

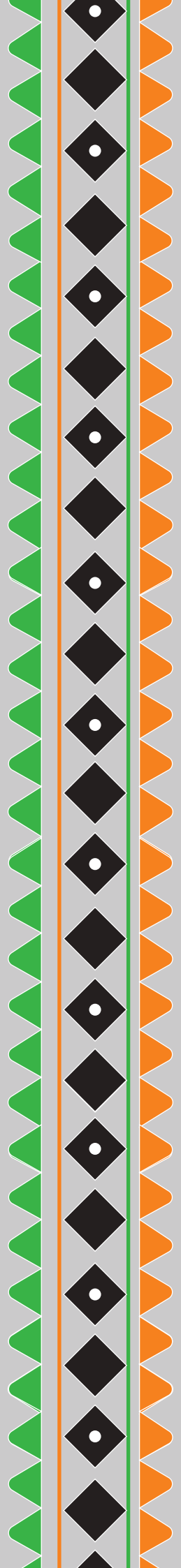
EPN

Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network
Réseau Pharmaceutique Œcuménique



Advocacy - Research - Communication

ANNUAL Report 2022



VISION

“A united and growing Christian network, in which at least 50% of its members meet pharmaceutical standards to ensure access to resilient quality pharmaceutical services”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches	GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
ACHAP	Africa Christian Health Association Platform	GPHF	The Global Pharma Health Fund
AHF	AIDS Healthcare Foundation	HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance	HSS	Health Systems Strengthening
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation	IMA	Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc
AMS	Antimicrobial stewardship	INERELA+	International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS
AMT	Availability Monitoring Tool	IPC	Infection, Prevention and Control
ASSOMESCA	Association des Œuvres Médicales des Eglises pour la Santé en Centrafrique	JMS	Joint Medical Store
BUFMAR	Le Bureau des Formations médicales agréées du RWANDA Limited	KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, Practice
CAR	Central African Republic	LMICs	Low and Middle Income Countries
CBC	Cameroon Baptist Convention	LMS	Learning Management System
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	MEDS	Mission for Essential Drugs and Supplies
CEPI	Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations	MNCH	Maternal Neonatal and Child Health
CHA	Christian Health Association	MOH	Ministry of Health
CHAK	Christian Health Association of Kenya	MUSUHUM	Mouvement Universel pour la Survie de l'Humanité
CHAL	Christian Health Association of Liberia	NASCOP	National AIDS and STIs Control Programme
CHAM	Christian Health Association of Malawi	NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
CHAN	Christian Health Association of Nigeria	NCD	Non Communicable Diseases
CHASL	Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone	NUPSA	Nairobi University Pharmacy Students Association
CHALe	Christian Health Association of Lesotho	PAN	Pandemic Action Network
CHAZ	Churches Health Association of Zambia	PCC	Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
CMF-K	Christian Medical Fellowship	RCBIF	Réseau des Confessions Religieuses pour la promotion de la Santé et le Bien Être Intégral de la Famille
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement	PLHIV	People Living with HIV
CSSC	Christian Social Services Commission	RECOSAC-G	Réseau Confessionnel Sanitaire Chrétien de Guinée
DCMP	Depot Central Medico Pharmaceutique	SF	Substandard and falsified medicines
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	SLSC	Smart Leveraged Supply Chain Project
DTC	Drug and Therapeutic Committee	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
DSO	Drug Supply Organisation	STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
EACPP	East African Pool Procurement	STG	Standard Treatment Guidelines
EPN	Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network	TB	Tuberculosis
EPP	Essential Pharmaceutical Practice	TWG	Technical Working Group
ESP	Ecumenical Scholarship Program	WHO	World Health Organisation
FBCMF	Faith Based Central Medical Foundation	ZACH	Zambia Association of Church- related Hospitals
FBO	Faith Based Organisation		
FIP	International Pharmaceutical Federation		
GDP	Good Dispensing Practices		

INTRODUCTION

Dear Valued EPN Member,

2022 was a year that propelled EPN forward. It was an impactful year that enabled us to hold our physical forum after 4 long years. After a disruptive pandemic, we were now able to focus on the future and learn from the experiences we had during COVID-19 and come up with solutions for future pandemic preparedness. We entered the second year of our strategic plan (2021-2025) and tackled a world that looked quite different from what we expected. We adjusted to the way we did things, by embracing digitalization and listening to what our members' needs were.

We involved religious leaders, communities, partners in our activities and they did the same with us. The Online learning platform served as a bridge to build capacities at the last mile, despite the challenges of network and data bundles on the ground. Our members had to adapt to this new way of digitalization and it gave them a perfect opportunity to connect faith and science. Today, we are happy to say that our projects have been impactful, in the sense of inclusion, performance and reaching those in need. We managed to convene a forum that brought over 22 countries together, conduct webinars, float out the Pooled Procurement tender, and support the Ecumenical Scholars in our member facilities who have now graduated and are back in their facilities, supporting their communities. This was all made possible by you, our members. Your commitment and dedication to EPN, over the last year, was unanimous. At EPN, we strive to make every month count, and we couldn't be prouder of the way we engaged in 2022 to deliver just and compassionate services and build capacities of our church healthcare workers and other cadres. You trusted us with your members and we strived to deliver. We are grateful.

Throughout our journey over the past forty plus years—step by step—we have built a stronger EPN. Our first priority was to sustain our Network after the pandemic by developing our

3 technical Programs which are Pharmaceutical System Strengthening, Supply Chain and Quality Assurance, and Training and Capacity Building. We are grateful that we could now recruit additional Program Officers to dedicate each program to a qualified staff to drive our 2021 – 2025 strategic agenda.. Today we have been able to work with additional partners like Novartis, IMA World Health and CCIH to optimize service delivery to our members. Our Supply Chain Program has been well established with a clear plan to leverage our church supply chain to meet globally acceptable standards. We have initiated the members' need assessment as recommended in our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. We are grateful for the commitment of our members to participate in this survey. We believe that by deeply addressing the needs on the ground, we will be creating a problem-solving culture and striving to serve our members better.



Staff of CBCHS pose for a photo after an advocacy meeting on the uptake of Covid - 19 vaccination held in Cameroon. From right Grants Manager Alphonse Ndi Abanda, Managing Director CBC Central Pharmacy Dr. Edward Ndzeh and Rev. Jane Nganga of EPN.



EPN Program Officer, Judith Asin assessing one of the pharmacies in a Health Facility in Kenya using the CQI tool.



Program Officer, Judith Asin posing for a photo with Executive Director, Happy Makala of Christian Health Association of Malawi where she paid a courtesy call.



Furaha Somoko (centre) being awarded a certificate after completion of the EPP course. On her right is DCMP Director Ph. Georges Mutombo and her left is Program Assistant Austine Opiata.

OVERVIEW OF EPN

HOW WE INTERPRET OUR VALUES

EPN values have their basis in Christian teachings, with the desire to uphold the following Christian virtues that enhance the dignity of human kind.

Mission: To support churches and church health systems to provide just and compassionate quality pharmaceutical services.

Goal: EPN aims at improving the quality of pharmaceutical services provided by its member institutions and guaranteeing equal access to all without discrimination. EPN, therefore, strives to promote its vision and increase the visibility of its members as credible and suitable partners for the planning and implementation of pharmaceutical services.

COMPASSION

"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things". Mark 6:34

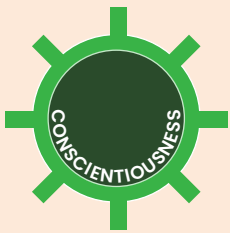
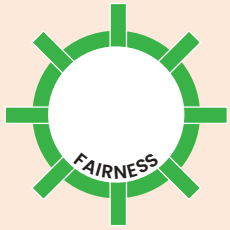
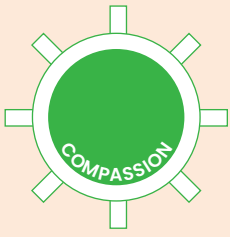
The needs of our members and their communities serve as a main factor that encourages us to imitate Christ by taking action to address these needs.

FAIRNESS

Justice and a sense of fairness underpin the choices we make as we go about our work.

Leviticus 19:15 *"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly".* We strive for inclusion of all faiths and are not partisan, regardless of race, gender, color or disabilities.





RESPECT FOR OTHERS

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves".

Philippians 2:3

We treat each other with respect bearing in mind the Bible teaching to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. We build capacities in the forgotten health facilities in the most remote areas of our member countries.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

"A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God". Ecclesiastes 2:24.

We aim at doing everything we have to do to the best of our ability and in such a way that it achieves the desired results, that is quality of pharmaceutical services, access and affordability.

INTEGRITY

All our dealings and relationships are based on a high sense of integrity. Proverbs 16:13 *"Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth"*. We try our best to engage our member network and partners in the most transparent manner and with a Christian perspective.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

We use every opportunity to better ourselves through inquiry and learning. Proverbs 1:5 *"Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance"*. As much as we provide training and capacity building for our members, we learn to listen to our members' needs as a priority for us.

