



ANNUAL REPORT 2024
LION HEART FOUNDATION

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1. Message from the board

The board is satisfied about the development of Lion Heart Medical Centre (LHMC) in Sierra Leone in 2024. In this annual report we take a closer look at the results achieved and the direction in which the hospital will move in this last year before the transfer of the hospital to Sierra Leone. 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, inside and outside Sierra Leone. We are also very grateful to the charity funds and donors for making the transition process to independence and specific projects possible.

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

- Continued capacity building through close attention to training and education in the hospital;
- Twice a year a training day for staff of the 22 government health centers (Peripheral Health Units (PHU's) in our catchment area;
- Opening High Risk Pregnancy Rooms, aimed at treating complicated pregnancies;
- The start of a project Staff Housing to create accommodation for governmental employees and qualified employees from remote towns;
- Expansion of the water factory, focused on preventive healthcare and creating local sustainable income. Revenue and profit have been increased;
- Developing and implementing a communication strategy based upon social media to enhance the exposure of the hospital and to increase the number of patients;
- Two hernia months;
- Two successful crowdfunding actions, Start them Right! and Act Fast, Save Lives!

In the context of becoming independent, the private hospital will ultimately be financed by contributions from patients (currently approximately 30% of the operating costs), income from projects, contributions from the central government in Sierra Leone and possibly some international funding. In addition, operating cost-efficiency will remain an important area of attention to ensure continuity.

2025 will be the last 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 Centre (LHMC) independent. Achieving this objective requires reinforcing organizational strength, increasing the competencies of employees and building financial self-supporting capabilities.

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, among them Wilde Ganzen and Oryx Stainless Group) 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.

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. Before taking this role Elijah has worked as a Medical Officer at the hospital for two years. Together with Yankuba 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 since April 2024. The previous Medical Superintendent, Martijn Knap, has relinquished his responsibility on the aforementioned date. He took the role of Medical Officer till June 1 2024 to allow a smooth transition. We like to express our thanks for his contributions to LHMC. Starting May 8 2024 Anne Snieder was named Medical Officer. In 2024 she was working together with Lisa Cornelissen, Medical Officer since June 2023 (her contract expired at January 1 2025; she has been succeeded by Laura Ouwerkerk as per January 15 2025). A delegation from the board visited the hospital in May 2024. Areas of attention included the functioning of the water factory and 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 and discussed the future of LHMC.

During this visit an important step was taken on the road to independence by establishing a local Advisory Board. The Advisory Board consists of 5 qualified members from Sierra Leone (refer to page 13). This council provides management and LHF Board with advice and assistance and can be seen as a precursor to a Supervisory Board after becoming independent. The Advisory Board had 2 meetings in 2024 and in between several exchanges took place on chair-level. Starting January 2025 Tripartite meetings (Advisory Board, LHF Board and LHMC management) will take place bimonthly to discuss the progress on the road to independence.

The 2024 Lion Heart Foundation Award has been awarded to René Scheeper. As a volunteer he committed himself to develop the laboratory facilities to a professional level. In about 10 years he supported this development very actively. We are grateful to René and thank him very much for his ongoing support.

Starting January 1, 2024. Gerard Vesseur joined the board as treasurer. Gerard 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, treasurer till January 1 2024, has replaced Gerard in the audit committee.

Heleen Koudijs left the LHF Board per January 1 2025. She has served the hospital as Medical Superintendent (MS) from September 2020 till April 2022. June 2022 she accepted the role as LHF board member. In this role she covered the area of medical affairs and organizational development for about 2½ years. The LHF Board likes to thank Heleen very much for her inspiring and dedicated contributions.

The year 2025 will be a challenging year to finalize readiness for the transfer of the hospital to Sierra Leone.

We are guided by a local law firm to establish a NGO-structure based upon good governance. Management is working hard to further enhance organizational strength and to improve financial results. Obviously the LHF Board and the Advisory Board are involved strongly.

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 85 employees. A water factory is also operated under the responsibility of the hospital, with 6 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) as a local NGO which is 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, 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*.

	Actual 2024* €	Actual 2023** €
Benefits		
Income from own fundraising	306.309	493.335
	306.309	493.335
Spent on LHMC objective	357.172	360.029
Recruitment benefits		
Own fundraising costs	6.045	1.645
Management and administration costs	6.974	4.065
Total charges	370.191	440.457
Operating result	-/- 63.882	52.879

* The figures are still provisional; the final figures will be included in the 2024 Annual Accounts.

** The figures 2023 have been adjusted. Contributions from Wild Geese have been included in Benefits and Charges now.

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

	2024	2023**	2022*	2021*
Visit Poli	6.285	7.536	6.837	6.857
Laboratory visits	29.722	14.890	14.550	14.782
Surgery	679	776	826	924
X-ray patients	745	744	437	60
Contribution from patients (EUR)	63.687	61.365	63.000	77.480
Medicin (EUR)	62.429	54.832	62.505	52.959
Medical staff costs (EUR)	135.303	157.597	134.000	112.988

* Impact Covid-19

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

5. Developments LHMC

5.1. Medical affairs (see also 5.5 Projects)

In 2024 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 2024, activities students on internships from the Paediatric Training Programme (PTP) funded by the 'German Doctors' and Surgical Training Programme of the CapaCare agencies respectively continued in LHMC.
- Two successful crowdfunding campaign were conducted to support maternal, neonatal and child health ('Start them right!' and 'Act fast, Save Lives').
- Four 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.
- A lot of energy was put into further improving our contacts with the central government to ensure support for the hospital.
- 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 were offered to 3 nurses to pursue: State Registered Nursing, Pharmacy and Surgical trainings.

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.

There were 85 permanent LHMC and MOH staff including: 34 Nurses and Nursing Aides, 2 Midwives, 1 Medical Superintendent, 2 expat Medical Officers (AIGT), 2 Surgical Officers, 5 community Health Officers (CHO), 1 Community Health Assistant (CHA), 2 Store Keepers, 1 HR Manager, 1 Facility Manager, 1 Assistant Technician, 1 Finance Manager, 1 Cashier, 1 Accounting Technician, 8 Cleaners, 3 Drivers, 8 Security Guards, 2 Cooks, 2 House keepers (Expat compound), 1 Gardener and 6 Water Factory staff.

The hospital has regular supplies of pipe-borne water and electricity (from solar and stand-by generator).

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.



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 2024, 10 employees were recruited by the Ministry of Health.

Considerable improvement was done in 2024 with the employment of a new Finance Manager - Franklyn Seppeh. He helped to standardize financial records. The Management Team intensified financial monitoring and supervision.

Financial activities of 2024 shall be audited by a chartered accountant in 2025.



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 LHF-website, social media and a monthly newsletter. Carlijn van Esch, partner of the former Medical Superintendent, is contributing to 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 2024, thanks to appropriate financial contributions from various charity funds and individual donations:

- The collaboration with 'Delft-Imaging' in the context of the baby checker study continued in 2024. This study attempts to develop artificial intelligence that can recognize high-risk pregnancies after a simple scan. With this scan, an ultra sound 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.
- The Patient's Waiting House was opened to patients that do not need admission but need some medical attention over a limited period of time. This includes high-risk pregnancies at advanced gestational age in particular.
- Construction of two blocks of staff houses, each with 7 apartments was started.
- Our solar system was expanded to meet the growing electricity needs of the hospital with increased activities

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

Since 2018, our collaboration with the government of Sierra Leone has grown through line ministries like the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED). The registration of the hospital is renewed with the two relevant ministries.

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, 'family planning' program and the government's 'Free Healthcare' program. 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'. In 2024, 10 employees were recruited by the Ministry of Health. We continue to engage with the government to try to get own hospital nurses onto the government payroll or to have such nurses placed 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 twice a year 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 22 clinics, so each clinic is visited twice a year. In this way, LHMC actively contributes to strengthening the local health system.

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6. Board, management and volunteers

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

- Reinier Hinse, chairman
- Gerard Vesseur, treasurer
- Truus de Ruiter, secretary
- Heleen Koudijs, board member (till January 1 2025)
- 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 Seppeh, Finance manager
- Esther Sia Amara, Human Resources
- Mariama Kamara, Matron
- Moses Bangura, Facilities Manager
- John Stephenson Koroma, Secretary, laboratory manager

The (unpaid) Advisory Board consists of:

- Professor Mohamed Syed Fofanah (Phd), Pro-Vice Chancellor Njala University, Chairman;
- Peter Laurence Tucker, Chartered accountant, Member of the Presidential Taskforce Unit;
- Dr. Jimisa, District Medical Officer;
- Kadiatu Sunthuba Fofanah, Public Health professional;
- Princess Sesay, Education expert

In addition to the management of the hospital, various AIGT-doctors, 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.

Pictures Carlijn van Esch.