



Emergency medical aid in the Central African Republic
Bimbo and M'baïki, Central African Republic

The Central African Republic is one of the poorest countries in the world. Moreover, the humanitarian situation in the war-torn state is extremely precarious. FAIRMED is on the ground and is committed to rebuilding the shattered health system and enabling access to urgently needed healthcare services for people in need.

Background

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the Central African Republic has been afflicted by near-constant political instability. The civil war that was triggered by a coup in 2013 led to a drastic deterioration of the already precarious living conditions of the general population – a situation that was only exacerbated by the complete collapse of the health system. The majority of the populace depends on humanitarian aid and more than a quarter are currently displaced or living as refugees. The maternal mortality rate and that of children under the age of five are among the highest in the world.

The project

In December 2014, in the wake of this humanitarian crisis, FAIRMED started providing emergency aid in the health districts of Bimbo in the Ombella M'poko prefecture and M'baïki in the Lobaye prefecture. The “Emergency Medical Aid in the Central African Republic” project is being carried out in cooperation with the UN Coordination Office for Humanitarian Aid and the district health authorities. The aim of the project is to ensure that the people in the health districts of Bimbo and M'baïki have proper access to medical care. In late 2018, the project area in the M'baïki district was expanded from six districts to nine, taking the total number of included health facilities from 30 to 37. Since the initiation of the project, FAIRMED has provided valuable assistance in efforts to rebuild Lobaye's decimated health system. However, in 2018 the humanitarian situation deteriorated once again, meaning that the need to continue the project is now greater than ever, in particular in the new districts and health facilities.

Objectives and activities

The central aim of the project is to construct and maintain a functioning health system in the regions of Bimbo and M'baïki. To this end, the project is pursuing three specific aims that are being realised, among others, through the following activities:

The general population is provided with access to health services

- Since the autumn of 2018, FAIRMED has operated a pilot emergency transport and treatment system for people living in inaccessible villages in the Moboma commune. Here, the villages have been provided with bicycles. In the event of an emergency, a villager can use the bicycle to reach the nearest health facility and inform them of the situation. In turn, the health facilities have motorcycles at their disposal and can pick up patients from villages and transport them to a health centre or, if necessary, transfer them to a better or more appropriately equipped health facility. The streets of Moboma are in an extremely poor condition, making these motorcycles the best form of emergency transportation.
- The emergency patients are treated at health facilities.
- A motorcycle ambulance is operated from the health centre in M'bata. Among other items, FAIRMED pays for fuel and maintenance.

The health facilities are equipped with the appropriate medical materials and medicines

- The health facilities are provided with medical materials and the necessary infrastructure for the areas of childbirth, surgery and laboratories.
- Healthcare facilities are provided with the necessary medication

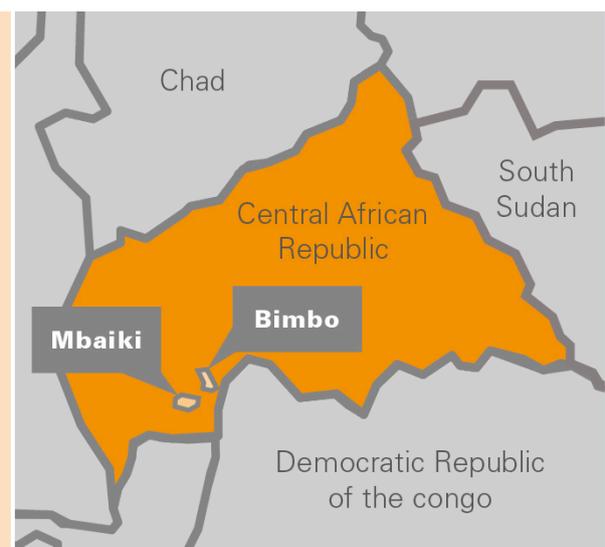
The health facilities are assisted in the recruitment of qualified and adequately paid health staff

- FAIRMED provides support in engaging doctors, nurses, midwives and caregivers in paid employment

Health personnel are trained in a range of topics

Budget

The total costs of the project in 2020 amount to CHF 479,000.



Monitoring

Monitoring is safeguarded by the project team in Bern and the FAIRMED employees on the ground. Every three months, a detailed report on project progress as well as a financial report are compiled and sent to our headquarters in Bern. On-site visits to the project are carried out at least twice a year by the responsible persons at the Bern headquarters. This includes a review of project implementation and a discussion of further steps. Once a year, the accounting for the project as well as the country office are assessed by external auditors.

Sustainability

FAIRMED works exclusively with local employees and the participation of local authorities, government bodies and partner organisations. This fosters broad acceptance and enables the respective local entities to assume responsibility for the continuation of activities once projects are completed. In addition, the local population is integrated in the administration of the healthcare system. This establishes individual responsibility and safeguards the interests of the communities in the overall implementation. The presented project is working towards sustainability through the following measures, among others:

- Healthcare contracts are signed directly with the district authorities and the healthcare management committees and not with FAIRMED. This increases awareness of the fact that these are personnel of the local health system, which increases the chance that they will continue to be employed even after FAIRMED has completed its activities
- The district and health facilities are supported in employee recruitment. This is to ensure that the health district employs only the best-suited candidates
- Regular interexchange with beneficiaries and management committees helps to maintain focus on their wishes and aims for the existing health system. The project is thus better able to reflect actual requirements, which in turn fosters greater acceptance

Beneficiaries

The project benefits the 217,271 inhabitants of the communities within the project area. These municipalities include M'baiki, Pissa, Mbata, Moboma, Mongoumba, Balé Loko, Bimbo, Lesse, Nola and Bogongo-Gaza.

Marcel's Story

The fears of a sick father

Marcel Bede, 40, recently underwent abdominal surgery. He was in severe pain but ignored the signs and continued as before with his physically demanding tasks. Of course, his condition only worsened, but attempts to relieve the pain with traditional herbal medicines were unsuccessful. One day, he passed out and was unable to stand up. He was taken to hospital for emergency treatment, where he underwent surgery on his hernia. This was all paid for by FAIRMED, as was the transfer, the hospital stay and the necessary medication and food. Marcel would not have been able to cover such expenses on his own.

«Even worse than the severe pain was my worry that I could no longer take care of my family.»



Our heartfelt thanks for your interest in our work. Since 1959, the Swiss development organisation FAIRMED has been committed to improving the health of people affected by poverty in Africa and Asia. Thanks to the support of our loyal donors, donations from foundations, as well as inheritances and bequests, FAIRMED is able to offer the very poorest a path to basic healthcare.

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