PROFESSIONALISM

We maintain a high level of professionalism in all that we do. Romans 15:14 *"I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another"*. We strive to offer just and compassionate services for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Our portfolio of Health systems strengthening interventions, with the particular focus on Capacity building, Supply Chain, Quality Assurance and strengthening of Pharmaceutical Systems, is helping the church health system to improve on quality, accessibility and affordability of medicines and services.

With 137 members in the region and beyond, EPN supports building capacities of church health systems and training Healthcare workers in improving health and pharmaceutical services at Health Facility level, to achieve our vision of, "A united and growing Christian network, in which at least 50% of its members meet pharmaceutical standards to ensure access to resilient quality pharmaceutical services". This will have an impact in communities receiving high quality patient care and improved health services.

EPN sits at the core of a dynamic and growing member and partner network with the inclusion of religious leaders and a focus on communities at large. Our technical expertise is exceptional and helps members to use advanced tools that seek solutions to improve the quality of medicines, detect substandard and falsified products, guide Facilities and Drug Supply Organizations to improve on supply chain and service delivery and also engage religious leaders to enhance quality of healthcare in their congregations. Up to 40% of healthcare in Africa is provided by the church which compliments the public sector in all its initiatives and therefore cannot be ignored. The contribution of religious leaders who serve at the heart of the church health system and their ability to deliver and counter health information and services is significant in raising awareness.

The Member Needs Assessment was one of the key activities conducted in 2022. As we are looking on translating the collected data in to actions, EPN remains committed t to its members ensuring together we address the identified needs. As board chair, a major highlight for me was the EPN forum that was held



in October 2022 in Nairobi where we were able to finally meet physically, and engage with members and partners after more than four years.

I would like to thank our great EPN secretariat for organizing this forum so well and for all their efforts! I also want to thank our committed board members, it is a pleasure to work with you all!

More information will be provided in detail in the Forum report.

Thank you all for another excellent year. I look forward to more fruitful engagements in 2023.

Christine Haefele Abah

*Board Chairperson,
Ecumenical Pharmaceutical
Network*

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the forefront of a dynamic and growing member network, together with our partners, we continued to advocate for increased collaboration in addressing identified health priorities within the Church health Systems. We sensitized and equipped health cadres, religious leaders and communities with accurate information, and supported initiatives that seek to build a resilient pharmaceutical system, well prepared to improve health-care service through established structures like DTC and AMS Committees.

While we saw the struggle to tackle Covid – 19 over the last years, we realized that having a support system is key in addressing the challenges that come with a pandemic. Pandemics do not end here as we now have to combat antimicrobial resistance and climate change, which are other global threats that need to be addressed before they eat into our communities.

In 2022, EPN managed to make progress on the various activities. We were able to review and update the HIV treatment Literacy guide that is to be used by religious leaders to support their con-

gregants living with HIV address their challenges of adherence to ARV treatment.

Among key projects implemented, we were able to successfully quick of our approach on combating antimicrobial resistance, an area in which EPN is back after more than 2 years of developing partnerships. The objective is to optimize the use of antimicrobials and improve antibiotic prescribing, dispensing, and disposal practices in faith-based health facilities.

We also managed to raise Covid - 19 awareness in communities through religious leaders on the effects of Covid - 19 and advocating for the uptake of vaccination accompanied by an online course on the LMS. EPN also conducted an assessment on the quality of services in church health facilities to ensure that there is sustainable access to and appropriate use of safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medical products and pharmaceutical services. Another key assessment was the Member Needs Assessment that caters for the needs of our members by identifying gaps and planning to build capacities of Health Care Workers.

EPN also conducted an assessment on the quality of services in church health facilities to ensure that there is sustainable access to and appropriate use of safe, effective, quality-assured, and affordable essential medical products and pharmaceutical services. Another key assessment was the Member Needs Assessment that caters for the needs of our members by addressing gaps and building capacities of Health Care Workers.

In the final quarter of the year we held our 8th EPN Biennial Forum with the theme "The Future of Healthcare in the Global South." in Nairobi Kenya which was successfully attended by all key stakeholders in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sector.

Our uniqueness in all of this is our pharmaceutical expertise, and this continues to grow as we strengthen a church health system that takes a new dimension each day. We sincerely thank our members for your continuous support towards our vision. God bless you! We sincerely thank our members for your continuous support towards our vision. God bless you!



Richard Neci Cizungu

Executive Director,

Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2022

In this report we have been able to capture key activities, per program that occurred in 2022.

Advocacy - We are delighted to report that having successfully managed to move on from the pandemic, an advocacy project, both physical and virtual to sensitize religious leaders and their congregations was rolled out. Physical activities resumed which saw preparations for the EPN Biennial Forum to be hosted in Nairobi, Kenya in the last quarter of the year.

Research - We undertook different surveys during this period. The assessment of the quality of pharmaceutical services in church health facilities was carried out through its members Christian Health Association of Kenya's health facilities. The second one being Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) where we collected data on the service delivery at health facility levels in Guinea, Malawi and Sierra Leone. We conducted a Minilab survey in 8 countries on knowledge and awareness about Substandard and falsified medicines (CAR, DRC, Liberia, Cameroon, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Ghana). We also completed a needs assessment for frontline health workers and stakeholders in order to build Supply Chain Capacity of Health Professionals in Primary Health Care Centers. This collaborative survey was conducted in Kenya, Rwanda and Nigeria. We conducted a survey among religious leaders and health professionals in Burundi, to understand the gaps in covid-19 vaccination uptake in order to improve the stand of the faith-based health system in Sub-Saharan Africa countries in vaccination campaigns for covid-19&other pandemic responses. Other surveys were conducted on DTC, AMS, etc.

Member Engagement - Being that EPN is member centric, the need to assess members needs in their Health Facilities is important. We conducted a Member Needs Assessment in our 18 DSOs and selected 21 CHAs with the aim of identifying urgent needs and health priorities of the members and health facilities. Advocacy Mentorship meetings were conducted in Cameroon, Burundi, Niger, Sierra Leone and DRC to support our member CHAs shape their advocacy strategy and capacity in advocating for inclusion of FBOs in Sub-Saharan Africa in national Covid - 19 vaccination programs.

Scholarships - We are also happy to report that the Ecumenical Scholars are now Ecumenical Scholarship Alumni after a notable success in students completing their studies in institutes of higher learning. Supervision visits were conducted once the Alumni were settled which they followed up with their action plans to improve pharmaceutical services in their respective institutions. We are grateful for the support of our members and focal contacts of the ESP in supporting and mentoring students during their study period.

Religious Leaders - In an effort to support religious leaders in sensitizing their congregations and bridging the gap between faith and science, we embarked in bringing them together with CHA health experts to discuss uptake of Covid - 19 vaccination in Africa. It was necessary to stand as one voice, the voice of the Church health system to call global partners and governments to support initiatives that promote African self-reliance and equitable access to vaccines and other health-care commodities services.

We succeeded to establish basis for a strong partnership with other Christian Networks like ACHAP and AACC. In November 2022 we commemorated the World Aids Day together with the National AIDS and STIs Control Program, the theme being **"Putting Ourselves to the Test: Achieving Equity to End HIV"**.

Youth Engagement - Our Executive Director Richard Neci was one of the keynote speakers at the event where a number of youth and stakeholders in the HIV space were present.

Partnership - In April 2022, the third phase of our partnership with Bread for the World (BftW) in improved access to quality effective pharmaceutical services in church health institutions was concluded for the period of April 2022 to March 2025. This new project phase is implemented in 5 countries (Cameroon, Lesotho, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia). With the Scholarship division of BftW, another partnership was concluded on Developing Pharmacy workforce for sustainable and resilient pharmaceutical services in Church Health Facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa. This 4-year scholarship project (2022-2026) is to be implemented in 9 countries which are Liberia, Sierra Leone, Chad, DRC, Lesotho, Tanzania, Guinea, Cameroon and Niger. Thanks to BftW, our two programs were filled by qualified program officers: Pharmaceutical Systems Strengthening and Training & Capacity Building. In October 2022 a new partnership was formed with Novartis Global. We delivered a project on optimizing the use of antimicrobials and improving antibiotic prescribing, dispensing and disposal practices in faith-based health targeting facilities in Kenya, Nigeria and Malawi. EPN partnership with Horizon 3000 and plan:g was renewed with the recruitment of Mrs. Rebekka Oelze to replace Dr. Susanne Duff-MacKay as our Technical Advisor from September 2022. We also saw our collaboration under the East-Africa Pooled Procurement Initiative renewed by a demonstrated commitment of MEDS and JMS in supporting the operational costs of the Initiative. With CCIH, we welcomed a small grant to support our capacity building activities and the delivery on the CCIH 30x30 commitment.

The year ended with another great new partnership with IMA World Health. With this support, the position of Supply Chain and Quality Assurance Program Officer was filled. The smart leveraged church supply chain project will be implemented

in Sierra Leone and Nigeria to strengthen our DSOs and health facilities meet minimum global supply chain standards and maturity. We are grateful for these great developments and partnerships, aimed at sustaining the EPN delivery on its Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

EPN Biennial Forum – With more than 120 participants from 22 countries and 30 speakers, the EPN Forum reflected on the future of healthcare in the global South. Recommendations were formulated are being implemented by EPN and its members. The Forum was preceded with the Minilab workshop and pre-conference where all the 18 Minilab members were present. During this Forum, members appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat and agreed in the AGM to a proposed set up of Technical Working Groups that would support the implementation of the EPN 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan. This would increase members' participation in developing tools, standards and guidelines. The aim of the formation of the TWGs was to support programs implementation.



Technical Working Groups - The suggested TWGs were:

1. Pharmaceutical Systems Strengthening
2. Capacity development and Training
3. Supply Chain and Quality Control

Online Platform - Through our digital platform, online learning by different cadres in our network was increasing. Participants from over 13 countries including the francophone regions had enrolled in the different courses on the platform. At the end of 2022, a total of 713 participants have registered on the platform.

Webinars - We conducted 2 webinars in 2022 and 4 mentorship sessions for our DSO members.

1. **Resilient Primary Health Care** – Strengthening leadership and governance in faith – based health institutions was successfully held in this quarter.

Key partners and stakeholders facilitating the event were from Zambia Association of Church Related Hospitals (ZACH), AMREF, WHO, Ministry of Health, Kenya, Christian Health Association of Nigeria and Professor Richard Laing, an Individual member of EPN.

2. Uptake of Covid - 19 vaccination in Africa forum was a 3 day joint webinar hosted by EPN, AACC and ACHAP and was moderated by EPN Dr. Richard Neci and Dr. Ezekiel Lesmore of AACC. Through this dialogue and collaboration, a Call to action was developed and disseminated to the key stakeholders and influencers in Africa and beyond.

The need to develop courses that would build capacities of our health care workers in pandemic preparedness was increasing. We developed and published 2 courses on Covid - 19, Antimicrobial resistance and Antimicrobial stewardship.

In January 2022, the Secretariat Office moved from Kabarnet Road to Kirichwa Road – off Argwings Kodhek Road in Kilimani, with more spacious office space.

STRATEGIC AREAS



PROGRAMS

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS TO SUPPORT PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTATION

To support the implementation of our Strategic Plan, 3 TWGs were established to increase member’s participation in developing tools, standards and guidelines. Members to be present in the TWG would include Secretariat staff, board members and network Members.

The Objectives and responsibilities were:

1. To act as advisory groups in developing standards and guidelines
2. To review contents of drafted technical documents before printing and dissemination among EPN members
3. Validation and adaptation of Guidelines, Standards and tools developed by the secretariat, experts or TWG members.
4. Development of Training concepts to increase professionalism in the church health institutions and DSOs.

They were able to inform patients in their communities on correct usage of medication and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures. Additionally, medicine supply and health commodity manage-

ment in the health facilities improved immensely. Standard operating procedures (SOPS) on pre-packaging and dispensing of medicines were present in all the facilities visited which saw an improvement from the initial outcome in 2021. PCC Cameroon endorsed the EPP course to be used in their training institution. The EPP course has been customized for online training to reach more health professionals in our network.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

ESSENTIAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRACTICE (EPP)

The objective of the EPP course is to capacitate pharmaceutical staff without formal pharmaceutical training in hard-to-reach areas. The pilot project targeted Health Care workers from EPN member facilities of Assomesca in Bangui.



Central African Republic. An initial assessment highlighted the needs and gaps of healthcare workers after which, we were able to train key pharmacy and healthcare workers in the Central African Republic on basic pharmaceutical knowledge. Additionally they had the opportunity to enjoy available courses on the online learning platform, the Learning Management System (LMS) which is free of charge for members.

COVID - 19 VACCINATION PROJECT

The Covid - 19 vaccination project aims to strengthen the capacity of health workers and managers to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 in Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda. Increased interest from 19 EPN member Drug Supply Organisations (DSOs), resulted in two mentorship sessions: Waste Management and Customer Qualification,



Healthcare worker from CHAK facility training on the EPN LMS platform.

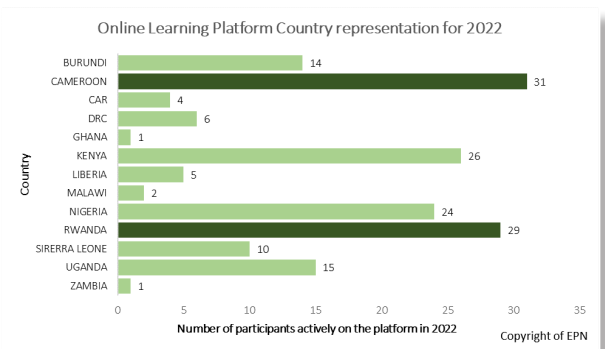
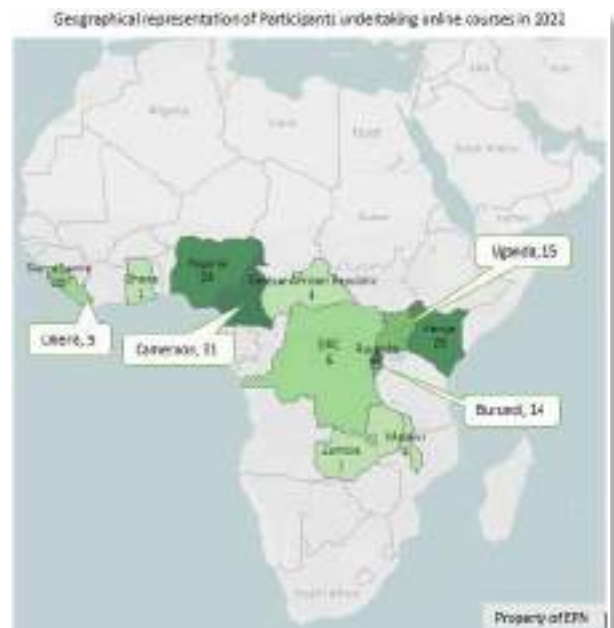
which were held virtually. The sessions were supported by Action Medeor (Susan Tedla), CHAN-Medipharm (Mr. Ochonu Ochoge), MEDS (Gladys Mburu) and EPN (Dr. Susan Duffmackay, Judith Asin). The mentorship sessions saw engagement beyond the four targeted countries including CAR, DRC. Witnessing the commitment of the member organizations in the passion to learn was a major achievement for EPN.

ONLINE TRAINING PLATFORM (LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS))

Overall Progress of the Participation on the LMS

In 2022, the EPN online learning platform (LMS) saw an increase in participation from a variety of EPN member countries and a diverse range of health care workers. As of December 2022, a total of 713 participants from 13 countries were able to register for online courses on the platform, 168 among them were actively taking courses.

EPN recognizes the significance of having online training as a way to strengthen capacities, but also has been keen to note the importance of additional support tools required such as laptops, smartphones and most importantly data bundles to successfully complete training.



A permanent instructor is able to address required needs of participants and is prepared to answer any questions that may arise. A milestone on the online learning platform was the recruitment of a training and capacity building officer at the end of 2022.

Development of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Course

AMR has been on the rise globally, a looming health threat and a menace in the pharmaceutical system that requires us to equip healthcare workers on how to tackle AMR. The AMR course on preventing Antimicrobial Resistance was successfully published on the online learning platform at the end of 2022 so that learners are able to understand the emergence of AMR and some of the preventive measures including tracking of antibiotic use. There was a great interest of health care workers on the topic of AMR with 20 participants registering and 8 completing in the course of December 2022.

ECUMENICAL SCHOLARSHIP (ESP) PROGRAM

Project Countries: DRC, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia

The Ecumenical Scholarship Program is one of EPNs longest running Projects, having granted Scholarships to last mile health care workers over the course for over a decade. EPN is particularly proud to be able to strengthen health care workers through scholarships and to continuously address the acute shortage of trained pharmaceutical staff. The Upgrading of

skills of existing pharmacy staff ensures strengthening of church health institutions in select countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Out of the selected 21 ESP Beneficiaries, 19 were able to complete their studies by the end of the project period in 2022. The Scholarship Alumni returned to their facilities after their diploma or degree levels and continue to create a lasting impact. Each had been tasked to commit to implementing action plans to improve their health institutions resulting in enhancing quality health services.

Furthermore, the close interaction with beneficiaries resulted in participation of EPN webinars, representation in the 8th Biennial Forum, advocating for health initiatives such as IPC and/or AMR and generally championing health initiatives in their respective countries.

EPN is proud of the achievements of the beneficiaries and continues to advocate for Scholarships of last mile health care workers.



Damian Kibet EPNs M&E Officer with ESP beneficiary Maria Bhoke and her colleagues at Nkoranga Hospital, Tanzania

Success Stories from The Ecumenical Scholarship Alumni 2018 – 2022 cohort



Maria Bhoke Mwita is an ESP Alumni based in Nkoaranga Lutheran Hospital, Tanzania working as a pharmacy technician. EPN granted her a diploma to pursue her passion in pharmacy and improve her skills in medication dispensation and other pharmaceutical areas.

"I graduated in 2019 as a Pharmaceutical Technician at Paradigms Health and Science College in Dar es Salaam through the Ecumenical Scholarship Program.

By the end of my studies, I had really improved on medication dispensation, filing bin-cards, taking stocks and writing reports amongst other areas. Things have become quite easy for me now that I am more knowledgeable and I am now mentoring and sharing what I learnt to my colleagues as well.

A key challenge we were facing as a hospital is that we had a few pharmacy staff thus work overload. However, I introduced work shifts which have really helped us. I also shared insights with my colleagues on better drug management and proper dispensation. Besides that, I am now able to locally prepare sanitizers which are quite pertinent during this time.

The Ecumenical Scholarship Project is a life saver! I encourage other students to tap into the opportunity. Thank you EPN".

Timothy Aborah, through the ESP pursued his bachelor degree in pharmacy at the Central University in Ghana shares the reason he selected the pharmacy profession, his experience and how he would like to create an impact for his community.

"I have been motivated to study pharmacy due to my strong desire to care for people that are sick and the less privileged in my community. My future plans in this career is to actually use and employ the knowledge that I have acquired through my studies in pharmacy to contribute to innovation and invention

of drugs to combat diseases that have been the greatest burden of this world, such as cancer, tuberculosis and HIV".

I strongly believe that having been provided the opportunity to pursue this course will endow me with the skills to make my contribution to combat these diseases. As for EPN, they answered my prayers, and provided me with a scholarship to continue my studies. My prayer is that after this course I am able to contribute my knowledge acquired to the development of pharmaceutical care in the communities around and to impact and touch lives.

I express my sincere gratitude to EPN and Bread for the World for this opportunity. Thank you!"



COV-FAB PROJECT (PROMOTING COVID-19 VACCINE EQUITY THROUGH KAMPALA FAITH- BASED NETWORKS IN AFRICA)

Supported by Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) and IMA World Health is a project aimed at reducing the loss of life and spread of COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa, contributing to global health security through the targeted capacity strengthening of Christian Health Association networks in Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Zambia, Côte d' Ivoire, Liberia, Tanzania and Central Africa Republic.

EPN successfully signed a contract in the final quarter of 2022 and the project officially began in 2023.

The aim of the project is to reduce the loss of life and spread of COVID - 19 in Sub-Saharan Africa, contributing to global health security through the targeted capacity strengthening of Christian Health Association networks.

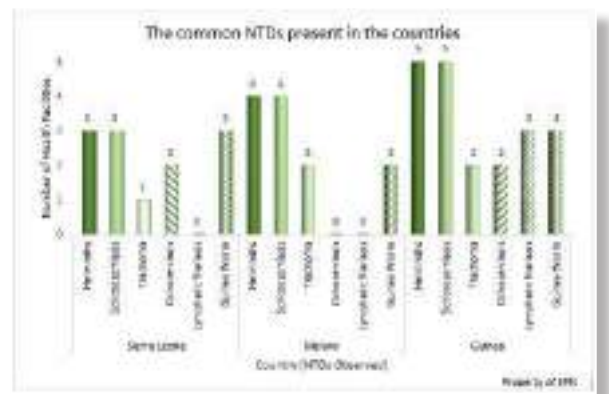
PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES (NTD) SERVICE DELIVERY ASSESSMENT AT HEALTH FACILITY LEVEL

1.6 billion people around the world are affected by neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). As a pharmaceutical and health systems strengthening network, which is working at grass root level, poverty, marginalization, geographic location, and living conditions are all contributing factors.

In the beginning of 2022, EPN conducted a study on Neglected Tropical Diseases in health facilities in Réseau Confessionnel Sanitaire Chrétien de Guinée (RECOSAC-G), Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) Malawi and Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone (CHASL) with the objective of highlighting the most common NTDs in each of those countries, and the availability of medicines to manage these diseases.

Common NTDs present in the countries have been illustrated in the graph below:



Key findings

Out of the 15 facilities that were assessed, 12 reported to diagnose and treat NTDs, however, stated they have poor access.

Lack of adequate training for health personnel on patient sorting and treatment procedures and a lack of clear guidelines by the Ministry of Health (MoH) on disease surveillance approaches were also problems identified by most of the facilities considered for the study. The survey revealed the need for continuous training within the health facilities to achieve disease free zones. A collaborative approach and engagement with the government was required, so as to ensure clear guidelines are disseminated to the facilities and proper hygiene and sanitation is implemented, including IPC.

Community sensitization campaigns are also key with the inclusion of the government in the fight against NTDs.

Mass drug administration was also recommended in eliminating NTDs. However, this should be done with caution due to the risk of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES IN CHURCH HEALTH FACILITIES

In February 2022, EPN developed a quality improvement (CQI) checklist that was used as a tool by healthcare providers at the Christian Health Association of Kenya (CHAK), to routinely monitor quality of pharmaceutical services in member health facilities.

EPN programme officer Judith Asin together with CHAK officer Geoffrey Mwalo conducted the assessment which was aimed to identifying gaps in respective domains of the facility such as, Leadership and governance; Availability of qualified pharmaceutical staff as per the required norms; Amenities and available Infrastructure e.g. adequate storage spaces for the medical products; Availability of health commodity tracer items and medical supplies and service delivery within the health facilities. The tool can also be used to test facilities (different levels) within the member countries.

Highlight of the Assessment

The assessment was conducted in six health facilities in Kenya affiliated with the Christian Health Association of Kenya. Using the tool in the pilot phase, the health facilities and EPN were able to identify gaps in the assessed domains:

1. Understaffing of the pharmacy was evident in all the facilities as a majority of them had only one pharmaceutical technologist in place while two lacked a pharmacy staff which conflicts with the Norms and standards described by the Kenya Essential package for Health. The gap witnessed in the pharmaceutical workforce clearly shows the need to implement capacity-building approaches both individual and institutional, which will in turn build pharmaceutical expertise and improve patient outcomes.
2. The assessment also revealed that a majority of the health facilities were not involved in regular monitoring of stock levels nor had a safety stock been in place. As a result, some medicines were completely out of stock.
3. Written documents describing the scope of pharmacy services were only available in 67% of the facilities.

4. Even though the management board was present in all of the health facilities, in one of the facilities the board members did not include members of the community. This means that there is a lack of representation of the community during strategic planning for the facility.
5. About a half of the facilities reported utilizing other sources of pharmaceutical supplies from Government entities and neighboring pharmacies; A drug therapeutic committee was present in only 1 of the 6 assessed facilities; none of the facilities conducted microbial susceptibility testing to guide the procurement of antibiotics.

Moving forward, rolling out the tool to member facilities with the guidelines for hospital pharmacy practice will support health facility managers and pharmaceutical personnel to ensure continuous improvement of the quality of community pharmacy services based on gaps identified.

ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSION OF FBO'S IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN NATIONAL COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMS

Project countries: Burundi (Core Country), Cameroon, DRC, Niger, Sierra Leone

With the aim of sensitizing religious leaders on the uptake of the Covid - 19 vaccination in Burundi, the project continued through our implementing partners, Réseau des Confessions Religieuses pour la promotion de la Santé et le Bien Être Intégral de la Famille (RCBIF).

EPN held a capacity building workshop on Covid-19 vaccine knowledge of health-care workers in Bujumbura, Burundi as well as the Advocacy support meetings.

EPN offered continued support to additional Christian Health Association (CHAs) and DSOs leadership to improve their advocacy capabilities. In DRC a support meeting was conducted in the first week of 3rd October 2022. A physical advocacy meeting was also conducted in Cameroon on the week of 3rd November 2022.

Supplementary activities included Healthcare Workers enrolled in online training from EPN members' organizations on the available Covid - 19 vaccination course.



From right: EPN ED Dr. Richard Neci, Advocacy Specialist Jane Nganga, Dr Jean-Claude Bizimana Director Emergency Preparedness MoH Burundi, Bishop Erast Bigirimana – Anglican Church and Vice Board Chair RCBIF and on the far left Executive Secretary Andre Bizoza of RCBIF Burundi.

Countries that actively trained on the platform were from Sierra Leone, Burundi, Cameroon, DRC.

There was immense support from members in Sierra Leone member CHASL in disseminating the Covid-19 joint declaration on relevant online media and respective websites.



EPN's Covid - 19 advocacy meeting in DRC. From far right, CBCA representative Dr. Isaac Muyonga, EPN's advocacy specialist Rev. Jane, Rev. Dr. Samuel Ngayihembako, President of the Church of Christ in Congo North Kivu and further left Dr. Nelson Syayighosola the Director of the Health Department Church of Christ in Congo, North Kivu.

A physical training on the Covid - 19 course for health-care workers was also conducted in December 2022 in Niamey, Niger.

A three-day joint advocacy workshop on vaccination uptake in Africa was held together with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and Africa Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP), with the goal of bridging the gap between faith and science. This was a very successful hybrid event that brought together stakeholders from various disciplines. Key stakeholders present were from Government, donors, religious leaders and health care professionals. A call to action was birthed and endorsed by EPN members and the stakeholders who participated in the meeting.

By the beginning of 2022, 10 organizations had already shared the call to action. A course was developed on the same to support other countries in future pandemic preparedness as well. Some of the key topics covered were on COVID 19 Vaccination uptake and how to explore Faith Leader experiences related to overcoming COVID-19 misinformation; vaccine confidence, vaccine equity, lessons learned during the pandemic, and steps taken in preparation for the next pandemic.

The advocacy specialist Rev Jane Ngángá was able to present and share the call in a panel and platforms in several meetings that she attended such as:

- ACHAP 10th Biennial Conference in Kigali - Rwanda (11th - 15th July 2022)
- 24th International AIDS conference, in Montreal - Canada (29th July to 2nd August 2022)

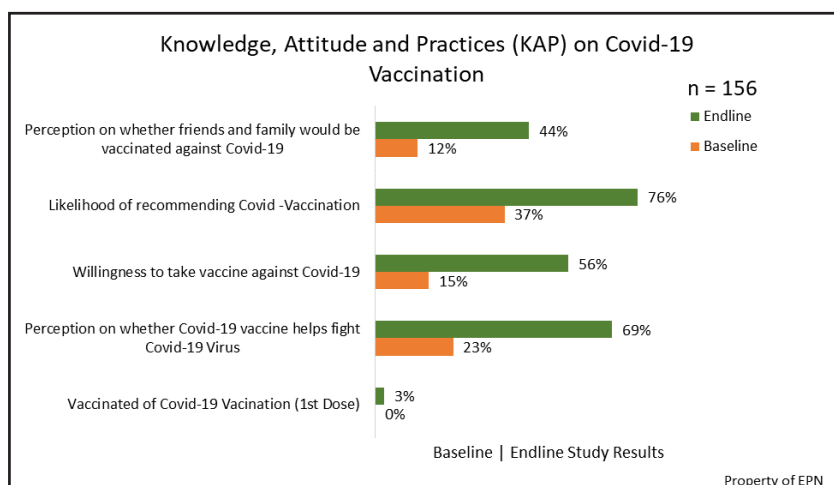
In addition to these activities, a Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) study was completed in Burundi where 156 responses were collected. The Physical training on Covid-19



Covid - 19 vaccination advocacy meeting with the CHASL team and local journalists in Sierra Leone.

Vaccination was conducted in Bunjumbura, Burundi between 31st May - 1st June 2022. Pretest and posttest were administered before the training commenced and at the end of the training which revealed a 15% knowledge gain. The below graph highlights a survey conducted on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP).

KAP baseline and end line surveys revealed an increase in knowledge about Covid - 19 Vaccination and a positive change in attitude towards vaccination. As deduced from the graph, after the interventions, the data revealed a notable rise in participants' willingness to get the Covid - 19 vaccine, recommending it to others, and the belief that their friends and family would also choose to be vaccinated. Additionally, there was a decrease in doubt regarding the vaccine's effectiveness.



IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY EFFECTIVE PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES IN CHURCH HEALTH FACILITIES (ACCESS) PROJECT

HIGHLIGHTS

The new project phase of the Access Project was officially signed in May 2022 and is a continuation of Access Project phase 1. Introductory meetings were held with implementing partners, Cameroon (CBC), Kenya (CHAK), Lesotho (CHALe), Tanzania (CSSC) and Zambia (CHAZ).

Activities under Access Project/Phase 2 included:

Baseline assessment was conducted in five project countries

The first activity under the Access project was a collaboration with INERELA+ Kenya.

International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally affected by HIV and AIDS. A member of EPN, INERELA+ Kenya works towards, empowering religious leaders through education,

knowledge and skills to live positively, becoming symbols of hope and agents of change who will help eliminate stigma and discrimination and promote gender justice and human rights within their congregations and community.

Our discussions led to the review of the HIV literacy guidelines for use by religious leaders as well as HIV comic strips for the youth. EPN together with INERELA+ Kenya collaborated to review and update the HIV/AIDS Treatment Literacy Guide for religious leaders as well as Comic Strips.

Review of HIV literacy guideline:

- The 1st expert review meeting was conducted with INERELA and other key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health Kenya (MOH) AACC and NASCOP in November 2022. Implementing partners that were involved were from the Access project i.e. CHAZ, CHALe, CHAK, CSSC and CBC. Participants were divided into committees and worked on different sections of the document.
- The 2nd Review meeting was conducted in December 2022. It was a working meeting to proceed making additions to the document.

The HIV Literacy Manual for religious leaders is a guide to treatment and care including a theological perspective to be used by religious leaders and their congregations.

This guide and many other materials are in the move to bridge the gap between faith and science.



EPNs Program Officer Judy Asin, (right) and Dr. Richard Neci, (center) posing for a photo during the first review meeting of the HIV literacy guide with religious leaders of INERELA+ and the technical team from NASCOP. The meeting was held in Nairobi



EPNs Program Officer Judy Asin, guiding the review team through a brief introduction and presentation of the Literacy Manual to be reviewed

COMBATING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN CHURCH HEALTH FACILITIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)) PROJECT

EPN held its introductory meetings on the project on Antimicrobial resistance - Combating Antimicrobial Resistance in Church Health Facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa which was rolled out in Kenya, Malawi and Nigeria through our implementing partners Christian Health Association of Kenya, Christian Health Association of Malawi and Christian Health Association of Nigeria.

In 2022 antimicrobial stewardship course was customized and uploaded on the EPN online learning platform.

A physical meeting to launch the project was held in Kenya (at CHAK offices) on the 29th November 2022. The meeting brought together Ministry of Health (MOH) officials, health facility administrators as well as the CHAK and EPN team to discuss and agree on the activities to be conducted under the project.



EPN AMR Stakeholder Meeting at CHAK guest house. Dr. Tanui, AMR lead, MOH Kenya addressing the participants during the meeting.



Health Systems Strengthening Officer CHAK Geoffrey Mwalo during the meeting with AMR Champions at CHAK guest house.

ESTABLISHING ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP (AMS) CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE TO IMPROVE PATIENT OUTCOMES BY ADDRESSING ACCESS DISPARITIES

In 2022, EPN through Gertrude's Children's Hospital as their implementing partner managed to secure a grant by Pfizer and BSAC on Quality Improvement, Establishing Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) Centres of Excellence to Improve Patient Outcomes by Addressing Access Disparities.

The institutions key targets were to:

- Engage management support and governance structures to establish/ optimize functioning of an AMS Team to deliver the local AMS program.
- Incrementally establish local surveillance data for key pathogens and antimicrobial use.
- Develop and implement national or local guidelines for empirical treatment of common infections in collaboration with clinical leaders.
- Enable healthcare professionals involved in prescribing, administration and monitoring of antimicrobials to have access to and participate in education and training on AMR and AMS relevant to their role.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES UNDER PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

EPNs engagement in World Health Days

EPN staff from the Secretariat also took part in the planning phase together with stakeholders in National events on various World Health Days.

- The commemoration of World Tuberculosis Day on the 24th March 2022 hosted by the Ministry of Health
- World Antimicrobial Awareness Week in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Kenya
- World Aids Day in collaboration with National AIDS and STIs Control Programme (NASCOP)
- EPN collaborated with members MUSUHUM in Niger to raise awareness in managing diabetes and treatment during World Diabetes Day.



Launch of the World Antimicrobial Awareness week (WAAW) where EPN was one of the partners invited and collaborating with MOH Kenya. Dr. Richard Neci posing for a photo with stakeholders in AMR. The meeting was held in Nairobi Kenya.

Launch of the World Antimicrobial Awareness week (WAAW) where EPN was one of the partners invited and collaborating with MOH Kenya. Dr. Richard Neci posing for a photo with stakeholders in AMR. The meeting was held in Nairobi Kenya.

EPNs member engagement on the online learning platform

EPN members were trained on Medicine supply management on the EPN online training portal which equipped them with efficient knowledge to organize a supply system and ensure that high-quality essential medicines and supplies were always available.

There was an increased number of facilities that use evidence-based STGs for all conditions, starting with MCH medicines and particularly pediatric dosage, and including STGs for the management of HIV/AIDS and diabetes and other chronic conditions and guidelines on AMR. Facilities in Sierra Leone were now adhering to IPC STGs.



EPN Executive Director Dr. Richard Neci delivering his speech to participants including key stakeholders and media at the World Aids Day, pre- launch at the KNH ground in Nairobi Kenya.

SUPPLY CHAIN AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

HIGHLIGHTS:

Activities that occurred in this year under the supply chain and quality assurance included the development of selection criteria for DSOs and obligations to participate in the EACPP initiative. The Procurement cycle for the EACPP was harmonized.

EPN assisted members to participate in and/or benefit from the prices and supplier information of pooled procurement groups. Price negotiations with suppliers were conducted in the current tender period (EACPP 07/2022) of the EACPP.

EPN was also able to empower members to meet pharmaceutical standards such as Good Storage and Warehouse Practices, Good Distribution Practices, Good Quantification and forecasting procedures.

There was increased interest from Minilab network members, which resulted in the development of a Minilab online course with the aim of strengthening the knowledge and skills of the network members with regards to identification and control of SF medicines.

- Conducting of 2 mentorship sessions in which DSOs were able to learn best pharmaceutical practices from experts
- Training of DSO members on Health commodity management on LMS

- In addition, DSO members participated in the Model Quality Assurance System (MQAS) sessions organized by MEDs with the goal of building skills on GMP, GDP, receipts and storage, prequalification of suppliers etc. were achieved.

MINILAB PROJECT

Project Countries: Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Liberia

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

A formal Collaboration was established between EPN, the Ministry of Health and Cameroon Minilab members by signing of a MoU.

Increased sample testing due to full time funded staff

ACTIVITIES:

Millions of people worldwide die from preventable causes and diseases due to sub-standard and falsified medicine. Therefore, improving access to essential quality medicines is fundamental in the effort to reduce mortality and morbidity. In Africa, the proliferation of substandard and falsified medicine is a public health emergency that can no longer be ignored.

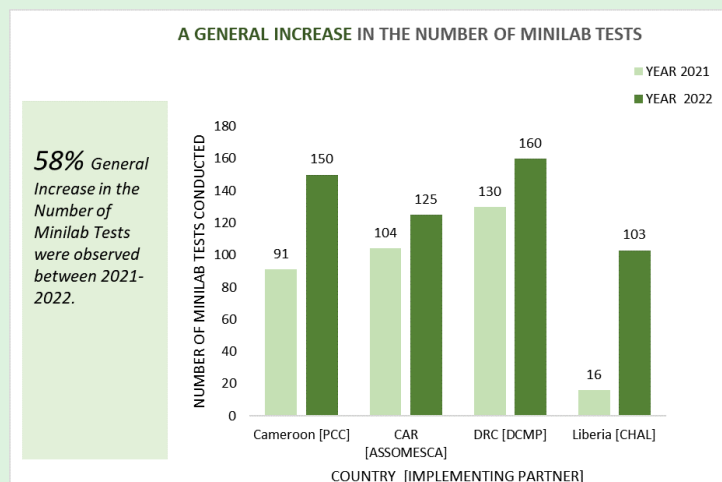


The Minilab project was started by Difaem in 2010 offering a small-scale laboratory like system, the so-called "Minilab", developed by the Global Pharma Health Fund (GPHF), to all EPN DSOs that wanted to screen their own drugs/medicines. The Aim of this project phase was to create good, replicable practices to improve medicine safety through detection of substandard and falsified medicines.

Through funding from Difaem and planning, implementing partners, Depot Centrale Medico-Pharmaceutique (DCMP), Presbyterian Churches of Cameroon (PCC), Assomesca and Church Health Association of Liberia (CHAL) were able to achieve the following results during the project period:

- In 2022 EPN successfully held advocacy meetings with all implementing partners bringing on board Government officials, which resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in Cameroon.
- Training of health professionals on visual inspection in Cameroon and DRC
- A number of sample tests were carried out and suspected samples were sent to MEDS, where confirmatory testing was being carried out (Amoxicillin capsules, Aspirin tablets and Erythromycin). The Certificate of Analysis was shared with EPN, which confirmed non-compliance of some of the suspected drugs.

A Minilab survey was conducted in 8 countries: Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia, data analyzed and the report was disseminated in the network. The published Minilab Survey can be found on the EPN Website.



EAST AFRICAN POOLED PROCUREMENT INITIATIVE (EACPP)

ACTIVITIES:

The East African Community Pool Procurement Initiative (EACPP) is one of the major Supply Chain and Quality Assurance Projects managed by EPN and its member Drug Supply Organization (DSOs). The initiative began in 2012 with the technical support of EPN, its goal being to improve access and affordability of high-quality essential medicines within the East Africa Region.

Three faith based implementing partner countries Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda enrolled in the initiative to ensure the procurement arm had a reduction in prices and that they would be friendly for facilities to benefit from. The EACPP Technical Working Group (TWG), finalized the final tender documents and went ahead to endorse the procurement plan of the year and approved the bidding documents. The tender was floated in February 2022 (EACPP/07/2022) to pre-qualified suppliers for selected non-pharmaceutical (consumables) products. All supplier responses were collected and an analysis conducted, data was consolidated and reviewed by the TWG. The tender was successfully floated and the engagement between EPN and the suppliers was strengthened.

Suppliers sent samples of products floated that were then analyzed. Results were shared in the evaluation meeting held in June 2022. Certificates of analysis (CoA) were shared and sent to each supplier thereafter. Declaration forms were signed. The EACPP annual tender report was developed

Additional Activities under pooled procurement that were accomplished

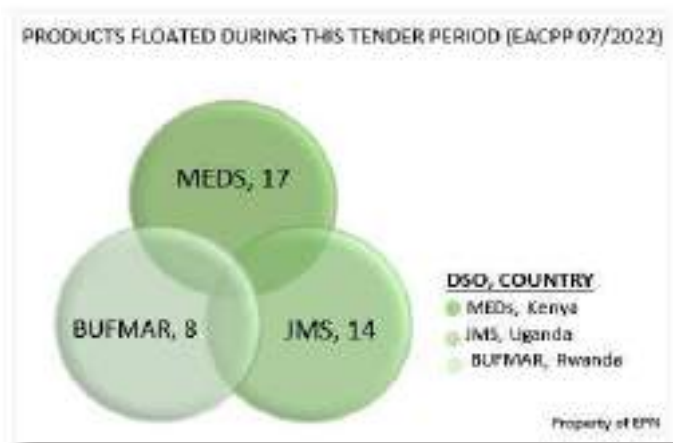
- Harmonization of the different procurement cycles and requirements to participate in a Pooled Procurement Group
- Experience sharing on the EPN EACPP Model with the Ministry of Health Kenya during the process of establishing a Pooled Procurement mechanism for cancer medicines targeting County hospitals.

SMART LEVERAGED CHURCH SUPPLY CHAIN PROJECT (SMART LCSC)

Project Countries: Nigeria, Sierra Leone

In 2022, EPN successfully signed a contract with our partners IMA World Health. The objective of the project was to strengthen the church Drug Supply Organizations across Sub-Saharan Africa to ensure continued, consistent, and sustainable supply of affordable and quality-assured medical products and preparedness for future emergencies.

IMA World Health was committed to work with EPN to improve the compliance of DSOs



to international standards.

In 2022, introductory meetings with the implementing partners i.e. Faith Based Central Medical Foundation (FB-CMF), Nigeria and Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone (CHASL) were conducted and work plans were put into place.

The agreement was to see the implementation of the EPN SLSC Project in 3 phases:

The first being the development of a Maturity assessment tool:

- Formation of a Technical Working Group (TWG) to review the Assessment tool
- Pilot implementation in Nigeria and Sierra Leone using the assessment tool
- Development of an Action Plan by assessed DSOs and support of its implementation, with a focus on the development of required policies and procedures.

The next phases would be the development of capacities in DSOs and the expansion of the EPN EAC Pooled Procurement to the entire Network.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

- By the End of 2022, the EPN Network had 137 members from 38 different countries.
- Youth Engagement
- Member Needs Assessment



Religious leader and EPN Member Pastor Didier Ouedraogo paying a courtesy call at the EPN Secretariat.



Dr. Eric Nietcho, CEO of Global Pharma in the US paying a courtesy call at the EPN Secretariat.



MEMBERSHIP IN 2022

In 2022, six (6) new members joined the Network:

1. Terrewode Hospital as Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) from Uganda

Terrewode Women’s Community supports and treats women suffering from Obstetric Fistula and other child birth injuries. It is a specialized hospital and the third in Africa addressing Fistula. It is a subsidiary of the TERREWODE NGO which has collaborated with the Uganda Ministry of Health (MoH) in the campaign to end Obstetric Fistula in Uganda.

The entity has existed for about 20 years, championing the campaign for promotion, protection and provision of obstetric fistula services within the context of Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR); including maternal and safe motherhood services and empowerment of vulnerable women and girls.

2 Global Pharma Inc, a Drug Supply Organisation (DSO) in the United States

It is a licensed pharmaceutical consulting and procurement company based in Charlotte, NC

Expertise: For Profit Pharmaceutical consulting and procurement (DSO)

Supply pharmaceutical products to providers, clinics and other health entities and provide additional services to enhance the effective use of medicines and increased access and adherence to therapy.

3. St. Clare Hospital a Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) in Tanzania

St. Clare Foundation is a Tanzanian Non-Governmental Organization and also Non-Profit

Organization (NGO), which was started by Tanzanians in 2021 and was officially registered in May 2021. The main function of this

organization is to operate the St. Clare hospital for the benefit of the patients of the local population, especially those materially and medically in most need making health-care available, accessible and accountable for the whole community.

4. Bdom Lubumbashi, Individual member, DSO Member, from the Democratic Republic of Congo

5. Professor Muenga Lwansa, Individual member MPH/Ph.D Pharmacovigilance, WHO-CC Fellow, Pharmacy Lecturer, Organization: Welwitchia Health Training Centre

6. Ph. Joseph Guwor (Liberia), Individual member, Pharmacist from Christian Health Association of Liberia

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

EPN aims to build capacities and work with the different youth engaging in activities that will prepare them to be future leaders and experts in the healthcare space. We were able to engage the following youth and student bodies in 2022:

1. RYCULTURE

Ryiculture Health and Social Innovation is a forward-looking social enterprise committed to improving access to quality healthcare service and promoting human capital development through health research, health communication, health systems strengthening and human ca-

capacity development. Their aspiration is to contribute to the edification of our societies towards a socially responsible, healthy and prosperous generation.

