



**Annual  
Impact  
Report**  
**2022 –  
2023**



**Rural  
Health Care  
Initiative**

*Improving health & nutrition for  
women & children in Sierra Leone*





*The Mission of Rural Health Care Initiative  
is to partner with rural communities in  
Sierra Leone to redevelop health care systems  
and to overcome one of the highest maternal  
and child mortality rates in the world.*



# Dear Partners,



Dear Partners ,

This year marked a long-awaited first for me. After disappointing delays due to the COVID pandemic, I finally made my first trip with the RHCI team to Sierra Leone. Leading up to the trip, I had so many expectations of meeting the RHCI team in Tikonko, witnessing our programs in action, seeing the landscape, experiencing the food and culture. I wanted to take it all in! What I could not have expected; however, is how profoundly the trip would change me.

We landed in Freetown late in the evening and woke up early to make the 4-hour drive to Tikonko accompanied by members of the RHCI team. I was amazed at the natural beauty of Sierra Leone. We drove past the beautiful coastline and lush landscape of palm trees. The moment we set foot at the Mbaomi Birth Waiting Home in Tikonko, we were greeted with songs and dance by the staff and Community Health Workers. From there our days were filled with meetings with the RHCI staff, consultations with government, hospital, and pharmacy officials, visiting RHCI facilities in Tikonko and Gondama, and attending outreach clinics.

It's difficult to convey in a few paragraphs all that I witnessed in Tikonko. An example that I think about daily happened during an outreach clinic in the remote village of Gbalehun. While providing care, RHCI staff identified two children, both under 2 years of age, that were critically ill. One with severe malnutrition and the other with a suspected case of malaria. Both children, accompanied by their mothers, were quickly ushered into the RHCI truck and transported to the hospital to receive treatment. Thankfully, both children recovered and returned to their families



I often think of what may have happened to these beautiful children had RHCI not been in Gbalehun that day, equipped with the means to transport them to the hospital and assume financial responsibility for their care. This is just one example of the impact RHCI is making in the communities we serve. One that has forever left an indelible mark on me.

I returned home from Sierra Leone with a deep respect for the people, who treated me with kindness and gratitude, and a renewed commitment to the mission of RHCI. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your support and for making the work of RHCI possible.

Sincerely,

Marie Stodolka  
*RHCI Board, Vice Chair*



# Sierra Leone Staff

## Tikonko Staff

Manley Jongopie,  
*In-Country Director*  
Isata Bah  
Moses Carter  
Allieu Jongopie  
Mohamed Fatorma  
Mohamed John  
Mohamed Kabba  
Mohamed Kalokoh  
Bobson Koroma  
Mohamed Momoh  
Juliana Sagba  
Umu Shour  
Marie Songa  
Shaka Stevens  
Patrick Vandy



*Tikonko Staff*

## Gondama Staff

Lamin Abu  
Sam Bindi  
Saffie Jusu  
Andrew Kemokai  
Dennis Moiwo  
Joseph Sogbandi  
Margaret Sylvalie  
Mariama Tarawally



*Gondama Staff*



*Umu Shour*

*“Without RHCI, many lives would have been lost. The RHCI malnutrition program has benefited many children, especially in the first three years of life. The programs have reduced the number of malnourished children in the Chiefdom. This reduces the risk of illness and growth stunting, which can have a lifelong impact.”*

*Umu Shour, Nutritionist*



# RHCI Welcomes a New Board Member



Riley holding a newborn in Tikonko

RHCI is delighted to introduce its newest Board Member, Riley DeLude, a distinguished Returned Peace Corps Volunteer with a compelling background. Riley's dedicated service spanned from 2019 to 2020 as a Public Health Volunteer in Tikonko, Sierra Leone, stationed at the Tikonko Community Health Center—a pivotal partner among RHCI's

esteemed health facilities. During this tenure, Riley was joined by her partner, Nick Gaines, who contributed as an Education Volunteer, focusing on English and Math instruction.

While living in Tikonko, Riley and Nick both saw the profound impact RHCI was making in improving

maternal and child health. After meeting Dr. Carol Nelson and a group of volunteers visiting Tikonko in 2020, they've remained involved with RHCI's mission and purpose.

Riley has a Master's of Science in Nursing and works as a Mother Baby Nurse in Chicago. Riley and Nick have become valued members of our team. The board is honored to extend a warm welcome to Riley, recognizing her acumen and genuine commitment to our cause.

