



**Annual  
Impact  
Report**  
July 1, 2024  
through  
June 30, 2025



*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.*



# About Sierra Leone

Located in West Africa, Sierra Leone, with a population of approximately 8.88 million, continues to be committed to improving the lives of the people living there. As one of the world's poorest nations it has ongoing challenges to the economy, education, political stability, and public health. The investment from foreign governments and numerous Non-Governmental Organizations, including RHCI (Rural Health Care Initiative) serve as a significant resource to assist in development and preparing the people for a better future.

Over the last five years there has been some improvement in the number of people living in poverty, however some 60% of the population still live below the poverty line. Women, children, and those living in rural areas are the most affected by poverty, these are the people RHCI is most heavily invested in.



# Dear Friends and Supporters,



As Vice Chair of the Board of the Rural Health Care Initiative (RHCI), I am honored to extend our deepest gratitude for your generous support over the past year. Your commitment to our mission has made a profound impact on the lives of women, children, and families in rural Sierra Leone.

Thanks to your contributions and support from grants, RHCI has continued its lifesaving work in **malaria prevention and treatment**, protecting vulnerable communities from one of the region's most persistent threats. Your support has also strengthened our **newborn home care program**, ensuring that mothers and their babies receive essential care during the critical first days of life.

One story that stands out is that of **Mariama**, a young mother from Tikonko Chiefdom. After giving birth to her son, she received a visit from one of RHCI's trained home care nurses. The nurse provided malaria prevention

education, newborn care guidance, and essential supplies. When Mariama's baby developed a fever, she knew exactly what to do—and thanks to early intervention, her son made a full recovery. Mariama later shared, "Without RHCI, I would have been alone and afraid. You gave me hope."

As we look ahead, RHCI is committed to expanding our reach and deepening our impact. Our goals for the coming year include:

- Increasing access to maternal and child health services in remote villages
- Training and equipping more Community Health Workers
- Enhancing our maternal waiting home program to support safe deliveries

Together, we are building a healthier future for Sierra Leone—one family at a time. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Marie Stodolka  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors

## RHCI Leadership Gathering in Bo

In January and February 2025, a team from RHCI-USA traveled to Sierra Leone to meet with in-country staff, community leaders, and beneficiaries. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen relationships, provide training, observe programs in action, and support the continued growth of RHCI's work in the Tikonko Chiefdom.

U.S. team members included Board Chair Ajayi Nicol, Lamin Foray, Riley and Nick Gaines, Julie Hoffer, Carol Nelson, and Inna Gabrielson. In May, board member and photographer Neil Craigan also visited Tikonko Chiefdom to document RHCI's work and impact.



*Pictured (Back Row): Juliana Sagba, Marie Songa, Neneh Vandy, Allieu Jongopie, Lansana Sesay, Mohamed Momoh, Dennis Moiwo, Alhaji Mehemoh, Moses Carter, Umu Shour, Mohamed Kabba Front Row: Isata Bah, Inna Gabrielson (ultrasound trainer), Julie Hoffer, Carol Nelson, Riley Gaines, Joseph Sogbandi*



*Meeting with the Bo District Medical Officer (DMO) in January 2025 at his office in Bo. Pictured left to right: Moses Carter, Carol Nelson, Neneh Vandy, DMO Dr. Amara Stevens Ngegbai, RHCI Board Chairperson Ajayi Nicol, Julie Hoffer, Joseph Sogbandi*

# Rural Health Redevelopment



## Training the Heart of the Community

In January 2025, thirty-five women from the Tikonko Chiefdom completed a 3.5-week maternal and newborn care training led by RHCI and Midwives on Missions of Service (MOMS), funded by the One Day's Wages grant.

The training covered pregnancy, delivery, newborn care, nutrition, infections, family planning, and more. These women—already trusted in their villages—are now better equipped to provide safe, informed care and to recognize when to refer patients for advanced treatment.

The team's graduation, held while RHCI staff from the U.S. were in Sierra Leone, was a moving celebration of their commitment and growth.

This past year, 125 CHWs have received focused training on topics such as malaria and malnutrition to strengthen RHCI's system of care. These women are transforming maternal and child health from the inside out—one village at a time.