2. The Christian Medical Fellowship of Kenya (CMF-K)

CMF-Kenya is an affiliated member of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA). Christian Medical Fellowship of Kenya (CMF-Kenya) is a non-profit, member-based organization that brings together and coordinates a network of Christian healthcare professionals and students for fellowship, service, witness and professional growth in order to help them fully integrate their faith into their professional and personal lives.

3. NUPSA - Nairobi University Pharmacy Students Association (NUPSA)

Nairobi University Pharmacy Students Association (NUPSA) is a non-profit, non-political, and professional organization for pharmacy students in the University of Nairobi

4. YOUTH AGAINST NTDs

Youth Combating Neglected Tropical Diseases is a collaboration platform that engages, empowers and supports communities to become disease free!

The objective is to extend this engagement with youth in other EPN member countries.

MEMBER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Member Needs Assessment is a project that has been implemented by EPN to evaluate and identify the needs and gaps of our members and address these findings. The project began in 2021 with a target of 21 CHA, 18 DSOs and 210 Health Facilities. As of June 2022, 11 CHAs, 9 DSOs and 114 Health Facilities from different countries completed the Assessment. Table 1 (below) clearly highlights the gaps in Key Health Topics, Supply Chain and lack of Training Capacities in our Member organizations.

Table 1: Highlights of the Member Needs Assessment Preliminary Results

		Component	Number of Members (CHA/DSO)	Total Participant	% age
Key Health Topics	1	CHAs with some of their affiliated Health Facilities not implementing MNCH/RH at all	5	13	38%
		CHAs with some of their Health Facilities implementing MNCH/RH without Appropriate STGs	4	13	31%
	2	No of CHAs having less than 40% of their affiliated health facilities not implementing NCD management activities	4	13	31%
	3	CHAs have some of their affiliated HFs not implementing Neglected Tropical Diseases activities.	9	13	69%
Supply Chain and Quality Assurance	1	CHAs having less than 50% of their inventory management staff trained for at least three months in their assignments	5	13	38%
	2	CHAs having less than 50% of their dispensing medicines staff trained in good dispensing practices.	3	13	23%
	3	CHAs having less than 50% of their affiliated HFs with an annual supply plan.	5	13	38%
The Drug Supply Organization	1	DSOs - not part of any pooled procurement initiative and they have no prequalification mechanism.	3	9	33%
	2	DSOs in need of support to improve a bit their respective quality control process	2	9	22%
	3	Training areas identified as more important for the assessed DSOs	1) Medicine Supply Chain		
			2) Good Governance		
3) Fund Raising					

The need for more data to show a clearer representation of the church health system was required and due to this factor, the project was extended to 2023.

By December 2022, one of the key achievements of this project was that EPN was able to engage more members and also reactivate membership. EPN from the results also realized that there were gaps that needed to be addressed. These would be under key selected topics which would target the following areas:

- a. Maternal Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH)
- b. Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs)
- c. Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)
- d. Drug Therapeutic Committees (DTCs)
- e. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)
- f. Supply Chain Measures
- g. Training and Capacity Building

Going forward, there would be a selection of priority countries and priority pharmaceutical needs to support our members that were most in need.

Various training activities were conducted to address some of the gaps in order to increase the number of trained pharmaceutical staff (Covid - 19 Project, Scholarship Project, EPP C.A.R Project).

WEBINARS

Webinar 1: Theme - Uptake of Covid-19 vaccination in Africa

Due to an ongoing concern on vaccine hesitancy, three Organisations, Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN) in collaboration with Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) and All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) organized a 3 day joint webinar which involved key members that is religious leaders, Christian Health Associations (CHA's), Drugs Supply Organisations (DSO's), other Faith Based Organisations and likeminded stakeholders. The key message

'Uptake of Covid -19 Vaccination in Africa' was to sensitize religious leaders and stakeholders in raising awareness on the effects of Covid - 19 and how to advocate not only for the Covid - 19 vaccination uptake but also future pandemic preparedness to the congregations and communities at large, and address myths and misconceptions.

The key achievements of this webinar were:-

- EPNs joint declaration with partners AACC and ACHAP was drafted and endorsed by 34 organizations present at the 3-day webinar which served as an exceptional platform for the church and Christian Health Association platforms. Strengthened partner-

ship of AACC, ACHAP and EPN as religious faith-based institutions and the church

- Increased advocacy of CHAs and DSOs through 2 additional Forums that reached 35 country representatives. The Webinar and the joint learning Forum
- Inclusion of stakeholders including Ministry of Health
- Ownership of the call from member countries and
- Building capacities of Healthcare workers

From this webinar, the joint call to action was disseminated by 13 Organisations in their various platforms.

EPN then took initiative to implement a follow-up project that also involved building capacities of religious leaders and Health Care Workers through physical and virtual training. The project was steered by an advocacy specialist and it targeted 5 countries, both francophone and Anglophone with a project period of 1 year.

The project reached the key target populations in Sierra Leone, Burundi, DRC, Cameroon and Niger and came to a close in January 2023. Over 250 participants registered with 150 attendees being part of at least 1 out of the 3 days of the event. There were several advocacy campaigns around this initiative.

Webinar 2: Theme - Resilient Primary Health Care – Strengthening leadership and governance in faith-based health institutions was successfully held in this quarter

The webinar sought to address health systems and resilience to cope with emerging emergency healthcare challenges e.g. epidemics/endemics

- The role of religious leaders in the midst of leadership related challenges, to help rebuild and sustain struggling CHAs.
- Identify and address key approaches in governance, leadership and policies at national and community levels in our health systems that improve access to quality healthcare and medicines and healthcare in low-resources settings to ensure equitable access to health care services.

One of the key takeaways was that primary healthcare was a society approach. A robust health system requires the inclusion of all stakeholders from leadership to human resource to community level and vice versa.

110 participants took part in this virtual event including key stakeholders in the government and the other platforms.

EPN in partnership with religious leaders living with HIV, (PLHIV), The National Empowerment of People Living with HIV in Kenya (NEPHAK), The International Community of Women Living with HIV Kenya Chapter (ICW Kenya), INERELA+ Kenya, AIDS Health Foundation (AHF) and the Global Fund among many other partners partnered to participate in a commemoration aimed to remember and celebrate rested heroes and heroines who had contributed enormously to the HIV response.

DONOR PARTNERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Our partners come as a highlight to the work that we have accomplished in 2022. Together with the different governments that we have worked with, we have been able to complement each other's work to justly and compassionately serve our communities in need.

EPN attended the Africa Health Christian Associations Platform (ACHAP) Conference in Kigali Rwanda (11-15th July). The Executive Director engaged in a panel discussion on the topic of Supply Chain. During the conference, he was reelected as a Board Member of the platform.

We also participated in the ReAct Conference in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2022 on "Africa's response to Antimicrobial Resistance: Accelerating One Health National Action Plans implementation for the next 5 years'.

Katharina Wilkin, a representative of Action Medeor e.V., paid a visit to the EPN Office in July 2022, with discussions leading around future joint proposal initiatives and ongoing projects at EPN.

EPN was also represented at the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Congress and FIP Council meeting 2022 by the ED. The theme of the conference was: Pharmacy united in the recovery of health care



Bread for the World representatives paying a courtesy call to the EPN Secretariat.



Bread for the World representative, Imke Tiemann Middleton, together with the EPN Secretariat.

In September 2022 the Bread for the World Scholarship representatives paid a courtesy call to the EPN Office.

Richard Neci attended a High Stakeholder meeting where Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and other key stakeholders i.e. Dr. Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO, AMREF Health Africa and Dr. Richard Hatchett, CEPI CEO were present. The event was organized by Pandemic Action Network (PAN) with the aim of accelerating the development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases and enabling equitable access to these vaccines for people during outbreaks.

To end the year, Ryculture, a youth body in health hosted their annual YouTH Voices Summit convening Health and Social Innovation that brought together thought leaders, youth leaders and policy makers committed to and working towards the realization of Universal Health Coverage for knowledge sharing, policy shaping and inspiring discussions. The theme of the event was "Activating Youthful Leadership Towards Universal

Health Coverage (UHC) in Kenya" with a focus on WHO system pillars.

Richard Neci participated and was a key speaker in this event. He spoke about Access to Essential Medicine, Health Products and Technologies. The summit captured key gaps in the healthcare space that need to be addressed and how the youth are challenged to take the center stage in contributing to efforts to realise Universal Health Coverage.



EPN represented by Dr. Richard Neci during the React Conference 2022 in Zambia Lusaka. On his left is Director of React Africa. Far right, Dr. Evelyne Wesangula, Senior AMR Control Officer, East Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC).



Dr. Richard Neci attending the high level stakeholder meeting facilitated by the Pandemic Action Network and CEPI.



Bread for the World representative, Imke Tiemann Middleton, with the Executive Director, Richard Neci.



Dr. Richard Neci during the Ryculture Youth Voices Summit in December 2022.



Dr. Richard Neci together with fellow Board Members attending the ACHAP Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda.



