

## **COVID-19 cloth masks for Africa**

Engineers Without Borders and The University of Southern Denmark provide cloth face masks in Africa and develops a clinical field study of how effective it actually is wearing a mask

### Introduction

The present project aims to reduce the contamination of COVID-19 in two countries, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, but also to test. The project will launch the production and distribution of community available, recyclable cloth masks, and soap accompanied by preventive hygiene guidelines and instruction material. Face masks must be handled using proper procedures to minimize the risk of getting infected when putting on, wearing and removing the mask. In the test population, the recipients will, therefore, also receive oral and written information on this, along with the advice that masks do not substitute the well-known preventive measures: frequent hand washing and social distancing.

Sustainability in the local context is secured through: local procurement of material, local production and capacity building, recycle masks - no use of plastic combined with all biodegradable materials. Socio-economic feasibility is high, as masks are within a price range accessible for the poor segment of the population (however present project will provide the masks for free).

The initiative has come about through the cooperation between Engineers without Borders Denmark (EWB- DK) and the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). Both organizations have prior long-standing experience in Africa and are already established with reliable, well-known local partners in Sierra Leone and Guinea- Bissau, allowing for fast and efficient interventions.

### Beneficiaries

This project will benefit two separate populations in vulnerable communities in both Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone with a total target group of app. 100,000 individuals. More specifically, in Sierra Leone, the target population is at the community level, and the aim is to reach app. 30,000 people, primarily in rural communities. In Guinea-Bissau, the target population is vulnerable households in the urban areas of the capital Bissau, constituting of app 70,000 individuals.

### Goals of the project

Short term: 1) Reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, 2) Protecting the lives of vulnerable communities, and 3) Generating income through local procurement and production of recyclable cloth masks.

Medium/long term: 4) Scientifically assessing and evaluating the impact of cloth masks in an African context.