

ACGSL

Assessing the Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Health Systems in Guinea and Sierra Leone: the Case of Malaria

Duration

2021 – 2023

Budget

approx. 770,000 EUR

Partner countries

Guinea
Sierra Leone

Challenges addressed by the project

Following the 2014 Ebola outbreak, Germany has played a major role in supporting the strengthening of health systems in Guinea and Sierra Leone. Investments were made to strengthen the emergency preparedness of health systems for future public health emergencies. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is timely to assess how well health systems in these countries have absorbed the shock caused by the pandemic, and reflect on the effectiveness of interventions received, specifically in terms of the ability to maintain basic health services. Malaria is a multifaceted disease that requires interventions through the whole spectrum of the health system, ranging from public health prevention activities like vector control, to delivery of treatment through health care services. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, it is the leading cause of death and years of life lost, and it is anticipated that the delivery of malaria services will suffer during the pandemic, potentially reversing years of progress towards malaria elimination which Guinea and Sierra Leone are committed to achieving.

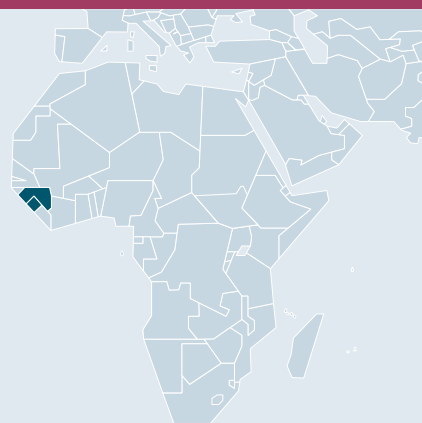
Objectives

Using malaria as a case study, this project will:

- » Measure the change in the delivery of essential health interventions and its consequences on equitable access
- » Analyse the capacities of adaptation of national and local health systems to the pandemic
- » Assess the change in the level of trust vis-à-vis the health system due to COVID-19 and the government response
- » Model the long-term consequences of the disruption of health systems caused by COVID-19 on malaria health outcomes and costs for the health system

Overview of activities

The COVID-19 pandemic is exerting enormous pressure on health systems around the world. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, questions have arisen about the capacities of health systems to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic whilst ensuring the ongoing delivery of essential health services. It is feared that countries in Western Africa could become the main infectious disease hot spots in the future due to weak health systems, limited local capacity for public health surveillance and outbreak response. By combining quantitative and qualitative data from health facility, household and social network surveys and key informant interviews, the project will provide decision-makers with a comprehensive overview on the effectiveness of Health System Strengthening investments, before and during the COVID-19



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Federal Ministry
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RKI team and Sierra Leone partner meeting,
June 2021



Fact finding at Centre de Santé Amélioré in
Forecariah, Guinea



Group photo Public Health Research Training,
Sierra Leone, October 2021



Public Health Research Training in Conakry,
Guinea, October 2021

pandemic, and an in-depth analysis of the driving factors that enable, and conversely hinder, this effectiveness. Malaria indicators data from national malaria programmes will be analysed and data will be collected from health facility managers, medical records of treated patients and households. These surveys will help measure the change in malaria service provision between pre-, during, and post-COVID-19. Using this data, advanced statistical modelling techniques will be developed to forecast malaria incidence or other epidemiological parameters under different scenarios, as well as long-term consequences of the disruption of health systems caused by COVID-19 on malaria health outcomes and costs for the health system. Beyond publications in peer-reviewed journals, the research team will develop easy-to-understand tools, issue policy briefs and organize events around these briefs to promote the transformation of the health system. This will make sure that the new evidence can influence future policy and investment decisions. Evidence is a major factor in strengthening health systems, increasing their resilience, and hence maintaining their responsiveness to the needs of their population. The findings will be tailored to multiple stakeholders, specifically healthcare workers and managers of the health system in the two countries, local health authorities, and global funders and technical assistance organizations.

Partner institutions/Contact

- » Ministry of Health, Guinea
- » Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone
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