Dr. Richard Neci, 2nd left as part of panel of discussions speaking on supply chain.

8TH BIENNIAL FORUM, AGM & MINILAB CONFERENCE



EPN member DSO representatives, Academia and EPN Secretariat staff visit MEDS during the Minilab pre-conference.

The pre-conference on Minilab was held at the Mission for Essential and Drug Supplies (MEDS) physically and virtually on 11th – 14th October, 2022 at the KCB Leadership Center in Nairobi, Kenya.

The theme of the Forum was: The Future of HealthCare in the Global South with an emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa. The global context called on all stakeholders to deeply think on how we envision the future of HealthCare and how the achieved PHC objectives can be sustained.

The pre- conference which was the Minilab conference was held before the main event attracting a broad range of DSO representatives, research and academia from different member countries and regulators as well.



Dr. Rashid Aman, Cabinet Administrative Secretary Ministry of Health (MoH) Kenya graced the event. Over 115 delegates from over 15 countries were present in the Forum.



EPN Board Members together with CAS Ministry of Health, Kenya, Dr. Rashid Aman and Dr. Karim Wanga of Pharmacy and Poisons Board pose for a photo at the 8th EPN Biennial Forum in Nairobi, Kenya.



FORUM OBJECTIVES

1. Review how COVID-19 had affected the delivery of Primary Healthcare and suggest improvements towards future pandemics preparedness.
2. Share strategies and approaches to tackle primary health priorities:
 - i. To improve MNCH (in future)
 - ii. To improve the control of major communicable diseases (HIV, TB, Malaria, Covid-19)
 - iii. To effectively prevent and control the epidemic of NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory diseases and cancers.
3. Present an overview and share learning on EPN members and stakeholders work delivery of holistic pharmaceutical services that improve health care, while focusing on the importance of networking.
4. Discuss strategies that boost pharmaceutical industry and local production of medicines in LMICs (progress/success, innovations, and challenges) and improve supply chains and their impact on future healthcare
5. Share strategies and experience on Quality Assurance and substandard and falsified Medicines. (Preconference)

Some of the key conversations were around the setting up DRFs and Drug Supply Units in the church health systems, Pharmaceutical Industry and local production of medicines; Future pandemic preparedness; Role of the religious leaders, Christian Health Associations and the Ministry of Health

In our sessions with members and key stakeholders, we were also able to discuss our health Priorities in Primary Health-care (Antimicrobial stewardship programs in the church health systems; Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC); major communicable diseases (HIV, TB), NTD); NCD (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory diseases and cancers); Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MCH, achievements and addressed the gaps and the importance of advocacy in church health systems.

For further info on our EPN Forum 2022 please find the Forum Report on our Website.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE

i. Membership policy review

Due to the differences in member organization structures, the EPN Membership policy was revised in July 2021. This provided an annex 001T on Membership Application Assessment Criteria for Institutional Applicants and would solve the problem for future applicant's assessments. The proposed minimum score to qualify for membership was 70.

ii. EPN Constitution

EPN was able to receive the required minimum signatories to the revised constitution.

The submission of the revised constitution was accepted on 30th March 2022.

iii. Change of Officials/Signatories

EPN presented the resolution of the changes to the NGO Board on 7th March 2022. It was acceptable in principle but still required additional documents prior submission from the new top Officials, namely the Chair and the Treasurer.

In the 2nd quarter we managed to gain the approval of Change of Officials which was issued to EPN by the NGO Board of 21st June 2022 attesting to records showing all the Nine (9) Officials and their titles.

iv. Policy reviews

Different policies were under review at the Secretariat. These were to be presented at the end of the 2nd quarter of the year, these policies include: Procurement, Consultants and Risk Management policies.

v. Staff Changes

There were various staff changes that occurred as well:

- September 2022 – Technical Support from Dr. Susanne Duff Mac Kay for the online learning platform Contract ended in August 2022; The Technical Advisor, Mrs. Rebekka Oelze, commenced work with EPN on Publications and Research
- The AMR Project lead -Mrs Sharon Odeo, joined EPN in October 2022 and will work under the EPN - Novartis AMR Project
- An advert for the Supply Chain Officer Smart LCSC Project under IMA - Corus International was published in October 2022. Mr. Austin Opiata was selected for the position.



EPN Secretariat posing for a photo with new Technical Advisor, Rebekke Oelze.

FINANCIAL REPORT

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

Statement of Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 31 December 2022

	2022 US\$	2022 Kshs	2021 US\$	2021 Kshs
Grants received	670,040	77,949,812	361,003	40,281,339
Other income	69,876	8,112,398	93,795	10,543,148
Gross Surplus	739,916	86,062,210	454,798	50,824,487
Expenditure				
Programme Cost	282,216	32,831,893	168,523	18,814,868
Administrative Expenses	265,996	29,624,188	235,880	26,404,450
Other Operating Expenses	3,605	418,993	3,075	344,149
	551,818	62,875,074	407,478	45,563,467
Operating Fund Surplus	188,099	23,187,136	47,320	5,261,020
Finance Costs	2,759	320,928	1,418	158,603
Net Fund Surplus	185,340	22,866,208	45,903	5,102,417

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position As at 31st December 2022

	2022 US\$	2022 Kshs	2021 US\$	2021 Kshs
ASSETS				
Trade and Other Receivables	96,639	11,547,502	51,954	5,780,307
Cash and cash equivalents	352,397	43,800,453	295,434	33,014,127
	449,035	55,347,954	347,388	38,794,434
Non- current assets				
Intangible Assets	585	34,833	726	52,245
Furniture, fittings and equipment	11,732	1,243,216	10,310	1,067,539
	12,317	1,278,049	11,036	1,119,785
TOTAL ASSETS	461,352	56,626,003	358,424	39,914,219
FUND AND LIABILITIES				
Current Liabilities:				
Payables and accruals	20,528	2,625,105	84,291	9,505,792
	20,528	2,625,105	84,291	9,505,792
Fund Balance:				
Fund Account	440,824	54,000,898	274,133	30,408,427
	440,824	54,000,898	274,133	30,408,427
TOTAL EQUITY & LIABILITIES	461,352	56,626,003	358,424	39,914,219

Statement of Cash Flows For the Year Ended 31 December 2022

	2022 US\$	2022 Kshs	2021 US\$	2021 Kshs
Cash flows from operating activities:				
Fund (Deficit)/Surplus for the year	185,340	22,866,208	45,903	5,102,417
Adjustments for: -				
Depreciation	3,399	418,993	3,075	344,149
Interest income	(119)	2,872	(3,130)	(350,250)
Gain on disposal	-	-	456	51,080
Surplus before Operations	188,620	23,288,073	46,304	5,147,396
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivab	(44,685)	(5,767,194)	(4,659)	(552,569)
(Decrease)/Increase in Trade and other payable	(63,762)	(6,880,687)	34,341	4,052,845
Net cash from (used) in operating activities	80,173.3	10,640,192	75,986	8,647,672
Cash flows from investing activities:				
Purchase of furniture & equipment	(4,679)	(577,258)	-	8,421
Proceeds from sale of equipment	-	-	843	94,400
Interest income	119	(2,872)	3,130	350,250
Translation adjustment	(18,651)	726,263	(7,536)	(432,776)
Net cash used in investing activities	(23,211)	146,133	(3,563)	20,295
Net Increase in cash and cash equivalents	56,963	10,786,325	72,423	8,667,967
Cash and cash equivalent at beginning of year	295,434	33,014,128	223,011	24,346,161
Cash and cash equivalent at end of year	352,397	43,800,453	295,434	33,014,128

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our partners for being part of our network, standing by us to help achieve "A united and growing Christian network, in which at least 50% of its members meet pharmaceutical standards to ensure access to resilient quality pharmaceutical service". It would not have been possible without your continuous support.

Special thanks goes to the following:

Religious leaders of each of our Christian Health Associations and Church Health Institutions.

The Ministry of Health in Kenya, DRC, Cameroon, Rwanda in each of the projects that we have implemented in. You have made it easy for us to collaborate with you and complemented what we do as well.

Novartis under the AMR Project - optimizing the use of antimicrobials and improving antibiotic prescribing, dispensing and disposal practices in faith-based health facilities. Kenya, Nigeria and Malawi

CCIH in Strengthening of Church health systems through online capacity building approaches

Bread for the World in building capacities of last mile Health care workers for a sustainable and resilient pharmaceutical services in Church Health Facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa

IMA World Health

Smart Leveraged Church Supply Chain

PFIZER – Gertrude's Children's Hospital for the Preserve the miracle for our children - Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) project

Plan:g for always supporting our effort to ensure the quality of medicines through Minilab

Apotheker Helfen e.V. in building capacities of our members and last mile health care workers through the LMS online learning platform.

Farmacie Mondial in building capacities of our members and last mile health care workers through the LMS online digital platform

Difaem for their support in the GPHF Minilab activities, Covid – 19 vaccination project and EPNs Member Needs Assessment.

ACHAPs partnership in pandemic preparedness activities through the Covid - 19 vaccination and COV - FAB project.

ECUMENICAL PHARMACEUTICAL NETWORK

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