

EAN NEWSFLASH

Summer Edition

Celebrating EPIET Alumni in Global Health Leadership

As an alumni organisation, we are very proud to see our alumni contribute to global public health leadership at the highest levels.

As **Dr. Mike Ryan** (cohort 1996) concludes an impactful chapter at the World Health Organization, especially at his latest role as Deputy Director-General and Executive Director for Health Emergencies, Preparedness, and Response, and **Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu** (cohort 2003) steps forward as Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme we wish the best to our alumni for their new journeys.

We are proud of the role that EPIET played in defining their careers!



Spotlight on Martyna Gassowski: EAN Introductory R Course Grant Recipient

2017), who was awarded an EAN grant covering the full cost of an introductory R course from Applied Epi.

"When I saw the EAN announcement about a grant to attend the Intro to R for Applied Epidemiology course offered by Applied Epi, I applied that very same evening. As a freelancer, getting access to funding like this really makes a difference, so I was very happy to learn I had been selected. Around that time, I had been reflecting on my professional path as I prepare to re-enter work after having kids. I realized that I would like to keep working with data, and it became clear that if I wanted to do that as a freelancer, I would need to add R to my toolkit. The grant came at just the right moment.

The course was both practical and inspiring. Though I had tried to teach myself bits of R through short courses and the Epi R Handbook, I often felt lost. This course gave me a clearer understanding of how R works and helped me begin to shift away from my Stata-based way of thinking. I also had a few real wow-moments - discovering R Markdown and seeing what is possible when it comes to visualising data felt like a whole new world opening up. But maybe the most important thing I got to practice was how to get help from a community forum by posting a "reprex" (reproducible example) and not to be intimidated to do so, even as a beginner. That may sound like a minor thing, but it was really useful - especially for someone working without colleagues to ask.

The course is created "by and for epidemiologists", and that really showed in the content. It ran over five weeks, with ten live online sessions that combined lectures, coding demonstrations, and hands-on exercises using outbreak case-studies. The exercises had a great flow and felt very well thought-through and one-on-one help was always available. Last but not least, the instructors really succeed in creating a friendly, encouraging atmosphere and a sense of community, reminding me of the modules during my fellowship.

I obviously still have plenty to learn, but I feel more confident to use R in future projects now. I am very grateful for the support from EAN that made this possible. For others in the network trying to make the transition to R, I can really recommend this course"

Martyna attended the course "Intro to R for Applied Epidemiology." If you are interested in this course or would like to explore other courses offered by Applied Epi, you can find more information [here](#).

EAN has also awarded another grant for an Advanced R course taking place in September. Active EAN members are eligible to apply for these grants. If you are not yet an active member, you can become one by following the instructions at the end of this newsflash.

***EAN Dinner & Drinks x MSF Career Compass 2025 –
A Memorable Evening in Athens***



On 11 June 2025, the EPIET Alumni Network (EAN) hosted a special edition of its traditional Dinner & Drinks in Athens, this time in collaboration with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and their Career Compass session, as part of the RAS 2025 module.

Held at the engaging Anglais Rooftop Bar, the event brought together RAS fellows and facilitators, EAN members, and MSF representatives for an engaging evening that combined structured mentoring with informal networking. The evening began with MSF's Career Compass, which followed a speed-dating format. Fellows rotated through a series of 10-minute conversations with experienced professionals, gaining insight into different career paths, fieldwork experiences, and the broader landscape of public health careers.

The facilitators represented a wide range of institutions, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Epicentre, the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), MediPIET, the Greek National School of Public Health, the Greek Institute of Public Health, the Croatian Institute of Public Health and independent consultants. Many of the facilitators are also EAN members, and we are proud of their contributions to the event.

Their openness and generosity in sharing their experiences created an enriching environment for the fellows, who came away with new perspectives and valuable connections. We warmly thank all facilitators for their time and energy.

