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**GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND  
FEDERAL STATES PROGRAMME**  
BUND-LÄNDER-PROGRAMM (BLP)



**Federal state – partner country**

Lower Saxony – Tanzania

**Title**

Improving health provision for newborns with hearing screenings in order to boost the resilience of the Tanzanian health sector

**In cooperation with the GIZ programme**

Improvement of Health Care in Tanzania

**Financing arrangements**

BMZ contribution	€ 289,214
Lower Saxony contribution	€ 189,176

**Duration**

01.04.2022 – 31.03.2023

**Responsible ministry**

Ministry for Social Affairs, Health and Equal Opportunities of Lower Saxony

Newborn hearing screening at Muhimbili National Hospital, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

## Early Detection of Hearing Impairments of Tanzanian Children

### Local situation

The ability to hear is fundamental for speech development in young children. Unless hearing impairments are diagnosed as early as possible and speech therapy is provided, there is a high risk that the children concerned will be adversely affected in their speech development. In Africa, hearing impairments in children are usually not diagnosed until they reach school age. In addition, there is a lack of therapeutic options and treatments throughout the country. This poses a serious risk to their educational progress and participation in society and jeopardises their chances of securing a job. There are many reasons for late diagnosis, ranging from poor infrastructure to a shortage of qualified professionals. Critical challenges within the health sector, such as the recent SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, have exponentially exacerbated difficulties with accessing general health care provision and check-ups for children and mothers, particularly during pregnancy, birth and infancy.

This project helps to achieve the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



*“The BLP is facilitating the implementation of new-born hearing screenings as early on as possible in Tanzania to improve young children’s educational and integration prospects in later life. In conjunction with an interdisciplinary capacity-building programme in otorhinolaryngology, audiology and speech-language therapy, MUHAS is becoming a hub for research and teaching with an increasingly significant role as a facilitator in Tanzania and a peer-to-peer partner on the international cooperation stage.”*

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UNHS training for otorhinolaryngology staff at MUHAS

## Cooperation arrangements

Several universities and health centres from Lower Saxony and Tanzania are working together as part of the project in the German Government and Federal States Programme (German: Bund-Länder-Programm, BLP). The implementing partners from Lower Saxony are the Department of Speech Pedagogy and Therapy within the Institute of Special Education at Leibniz University Hannover (Prof Dr Ulrike Lüdtkke), the Department of Otorhinolaryngology at Hannover Medical School (MHH) (Prof Prof hc Dr med Thomas Lenarz) and the MHH-affiliated German Hearing Center Hannover (DHZ) (Prof Anke Lesinski-Schiedat, PD Dr Angelika Illg). The BLP project benefits from the initial findings of the “HEAR Africa!” project, which developed this research partnership.

Long-term implementing partners from Tanzania are the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) and the MUHAS-affiliated Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) in Dar es Salaam. The extended network also includes the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) in Moshi and the Bugando Medical Centre in Mwanza.

## What we are doing – and how

The project seeks to develop the capacities of medical staff and speech therapists in the field of universal newborn hearing screening (UNHS) and confirmation diagnostics. A range of interdisciplinary training formats are being used to enhance the expertise and practical skills of students and specialists. In addition to this, exchange trips are being

organised, training strategies are being evaluated and standardised, and the development of a freely accessible digital platform on diagnosing and treating infant hearing impairments is supported.

This will serve to develop the general skills of specialists and strengthen sustainable structures within the Tanzanian health system. It will help to improve the resilience of the country’s health sector in the face of complex health care challenges, especially in regard to newborns and children.

## Useful links

- Further information on the German Government and Federal States Programme (BLP):  
<https://bund-laender-programm.de/en>  
<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/91262.html>
- Further information on the “HEAR Africa!” project:  
<https://www.ifs.uni-hannover.de/en/departments/sprach-paedagogik-und-therapie/forschungsprojekte/global-issues-of-slt>
- Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Hannover Medical School:  
<https://www.mhh.de/en/ent>
- German Hearing Center Hannover (DHZ):  
<https://www.dhz.clinic/en>
- Further information on MUHAS:  
<https://www.muhas.ac.tz/>

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