

## The Fusco Group crosses the borders of East Africa to increase knowledge on Female Genital Schistosomiasis

This month, we kicked off the FESZAM (Female Genital Schistosomiasis: a comparative study between Zanzibar and Madagascar) project, funded by the Else Kroener Fresenius Stiftung. The primary objective of the project is to explore the impact of mass drug administrations on the onset and progression of Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS).



Madagascar and the island of Pemba in Zanzibar (created with mapchart.net)

Female Genital Schistosomiasis has been the main research focus of the Fusco group since its establishment. Recent publications, as well as the organisation of webinars and debates within the context of international conferences, have positioned the group as an international reference point in the field.

The main idea of the project is to compare the disease status of female populations in two countries heavily affected by schistosomiasis: Zanzibar and Madagascar. This project aims to enhance scientific understanding of FGS while simultaneously fostering local capacities and establishing networks among endemic countries for the disease. Both clinical and laboratory trainings will be held between experts of the two countries in order to strengthen capacities for the diagnosis of schistosomiasis and FGS. FESZAM will represent a unique opportunity to foster scientific collaboration between two east African islands that share common geographical and territorial challenges.



Panel discussion about FGS at ECTMIH2023

FESZAM presents an opportunity to expand the reach of the Fusco Group, enabling the dissemination of lessons learned from Madagascar regarding FGS and fostering collaboration between Madagascar and Zanzibar in a south-to-south framework.