

IMPLEMENTING A NATIONAL BACHELOR DEGREE

Pediatric Training Program Clinical Officers Sierra Leone



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SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone has amongst the highest neonatal and under five mortality rates in the world, with 31 and 108 deaths per 1000 live births, respectively. [1] Lack of healthcare professionals is one of the main contributing factors. With only 0.74 physicians per 100,000 population, 566 physicians in total, Sierra Leone has one of the lowest physician densities in the world. [2]



CURRENT FACTS

- National bachelor degree
- Affiliated with the University of Sierra Leone
- Combination of clinical and theoretical blocks

- Currently 28 students in training
- 64% male - 36% female

- Local trainers involvement from 10% increased to 40% over the last 1.5 year
- Train the trainer program started

- 9 partner hospital country wide

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In October 2021, the Ministry of health and Sanitation (MOHS) of Sierra Leone together with German Doctors started a specialized Pediatric Training Program (PTP) for clinical officers(CO) with the School of Clinical Sciences in Makeni (SCSM). Students can enter after obtaining their diploma in clinical medicine at the SCSM. There is close collaboration with two other NGOs: CapaCare and Partners in Health, respectively responsible for the specialty's surgery/obstetrics and internal medicine.

The bachelor pediatric specialization training program is a task sharing project with the aim to increase the number of clinically trained professionals in order to reduce child and neonatal mortality in Sierra Leone. Comparable to other successful programs in Sub-Saharan Africa.[3] The program consists of four clinical rotations in various partner hospitals, alternated by advanced theoretical modules taught by national and international trainers. The last year consists of a housemanship year in OlaDuring Children's hospital in Freetown.

Year 1	Coremodule 1.5 months	Clinical Rotation 5 months	Module A 1 month	Clinical Rotation 5 months
Year 2	Module B 1 month	Clinical rotation 5 months	Module C 1 month	Clinical Rotation Writing dissertation 5 months
Year 3	Internship year			

Table 1. Curriculum Pediatric Training Program Clinical Officers



Ministry of Health and Sanitation

LESSONS LEARNED

Strengths:

- A recognized bachelor degree in Sierra Leone
- Initiative for the program coming from the MOHS and the collaboration with the SCSM.
- High quality due to small numbers and direct supervision during clinical rotations
- Great interest of national stakeholders in the future pediatric COs (UNICEF, MOHS)

Challenges:

- Novel program, recognition needs to be gained
- The involvement of national trainers, possibly due to the fact that there are few doctors and the country has long relied on foreign expertise and support.

CONCLUSION

The Pediatric Training Program in Sierra Leone is a high quality training and looks promising in reducing the need for more pediatric healthcare workers, and thereby works towards a reduction in neonatal and child morbidity and mortality. Collaboration with governmental institutions, local stakeholders, and national paediatricians is essential and makes the program sustainable.

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-leading-causes-of-death>
2. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-leading-causes-of-death>
3. WHO (2008): Task shifting: rational redistribution of tasks among health workforce teams. Global Recommendations and Guidelines

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