

Project ECHO® in Africa

Since the initial launch of the Namibia HIV ECHO – Project ECHO’s first program in Africa – in November 2015, Project ECHO’s presence in Africa has grown to 25+ programs run by local hubs in 13 countries. Additionally, 12+ new programs are in development in seven of the already-participating countries, and in three additional countries. Through partnerships with the Africa Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the African Society of Laboratory Medicine (ASLM), ECHO engages spoke participants in another 20+ countries. Partners at Ministries of Health all over the continent are recognizing the potential of the ECHO model™ to more effectively build workforce capacity across health systems.

The success story of **the first African ECHO, in Namibia**, demonstrated the feasibility and acceptance of the ECHO model and its telementoring approach in Africa. In collaboration with the Namibia Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), the International Training Center for Health and Education (I-TECH), the National Institute of Pathology (NIP) supported by funding from the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and assistance from U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the HIV ECHO pilot program ran from November 2015 to September 2016, engaging over 100 providers in initially ten state hospitals around the country with the highest HIV burden in weekly teleECHO sessions on HIV care and treatment.

The nurses, doctors, pharmacists and other healthcare workers learned a broad curriculum of HIV topics and discussed patient cases with the MoHSS HIV Chief Clinical Mentor as the teleECHO session facilitator. Now in its fourth year, the Namibia HIV program now engages over 40 participating clinical spoke sites and aims to connect all 40 state hospitals. A pilot evaluation report by Namibia’s MoHSS found ECHO reduced provider isolation, increased job satisfaction, and facilitated significant knowledge gain, especially for nurses. Participants in this ECHO also earned increased numbers of Continuing Professional Development Credits. Dr. Ndapewa Hamunime, head of HIV and STI programs at the MoHSS, recently said of the Namibian ECHO that it is “the most beloved mode of educational communication here.”

East Africa has programs in **Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and South Sudan**. **Kenya** launched the first TB ECHO in Africa in 2016, and an HIV ECHO later that year. An Antimicrobial Resistance laboratory ECHO and a program for Chronic Disease were added in 2018. The national TB program added a pediatric TB ECHO in Western Kenya and an autism teleECHO program launched in late 2018. The Africa CDC’s Regional Collaborating Centre for East Africa in Kenya operates as an ECHO hub, connecting 10+ countries in the

ECHO IN AFRICA

COUNTRIES WITH ONE OR MORE ACTIVE ECHO HUBS:

- Namibia (1)
- Kenya (5+)
- Tanzania (5+)
- Uganda (2)
- Côte d’Ivoire (1)
- Nigeria (1)
- South Sudan (1)
- Zambia (2)
- Ethiopia (3)
- Egypt (1)
- South Africa (2+)
- Mozambique (1)
- Malawi (1)
- Congo (DRC)

ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES AS SPOKES

Burkina Faso, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Eswatini, Togo, Zimbabwe

region for discussion of infectious disease outbreak situations and the implementation of International Health Regulations. **Uganda and Tanzania** launched the first laboratory teleECHO programs in 2016, training HIV rapid testers.

In **Central and West Africa** the first francophone ECHO in Africa for HIV care and treatment launched at the end of 2017 in **Côte d'Ivoire**. **Nigeria** implemented another HIV ECHO in the spring of 2018 and now uses ECHO to support a major effort to enroll 500,000 people living with HIV in treatment within a year. Nigerian partners also launched an Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) ECHO. The **Africa CDC** connects senior public health officials across Central Africa from about ten African Union member states to share information on infectious disease outbreaks in the region. This established network has helped to address the recent Ebola outbreaks in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**.



In addition to the Namibia program, **Southern Africa** has active teleECHO programs in **Zambia and South Africa**. The **Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN)** launched a multi-country Infection Control ECHO in spring 2018. The Africa CDC Southern Region RCC operates from a hub in Zambia, connecting 10 countries for information sharing on IHR implementation. ECHO is a partner in **Zambia** on the Health Workforce for the 21st Century (HW21) initiative, as part of a consortium led by Jhpiego and funded by PEPFAR through the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA); ECHO programs with a focus on HIV have launched across four regions in the first year. With many stakeholders interested in ECHO in Zambia, ECHO could become an integrated part of the country’s health education system. The National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) in South Africa has implemented a program on chemical pathology.

PARTNERS IN AFRICA

- Africa CDC
- Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH)
- African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM)
- American Society for Microbiology (ASM)
- Assist International
- CDC
- Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF)
- FHI360
- Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)
- ICAP at Columbia University
- I-TECH at the University of WA
- Jhpiego (Johns Hopkins affiliate)
- Sandia National Laboratories
- University of Maryland
- University Research Corporation (URC)

The collaborations with **Africa CDC** and **African Society of Laboratory Medicine** have led to multi-country teleECHO programs connecting more than 40 countries altogether. The work with Africa CDC in four regions so far has created a network supporting the Global Health Security Agenda and IHR goals of the World Health Organization. ASLM connects a network of eleven countries to strengthen national laboratory systems for HIV Viral Load Scale Up. As of late 2019, ECHO is working to support the USAID funded One Health Next Generation Workforce Development Initiative in Africa led by UC Davis. The groundwork in Africa for ECHO expansion has been laid through many strong partnerships with Ministries of Health and other country based governmental and non-governmental organizations to strengthen and grow ECHO networks all across Africa.