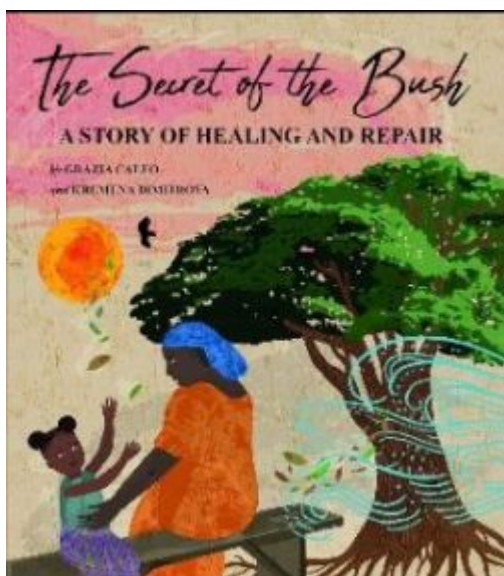
After the mentoring session, the evening transitioned into a more relaxed EAN Dinner & Drinks, allowing for further informal conversations, reconnections, and new friendships.

This event was a celebration of mentorship, solidarity, and shared purpose within our field. It demonstrated the strength and energy of the EPIET Alumni Network and the value of creating spaces where public health professionals at all stages of their careers can meet,

To everyone who participated—thank you for making the night such a success. We look forward to seeing you at future EAN events!



Experiences from the first online EAN Book Club - The Secret of the Bush with author Grazia Caleo



On 27 May 2025 we kicked off the EAN Bookclub with ***The Secret of the Bush***, a children's book written by **Grazia Caleo**, EPIET alumna (Cohort 2009), and illustrated by Kremena Dimitrova.

The Secret of the Bush is a 'lived experience' story, based on Grazia's work in Sierra Leone with Doctors Without Borders, at the time of Ebola. Baby Fatou, a 10-year-old girl, and her beloved grandmother, Grand Mammy Hawa, a traditional healer, share a close emotional bond, and together face the arrival of Ebola in their beautiful and peaceful village.

This is a story of healing and repair, aimed at removing stigma and enhancing community cohesion, and acknowledges the strength and compassion of children and the elderly.

Book Club participants shared their impressions of the conversation with Grazia:

"It was such a privilege to hear Grazia share her story behind the book. I was really moved by the many personal and emotional experiences that form the foundation of the story. I already found the book touching and visually captivating, but learning about all the details that went into the imagery and theoretical framework behind it made it even more special."

- Rosanne de Jong, EPIET Fellow Cohort 2023

others were thinking. I had not noticed before how empty the Ebola Treatment Unit was depicted in the book. But it was done on purpose to show how boring and dull it was to stay there, especially for a young kid."

- Emily Mayer, PAE Cohort 2020

"I really enjoyed the first EAN book club where Grazia Caleo, EPIET alumna, presented her "Secrets of the bush" book that referred to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014-16. The presentation and discussion effectively captured the response to the outbreak and its implications for the local community and beyond. The book underscored the substantial impact of field epidemiology on controlling outbreaks and safeguarding public health. Following this inspiring session, I felt proud to be an epidemiologist."

- Kostas Danis, EPIET Scientific Coordinator and EPIET Cohort 2002

You can get The Secret of the Bush through this [link](#).

EAN is planning another Book Club session this autumn. Stay tuned via the EAN Book Club WhatsApp group and the EAN mailing list.

Be part of the community : ways to stay involved and connected!

Do what you love to do!

You'd like to get active on a project for our community? An experience you'd like to share or a topic you'd like to educate on? Please reach out to us at eanboard@gmail.com if you'd like to discuss your idea and want our support. We are available to help you bringing your ideas come to life.

Support us with mini-assignments

Our community lives from all of us and the capacities of the board alone are limited. Every now and then, we may reach out to ask for your help on specific tasks or activities to get the best out of it for all of us.

Activate your membership

Many benefits are lined up for active members of the network (GOARN requests of assistance, bulletins, discounts on mini-modules, access to specific resources on our website...).

Membership runs from Nov. 1 until Oct 31 of the following year - but you can activate your membership at anytime! **The annual membership fee is now €30 / £28. There is a**

Fellows in their first and second year of training are exempt from paying membership fees. We have added a new payment option for credit cards to make membership renewal a bit easier. To use this option, please go to our website and follow the instructions there.

The details for how to transfer fees by online banking are also on the [EAN webpage](#); if you require any further information on membership payment, we kindly ask you to contact the EAN board (eanboard@gmail.com), putting “membership payment” in the subject line. Please indicate your name and membership year as reference in the bank transfer and also send an email to eanboard@gmail.com with a copy of the receipt/invoice to inform us about your payment (sometimes names are not correctly transmitted with the transfer). Thank you for your support!

Update your membership

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