In the remote villages of the Tikonko Chiefdom, access to healthcare is extremely limited. With no ambulance system in place, RHCI relies on four trucks, thirteen motorbikes, and even river crossings by canoe or on foot to reach patients. Last year, our transportation and outreach efforts helped deliver lifesaving care to even the most isolated communities. Last year, we provided:

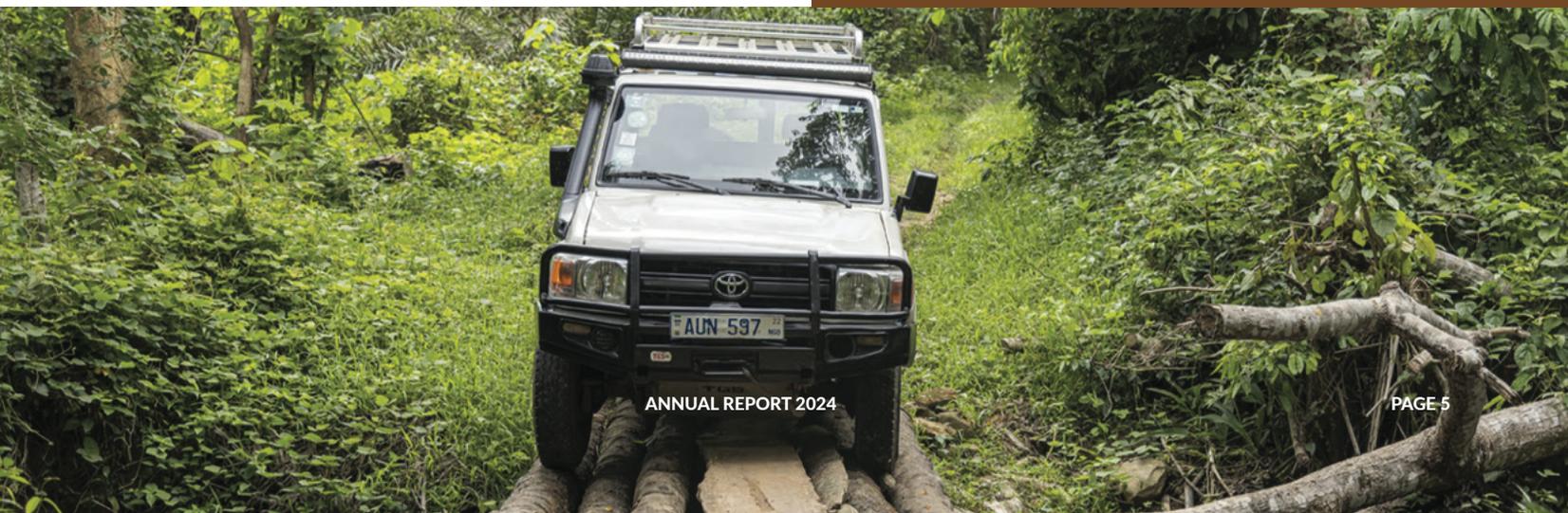
**13,441** Child medical visits at Outreach Clinics

**1,493** Prenatal care visits

**1,640** Patient visits at Peripheral Health Units

**219** Critically ill children with transportation and hospital expenses covered

**125** Community Health Workers trained



# Maternal Health Programs

Maternal mortality in Sierra Leone has improved significantly since 2010, yet it still remains 21 times higher than in the United States. In the past three years, no maternal deaths have been reported in the area of the Tikonko Chiefdom served by RHCI's comprehensive system of care. This system includes birth waiting homes, prenatal services, mobile outreach clinics, emergency transportation, support for hospital deliveries, family planning, and nutritional programs for mothers and children.

RHCI remains deeply committed to its mission: reducing maternal and child mortality in rural Sierra Leone and ensuring safer, healthier futures for women and families.

In the past year we've had:

**445** Pregnant and postpartum women stays at our Birth Waiting Homes



**212** Pregnant women referred to and supported at Bo Maternity Hospital



**5,002** Family Planning consultations and care



**402** Basic OB ultrasound scans performed



Mother and her twins at the Birth Waiting Home



## A Young Mother's Life is Saved

In April, 17-year-old Mariama from the village of Gondama was referred to Bo Government Hospital with severe pre-eclampsia. She underwent an emergency C-section and delivered a healthy baby. After a week, she began running a high fever and continued bleeding despite receiving six units of blood and IV antibiotics. Her hemoglobin dropped to a dangerously low level of 4, and her condition worsened.



Mariama and her baby

Fearing for Mariama's life, RHCI's Director, Neneh Vandy, arranged a transfer to the hospital in Kono District, which is staffed by Partners in Health, (PIH) for more advanced care. Neneh accompanied Mariama on the three-hour journey in an RHCI vehicle and ensured she was admitted promptly. At the Kono hospital Mariama was diagnosed, treated, and given two more units of blood.

