

# Youth Nurses at the Forefront



EMR Youth Nurses Initiative (EMR-YNI)

Regional Action and Strategic Impact 2025

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# Preface

Across the Eastern Mediterranean Region, young nurses are stepping forward as catalysts of transformation. They are not only caregivers, but educators, advocates, and leaders, anchoring resilience in communities and shaping the future of health systems. The EMR Youth Nurses Initiative (EMR-YNI), launched in 2025, was born from the conviction that youth nurses are not simply the future of healthcare, but a driving force of change today.

In its inaugural year, EMR-YNI laid the foundation of a regional movement rooted in empowerment, collaboration, and leadership. Despite operating in diverse and often resource-constrained contexts, youth nurses united with a shared vision: to amplify their voices, engage in policy dialogue, and represent their countries on global platforms. Their achievements, spanning governance, advocacy, leadership development, and digital engagement, demonstrated the immense potential of youth nurses to strengthen health systems and advance universal health coverage.

This report documents the strategic pillars, regional impact, and lessons learned from 2025, while charting a bold outlook for 2026. It reflects the extraordinary commitment of young nurses who, through solidarity and innovation, have positioned themselves as active contributors to health policy and global governance.

The call is clear: investing in youth nurses is essential. Their empowerment translates directly into stronger health systems, improved population outcomes, and accelerated progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

We invite governments, professional bodies, and global health leaders to stand with us, amplify this movement, and create enabling environments where youth nurse leadership can thrive. Because when young nurses are empowered, health systems transform. And when health systems transform, societies prosper. Let this report be both a testament to the progress already made and a call to action for all who believe in the power of youth nurses to shape a healthier, more equitable future.



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**Prof. Arwa Owies**

**EMR-YNI Senior Advisor**

# Preface

Nurses stand at the very heart of our health systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region—delivering care in the most complex, resource-constrained, and often fragile settings. They are not only caregivers, but educators, advocates, leaders, and the backbone of community resilience. In 2025, the EMR Youth Nurses Initiative was born from a simple yet powerful belief: that young nurses in our region are not just the future of healthcare—they are a driving force of change today.

Despite operating with limited resources, and within diverse and challenging contexts, we have witnessed something extraordinary. Young nurses from across the region came together with a shared sense of purpose, commitment, and vision. They stepped forward to engage in policy dialogue, represent their countries on global platforms, support one another, and raise a collective voice that had long remained underrepresented.

What we achieved in 2025 is not defined by scale alone, but by significance. We laid the foundation of a regional movement—one that is rooted in empowerment, collaboration, and leadership. A movement that recognizes the immense potential of youth nurses to shape stronger, more resilient, and more equitable health systems.

Yet, this is only the beginning. The challenges facing our region demand bold, inclusive, and sustained action.

Investing in young nurses is no longer optional—it is essential. Their empowerment directly translates into stronger health systems, improved population outcomes, and accelerated progress toward universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we look ahead, we call upon all partners—governments, the World Health Organization, United Nations agencies, professional bodies, and global health leaders—to stand with us. To invest in this movement. To amplify the voices of young nurses. And to create the enabling environments where their leadership can thrive.

Because when young nurses are empowered, health systems transform.

And when health systems transform, societies prosper.



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**Ahmed G. Sallam**

**EMR-YNI Lead**

# 1. Executive Summary

In 2025, the EMR Youth Nurses Initiative (EMR-YNI) emerged as a transformative regional platform advancing youth nursing leadership across the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). Through strategic engagement, global representation, and innovative youth-led initiatives, EMR-YNI has contributed to strengthening health workforce development, policy dialogue, and leadership capacity, in alignment with the priorities of the World Health Organization (WHO), International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Across its inaugural year 2025, EMR-YNI successfully:



## **Governance**

Established foundational governance structures and strategic direction



## **Voice**

Amplified youth nurse voices in regional and global platforms



## **Leadership**

Facilitated leadership development and global exposure for EMR youth nurses



## **Advocacy**

Initiated regional advocacy and digital engagement efforts

These achievements position EMR-YNI as a key regional partner and catalyst for youth engagement in health system transformation.



