

Project title

Demonstration project for integration of oral health and primary care in a district level hospital in Gulu Province, Northern Uganda

Swiss Institute	University of Bern ZMK, Dept of Rest Preventive & Pediatric Dentistry	Partner Institute	St. Mary's Lacor Hospital (SMLH), Gulu city & Gulu Province, Uganda
Project leader	Prof. Dr. Guglielmo Campus guglielmo.campus@zmk.unibe.ch	Country project leader	Dr. Martin Ogwang Institutional Director Ogwang.martin@lacorhospital.org
Intended results	Based on the needs identified during our ongoing project with our main partners in Uganda, the workshop will allow us to explore the possibility to broaden the network of collaborations with local schools and community health extensions.		
Target group and beneficiaries	The catchment area of SMLH includes neighboring rural parishes with a population of about 400.000 inhab. The Bidibidi refugee camp, the second largest in the world after the Rohingya camp in Bangladesh, is situated just 180km north of Gulu.		
Time frame	August 2020 – February 2021	Project cost	

How will you contribute to health system strengthening

The integration of interventions to improve workforce capacity, health information and oral health care delivery in primary care requires collaborative work with actors beyond the health sector. Building new partnerships with tangible results for all stakeholders might further encourage exchanges between local and international networks. Models of super-specialization and isolated programs in low-resource settings are less effective and lack sustainability. Our current model in Uganda allows the provision of simple, cost-effective interceptive treatments of dental caries. We aim at increasing capacity and expanding the spectrum of activities to oral health care and prevention delivered to schools in the Gulu municipality and to rural peripheral HC III managed by the SMLH. An out-reach model would have the added value of costs savings and fostering synergies in collaboration with school teachers, community health extension workers, ophthalmologists, deworming, vaccination teams and environmental officers.

How will you spread the outcomes of this partnership and influence policy?

We count on the support of ESTHER Switzerland and hope to establish new ties with former funded projects. In addition, for our work in community dentistry among vulnerable groups, we have an extensive network of academics and colleagues all over the world, from Europe, to Africa, Asia, South and North America. During our most recent study on the impact of COVID-19 among dental professionals, we have learnt the power of media, social networks and dialogue with decision makers in building a bridge between science and the real world.

What are the benefits for all partners involved?

After strengthening our partnership and weighing our mutual capacity and developing a pilot project with, we will be

able to plan in the future a comprehensive approach to the of oral health and primary care in the Gulu district. Mutual benefits will derive from this collaboration. The main benefit will be the setting of a simple, cost-effective interceptive treatments of dental caries, that in the future might be implemented by the St. Mary's Lacor Hospital. If outcome of the project will successful the Department of Rest Preventive & Pediatric Dentistry University of Bern might be use the same approach in other Countries.

We are aware of the magnitude and capacity required to bring it to good end. If the mutual evaluation indicates our inability to deliver results in each of the building blocks, we will then choose a single feasible component that will still contribute to improving the health of the population.

How do you ensure sustainability of this partnership?

Beyond the mutual learning and work with our colleagues in Uganda, coordination and fundraising with other potential partners, we acknowledge the current challenges and changing needs imposed by the COVID-19 global pandemic and the associated hurdles that might impede a future integration of the project within the primary healthcare structure at the local and regional level.

In the long term, we hope to be able to provide evidence and encouraging policy dialogue at the local or central level in Uganda. We have already established an trusted collaboration with Dr. Juliet Nabbanja Katumba, Principal Dental Surgeon at the MoH. We hope this relationship will continue after the next general election in Uganda which is just around the corner in 2021.



ESTHER Switzerland | Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine | www.esther-switzerland.ch
Universität Bern | Mittelstrasse 43 | CH-3012 Bern | T +41 (0)31 631 33 35 | esther@ipsm.unibe.ch

Coordinated by ISPM, Universität Bern, with support from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC