

# EAN News

Newsletter of the EPIET Alumni Network



[www.epietalum.net](http://www.epietalum.net)

March 2010

## Editorial

Dear EAN Friends,

Welcome to the spring 2010 issue of the EAN Newsletter.

This edition is indeed very dense with updates from the EAN board: ESCAIDE 2010 and the Outreach Project, the EAN Annual Report, the board meeting, the selection of cohort 16 and so on...

We are sure that our members will be especially interested in knowing that we are planning an EAN Time Series Analysis mini-module this May in Berlin.

In addition, Florian Burckhardt, the EAN webmaster (or head of IT as we prefer to call him), presents us a very promising online survey tool hosted on our server ([www.epietalum.net](http://www.epietalum.net)), which any EAN members can access for free. This is the first of a series (at least two) online surveying tool that we will talk about. In the next edition of EAN newsletter edition we will look at another type of free web survey, on the development of which some EAN members have been involved directly.

One of the other highlights of this edition is in the "Stories from the Field", where Grazia Caleo (Epiet cohort 15), who went to Central African Republic to set-up nutrition and mortality surveillance, will tell us about her impressions of this spectacular country.

Finally, Esther Kissling (Epiet Cohort 12) continues the great tradition of Epi Cartoons with her take on the difficult task of selecting the next cohort of EPIET fellows.

Winter has been cold and long, but it is finally spring, time to enjoy the first sun rays peaking from the clouds, the flowers blooming, the robins singing, the butterflies flapping, and of course reading the March edition of the EAN Newsletter.

Disclaimer: if you are in the other hemisphere and spring does not mean much to you at the moment, perhaps you should order some spring-rolls, go to Alice Springs, or cheers to a Springboks game before continuing to read, just to get in the mood...

## From the EAN Board

### EAN Annual Report

The EAN Annual Report summarising all activities, achievements, financial overview and other information related to the EAN in 2008-2009, is now completed and will be circulated to members.

### EAN Board Meeting 2010

The EAN Board held its annual meeting in a lovely cottage on the Suffolk shores in January 2010. During the meeting we discussed future ideas for the EAN, the finances of the EAN, the idea of a member survey in occasion of the 10 years of the EAN, the next ESCAIDE, travel grants, EAN modules, and the Yearbook 2010.



*The EAN Board boldly exploring the limits of the known World for the sake of field epidemiology...*

## EAN Module on Time Series Analysis

As already announced last year, the EAN board is organising a workshop on time series analysis (TSA).

The workshop targets epidemiologists working on time series of surveillance data who have already received some basic training in TSA (EPIET, ECDC, or other course). The aim of the workshop will be to learn from each other by discussing and trying to solve problems that participants might have encountered during the analysis of datasets using TSA. Ideally, every participant should bring a dataset with them, which could benefit from time series analysis (e.g. regression analysis, ARIMA, as applicable). Apart from prior training in TSA, other prerequisites are basic knowledge of Stata and Excel.

The workshop will be facilitated by Bernadette Gergonne (ex-EPIET cohort 9) and will be hosted by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) in Berlin. The suggested date is **7-9 May, 2010**. Arrival in Berlin should be late Friday afternoon, so that the workshop can start with a first session in the evening. The maximum number of participants is 15. Travel and accommodation have to be arranged and paid by participants.

If you are interested in participating, please send an email to Helen Bernard ([BernardH@rki.de](mailto:BernardH@rki.de)) with cc to [eanboard@gmail.com](mailto:eanboard@gmail.com).

## EAN membership fees

The annual membership fee is €20. New fellows are exempt from this for the first year of their fellowship. Starting from the second year of fellowship every member should pay the fee. We kindly ask you to contact the EAN Treasurers at [eanboard@gmail.com](mailto:eanboard@gmail.com), in case you want to get information on your membership payment. You should all have received a reminder about this: so please, make arrangements for overdue payments if you have not already done so. We also encourage you to pay for more than one year **in order to** secure your membership for a longer period of time and avoid duplicating bank charges.

We are currently in a transition period from the old board to the new board. For the time being we are using our bank account in Malta which was managed by Gianfranco Spiteri, the former EAN Treasurer

**Name of Bank: HSBC Malta**

**Account Holder: Epiet Alumni Network**

**Account number: 85110443451**

**Sort code: 44853**

**IBAN: MT41MMEB44853000000085110443451**

**BIC/Swift: MMEBMTMT**

Please indicate your name and membership year as reference in the bank transfer and also send an email to [eanboard@gmail.com](mailto:eanboard@gmail.com) to inform us about your payment (sometimes names are not correctly transmitted with the transfer).

## ESCAIDE 2010

EAN is involved in the organization of the 4<sup>th</sup> European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (ESCAIDE), which will take place in Lisbon, Portugal, in November 2010 (exact dates to be determined).



## The EAN Outreach Project

Just like last year, we are again planning to conduct the outreach project also in view of ESCAIDE 2010.

The EAN Outreach Project aims to increase participation in ESCAIDE from countries in the WHO-EURO region which were relatively under-represented at ESCAIDE.