Some members of the EMR-Youth Nurses Initiative advisory board and youth nurses gather in an informal meeting with other EMR Nurse Leaders during the ICN Congress 2025 in Helsinki, Finland – reflecting collaboration, dialogue, and shared vision for advancing nursing leadership across the East Mediterranean Region.

# 2. Strategic Pillars of Action

In 2025, EMR-YNI structured its work around five interconnected strategic pillars. These pillars guided the initiative's governance, advocacy, capacity building, and regional alignment efforts throughout the year.



Fig.1: Strategic pillars of action at EMR-YNI

## 2.1 Governance, Institutional Development, and Strategic Alignment

EMR-YNI laid a strong institutional foundation through:

- Establishment of a multi-level governance structure (Advisory Board, Focus Group, Working Groups)
- High-level Advisory Board engagement with senior regional and global leaders
- Development of strategic priorities aligned with WHO EMRO workforce and youth engagement frameworks

A regional consultation further ensured that the initiative remains:

- Youth-led and context-responsive
- Reflective of diverse country needs across the EMR
- Grounded in principles of inclusivity, participation, and co-creation
- Reflective of diverse country needs across the EMR
- Grounded in principles of inclusivity, participation, and co-creation

### Strategic Outcome:

A credible, inclusive, and scalable regional platform aligned with global health governance and youth empowerment frameworks.



Fig.2: Governance structure of EMR -YNI



A group of the EMR Youth Nurses Initiative Advisory Board, alongside passionate youth nurses, came together in an inspiring, informal gathering with fellow EMR nurse leaders during the ICN Congress 2025 in Helsinki, Finland.

This meaningful moment embodied the power of youth engagement, open dialogue, and intergenerational collaboration—where ideas were shared, voices were heard, and a united vision was strengthened.



## 2.2 Youth Engagement in Policy and Global Health Leadership

EMR-YNI significantly advanced youth representation in high-level policy and leadership platforms, including:



### Regional Level

- Active participation in WHO EMRO regional dialogues on the State of the World's Nursing
- Representation in high-level regional launch events and policy discussions
- Engagement with WHO leadership to explore strategic collaboration pathways



### Global level

- ICN Congress 2025 participation and knowledge exchange
- Representation at the ICN Student Assembly and CNR governance meetings
- Amplification of EMR youth perspectives in global nursing dialogue



### Strategic Outcome:

Positioning youth nurses as active contributors - not passive beneficiaries - in health policy, workforce planning, and global health governance.



Helsnk 2023  
ICN Congress  
Nurses' POWER  
to Change the World  
9-13  
JUNE

VOLUNTEER



Youth nurses from the East Mediterranean Region participate in the ICN Student Assembly during the ICN Congress 2025 in Helsinki, Finland

## 2.3 Leadership Development and Capacity Building

In 2025, the EMR-YNI successfully launched its first regional advocacy initiative, the “Voices of Youth Nurses: International Nurses Day 2025” Campaign. This initiative served as a foundational step in building a modern, digital-first presence for young nurses in the region.

Key Achievements & Activities:

- **Digital Storytelling:** Amplified the voices of youth nurses across the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) through strategic digital narratives.
- **Regional Solidarity:** Strengthened a sense of professional pride, identity, and regional solidarity among early-career nurses.
- **Infrastructure Building:** Established the initiative's initial branding and digital communication infrastructure.
- **Enhanced Visibility:** Successfully increased the presence and visibility of youth nurses within regional health discourse.
- **Future Readiness:** Created a repository of foundational content for future campaigns and generated critical lessons for scaling digital engagement, such as the need to further strengthen content production capacity

### **Strategic Outcome**

The emergence of a youth-driven regional advocacy voice that effectively leverages digital platforms for meaningful influence and engagement across the health sector

## 2.4 Advocacy, Visibility, and Digital Engagement

EMR-YNI launched its first regional advocacy initiative: “Voices of Youth Nurses: International Nurses Day 2025” Campaign

- Amplified youth voices across EMR through digital storytelling
- Strengthened regional identity, solidarity, and professional pride
- Established initial digital communication and branding infrastructure

The initiative also:

- Increased visibility of youth nurses in regional discourse
- Created foundational content for future campaigns
- Generated key lessons for scaling digital engagement

### **Strategic Outcome:**

Emergence of a youth-driven regional advocacy voice leveraging digital platforms for influence and engagement.



