



ANNUAL REPORT 2025
LION HEART FOUNDATION

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1. Message from the board

Past year has been a crucial year in the development of the hospital, the Lion Heart Medical Centre (LHMC). After several years of preparation 2025 was the transition year on the road to independence. Independence has been the ultimate goal from the very beginning in 2010. Achieving this objective required reinforcing organizational strength, increasing the competencies of employees and building financial self-supporting capabilities.

In 2020, the LHF board decided that the handover of the hospital to a local governance structure should take place at the end of 2025. Based upon the plan 'LHMC Independence 2021-2025' we executed 5 strategies towards independence. In 2025 we have been intensively involved to further prepare management and staff in this last transition year. 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.

As always, we are very grateful to the charity funds and donors for making the transition process and specific projects possible. With the support of 6 LHF-partners and some others we have been able to fund the 5-year transition period. As not every partner likes to be mentioned we limit ourselves to mentioning Wild Geese and Oryx Stainless Group, a leading global processor and trader of stainless steel scrap blends used as secondary raw material for the production of new, virgin stainless steel. Without the help of all contributors LHMC would not be in the position as obtained.

As an independent private hospital the Lion Heart Medical Centre (LHMC) will have to be financed by contributions from patients (currently 29% of the operating costs), income from projects, income from the own water factory, contributions from the central government in Sierra Leone and possibly international funding. In addition, operating cost-effectiveness will remain an important area of attention to ensure continuity.

Knowing that the funding of the transition period would come to an end after 2025, we reinforced local efforts to create more hospital income and to control costs. In the transition period we invested in projects that would create sustainable local income, in the medical as well as the non-medical area, such as the water factory. In 2025, additional income was also generated by price increases. Opportunities in this area are restricted though because patients are poor and the hospital is meant to serve the poorest people. We have spent a lot of time to boost the water factory as this facility showed a very good (potential) profit margin. We have encouraged the hospital management to develop many opportunities in general from idea into execution. We have presented new marketing approaches to benefit more from existing facilities like private rooms and patient waiting houses. The ambition was targeted upon creating more exposure for the hospital in order to attract more patients. To improve exposure, also communication approaches based upon social media have been developed further. In the aforementioned process we gave a strong guidance to strengthen the management power in every dimension, including reporting and meeting deadlines.

Naturally we put a lot of effort in guiding the 2026 budget process. As LHF resources will be much more limited in 2026 a reliable budget and strong budget management becomes even more important. Management developed 4 scenarios varying from 'business as usual' to 'worst-case scenario' (meaning reducing services to core mother and child care). Management has chosen for the scenario 'business-as-usual' as a guiding principle, which represents quite a challenge as a part of the budgeted deficit has not been covered yet.

In 2025 a group of Dutch expats doctors who have previously worked in the hospital have started a 'Friends of Lion Heart Medical Centre' member group with the aim of collecting periodic donations from 'friends', which will be used to financially support the hospital with selected projects. At this moment, some 60 friends are part of the member group.

To enable the administrative transfer of LHMC to Sierra Leone the establishment of a local NGO has been explored in 2025. A reliable local NGO based upon good governance and managed by expert directors is an obvious condition as a final step. Research guided by a local law firm, Brewah & Co, resulted in a Company by Limited Guarantee (CLG) as the intended legal structure. The CLG will be administered by a Board of Directors, a one tier board comprising of executive and non-executive members. This exploration process was quite difficult and time consuming as a result of which we had to postpone the intended handover which was planned at January 1, 2026. We now aim upon June 1, 2026. After handover, LHF will continue to work with LHMC, from then on as a friendly foundation which will provide support where possible.

Important governance information after the year-end closing: Anticipating the CLG, in early 2026 we took an interim-step within the current LHMC governance structure. We decided to establish a Supervisory Board (SB) within LHMC, with immediate effect. The members are Professor Mohamed Syed Fofanah (Chairman of the Board), Dr. Augustine Jimissa (District Medical Officer, Tonkolili district), John Bosco Massaquoi Esq.(Legal Officer), Bai Komp Kanasang III (Paramount Chief of Gbonkolenkeh Chieftdom), Madam Yabom Seasay (Chairperson Tonkolili District Council) and Mr. Lansana Senesie (Accountant). These members of the Supervisory Board are the same people as the members of the intended Board of Directors when the CLG has been established. At that moment we can end the Supervisory Board and replace this body by the Board of Directors. The Supervisory Board will function based upon a 'Charter of the LHMC Supervisory Board'.