Of the 407 abstracts presented in 2007 and 2008, 10 countries (9 EU and 1 EEA) accounted for 328 abstracts (81%). In contrast, 27 of the 53 countries in WHO-EURO presented no abstracts, including 5 EU countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia) and 2 accession countries (Croatia and FYR Macedonia).

The following countries were identified as targets for the outreach project, being either EU or EU accession countries with 2 or fewer abstracts presented at ESCAIDE 2007 or 2008: Turkey, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Malta, and Slovakia.

Support offered was in the form of EAN travel grants to attend ESCAIDE, and an offer to review abstracts before they were submitted to ESCAIDE. Representatives from state public health departments were contacted before ESCAIDE to encourage abstract submission and offer support, and travel grants were publicised through ECDC.

Two abstracts from Turkey were received for review, both of which were presented as posters at ESCAIDE.

5 travel grants were awarded to presenters at the 2009 ESCAIDE, following 10 applications. Although no applications were received from target countries, two grants were awarded to countries with 6 or fewer abstracts from 2007/8 (Greece and Portugal), and one to a presenter from Morocco, a country which had not previously been represented at ESCAIDE.

For 2010, we will contact again the target countries through our network, along with earlier publicising of available travel grants (subject to agreement by EAN members). We also ask EAN members to please put

colleagues who they think may benefit from the Outreach in contact with us.

If you wish to help with this project by reviewing abstracts before they are submitted please also do get in touch with us!

## EPIET News

### Selection of EPIET Cohort 16

In 2010 ECDC will have funding for up to 18 EPIET fellows. The application for the 16<sup>th</sup> cohort of EPIET fellows was closed in February. EAN is again part of the Selection Committee. We are now in the process of reviewing the many applications (this year we have a new record in the number of applicants!) from all over Europe. As usual, the final face-to-face interview will be conducted at the ECDC in Stockholm in May.

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/epiet/Pages/HomeEpiet.aspx>



## Stories from the Field

### Mortality and Nutrition Surveillance in Central African Republic

By Grazia M. Caleo (EPIET Cohort 15 - EPICENTRE)



*Anthropometric measurement during surveillance activities*

From the end of January to the 13th of February I have got the opportunity to travel to the Central African Republic, with a senior Epidemiologist, in order to set up a surveillance system on mortality and nutrition.

It is quite challenging to describe this professional experience without giving you a bit of the scenario of this country that for many of us is just one of the numerous states situated in the heart of Africa.

For a long time, I imagined the Central African Republic as a place made just of tropical forest, diamonds mines and animals. However, this is just a part of the reality; the authentic diversity is made by the local population, which is unique in term of culture and traditions.

It was for me a real privilege to meet the small but proud Pigmies and to speak with the mysterious nomads Peul.



*Children from a Pygmy village*

It was very touching to see how these different populations are getting along even if the living conditions are one of the poorest in the world.

To set up a surveillance system allowed me to travel and visit remote villages, to enter in little shelters, to meet chiefs of villages and cooperate with them in order to inform the villages about the project; to draw maps showing neglected villages in current census or other registers.



*Traditional housing in a village*

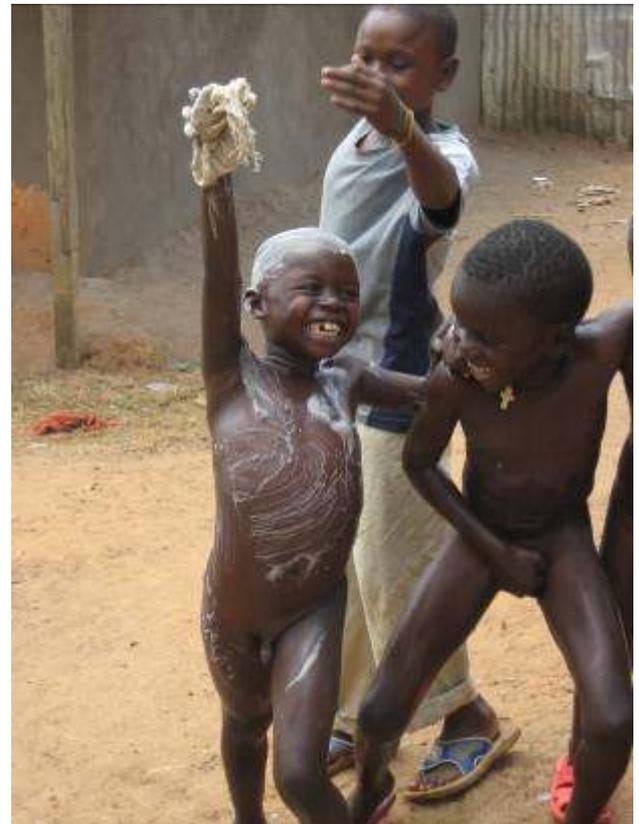
To see people with poor literacy level involved in the training and be willing to be part active of the surveillance reminded me of the important role that Public Health could have in this context.

