

Health Systems Strengthening and Epidemic Prevention in Sierra Leone

Supporting Sierra Leone in building up a resilient health system

Context and Challenge

Between 2014 and 2016, Sierra Leone and its neighbouring countries, Liberia and Guinea, were severely afflicted by the Ebola outbreak, which overburdened the countries' fragile health systems. In Sierra Leone over 11,000 people were infected by the Ebola disease virus, of whom close to 4,000 died (MoHS, 2016).

To date, Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) has made health systems strengthening a priority. Its sector is critically understaffed and the personnel insufficiently qualified with the necessary skills and knowledge. Health services are underfunded, so that opportunities to improve performance capacity and quality consistently fail to meet the demand. Especially the quality of maternal and child health care services remains at a low standard.

The system for the routine and regular collection and processing of health-related data, particularly the country's Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) system, is not yet fully developed and cannot be managed efficiently due to shortcomings in human capacity. As a result, there is little resilience to respond adequately in the event of an epidemic outbreak with potentially catastrophic and fatal consequences.

Our Approach

The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) works in close cooperation with the MoHS towards building a resilient health system that is responsive to its demands. The intervention areas are aligned to MoHS *Health Sector Recovery Plan 2015-2020*

(HSRP). The HSRP goals are to strengthen the health care system and to improve the nutritional, health and hygiene status of the population.

In agreement with the MoHS, the GIZ Health Systems Strengthening and Epidemic Prevention Project provides technical support in the following three priority areas:

- 1) Strengthen **human resources in health** management, including the enhancement of management and teaching methods at two midwifery schools.
- 2) Mainstream **health financing strategies** for human resource development in the health care system and process development towards Social Health Insurance.
- 3) Strengthen **cross-border disease prevention** in Kambia and Kailahun Districts.

Project name	Health System Strengthening and Epidemic Prevention in Sierra Leone
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead Executing Agency	Ministry of Health and Sanitation Sierra Leone (MoHS)
Overall term	May 2016 to December 2019
Budget	EUR 7,000,000

The GIZ project convened its project strategy and operational planning workshop in October 2017 in Freetown. The main objective of the workshop was to jointly develop a project strategy and operational plan, which GIZ together with the MoHS and key partners will implement up to the end of 2019. The workshop, furthermore, clarified roles and responsibilities



Left: GIZ and MoHS representatives at the MoHS-GIZ strategy and operational planning workshop in October 2017.

Right: The GIZ Project Director with her counterpart of the MoHS welcoming key partners at the MoHS-GIZ strategy and operational planning workshop in October 2017.



Left: A MoHS health economist shares his knowledge with GIZ and key partners at the MoHS-GIZ strategy and operational planning workshop in October 2017.

Right: Key actors jointly develop strategic work processes to be implemented between 2017 and 2019 at the MoHS-GIZ strategy and operational planning workshop in October 2017.

of the MoHS, GIZ and other stakeholders aimed at sustaining the interventions.

The workshop also served as a platform to foster relations between key stakeholders and to encourage active involvement in decision-making processes on strategic and operational levels.

Key Successes thus far

- In collaboration with the MoHS, GIZ gave a grant to the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) to provide technical support in strengthening and decentralizing the management of human resources in health.
- Two GIZ development workers are assigned to the mid-wifery schools in Freetown and Makeni to provide technical support in school management, teaching methods, and curricula development.
- An assessment of Sierra Leone's health financing landscape was conducted to identify health financing gaps and possible intervention areas. Based upon the information obtained, concise and adequate finance strategies for the health workforce and a process development towards establishing a social health insurance scheme will be developed.
- A joint assessment in the two border districts Kambia and Kailahun was conducted to determine the districts' capacities to prevent, early detect, and to respond to notifiable diseases and epidemics. The results of the assessment are being incorporated in the project strategy.
- To prevent a cholera outbreak following the devastating landslide in Freetown in August 2017, the project under the stewardship of the MoHS trained 400 community health workers in cholera prevention and hygiene promotion. These efforts contributed towards preventing a likely cholera outbreak.

Published by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany	In cooperation with	Ministry of Health and Sanitation Sierra Leone (MoHS)
		On behalf of	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project	Health Systems Strengthening and Epidemic Prevention GIZ Office Freetown, Sierra Leone 32D Wilkinson Road T+49-421-98504375-10	Addresses of the BMZ offices	BMZ Bonn Dahlmannstraße 4 53113 Bonn, Germany T +49 (0)228 99 535-0 F +49 (0)228 99 535-3500 BMZ Berlin Stresemannstraße 94 10963 Berlin, Germany T +49 (0)30 18 535-0 F +49 (0)30 18 535-2501
Authors	Kläre Heyden, Lorena Führ		poststelle@bmz.bund.de www.bmz.de
Layout	GIZ		
As at	December 2017		