*"I am continuously impressed by the impact RHCI is making in Tikonko. Tikonko welcomed Nick and I into their community and became our family. We are so grateful for RHCI and its supporters for making a significant difference in the well-being of mothers and children in the Tikonko Chiefdom. I am honored to be part of such an amazing organization." Riley DeLude*



Alice Karpeh presenting Direct Relief Midwife kits to the Midwives

A message from Founder, Alice Karpeh, who is now living back in her home village of Tikonko.

The impact of RHCI's work in the Tikonko community has been tremendous. RHCI's health care delivery has changed the lives of women and children in Tikonko and the entire Bo district since our services started a decade ago.

For example, when Baby Manley's mother died giving birth to him at the Bo Hospital 18 months ago, RHCI stepped in right away to help, providing formula and baby supplies. Today, he is strong and healthy. His aunt, who is taking care of Baby Manley, is happy to call him her own, and is very grateful to RHCI.

Please know how grateful we are for your support! RHCI would not have achieved any of this without your commitment. Thank you so much.

Alice Karpeh, *Founder*

## Board of Directors

- Ajayi Ajayi-Nicol *Chair*
- Marie Stodolka-Vice *Chair*
- Peter Gogra-Treasurer
- Maggie Pilacinski *Secretary*
- Sarah Cassell
- Rev. Dr. Neil Craigan
- Dr. Beth Detlie
- Komba Fayia
- Lamin Foray
- Julie Hoffer
- Dr. Carol Nelson
- Dr. David Parker
- Riley DeLude



# July 2022 – June 2023



## Rural Health Redevelopment

In numerous remote villages, access to healthcare remains limited. Over the past year, our mobile outreach initiatives have delivered:



**6,555** Child medical visits

**820** Prenatal care visits

**2,858** Family planning consultations and care

**1,611** patient visits at two peripheral health units



In a commitment to reduce disparities and reinforce local healthcare systems, in the past year, we offered:



**661** transports of women and child patients to hospital or home village

**\$36,961** medical supplies and equipment donated

## Birth Waiting Homes



In Sierra Leone, approximately one in every 31 women will lose their lives due to pregnancy or childbirth, a stark contrast to the U.S. rate of around one in every 3,000. RHCI remains dedicated to facilitating access to expert care throughout the entire pregnancy journey, coupled with health education, nutritious food, and reliable transportation.

**1,218** pregnant and postpartum women have received care at our two Birth Waiting Homes since 2018

In the past year:

**290** pregnant and postpartum women at our two Birth Waiting Homes

**128** pregnant and postpartum women at two other remote health units we support

**291** ultrasound scans performed







## Children's Health Program

One out of every nine children in Sierra Leone does not survive to reach the age of 5, a staggering 17 times higher than the corresponding rate in the U.S. The prevalence of malnutrition, malaria, respiratory infections, and diarrhea significantly contributes to this distressing mortality pattern. A notable 30% of children suffer from growth stunting. Throughout the preceding year, our initiatives covered:



**1,227** malnutrition visits for children

**166** critically ill children with transportation and coverage of hospital expenses

**57** Community Health Workers trained to support newborns and lactating mothers

**576** infants enrolled in newborn care program

**1,504** newborn home visits performed

**1,191** children updated on vaccines and preventative treatments



## Food Security and Agriculture



Amidst stark hunger statistics, an estimated 40% of the population is undernourished in Sierra Leone. RHCI empowers rural farmers, especially women, through hands-on technical training and expert consultations, to grow nutritious foods. Furthermore, the on-site farm and garden at the Birth Waiting Home, provides food supply for patients, bridging health with agricultural prosperity. This past year we provided:



**32** farmers with continuous agriculture trainings

**140** women trained on modern agriculture techniques at the on-site garden

**3** meals served daily for Birth Waiting Home patients and staff





# What Does it Cost to Save a Life?



*Fatima and her newborn*

It cost \$50 US dollars to save the life of this young mother, and more than likely the life of her baby. This is Fatima, a mom from the village of Ngandorhun, approximately 7 miles outside the city of Bo. Fatima came to RHCI's birth waiting home in Gondama during the final weeks of her pregnancy to be closer to the Community Health Center (CHC) when it was time for her to deliver. When

she went into labor, RHCI staff transported Fatima to the CHC. Unfortunately, there were complications during her delivery. RHCI staff were notified of the emergency and immediately dispatched a truck to transport Fatima to the Government Hospital in Bo.