This decision meant that we ended the Advisory Board, also with immediate effect. We like to thank the members of this Board very much for their willingness to take a seat in the Advisory Board in the past two years. We are very grateful to Professor Mohamed Syed Fofanah especially. He showed to be very committed and dedicated and we benefited from his contribution tremendously. We like to thank him very much.

Our message clarifies that we and LHMC still have a lot to do to improve the position of the hospital. The strategy to create sustainable local income is successful, but the hospital still needs a few years to achieve sufficient financial balance. Sustainable local income is the only way forward to guarantee continuity and to no longer be (so strongly) dependent on contributions from abroad as an independent hospital. With the latter as a goal in mind we have formulated the project 'Future-proof LHMC 2026-2028'. In this plan we defined 8 policy lines to achieve this goal. Realizing the project will mean that the hospital will become self-supporting in all respects and that continuity as an independent hospital is guaranteed. LHF committed itself to try to raise money to execute this plan.

Although the government's resources in Sierra Leone are limited, it is still important that the government takes 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.

The 2025 Lion Heart Foundation Award has been granted to Max Kooijmans, our volunteer Marketing & Communication. Since 2018 he has been involved in LHF as a volunteer to support marketing and communication. He pushed the development of new websites, the use of social media and launched the monthly LHF newsletter, all still in place. It was great that he engaged his personal network too to provide all kinds of related services without costs.

We would like to thank the management and employees of the hospital once more 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) is a Dutch foundation (“Stichting”) that operates the Lion Heart Medical Center (LHMC) in Sierra Leone. Since 2010, the hospital has expanded from a small clinic to a general hospital with approximately 80 beds and approximately 80 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 and rural 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 200.000 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 aforementioned 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, which functions economically independent and in a professional way. The key words are:

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

The plan 'Future-proof LHMC 2026-2028' formulates 8 policy lines:

1. Strengthening the quality of management based on skills that match what the next phase requires.
2. Increasing the profitability of previously made investments.
3. Investing in new projects that generate sustainable local income.
4. Strengthening the strategic positioning and marketing of the hospital to attract more (profitable) patients who generate higher income.
5. Strengthening income and cost management by investing in planning & control (monitoring, analysis, business control).
6. Further investing in training and education, such as scholarships based on the 'Education Policy'.
7. Safeguarding the acquired medical skills and further knowledge transfer through 'training on the job' by expats and expert volunteers.
8. Safeguarding good employment practices.



4. Key figures

Financial overview Lion Heart Foundation*.

	Actual 2025* €	Actual 2024 €
Benefits		
Income from own fundraising	238.124	306.310
	238.124	306.310
Spent on LHMC objective	236.079	357.173
Recruitment benefits		
Own fundraising costs	843	6.045
Management and administration costs	12.096	6.974
Total charges	249.018	370.192
Operating result	(10.894)	(63.882)

*The figures are still provisional; the final figures will be included in the 2025 Annual Accounts.

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

	2025	2024***	2023**	2022*	2021*
Visits, Outpatient	6.075	6.285	7.536	6.837	6.857
Laboratory visits	15.280	29.722	14.890	14.550	14.782
Surgeries	668	679	776	826	924
X-ray patients	709	745	744	437	60
Patient personal contribution (EUR)	119.705	73.314	61.365	63.000	77.480
Medicines (EUR)	87.226	71.865	54.832	62.505	52.959
Medical staff costs (EUR)	179.485	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.

*** Management Team 100% made up of local staff since 1st April 2024

5. Developments LHMC

5.1. Medical affairs

In 2025 the focus was placed on:

- Preparing for the shifting of responsibilities from the international Board (LHF) to a local board, marking the end of the transition period on 31st December 2025;
- Continue the provision of good quality and affordable healthcare to the population in Yele and surrounding areas;
- Reducing maternal and child mortality, offering highly subsidized care for mothers and children;
- Strengthen cooperation with the government to provide more support for the hospital;
- Increase collaboration with other agencies – Delft Imaging systems.

