

## Filling the gap in health care provision

West and Central Africa have the world's highest under-five mortality rate in the world (Unicef 2013), with 118 deaths per 1,000 live births. In the fight to save children's lives and increase their access to quality medical, surgical and diagnostic services, we support AMREF Flying Doctors' work to strengthen the capacity of national health systems in Senegal and Guinea, improving the countries' own specialized health care through education, training, equipment and skill building. The programme seeks to provide preventive and curative interventions in remote and hard to reach areas, targeting the main causes of children's deaths, with a special focus on children and maternal health care as well as surgical procedures to treat cataracts, trachoma, cleft lips and cleft palates.

**DURATION:** 2014-2016

**CHALLENGE:** Access to basic services (health)

**COUNTRY:** Senegal, Guinea

**PARTNER:** AMREF Flying Doctors



### CONTEXT

West and Central Africa have the world's highest under-five mortality rate in the world (Unicef 2013), with 118 deaths per 1,000 live births. Pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and undernutrition are the main causes of child deaths. High maternal mortality rates also have a significant impact on child survival, with the survival of new-borns being jeopardized when their mothers die in childbirth. Most of these deaths are preventable with basic treatments, but a severe lack of healthcare workers - only one doctor and four nurses for every 10,000 people in Senegal - means that basic primary care is inaccessible to many, especially those living in remote communities far from paved roads, reliable electricity, and health facilities.

### ACTION

In the fight to increase children's access to quality care and treatment, we support AMREF Flying Doctors' work to strengthen the structural capacities of the national health systems in Senegal and soon in Guinea through the provision of training, equipment and capacity building. Our contribution enables AMREF Flying Doctors - a leading health organization active in Africa since 1957 - to expand its programmes in West Africa, reaching communities in need in three regions of South Senegal (Kolda, Tambacounda and Sedhiou) and one region in Guinea (currently being decided through careful evaluation) with the aim of filling the gap in healthcare provision and tackling the main causes of children's deaths. This project will be delivered in 45 partner schools which will simultaneously provide hygiene and sanitation transformation support.

Activities include:

- At least 45 health screening missions in communities and schools a year, setting up early detection of most common childhood diseases, including respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, anaemia, malaria and neglected tropical diseases.
- Strengthening the early detection, care and treatment of and referral systems for the most common childhood diseases, together with the provision of essential medical equipment and basic drugs for local health centres and hospitals.
- *12 medical outreach missions* (9 in Senegal and 3 in Guinea) that bring surgeons to remote communities to perform procedures such as cleft lip and palate repair, and cataract removal on children who would otherwise have to live with painful and debilitating conditions, facing severe physical, social and psychological challenges.
- *Training courses* to help local surgeons, doctors and nurses meet the needs of their communities sustainably in the short and long term. Nurses and other health personnel are trained in post-surgery follow-up to mitigate complications, and community counselling and support to prevent marginalization.
- Community- and school-based mobilisation and education programmes to promote key health, nutrition and hygiene practices.

### **Expected results**

The programme targets 40,500 school-aged children and children under 5 in Senegal and Guinea and will be implemented through 45 schools and their neighbouring communities.

The expected results in these targeted areas are as follows:

- 80% of school children and teachers are well informed about personal hygiene and health practices.
- 80% of mothers and women of reproductive age living in the targeted communities are well informed about key childcare, health, nutrition and hygiene practices.
- 80% of children have regularly received adequate medical diagnosis and treatment for common pathologies in local communities, mobile surgical camps or hospitals.
- Hospitals and health centres in the targeted regions are adequately equipped and have staff trained in clinical, medical, post-operative follow-up and their diagnostic services for children are strengthened.

- At least 2,100 children in need of surgical intervention (otolaryngological problems, cleft lips and cataract diseases) have been operated on.

**Long-term strategy**

This programme is integrated in the national and regional healthcare and education plans and focuses on long-term change. The involvement and mobilisation of community-based organisations championing women, who are at the heart of their families' and communities' health, will ensure ownership of knowledge and practices. Health, nutrition, and sanitation promotion in schools will generate positive lasting behaviour change in the communities.