## 2.5 Alignment with Regional and Global Priorities

EMR-YNI has strategically aligned its activities and priorities with key global and regional frameworks, particularly those of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN). This alignment ensures that youth-led efforts in the Eastern Mediterranean Region are responsive to evolving health system needs and contribute meaningfully to global nursing and workforce agendas.

Through engagement in WHO- and ICN-led platforms and events, EMR-YNI has:

- Contributed youth perspectives to ongoing regional and global health dialogues
- Strengthened coherence with international priorities in nursing leadership, workforce development, and health system resilience
- Positioned its initiatives within broader global efforts to advance the nursing profession

These engagements have enabled:

- Constructive dialogue with global stakeholders
- Increased visibility of youth nursing contributions from the EMR
- Identification of opportunities for future collaboration and engagement

### Strategic Outcome:

Enhanced alignment of EMR-YNI with global nursing and health priorities, reinforcing its role as a youth-driven contributor within the broader international health ecosystem.



Ali Karout- EMR representative at the ICN Students and Early Career Nurse (SECN)



# نقابة الممرضين و القابلات الأردنيين



From Amman, at the Jordan Nurses and Midwives Council (JNMC) the seeds of EMR-YNI were first planted. This historic gathering marked the beginning of a youth-driven movement to elevate nursing leadership across our region. What started as an initial meeting has grown into a powerful initiative, connecting voices, building capacity, and shaping the future of nursing in the Eastern Mediterranean  
Amman, Jordan-2024

### 3. Strategic Milestone

## Voices from ICN 2025: Amplifying Youth Leadership in Global Nursing

The “Voices from ICN 2025” initiative stands as a strategic milestone in advancing EMR-YNI’s vision of inclusive, youth-centered nursing leadership. By capturing authentic insights from both global and emerging leaders, the initiative reinforces the importance of bridging opportunity gaps and ensuring that young nurses across the region remain connected to global discourse, regardless of existing barriers. Despite the delay in dissemination, the initiative’s long-term value remains strong. Its upcoming launch in 2026 is expected to significantly enhance leadership awareness, mentorship access, and regional engagement. Moving forward, EMR-YNI will continue leveraging such innovative platforms to empower youth nurses, amplify their voices, and position the Eastern Mediterranean Region as an active contributor to the global nursing leadership landscape.





WISH  
مؤتمر القمة العالمي للابتكار في الرعاية الصحية  
World Innovation Summit for Health

7  
النسخة  
EDITION

المؤمن من منظور إنساني:  
المساواة والمرورة  
فئة الصراعات  
Humanizing  
Conflict, Equity, and Justice



EMR Youth Nurses representatives had the honor of meeting Her Excellency Prof. Rowaida Al-Maaitah, a pioneering leader in nursing and health policy. This engagement underscored the importance of intergenerational dialogue and the role of youth nurses in shaping regional health strategies. During WISH 2024, Doha, Qatar

# Measurable Contributions Across the EMR



## Empowerment of Youth Nurses

- Strengthened leadership confidence and skills
- Increased participation in policy and professional dialogue
- Enhanced motivation and engagement across EMR countries