Below are examples of matters that have received attention:

- 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;
- A successful crowd funding campaign to raise 6,840 Euros was conducted by LHMC Expats towards the sustainability of LHMC after its independence from international support;
- The contracts of the last 2 expatriates employed by LHF ended;
- A few local post-graduate Medical Officers were posted for internships who also provided support to the medical team;
- Our hospital continued to serve as a Teaching Hospital, attracting Interns, both internationally (Dutch Interns) and nationally - Medical Officer, Nursing, Community Health Officer, Clinical and Surgical trainees;
- We strengthened our collaboration with the Ministry of Health to ensure support for the hospital;
- In addition to the ongoing BabyChecker Research at the government’s Peripheral Health Units (PHU), Lion Heart Medical Centre also launched a comparative BabyChecker Research with support from Delft Imaging Systems. The research focused on comparing the scanned results of Babychecker device with that of the standard ultra-sound scan machine of 500 selected pregnant women from our catchment area. The research identifies at-risk conditions in pregnancy with the aim to prevent any potential danger to the mother and baby during and after delivery;
- The ‘BabyChecker research’ at the government PHUs (Health Centres) started since 2021, which involves the identification of high-risk pregnancies through an AI software linked to the BabyChecker device and referral of the cases to LHMC, but we mainly played a collaborative role without directly involving in the research;
- Cervical Cancer Screening project was implemented in LHMC- funded by Female Cancer Foundation (Holland): A 2–year project with the possibility of extension. The focus is to screen women of reproductive age for potential cervical cancer. In the first year, 2000 women were proposed for screening and 3000 in the second year;
- We organized HIV/AIDS related quiz competition among local secondary schools in commemoration of the International World AIDS Day – December.

5.2. Activities of Lion Heart Medical Centre

- Outpatient Department/Triage;
- Laboratory tests and Blood banking;
- X-ray and Ultrasound scanning;
- Surgical care for various conditions such as obstetric emergencies, hernia, hydrocele, wound care, orthopaedic care (such as external fixation), laparotomy, appendectomy, myomectomy etc.;
- Admission of adult females and males, maternal cases and children;
- Antenatal care;
- Delivery and Obstetric emergencies;
- Family Planning;
- Outpatient Cervical cancer screening;
- Outreach activities: cervical cancer screening, health promotion;
- Dental care;
- Trauma and Emergency Care;
- Care Unit (HIV Unit) – supported by Jhpiego;
- BabyChecker Research – supported by Delft Imaging Systems, the Netherlands;
- Training hospital – medical students, nurses, midwives and CHOs, paediatric, clinical and surgical training;
- Ambulance services.



5.3. Organisation and Human Resources

The overall Team of the Hospital (2025) comprises: 80 staff – including 4 staff studying on LHMC scholarship and Expatriates:

- Medical Team: 1 National Medical Officer/Medical Superintendent - Dr. Elijah Charles (MD, MPH), 2 Expatriate Medical officers, 1 Matron, 5 Community Health Officers (CHOs), 2 Surgical Officers, 2 Paediatric Clinical Officers, 2 Midwives, 3 Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Aides, 2 X-ray Technicians, 4 Lab Technicians, Nursing Aides, State Registered Nurses (SRNs), State Enrolled Community Health Nurses (SECHNs);
- Non-medical Team : Hospital Manager - Yankuba Sesay (BSc Hons., MPH) – responsible for general administration/non-medical, 1 Finance Manager, 1 Accountant, 1 Cashier, 1 Human Resource Manager, 1 Facility Manager, 1 Assistant Technician and support staff (drivers, security guards and Cleaners).

We offered 4 scholarships to staff for training in Community and Clinical Science, Midwifery, Accounting and Computer. LHMC has been certified by SafeCare at level 3 (out of a Maximum level 5) following 2 assessments visits- an improvement from Level 2 in 2022 to Level 3 in 2023. SafeCare is an international organization, with its management team based in the Netherlands, operating in over 25 countries. It evaluates the quality of healthcare services in resource-limited settings and provides practical guidance to help facilities address gaps and continuously improve their standards of care.



5.4. Power and Water Supplies

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

5.5. Capacity Building

We conduct regular in-service training and support our deserving staff with education scholarship as a strategy of capacity building. This is part of our education policy.



Reproductive Healthcare Training on Cervical Cancer Training



Neonatal Resuscitation by Ministry of Health.

5.6. 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, starting from January 2026. 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.

The number of Ministry of Health staff (pin-coded staff) increased from 10 in 2024 to 21 in 2025. While this did not reduce salary expenditures in the short term, due to increased staffing levels and the replacement of expatriates with two higher-paid local Medical Officers, it was expected to lower long-term staffing costs, as the hospital will not bear responsibility for NASSIT contributions, NRA obligations or end-of-service benefits.