After four days of hospital care, she was healthy enough to return home with RHCI transport. She and her baby recovered further at the Mbaomi Birth Waiting Home. Without RHCI's intervention and Neneh's swift action, Mariama may not have survived.



Elizabeth Williams, 25 years old expecting her second child

# Children's Health Programs

## Mariama's Story: A High-Risk Pregnancy



Community Health Worker, Mamie Bassie, holding Mariama's twins, Ibrahim and Neima

Another mother also named Mariama, joyfully welcomed healthy twin babies in early 2025—with RHCI's care ensuring the best possible start to their lives. Knowing her pregnancy was high-risk, Mariama stayed at our Tikonko Birth Waiting Home for two weeks before delivery and one week after her

C-section, receiving the medical attention she and her babies needed. "Thank RHCI for three safe lives," she said with deep gratitude.

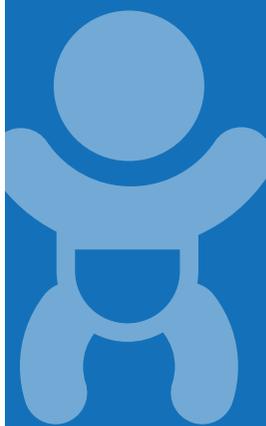
But the support didn't stop there. Through RHCI's Newborn Home Visit Program, Mariama and her twins received regular follow-up visits at home from a nurse and trained community health worker. These visits were critical in monitoring the babies' health, supporting breastfeeding, and educating the family on newborn care. By catching any early signs of illness and ensuring strong, healthy development in the first critical months, the program gave Mariama's twins the foundation every child deserves. Today, both babies are thriving—surrounded by love, care, and a healthier future.

Child health outcomes in Sierra Leone remain among the worst in the world. One in ten children do not survive to their fifth birthday, and the mortality rate for children under age five is 15 times higher than in the United States. RHCI's system of care continues to grow—bringing essential services like vaccinations, early malaria treatment, outreach clinics, hospital referrals, nutrition support, and community health education to the most vulnerable. Every child reached is a step toward changing these statistics and building a healthier future. Throughout the past year, RHCI's child health initiatives have reached families across the Tikonko Chiefdom through:

**2,149** Malnutrition Visits for children

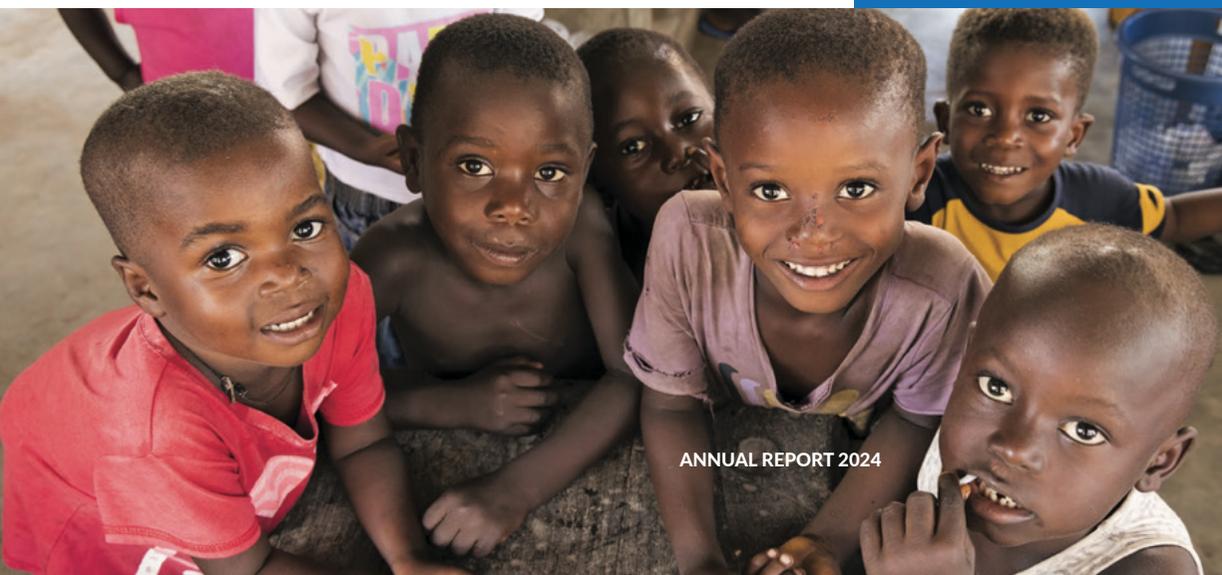


**2,567** Newborn Home Visits performed by nurses



**6,771** Visits for immunizations catch-up, vitamin A, and deworming medication

**3,251** Malaria Case Management Visits by Community Health Workers



# Food Security and Agriculture



Hunger continues to threaten the health and future of families in Sierra Leone. Over 2 million people are experiencing food insecurity, and 1 in 3 children are malnourished. Nearly half of women of reproductive age are anemic, often due to poor diet. RHCI works with three collective farmer-based organizations, maintains a large garden that supplies nutritious food to our Birth Waiting Homes, and trains the women staying there in basic gardening and nutrition.

This past year, RHCI provided continuous agriculture training and support to **45** farmers, who are estimated to be feeding around **315** family members. As a result of improved techniques, these farmers are now growing **300%** more food than before. In addition, an average of **27** participants per month attended weekly gardening and nutrition sessions at the Birth Waiting Homes, with some joining more than once during their stay. These efforts are helping families move toward year-round food security—and improving the health of mothers and children in the communities we serve.



## Mamie's Story: Transformational Change



Mamie Alfred, a Community Health Worker and Vice Chairwoman of her Farmer-Based Organization (FBO), reflects on the transformation she's seen.

She credits much of this progress to Milton Kabbia, RHCI's agricultural consultant from Njala University. "Mr. Kabbia is always

ready to support us when issues come up, like transportation. His techniques have made a big difference. We have the zeal to work because of the support and knowledge he shares with us."

"We are so much more organized now that Milton has helped us. Our planting is structured, and we use spacing techniques for groundnut. Before this FBO, it was difficult to grow enough food to feed

my family. Now, I grow groundnut in abundance—and I prepare it for my family by drying, boiling, or roasting it."



*Agriculture Supervisor, Patrick Vandy at RHCI's garden*

# RHCI Fights Malaria with Rotary



Meeting between RHCI and the Rotary Club of Bo - January 2025

Malaria remains one of the greatest threats to survival in Sierra Leone, with children under five years of age and pregnant women being most vulnerable. All areas of Sierra Leone experience malaria year-round. The most severe strain, *Plasmodium falciparum*, is the most common malaria parasite in the RHCI service area.

In 2024, RHCI distributed 35,000 insecticide-treated bed nets and provided diagnosis and treatment for 1,065 children by Community Health Workers in their home village. This demonstrated that trained CHWs can successfully implement Malaria Case Management (MCM) in their villages, significantly reducing child hospitalizations and deaths. MCM is now an integral part of RHCI's malaria work. This project was in partnership with the Rotary Clubs of Bo, Sierra Leone and White Bear Lake, Minnesota and Malaria Partners International. One Day's Wages has supported the ongoing operation of this program.

A new malaria project is focused on expanding access to the malaria vaccine for infants. Over 1,400 doses have already been administered in five months, with no malaria deaths reported among vaccinated children.

Looking ahead, the Rotary Club of White Bear Lake, Minnesota, and the Rotary Club of Bo, Sierra Leone, have submitted a grant proposal to expand the reach of these two pilot projects, with RHCI as the implementing partner. If funded, approximately 9,300 children will benefit—through malaria vaccines, testing, and treatment. Watch for more news as this effort grows.

*Rotary is a global network of service-minded individuals who unite to tackle the world's most pressing issues. Rotary has been instrumental in reducing global polio incidence by over 99%.*



CHW Wilfred Saffa Finnoh performing malaria testing



Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) for malaria



The team of nurses and other staff working on the malaria vaccine project

# RHCI and One Day's Wages

## Partnering for a Healthier Future



Rural Health Care Initiative is in the second year of a three-year grant from One Day's Wages (ODW), an organization committed to alleviating

extreme poverty by partnering with locally led organizations in underserved communities. Each year, RHCI is responsible for raising half of the grant funding through the support of our generous donors. Thank you to our many faithful supporters who continue to make this match possible.

The ODW grant supports a range of life-saving programs implemented by RHCI, including:

- **Newborn Home Visits** to reduce newborn deaths, improve health and provide support and education to caregivers;
- **Vaccine Home Visits** to eliminate vaccine preventable diseases and reduce severe cases and deaths from malaria
- 37 Community Health Workers completed an intensive one month **training program** to improve maternal and child health and promote positive health behaviors



*Isata with her twins, Joseph and Lilema, during a home visit from Nurse Janet in Gehelehun.*

- **Hospitalization support** for children and obstetric emergencies
- **Testing and treatment for malaria**, diarrhea illness and pneumonia in the villages by Community Health Workers
- **Motorbike outreach programs** for two health facilities and eight villages in remote hard to reach areas
- **Cooking demonstrations** for caregivers to support preparing nutritious meals with locally available foods
- **Transportation** support

These programs have directly contributed to the growth in RHCI's impact numbers in the Tikonko Chiefdom.

ODW believes that local leaders are best positioned to understand and address their communities' needs, and supports sustainable, systemic solutions that create a more just and beautiful world. RHCI is honored to be one of their trusted partners.



*Meet Kadiata and her 9-month-old twins, Hawa and Satu. In Gehelehun, they benefit from rice and formula provided through the ODW grant.*

# Partnership and Thank You

## Together We Make a Difference



This past year has shown us, once again, that it truly takes a village to advance RHCI's mission in Sierra Leone—and that our “village” extends far beyond financial donors. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has joined us on this journey:

Thank you to the Minnesota volunteers who organized, packed, and shipped barrels of essential supplies—your care literally fills the shelves in rural clinics. To our generous financial supporters, your contributions power every program we run. To the travelers—from ultrasound teams to volunteers—who journeyed to Sierra Leone, your hands-on engagement builds real-life impact. Our ultrasound team deserves special recognition for working side-by-side with in-country providers to strengthen prenatal care. To Julie Hoffer and the entire grants and Monitoring & Evaluation team: your diligence ensures that every dollar is stewarded and every outcome measured. Thank you to the Petrie Hanson

family for your gift that funded lifesaving trucks and motorbikes, and to our volunteer U.S. finance team for stewarding RHCI's resources with care. And a heartfelt thanks to Carol Nelson for her collaboration with Sierra Leonean hospitals on critical sickle cell initiatives.

We also celebrate our partnership with local and global allies: the Rotary Clubs of White Bear Lake and Bo; One Day's Wages; H<sub>2</sub>O for Life; Direct Relief Midwife Kits; Growing the Grassroots; Njala University; the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health; Malaria Partners International and Vitamin Angels. Your aligned mission amplifies our reach and creates lasting change.

Each barrel packed, each grant written, each trip taken, and each partnership forged strengthens RHCI's “system of care”—and changes lives. And it's not just us who are grateful. Time and again, when volunteers travel to Tikonko, they're met with heartfelt thanks from mothers, village chiefs, in-country staff, the District Medical Officer, and community leaders. Your support is seen, felt, and deeply appreciated. Together, we are building a healthier, more hopeful world.



# RHCI Financials

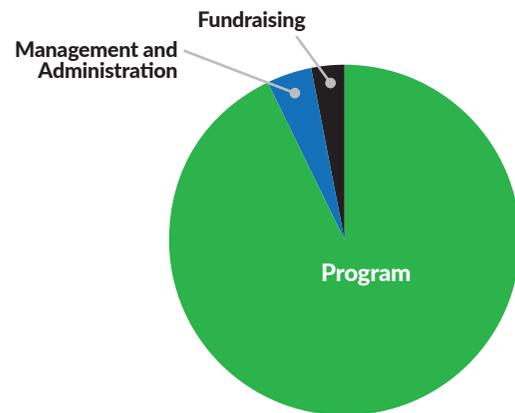
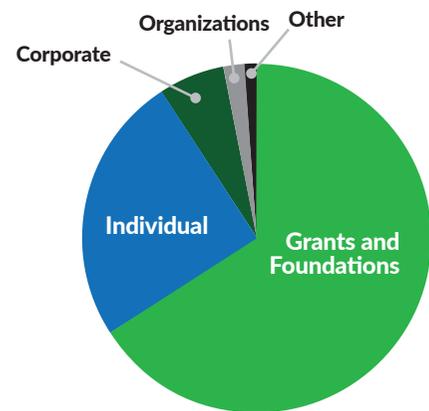
## Revenues

Grants and Foundations	\$ 310,312.17	
Individual	\$ 119,710.36	
Corporate	\$ 23,567.84	
Organizations	\$ 9,681.76	
Other	\$ 1,147.45	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 464,419.58</b>	

## Expenses

Program	\$ 399,405.18	93.22%
Management and Administration	\$ 14,986.55	3.50%
Fundraising	\$ 14,051.83	3.28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 428,443.56</b>	
Net Income	\$ 35,976.02	

*This past year, RHCI made significant capital investments to improve its operations, including two new four-wheel drive trucks, a new fleet of motorbikes, and essential medical equipment to better serve our beneficiaries. These expenses are included in the program expenses above.*



For updates follow us



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