

Infant and child mortality rates are alarmingly high in The Gambia



According to the latest estimates (2020), the Republic of The Gambia has around 2.4 million inhabitants. The population density is quite high with 239 inhabitants per square kilometer.

The Gambia has recorded a steady increase in population of three percent annually in recent years. Almost half of the Gambians are young. The average age of the population is 21 years.

In 2015, 49.2 percent of the population over the age of 15 were illiterate, with the proportion of women clearly predominating. Only 41.6 percent of women over the age of 15 living in The Gambia were able to read and write even though schooling is compulsory.

The birth rate in The Gambia is among the twenty highest in the world. Every woman in The Gambia has more than five children on average (Germany: 1.4). This is very much. As in many other African countries, the reason for this is poor medical care and the lack of preventive education, which, given the high rate of illiteracy, would be very difficult to implement.

This is one of the main reasons of the spread of many diseases that could be prevented with proper hygiene. The lack of a secure supply of clean drinking water also contributes a large part to this problem.



Projekthilfe Gambia e.V.

Despite extensive development aid, The Gambia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Although the domestic economic situation has stabilized in recent years with growth rates of six percent, the upswing is not affecting the majority of the population. Widespread poverty, high population growth and heavily indebted public budgets are the greatest challenges.

One of the most significant factors is certainly the infant mortality per 1,000 births. The situation in The Gambia has improved slightly. While 79 out of 1,000 newborns died by the age of one in 2000, the number was reduced to 58 by 2018. However, it is assumed that the number of unreported cases is much higher, especially in rural areas. In Germany the number is just under four deceased infants per 1,000 births.

The comparison of child mortality from the first to the fifth year of life is also frightening. While 3.7 out of 1,000 children in Germany no longer experience their 6th birthday, in The Gambia there are 58 children (2018). Low life expectancy and high infant and child mortality rates are significant expressions of inadequate medical care. In the world rankings for child mortality (a total of 221 countries), Germany is in 200th place, while The Gambia is in 16th place.

In Germany there are 8.3 hospital beds per 1,000 inhabitants. In The Gambia there is one hospital bed per 1,000 people.

The supply of doctors is also drastic. In Germany there is a 40 times higher density of doctors than in The Gambia. While there are 240 inhabitants per doctor in Germany, there are 9,000 people per doctor in The Gambia.