After the 2024 financial audit, improvements were made in the financial management system. The 2025 financial accounts shall be audited in 2026.

5.7. 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 international volunteer '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 and subscribers of the hospital staff with short updates on developments in the hospital.

5.8. Projects

Various projects were carried out in 2025, thanks to appropriate financial contributions from various charity funds and individual donations:

- 5.8.1. The Delft Imaging funded and supported a BabyChecker versus standard Ultra-sound scanning comparative research conducted by LHMC in 2025. The research aims to evaluate a diagnostic accuracy of babychecker device compared with conventional ultra-sound scanning;
- 5.8.2. Construction of Two blocks of staff houses, each with 7 apartments continued;
- 5.8.3. We procured new tricycle truck for the water factory in order to enhance the distribution of stock within the community.



5.9. SafeCare Certification and Quality Recognition

SafeCare issued the Lion Heart Medical Centre a level 3 certificate (out of a maximum Level 5) following 2 assessments visits, reflecting an improvement from Level 2 in 2022 to Level 3 in 2023.

The assessment demonstrated the hospital's compliance with internationally recognized healthcare quality and patient safety standards, highlighting the commitment to continuous improvement and quality service delivery.

SafeCare is an international organization headquartered in the Netherlands and operating in over 25 countries. It assesses the quality of healthcare services in resource-limited settings and provides practical guidance to help facilities identify gaps and continuously improve standards of care,

5.10. 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 with the two ministries was renewed.

We doubled our Ministry of Health staff population in 2025 through our continued cooperation with the relevant authorities. At local level, we worked intensively with the government. There are 22 government clinics located around our hospital that are responsible for primary care. We maintained collaboration with the staff of peripheral MOH facilities who refer complicated cases directly to LHMC for further review 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.

Every week, we conducted outreach clinics on maternal and child health care services and screening of women for cervical cancer at government health centers.

6. Partners

- Ministry of Health & Sanitation – pays MOH staff, provides free health care drugs, donates Lab test kits and medications for TB and HIV cases;
- Wilde Ganzen (Donor Agency – Holland, provided 1/3 of funding to the hospital);
- Female Cancer Foundation (Holland) – funds the cervical cancer screening project in LHMC;
- Delft Imaging Systems (Holland) – manufacturer of Digital X-ray and supports BabyChecker research
- Friends of Lion Heart Medical Centre (Holland) – former LHMC Expats. They support with crowd-funding on behalf of LHMC;
- Jhpiego (HIV project – Sierra Leone);
- Insulin For Life (Holland) – donates insulin;
- Vitamin Angels (USA) – regularly donates prenatal vitamins and Albendazole tablets for pregnant women in LHMC;
- FG Gold – mining in Mbaomahun, neighbouring chiefdom (Bo District). We treat their patients;
- Ritcorp Insurance Company (Freetown) – medical bills of FG Gold are paid through the company at Ecobank, based on written MOU;
- Oryx Stainless Group, a leading global processor and trader of stainless steel scrap blends used as secondary raw material for the production of new, virgin stainless steel.



7. Awards

We are proud we received next awards:



Humanitarian Goodwill Award (NASSIT)



National Social Security and Insurance Trust



8. Board, management and volunteers

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

- Reinier Hinse, chairman
- Gerard Vesseur, treasurer
- Truus de Ruiter, secretary
- Suzanne Bouman, HR

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

- Elijah Charles, Medical Superintendent - Leader with prime responsibility Medical
- Yankuba Sesay, Hospital Manager – Leader with prime responsibility Non-Medical

The Management Team of Lion Heart Medical Center consists of:

- Franklyn Ansumana Seppeh, 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 members of the LHMC Supervisory Board are:

- Professor Mohamed Syed Fofanah (Chairman of the Board)
- Dr. Augustine Jimissa (District Medical Officer, Tonkolili district)
- John Bosco Massaquoi Esq.(Legal Officer)
- Bai Komp Kanasang III (Paramount Chief of Gbonkolenkeh Chiefdom)
- Madam Yabom Seasay (Chairperson Tonkolili District Council)
- Mr. Lansana Senesie (Accountant).

The LHMC project falls under the INGO Lion Heart Foundation in Sierra Leone. The board members of the Dutch NGO LHF serve also on the International (INGO) LHF 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.

All photos are by photographer Janna Blom in Sneek www.jannablomfotografie.com