

# Improved patient safety and protection against antimicrobial resistance and infections in Liberian district hospitals

Academy for Global Health and Development and the Christian Health Association of Liberia



**HOSPITAL  
PARTNERSHIPS**

## The challenge

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Liberia's health system is one of the weakest in the world. This is reflected in general health indicators such as life expectancy (60 years of age for men and 63 for women), maternal mortality (725 per 100.000 live births) and child health (50,7% of children under five are treated for respiratory disease).

Following the Ebola crisis, the country has taken steps to strengthen health services and address the quality of care, with support from international partners. This includes implementing infection prevention and control measures for the protection of staff and patients.

However, with Ebola no longer an immediate threat, it is now essential that preventative measures such as consistent hand hygiene, use of appropriate protective clothing and sound waste management are maintained at a high level. This relates not only to highly infectious pathogens but also to the prevention of nosocomial infections (i.e. those acquired in hospital) as a whole. High rates of post-operative infectious complications are common and outbreaks of infectious diseases in paediatric wards are often seen as unavoidable, with no connection being made with associated hygiene problems. Medical staff often respond with the preventive, multiple prescription of antibiotics, which in turn encourages the development of antimicrobial resistance.

## Partnership activities

The main objective of the partnership is to achieve a sustained improvement in hygiene standards for the prevention of hospital-acquired infections (HAIs). It is important to raise awareness of the links between prevention of infectious diseases, general treatment with antibiotics and hygiene measures.

In the first stage of the partnership, three hospitals in Liberia are linking up with the Academy for Global Health and Development (Akademie für globale Gesundheit und Entwicklung, AGGE) to share knowledge via an e-learning platform. Initially, the hospitals will collect data on the application of infection prevention and control measures.

This will include the implementation of existing hygiene measures, access to water and the disposal of infectious waste. Based on situation analyses, appropriate training measures will then be conducted, including general disinfection measures such as basic hand hygiene, the use of protective clothing, and responsible handling of potentially infectious material.

*'This project links hospitals in Liberia together through an internet platform that allows for peer-to-peer learning processes and expert inputs in order to improve quality of care.'*

**Dr Schneider, Director of DIFAEM**

Most importantly, the hospitals can learn from each other and exchange their experiences with implementation via the internet platform in the presence of a qualified facilitator.

The second step will involve awareness-raising on the rational use of antimicrobial drugs, with the long-term target of reducing multi-resistant microorganisms. This will include peer-to-peer learning and external supervision with the aim of achieving improved prescription habits.

To ensure sustainability, all measures and results will be published and the network will include a 'learning box' tool.



*Waste management – an important aspect of infection prevention and control at Ganta Hospital © GIZ / Gisela Schneider*



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

Else  
Kröner  
Fresenius  
Stiftung

## Financing

The funding program University and Hospital Partnerships in Africa makes part of the Hospital partnerships Initiative – Partners strengthen health. The Initiative is funded by the Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development and Else Kröner-Fresenius Foundation and is a member of the ESTHER Alliance.

## Results

- An internet-based knowledge and competence platform will be set up for the use of medical staff in the partner hospitals.
- Infection, prevention and control measures based on the guidelines of the Liberian Ministry of Health with a focus on the prevention of nosocomial infections will be operationalised effectively and supported in the partner institutions.
- Analysis will be conducted of possible fields of action to avoid antimicrobial resistance and initial considerations for a plan of action formulated.

## The partners

The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Heidelberg, via its participation in AGGE, has already conducted several projects with ESTHER.

### Institutions in Liberia

The Christian Health Association of Liberia is a network of Christian hospitals in Liberia. The cooperation partners are:

1. Ganta United Methodist Hospital, which serves a population of 100.000 people in Nimba County. It is a referral centre for maternal and child health and has a nurse and midwifery school.
2. Phebe Hospital, the district hospital in Gbanga (Bong County). The hospital has a nurses' school affiliated with the College of Health Science of Cuttington University.
3. Saint Joseph Hospital, a major hospital in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. It has an excellent reputation in medicine, surgery, and obstetrics and gynaecology. The hospital has implemented excellent standards of infection prevention and control and is recommended by the authorities as a reference structure for the prevention of infections.

### Institutions in Germany

The Academy for Global Health and Development (AGGE) is a network bringing together the Medical Mission Institute in Würzburg, the German Institute for Medical Mission in Tübingen (DIFAEM e.V.) and the Institute of Public Health at the University of Heidelberg.

## Overview

<b>Name</b>	<b>Improved patient safety through the development of a knowledge, management and competence network for infection prevention and control and the prevention of antimicrobial resistance in Liberian district hospitals</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	Improvement in the general hygiene of the hospitals and more responsible handling of antimicrobial drugs	
<b>Countries</b>	Liberia	Germany
<b>Cities</b>	Ganta Gbanga Monrovia	Würzburg Tübingen Heidelberg
<b>Institutions</b>	Ganta United Methodist Hospital; Phebe Hospital; Sankt Joseph Hospital	Academy for Global Health and Development, German Institute for Medical Mission, Medical Mission Institute Würzburg, University of Heidelberg
<b>Term</b>	July 2017 – April 2019	
<b>Budget</b>	110.000 EURO	

## Contact person for the partnership

### Academy for Global Health and Development (AGGE)

Represented by:

### German Institute for Medical Mission (DIFAEM)

Dr med Gisela Schneider

Email [direktorat@difaem.de](mailto:direktorat@difaem.de)

Member of:



In cooperation with:



Implemented by:

