



**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**  
**LION HEART FOUNDATION**



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## 1. Message from the board

The board looks back on a successful year at the Lion Heart Medical Center in Sierra Leone. In this annual report we take a closer look at the results achieved and the direction in which the hospital will move in the coming years. First of all, the board would like to express its gratitude to all employees and volunteers, inside and outside Sierra Leone, who care about the hospital and have worked (selflessly) for healthcare in Sierra Leone in sometimes difficult circumstances.

2023 is the third year of the transition process in which Lion Heart Medical Center in Sierra Leone is being developed towards our strategic objective: Making the Lion Heart Medical Center (LHMC) independent. Achieving this objective requires reinforcing organizational strength, increasing the competencies of employees and building financial self-supporting capabilities.

Steps have been taken on various points in the past year:

- Opening a water factory, focused on preventive healthcare and creating local sustainable income;
- Developing an outpatient clinic in the field of wound care, dental care and gynaecology. The clinic aims to provide more effective healthcare and create sustainable local income;
- Carrying out a High Risk Pregnancy Rooms project, aimed at treating complicated pregnancies;
- Commissioning new ultrasound equipment and additional CPAP capacity (breathing support);
- Major expansion of the solar installation (after a major setback: the explosion of the existing installation);
- A reconstruction of the waiting area for patients;
- Achieving the 'level 3' certificate from SafeCare (a certification organization), which means that the organizational strength has been strengthened;
- Continued capacity building through close attention to training and education.

In the context of becoming independent, the private hospital will ultimately be financed by contributions from patients (currently approximately 75% of the operating costs), income from projects, contributions from the central government in Sierra Leone and possibly some international funding. In addition, operating cost-efficiently will remain an important area of attention to ensure continuity.

We are grateful to the charity funds and donors for making the transition process and specific projects possible.

We are working step by step to implement the Transition Plan 2021-2025 to achieve independence. We are very grateful to our strategic partners (5 parties, including Wilde Ganzen) for agreeing to enter into a multi-year collaboration based on this plan in 2021. The collaboration increases the stability of the Lion Heart Foundation and makes it possible to work on the transition in a targeted manner.

Although the government's resources in Sierra Leone are limited, it is still important that the government takes some responsibility for the continuity of the hospital. The government did this by concluding a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with us in July 2021. The MoU includes a mutual obligation to make Lion Heart Medical Center independent. Under this MoU, LHMC is admitted to government medical programs, some staff members are paid by the government and the hospital receives a (small) government subsidy. In early 2023, a large government delegation from Sierra Leone visited the hospital for the official opening of the water factory, followed shortly afterwards by a visit by the Vice President, reflecting the good relationship with the government.

At the end of 2023, a delegation from the board had a meeting in the Netherlands with the Minister of Health in Sierra Leone, Mr. Austin Demby. Naturally, ideas were exchanged about the objective of independency of the hospital.

Important information after the year-end closing: On April 1, 2024, an important step was taken in the transition process to independence: As of the aforementioned date, Elijah Charles took on the role of Medical Superintendent. Elijah has worked as a Medical Officer at the hospital for the past two years, so he is already familiar with the organization. Together with Yan-kuba Sesay, Hospital Manager since the end of 2019, he forms the leadership of the hospital, which means that the LHMC is entirely led by people from Sierra Leone. The previous Medical Superintendent, Martijn Knap, has relinquished his responsibility on the aforementioned date, but he will remain available as a Medical Officer until June 1, 2024. As of July 1, 2024, Lisa Cornelissen, Medical Officer since June 2023, will resign from her duties; currently there is a vacancy.

Ronald Streekstra, treasurer, stepped down as a board member as of January 1, 2024. He contributed to the development of the hospital for almost 5 years, for which we owe him many thanks. Gerard Vesseur joined the board as treasurer on the same date. He has extensive financial knowledge and experience, has already fulfilled the role of treasurer in the period 2013-2017 and has served as a member of the audit committee in recent years. Ronald Streekstra is willing to take over the latter role starting 2025.

A delegation from the board visited the hospital at the beginning of October 2023. Areas of attention included the functioning of the water factory, innovations within the hospital, visiting departments, individual conversations with staff members and contact with local government officials. In addition, there have been a number of meetings with the Management Team focused on the path to independence. The delegation also met with representatives of the local community. It has been agreed to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), describing the relationship between the hospital and the community.

Our aim is to sign an MoU during a visit by a delegation of the board in May 2024. The intention is also to have a kick-off session with an Advisory Board in formation consisting of qualified members from Sierra Leone. This council will provide management with advice and assistance and can be seen as a precursor to a Supervisory Board after becoming independent.

The 2023 Lion Heart Foundation Award has been awarded to Commit and Act (CAF) Organization. CAF helps vulnerable people in difficult circumstances to make their lives more bearable. The Lion Heart Medical Center and CAF maintain good contacts and representatives of this organization visit their clients if they are admitted to our hospital. CAF also helps our patients, which is of great importance to them.

We would like to thank the management and employees of the hospital for the great effort and commitment they show every day in the hospital and the willpower with which they help the hospital move forward. We would also like to thank the volunteers who continue to work selflessly.



## 2. General information

The Lion Heart Foundation (LHF) operates the Lion Heart Medical Center (LHMC) in Sierra Leone. Since 2010, the hospital has been expanded from a small clinic to a general hospital with approximately 80 beds and approximately 90 employees. A water factory is also operated under the responsibility of the hospital, with 8 employees. The water factory serves preventive healthcare and creates sustainable income for the hospital.

The hospital is located in the heart of Sierra Leone, in a remote area. The catchment area includes approximately 150,000 people. The hospital focuses mainly on mother/child care. Sierra Leone is among the poorest countries in the world and its mother/child mortality is among the highest in the world. The average maximum lifespan in the country is 59 years. The Lion Heart Foundation's projects focus on reducing mother/child mortality and reducing mortality from (avoidable) causes. Approximately EUR 300,000 is needed annually to keep the hospital running. It is a challenge every year to raise this amount.





### 3. Objectives and policies

The mission of the Lion Heart Foundation is: to contribute to a better health situation in the hospital's catchment area by sustainably providing good, accessible and affordable medical care, with a focus on mother/child care.

The strategic objective is: The sustainable delivery of the above-mentioned medical care through an independently functioning Lion Heart Medical Center (LHMC), which is owned and managed by people from Sierra Leone.

The goal for Lion Heart Medical Center (LHMC) is to be a future-proof hospital by the end of 2025, which functions economically independently and professionally. The key words are:

- Continuity of care
- Independent hospital
- Professional acting
- Embedding in community

The capacities of the LHMC will be further built up in the period up to the end of 2025. New sources of financing are being opened up and (financial) support from the Lion Heart Foundation is being reduced. To this end, we have formulated 5 strategies:

1. Transforming from an international NGO (INGO) to a national NGO (NGO), which guarantees the ethical and controlled management of the hospital;
2. Achieving sustainable financing of the hospital by the local organization;
3. Developing a sense of responsibility and ownership for the LHMC in the local community;
4. Strengthening the relationship with central and local government and other possible stakeholders;
5. Gradually increasing the sense of urgency among all stakeholders.



## 4. Key figures

Financial overview Lion Heart Foundation\*.

	Werkelijk* 2023 €	Werkelijk 2022 €
<b>Benefits</b>		
Income from own fundraising	386.932	285.665
	386.932	285.665
<b>Spent on LHMC objective</b>	328.343	360.029
<b>Recruitment benefits</b>		
Own fundraising costs	1.645	1.718
<b>Management and administration costs</b>	4.065	5.056
<b>Total charges</b>	334.053	366.803
<b>Operating result</b>	52.879	-/- 81.138

\*The figures are still provisional; the final figures will be included in the 2023 Annual Accounts.

Key medical figures and most important medical revenue and cost categories in Sierra Leone (numbers unless otherwise stated):

	2023**	2022**	2021*	2020*
Visit Poli	7.536	6.837	6.857	5.354
lab. visits	14.890	14.550	14.782	8.670
Operations	776	826	924	540
X-ray patients	744	437	60	0
Patient personal contribution (EUR)	61.365	63.000	77.480	56.600
Medicines (EUR)	54.832	62.505	52.959	45.255
Medical staff costs (EUR)	157.597	134.000	112.988	122.169

\* Impact Covid-19

\*\* Major impact of high inflation in Sierra Leone / world market and depreciation of Leones against the Euro.

## 5. Developments LHMIC

### 5.1. Medical affairs (see also 5.5 Projects)

In 2023 the focus will be on:

1. Providing good and affordable healthcare to the population in Yele and surrounding areas;
2. Reducing maternal and child mortality, offering highly subsidized care for mothers and children
3. Strengthen cooperation with the government to provide more support for the hospital.

Below are examples of matters that have received attention:

- In 2023, 4 trainees from the 'German Doctor' training program for pediatric specialization for 'clinical officers' were trained in LHMIC.
- We contributed to the training of 2 different surgical officers as part of the CapaCare training program.
- A successful crowdfunding campaign has been set up to raise money to improve care surrounding childbirth. More than EUR 20,000 were raised!
- Two Dutch doctors in international healthcare & tropical medicine (AIGT) have completed the last part of their training at our hospital.
- We have had several Dutch interns do an internship in the hospital and we have also had Sierra Leonean nurses in training and 'clinical officers' in training with us. It emphasizes our status as a teaching hospital.
- The month of July was the hospital's busiest month of the past three years. Since we started keeping structured statistics, we never had as many admissions, deliveries and outpatient visits as this month. This month we performed more than 70 deliveries and had a total of more than 330 hospital admissions.
- In collaboration with the dentists from 'Dental Health International the Netherlands', we organized a three-day 'dental camp' where everyone could receive a free dental check-up and have any teeth extracted.
- A lot of energy was put into further improving our contacts with the central government to ensure support for the hospital.
- By contacting various hospitals in the Netherlands, we were given the opportunity to have 3 ultrasound machines come to Sierra Leone so that we could reduce our dependence on 1 machine.
- The collaboration with 'Delft Imaging' for the 'Babychecker research' has been extended again. Since 2021, we have been involved in this research in which artificial intelligence is being developed to detect high-risk pregnancies and refer them to the hospital in time.
- Around World AIDS Day in December, we as a hospital generated attention for this in Yele and the surrounding area by visiting all secondary schools and organizing a 'Quiz competition' between the schools.
- Three scholarships have been awarded to two 'nursing aids' to become certified nurses and to a 'clinical officer' to specialize as a 'surgical officer'. Furthermore, 4 other employees are developing further on a study grant from the hospital. This concerns four nurses, two of whom have obtained an official nursing diploma, one specializes as a 'surgical officer' and one is training to become a pharmacist.



## 5.2. Organization and HR

The hospital has an outpatient clinic and various admission departments (women, men, children, pregnant women), an operating room, a separate X-ray department, a laboratory and an isolation department.

The permanent staff includes 1 Medical Superintendent (MS), 1 Hospital Manager (HM), 2 Medical Officers (MO), 1 surgical CHO, Community Health Officers (CHO), 2 midwives, 23 registered nurses, 1 accountant, 1 cashier, 1 facility manager and approximately 40 others such as 'nursing aides' (approximately equivalent to a caregiver), drivers and cleaners. With the exception of the Medical Officers (Martijn Knap and Lisa Cornelissen), all come from Sierra Leone.

The LHMC is largely self-sufficient for water and electricity based on solar energy and batteries.

As every year, a lot of attention was paid to training and education of our employees in the context of capacity building. Training reduces dependence on expat doctors, which benefits the sustainability and self-reliance of the hospital.

Some staff members study thanks to a grant from the hospital. Every year, various applications for a grant are assessed by a local committee of the hospital. In 2023, there were 10 applications for 3 scholarships, which led to a selection process with a test and an interview. Ultimately, 3 candidates have been selected for further training in 2024. Two 'nursing aids' will obtain their official nursing diploma. One of the 'clinical officers' will specialize into a 'surgical officer'.





### 5.3. Financial matters

LHMC works on the basis of annually determined budgets, which are intensively monitored throughout the year. If necessary, adjustments will be made. LHMC is largely funded by the Lion Heart Foundation in the Netherlands. It also generates income through patient contributions, income from the hospital's water factory and kitchen.

LHMC's goal in the context of the 2021-2025 transition plan is to be able to fully cover its own operating costs. In anticipation of becoming independent, we aim for local salary costs to be financed as much as possible by income in Sierra Leone. One of the important strategies is that part of the staff is paid by the government as 'PIN coded employees'. To this end, we have intensified contacts with the government for many years. In 2023, 10 employees can be regarded as 'PIN coded employees'. Unfortunately, two of these left during the year without a replacement being obtained from the government.

One of the important pillars of a healthy financial LHMC is good financial control. A financial audit was carried out every year from the Netherlands until 2022. In 2023, a financial audit was carried out for the first time by a Sierra Leonean accounting firm. The hospital's financial administration has been examined, after which the annual accounts 2022 have been provided with a positive statement. Various areas for improvement have also been identified, which will be addressed expeditiously.





#### 5.4. Marketing communications

Our goal is to position LHF/LHMC in Sierra Leone as an A-brand, as an organization that functions professionally in all respects. This fits in with our strategy and benefits the confidence of lenders. From a marketing & communications perspective, we use various instruments, such as a website, social media and a monthly newsletter. Since 2022, Carlijn van Esch, partner of the former Medical Superintendent, has taken on the implementation of this as a volunteer. She acts as our local 'Communications Officer' and works together with the LHF Marketing & Communications volunteer, Max Kooijmans. The hospital posts almost daily messages on social media about activities within the hospital. Every week, LHMC organizes a radio show on the local radio station in which a department of the hospital explains a certain activity or a clinical picture. There is also room for questions from listeners. A monthly newsletter is sent to Dutch followers with short updates on developments in the hospital.

#### 5.5. Projects

Various projects were carried out in 2023, thanks to appropriate financial contributions from various charity funds and individual donations:

- Lion Heart Pure Water's water factory is open. Since January 2023, safe drinking water has been available in Yele and we are no longer dependent on the water factory in Magburaka (more than 1 hour's drive away). The proceeds from the water factory help to finance the hospital's running costs.
- The collaboration with 'Delft-Imaging' in the context of the baby checker study will be continued in 2023. This study attempts to develop artificial intelligence that can recognize high-risk pregnancies after a simple scan. With this scan, an ultrasound can be made with any telephone. Nurses are trained to make these scans at several health posts in our area. LHMC acts as a referral center for high-risk pregnancies and can confirm a possible abnormality.
- In 2023, we completed a full renewal of the battery bank of our solar energy system and added additional solar panels on the roof. As a result, we are now self-sufficient in electricity almost all year round.
- The construction of the 'patient waiting house' was completed in 2023 and will be opened in 2024. Thanks to this building, high-risk pregnant women can stay close to the hospital until the moment of delivery.
- A new waiting area for patients has been built next to the gate. This means patients no longer have to wait in a tent until they can be seen by the doctor. Separate rooms have also been created for triage, which provides the process with more privacy.
- In November 2023 we had a follow-up visit from 'SafeCare'. A certification organization of PharmAccess that provides hospitals with a quality mark. After our first assessment in 2022, this was the follow-up visit during which we rose from level 2 to level 3 (scale 1-5).

### 5.6. Government cooperation; "LHMC: visible on the map".

Since 2018, we have intensified contact with the government for various reasons. First of all, to increase the visibility of our organization. Due to the hospital's remote location, it has historically proven difficult to connect with existing programs and facilities. By regularly engaging with the 'District Health Management Team' (DHMT), the 'Deputy Minister of Health' and the 'Chief Medical Officer' at the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS), we have gradually managed to bring the hospital along to benefit from national programs. Examples of this are the malaria program, tuberculosis program, HIV program and 'family planning' program. In 2021, after much lobbying, we were included in the government's 'Free Healthcare' program. During 2023, deliveries of medication from the government to LHMC took place several times. The disadvantage is that deliveries are very unclear in terms of quantities and planning. This makes it difficult to adjust the purchasing policy regarding medication accordingly.

We also strive for more government support to cover employee costs. This takes shape by allowing some of the employees ('PIN coded employees') to be placed on the government payroll. A first step in this direction was taken in 2021, but unfortunately this could not be continued in 2022. In 2023, a total of eight employees can be regarded as 'PIN coded'. We continue to engage with the government to try to get our own hospital nurses onto the government payroll or to have such nurses placed with us in the hospital.

We also work intensively with the government at a local level. There are 22 government clinics located around our hospital that are responsible for primary care. We have intensive contact with the on-site employees so that they can discuss difficult cases directly with LHMC and, if necessary, send patients for admission and treatment. A training day is organized every two years for employees of these clinics to provide further training in the field of mother/child care.

In the past year we have visited all health centers in the vicinity of the hospital to provide education to the 'communities' at a local health post. At the same time, we offer 'on-the-job training' for employees, for example focused on dental care and malnutrition. Every week we visit one of the 20 clinics, so each clinic is visited twice a year. In this way, LHMC actively contributes to strengthening the local health system.





## 6. Board, management and volunteers

The (unpaid) board of the Lion Heart Foundation consists of:

- Reinier Hinse, chairman
- Ronald Streekstra, treasurer (until January 1, 2024)
- Gerard Vesseur, treasurer (from January 1, 2024)
- Truus de Ruiter, secretary
- Heleen Koudijs, board member
- Suzanne Bouman, board member

The management of the Lion Heart Medical Center (LHMC) consists of:

- Martijn Knap, Medical Superintendent (until April 1, 2024)
- Elijah Charles, Medical Superintendent (as of April 1, 2024)
- Yankuba Sesay, Hospital Manager

The Management Team of Lion Heart Medical Center consists of:

- Franklyn Ansumana, Finance manager
- Esther Sia Amara, Human Resources
- Mariama Kamara, Matron
- Moses Bangura, Facilities Manager
- John Stephenson Koroma, Secretary, laboratory manager

In addition to the management of the hospital, various doctors in training and nurses from the Netherlands have worked in the hospital for a shorter or longer period of time. We would also like to thank them for their contributions to the patients of our hospital.

The LHMC project falls under the INGO Lion Heart Foundation in Sierra Leone. There is a personal union between the LHF board and the INGO board.

The Lion Heart Foundation is supported by volunteers who contribute their expertise in many areas, such as:

- Nursing training
- Midwifery training
- Pediatric training and education
- Surgical expertise
- Laboratory expertise
- Logistics expertise
- Financial expertise
- Marketing communications
- Diverse materials

We would like to reiterate our thanks to all these volunteers, as stated in paragraph 1.