**FACT:** Ambulance service in the Tikonko Chiefdom is mostly nonexistent. It is generally up to the patient to find her own transportation to the hospital, even in the event of an emergency. For this reason, RHCI maintains three trucks used to transport critically ill women and children to the CHC or one of the hospitals.

**FACT:** While care at the Government Hospital in Bo is free, patients are often required to purchase their own medications and supplies from the hospital pharmacy BEFORE they are treated, regardless of the emergency. For this reason, RHCI has an agreement with the hospital pharmacy that covers medication and supplies for all our patients.

RHCI staff accompanied Fatima to the hospital to ensure she was admitted with the medication and supplies required. Fatima underwent a C-Section to deliver a healthy baby boy. After a short stay in the hospital, Fatima returned to the birth waiting home to further recover before returning to her home village. Without RHCI's intervention, it is unlikely Fatima would have survived her delivery. The total cost of her care and transportation, covered by RHCI, was approximately \$50. It is astonishing how little it costs to save a life in Sierra Leone. Thank you to all our donors and all that have supported RHCI in this lifesaving mission.

## Empowering Children's Health: One Day's Wages (ODW) Grant Impact Report



With the generous support of an \$18,000 grant from ODW, supplemented by matching contributions from our dedicated RHCI donors, we successfully launched and expanded several vital initiatives:

- Conducting essential newborn nurse home visits for infants in the Gondama and Tikonko regions.
- Equipping 74 Community Health Workers with specialized training on child malnutrition.
- Enhancing the skills of 57 CHWs in newborn care and the identification of danger signs.
- Enabling nurse-led visits to update children on crucial vaccines, Vitamin A, albendazole for deworming, and malaria prevention.
- Extending care to a greater number of critically ill children requiring hospitalization.
- Providing lifesaving Ready to Use Therapeutic food to address child malnutrition.
- Widening the scope of age coverage for children treated at outreach services, now extending up to age ten.

This remarkable endeavor has touched the lives of 18,726 individuals. Among them, 7,782 children benefited from outreach services, while 23 nurses

played a pivotal role, and 576 newborns received invaluable nurse home visits.

Undoubtedly, these new and expanded programs have saved the lives of many children and improved many more. Quoting from Moses Carter, RHCI Project Coordinator, "The One Day's Wages grant has helped our organization so much to overcome many of our difficult challenges in our daily health care delivery."

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to One Day's Wages for their unwavering investment in RHCI's initiatives for the children of the Tikonko Chiefdom. We are equally appreciative of our donors who wholeheartedly answered the call for matching funds, making these transformative achievements possible.



*Nurse Saffie weighing a newborn during the nurse home visit*



*Home visit nurse reviewing vaccine card*

# Combating Malaria with Rotary Grant

Malaria, a global scourge claiming countless lives annually, disproportionately affects children under the age of 5, particularly in Sierra Leone where its impact is grave. RHCI proudly announces a \$10,000 grant from Rotary's Malaria Partners International (MPI) and Rotarians Against Malaria-Global, in collaboration with Bo (Sierra Leone) Rotary Club. Operational since August 1, 2023, this one-year Malaria Grant Project has garnered additional funding from Bo Rotary Club, White Bear Lake Rotary Club, and RHCI donors.

Key elements of this endeavor encompass:

- Distributing Insecticide Treated Bed Nets (ITNs) facilitated by transportation support.
- Empowering Community Health Workers (CHWs) through training in malaria prevention, ITN usage, and early detection.
- Equipping trained CHWs with Malaria Test Kits and medications for prompt intervention.
- Ensuring preventive medication for infants and expectant mothers within our service realm.



**Malaria Partners International**

Malaria, an ailment transmitted by mosquitoes, remains the foremost cause of mortality in Sierra Leone. RHCI's impactful outreach clinics attend to numerous children grappling with malaria monthly. With a commitment to comprehensive care, RHCI transports severely affected children to Bo Children's Hospital, defraying all associated expenses. In May 2023, over 30 children were hospitalized, and RHCI's steadfast support has proved instrumental in saving many young lives.

We extend our gratitude to Rotary, Malaria Partners International, Julie Hoffer and our other benevolent contributors for granting us the opportunity to combat malaria and enhance the well-being of children and families.

# Nurturing Health: The Vital Role of RHCI's Community Health Workers



August 5, 2023: First training of Community Health Workers (CHWs) on malaria

RHCI employs over 70 Community Health Workers (CHWs), who play an essential role in supporting women through prenatal care, labor and delivery.

