A brief history:

- Bo Government Hospital/ School of Community Health Sciences Library was established in February 2014, after discussions with the Hospital Management Team in August 2013.

- The library was started as a collaboration between the founders of African Hospital Libraries, Bo Government Hospital Management Team, and Njala University School of Community Health Sciences.

- Core books were donated by the BMA Information Fund, Oxford University Press, and private donations. Since then, the library has received several more shipments of books (mostly sourced from TALC and WHO) from the UK, through African Hospital Libraries.

- Library furniture, consumables, signage, and library staff salaries and relevant expenses, are paid for using African Hospital Libraries funds.

- The library employs a full-time librarian, Alex B Marrah (who took over from the previous Bo Librarian in April 2016). It also employs a Library Coordinator, Mr Komba A Momoh, who works across both libraries, in Bo and Makeni Government Hospitals.
The Library System:

• The Library at Bo Government Hospital uses a robust system for cataloguing library items, registering users, and lending books. The system includes a data collection system, to record all borrowing episodes by library members.

• The Bo Librarian was trained in the library system by the Makeni Hospital Librarian, and was also issued with a copy of “How to Plant and Grow a Library: A Manual”, which was written by supporters of African Hospital Libraries, in collaboration with TALC.

• The library is free to join for all hospital staff, and for healthcare students on rotation, subject to completion of a registration form.

• Members are issued with a photo membership card, and a borrower card, with which they can borrow library items.

• Loans of library items are for 2 weeks, after which a transparent system of reminders and fines is implemented.
• Bo Hospital Library has 376 Registered Members

• In addition to borrowing books, many Members use the library’s study tables for private reading

• Membership is diverse, and includes: Nurses, Midwives, Anaesthetic technicians, Community Health Assistants, Community Health Officers, Doctors, Dental Assistants, Laboratory Staff, Maternal and Child Health Aides, Ophthalmic technicians, Pharmacy Staff, X-ray Technicians, and healthcare students from local training institutions.

In June 2016, the Library Inventory contained 597 items (including duplicate titles).

A total of 963 items were borrowed in the 8 month period between May and December 2016.

The most popular categories of books borrowed were Medicine (33%), Midwifery Obstetrics and Gynaecology (15%), Nursing (11%), and Laboratory (9%). (See figure on next page)
Some of the most popular library items in Bo Hospital Library
Feedback from library users about the current health information resources:

**State Registered Nurse, in charge of Ward 7**
“The library has played a vital role in my life, it has improved my nursing career.”

**Nurse, paediatric ward**
“The library has done much for us. It helps us to go in search of materials, in terms of treatment and other things – whatever we need. It helps us greatly.”

**Community Health Officer, Paediatric Ward**
“The books help to create a lot of opportunity for me. By reading the books, I want to become a paediatrician, because the books teach me a lot of things about children.”

**Paediatrician**
“The books cover a wide range of subjects, some are really easy to carry and make a quick reference whilst on the job. I appreciate it very much because [...] we have cultivated a culture of reading [...] It helps us to keep abreast with what is happening across the wider medical field.”

**Community Health Officer in charge of Maternal and Child Health Clinic**
“The books have been very useful to us. There are certain things we did not learn in our schools; we have come to learn them now in the library, from the books. More especially, the use of the library for this clinic: it was from the library that I saw some cassettes/plates (DVDs) that teach pregnant women about focused antenatal care – the new antenatal care that WHO is now using [...] even from African countries [...] the holistic approach of care for pregnant women, which is focused more on quality, not quantity of care [...]”

**Matron**
“I am a person who loves to read. [When I was transferred to the hospital] I quickly enrolled in the library. I am a regular visitor there. For example, I teach other nurses, so most of my reference books I go to the library to collect. For example, I teach some midwifery to the State Enrolled Community Health Nurses, and Myles and other books for midwifery have been very helpful. Even the general nursing, I have been reading books because I teach even the general nurses who come around me and I need to update myself. So those books have been very good to me. Whenever I have something I want to read about I go there. I also refer other nurses who want to get knowledge to the library.”
Resource Centre Project:

• The current library space is on loan from the hospital, and is likely to be used again as a clinical area in the future. It is not suitable for further growth of the library.

• It is the vision of the Hospital Management Team and African Hospital Libraries, to build a dedicated Resource Centre within the hospital grounds.

• This Resource Centre will provide extra space for educational resources and private study, and will increase the comfort of members by providing toilet facilities and air conditioning. A small computer suite will also be established in the Resource Centre, to enable access to online and e-resources.

Progress so far:

• The Hospital Management Team has given land to the project, and will provide water and electricity.

• Plans have been drawn up and costed by a local builder

• A Service Level Agreement with the Ministry of Health is in progress

• Salaries of library staff, and costs of consumables, will continue to be met by African Hospital Libraries
Support for the Resource Centre vision, from current library users:

**Community Health Officer**

“The library is good, but the accommodation is scanty – there are not a lot of sitting positions […] We want you to expand the library, and try as much as possible for internet facilities.”

**Paediatrician**

“We appreciate if we can have an internet facility where we can make research, and quicker reference to the wider world.”

**Nurse**

“The space is not enough. We need some other facilities, like internet.”

**Paediatrician**

“If someone is making use of the library, he or she will have to use the restroom. The library has no toilet. I think there should be provision for that. And more the internet. The library as we all know is a quiet place, and when we want to make use of the internet, it should be in a very quiet place, so please if possible, let them make internet facilities available in the library for us as well.”

**Community Health Officer**

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**Matron**

“My only problem is that I don’t stay to read in the hall because it is too small for me, so normally […] I bring them (books) in my office. The space – aside from it being small, if I want to ease myself (use the toilet) I have to run all the way to my office. If at all it can be possible for us to get a larger space that will be convenient for us to sit and read, it is good […] Some of us want to instil a culture of reading, but when they (nurses) get to the place, it is too small for them to stop and read, so they have to take the books out […] maybe it is just one page you wanted to read […] so you should sit and read, and write, before coming. The position also must be changed, because where it is located at the moment used to be our (Ebola) isolation space, so some people even have a thing against going to that area, so that is bringing some people not to go to the library. If it can be relocated from that area and a bigger space created, I think it would be a very good one for us.”