We should never forget that epidemiology is a useful tool for Public Health helping to think about new health strategies; provides number for lobbying, map of villages that do not exist for many relief agencies in order to make access to health possible and human right respected.

I will never forget the small children of the MSF tuberculosis tent severely malnourished but still with the force to make a smile willing to survive.

I will never forget the villages, the hundreds of children welcoming in their little and simple house playing around fragile but full of life.

I will never forget that all the work was possible thanks to the Pigmy and Peul chiefs, the local population, the mothers and little children willing to be part of the surveillance activity, and the patients to responding to questions or anthropometric measurements; all very generous to spent time with us putting on hold their daily priorities as working in the field, collecting water or taking care of the food supply.



*Just happiness*

## EPI Tools

### Limesurvey via the EAN Server

by Florian Burckhardt (PAE Cohort 12 - Head of IT for EAN)



During our general meeting in Stockholm last year, many of you expressed the necessity of conducting online surveys for research projects, outbreak investigations and the likes. EAN is happy to announce Limesurvey, a powerful and user-friendly open-source survey platform hosted on our server ([www.epietalum.net](http://www.epietalum.net)).

The idea is providing one place with many surveys where we can learn from each other and just mash up our outbreak questionnaire with the templates provided by the previous YOUS.

Find the login here:

<http://epietalum.net/limesurvey/admin/admin.php>  
Username and password for this test account will be sent out separately from this article.

Try this account for testing purposes only and backup your work (!!!). Once you feel confident, just drop EAN-Board ([eanboard@gmail.com](mailto:eanboard@gmail.com)) a line and they will send you a personal account.

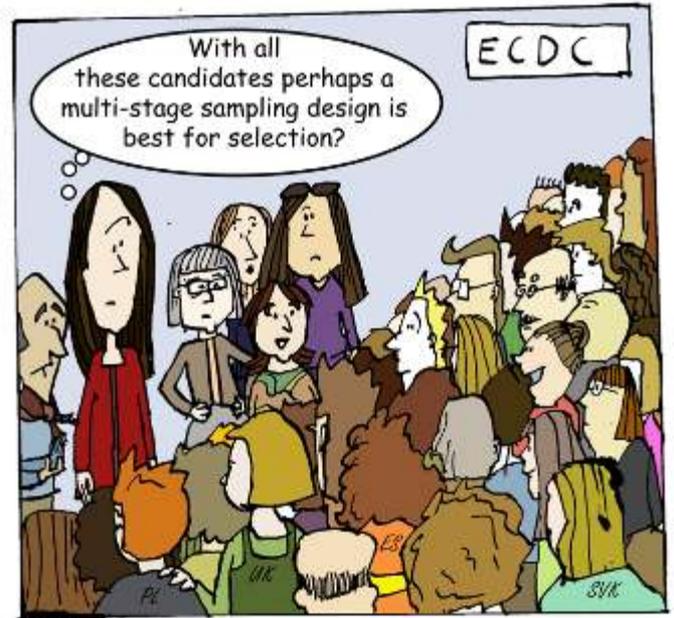
Try a test-survey (sorry, German only) at <http://epietalum.net/limesurvey/index.php?sid=91261&lang=de>

Technicalities: Limesurvey Version 1.85+  
Documentation: <http://docs.limesurvey.org/tiki-index.php>, look for "creating survey: introduction"

Have fun!

## EPI Cartoon

The selection process of EPIET Cohort 16 has started!



The Artist behind the Epi Cartoon is, as usual, Esther Kissling.

## Upcoming Conferences and Courses

- [Dec 5-10, 2010: 15th International Biometric Conference, Florianopolis \(Brazil\)](#)
- [October 3-5, 2010: 4th Vaccine and ISV Annual Global Congress, Vienna, Austria](#)
- [August 23-26, 2010: 2nd Symposium on Food Associated Pathogens, Grythyttan, Sweden](#)
- [July 11-14, 2010: ICEID - International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases, Atlanta \(USA\)](#)
- [June 28-30, 2010: I3S - International Symposium Salmonella and Salmonellosis, Saint-Malo \(France\)](#)
- [June 23-26, 2010: Annual Meeting of the Society for Epidemiologic Research, Seattle, USA](#)
- [May 26-29, 2010: 3rd Northern European Conference on Travel Medicine \(NECTM\), Hamburg](#)
- [May 5-8, 2010 28th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases \(ESPID\), Nice, France](#)
- [May 3-7, 2010: Historical Influenza Pandemics: Lessons Learned. Copenhagen, Denmark](#)
- [April 26-28, 2010 13th Annual Conference on Vaccine Research, Bethesda, USA](#)
- [April 10-13, 2010 European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Vienna, Austria](#)

Check the **EAN Website** for additional upcoming conferences

(<http://epietalum.net/content/conferences>) and regularly updated job offers (<http://epietalum.net/content/jobs-0>).

## Contribute to the next EAN Newsletter!

We are currently looking for contributions for the next newsletter. Would you like to share an interesting experience? Are you doing an exciting job somewhere in the world and beyond? Please e-mail your story to [EANboard@gmail.com](mailto:EANboard@gmail.com).