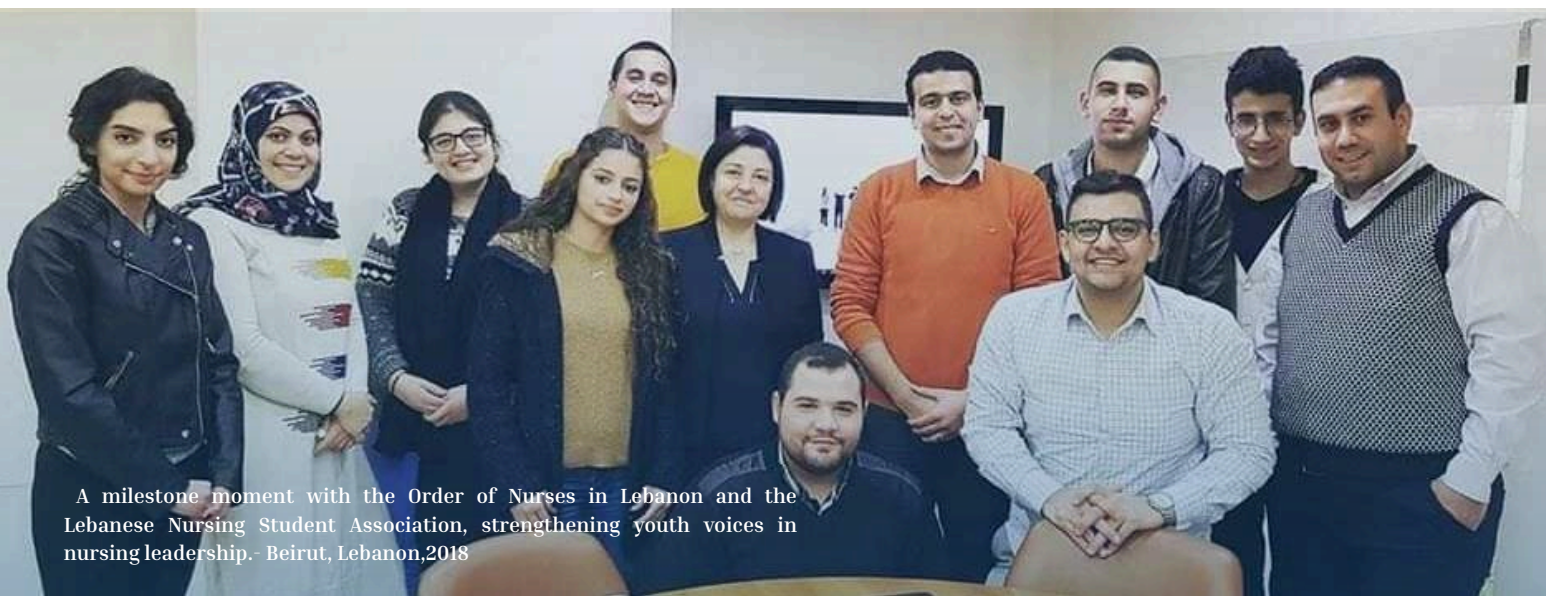
## Strengthening Health Workforce Dialogue

- Integration of youth perspectives into workforce discussions
- Contribution to dissemination and contextualization of global WHO reports



## Advancing Regional Collaboration

- Creation of a regional youth nursing network
- Promotion of peer esucaand shared innovation



A milestone moment with the Order of Nurses in Lebanon and the Lebanese Nursing Student Association, strengthening youth voices in nursing leadership.- Beirut, Lebanon,2018

## 5. Lessons Learned & Strategic Outlook



# Building on 2025 for Greater Impact in 2026

### Key Challenges & Lessons (2025)

- Need for structured governance documentation and clear role definition across all levels
- Importance of early planning and country-level coordination mechanisms
- Strengthening partnerships with national nursing bodies and academic institutions
- Building digital infrastructure and content production capacity for sustained advocacy

### Strategic Priorities for 2026

- Formalize governance and institutional positioning
- Expand country representation across all EMR Member States
- Scale leadership and mentorship programmes
- Strengthen policy engagement aligned with WHO priorities
- Launch high-impact regional advocacy campaigns
- Expand partnerships with UN agencies and global stakeholders



Meeting with Dr. Gülin Gedik, Coordinator of Health Workforce Development, WHO-EMRO –WHO-EMRO Headquarters, Cairo, Egypt February 2025.

# When Young Nurses Are Empowered, Health Systems Transform

The EMR Youth Nurses Initiative has, within a short period, demonstrated its potential as a strategic regional platform advancing youth leadership, policy engagement, and workforce development.

By elevating the voices of young nurses and fostering meaningful engagement with

global health systems, EMR-YNI contributes directly to:

- Strengthening health systems resilience
- Advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC)
- Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**Investing in youth nurses is not only a workforce strategy —it is a strategic imperative for the future of health systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and beyond.**



EMR-YNI-2025