In addition to in-country staff, RHCI utilizes a Community Health Worker based model of care with over 100 CHWs living throughout the 92 villages we serve. These CHWs, equipped with fundamental health knowledge through RHCI's training, serve as a liaison between their community members and the health care team and are key for increasing utilization of preventative care.

The CHW role is most utilized in accordance with maternal health. CHWs refer newly pregnant women to the Community Health Center to receive antenatal care. CHWs also accompany the term pregnant women to the Birth Waiting Home and ensure they are settled and comfortable during their stay. During labor and delivery, the CHWs provide support, cleaning, laundering, cooked meals, and more.

Their significance can best be described through this sample scenario. A compelling illustration of their impact is exemplified in the story of CHW Mariama. Residing in a rural village, Mariama learns about Aminata, a potentially pregnant community member. Mariama approaches Aminata and after some discussion, encourages her to visit the Community Health Center to confirm her pregnancy and begin antenatal care. Mariama writes a referral and accompanies Aminata to her first visit. Aminata is nervous for the first visit, but Mariama explains to her what to bring and what to expect. Having the support and presence of a familiar community member is invaluable. Mariama explains to Aminata what the antenatal care process looks like and the benefit of staying at RHCI's Birth Waiting Home once her pregnancy reaches term. When it comes time to stay at the Birth Waiting Home, Mariama accompanies Aminata there herself and makes sure she is settled. Mariama supports Aminata throughout her labor and delivery and supports her transition home with a newborn.



Proud Community Health Worker

Although CHWs may have less medical training, their familiarity with the health care system and close connection to the community is a critical component to the positive outcomes that RHCI is promoting.



# Financial Partners July 2022 - June 2023

## 50000+

The Cossack Foundation,  
Steve and Barb Cossack

## \$20,000 - \$49,999

Berglund Family Foundation  
Julie Hoffer  
Petrie Hanson Charitable Trust

## \$10,000 - \$19,999

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 Global Health Ministries  
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 Matter NGO  
 Precision Pouches  
 Solar Kits for Change



RHCI wishes to remember long-time supporter Marcia Staack who worked at Boynton Health Women's Clinic. Sadly, Marcia passed away in early January 2023. Her family chose RHCI to receive memorial gifts. Marcia's legacy lives on in RHCI's work with maternal health and family planning. We are grateful to Marcia and her family.



# RHCI Financials

## Operating Revenue

Individual Donors	\$ 190,294	56%
Foundations and Grants	\$ 125,316	37%
Corporate	\$ 19,706	5%
Organizations and Churches	\$ 7,165	1.5%
Other Revenue	\$ 345	.5%

**Total Support \$ 342,180**

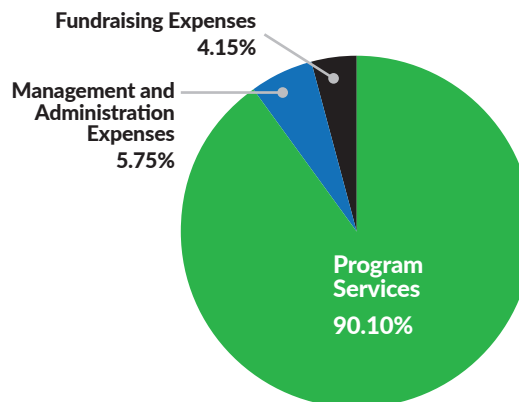
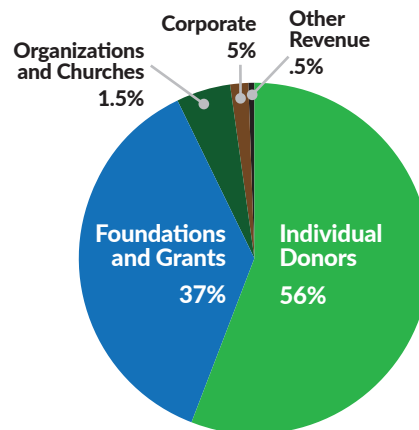
## Operating Expenses

Program Services	\$ 268,371	90.10%
Management and Administration	\$ 17,118	5.75%
Fundraising	\$ 12,379	4.15%

**Total Expenses \$ 297,868**

**Net Operating Surplus \$ 44,311**

*\*In addition to the cash totals stated above, RHCI was the recipient of approximately \$37,000 worth of In-Kind Donations, including over \$20,000 in medical supplies donated by Vitamin Angels and Direct Relief.*



For updates follow us



Go to [rhcimnsl.org](http://rhcimnsl.org) for more information  
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