

Africa and European Union to improve research ethics capacities in Liberia

Between the countries where the Sustainable Development Goal states to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” is particularly challenging to be achieved by 2030, Liberia deserves a special attention. Indeed, Liberia was hard hit by the unprecedented 2014-2016 Ebola Virus Disease outbreak that reversed some of the public health gains made in the country following the end of the 14 years (1989-2003) of civil crisis. Therefore, the Liberian public health condition requires a biomedical research response guided by an efficient national ethical review system that can ensure the protection and welfare of research participants and prioritize the public health needs of the Liberian population.

Within this context, the National Research Ethics Board of Liberia (NREB) and the University of Liberia-Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation Institutional Review Board (UL-PIRE IRB), together with the European not-for-profit organization, R-Evolution Worldwide, developed and submitted a proposal to the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) for a research project focused on the effectiveness of the Liberian ethics infrastructures to protect human subjects, especially during public health emergencies.

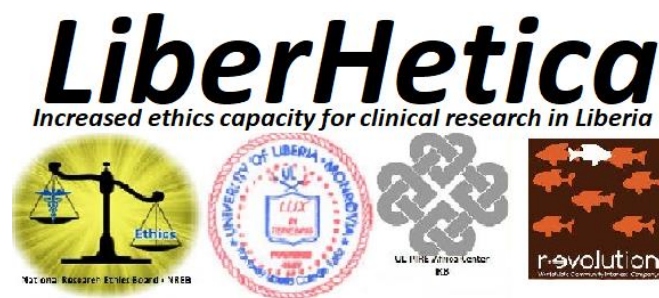
This project is titled: “LiberHetica - increasing the ethics capacity of oversight for clinical trials in Liberia by establishing European-African collaborations that facilitates implementation of efficient processes, harmonized procedures, standardized guidelines and educative training programs”.

The EDCTP positively evaluated, approved and funded this project (Grant Agreement CSA2018ERC-2327-LiberHetica), that started on 1st August 2019, and it has just successfully completed the first of its 3 years duration. The project activities are proceeding tirelessly, as highlighted during the yearly project meeting held on 1st October 2020 to generate the implementation framework for its second year.

“This is an extraordinary example of collaboration between African and European institutions with substantial support from the European Union in its common efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, said Jemee K. Tegli, the LiberHetica Coordinator at UL-PIRE IRB, Monrovia, Liberia.

This project is increasing the ethics capacity for the oversight of clinical trials at the UL-PIRE-IRB, hosted by the UL-PIRE Africa Center, and NREB of Liberia, and it will extend these achievements to other ethics institutions in Liberia as well as in the sub-region.

“While strengthening the ethics capacities at UL-PIRE IRB and NREB, we will also develop an ethics capacity improvement strategy for national level implementation at the Liberia’s Ministry of Health (MoH)”, said Gloria T. Mason, LiberHetica Project Manager, NREB Coordinator, Liberia.



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