

Restore Hope: Liberia Annual Report 2018

RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA

a project of the Restore Hope Fund, TIDES Foundation

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

FY 2018 • JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018

PROGRAM SUMMARY

RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA has made significant strides in its programming during the fiscal year 2018. The challenges for program expansion are constrained primarily by limited resources.

Our staff in Liberia has carried the program forward and our partner and Head of Programs, Margret Gieraths-Nimene of MAGIF continues to lead RHL in Liberia, advancing the program in strategic ways and ensuring that field operations remain transparent, of quality and accountability.

We ended the previous fiscal year with 85 beneficiaries enrolled and we have since expanded to 106. The need is tremendous and there is a waiting list of more vulnerable children for when RHL has the resources to serve a greater number of children and households.

We have expanded from 85 enrolled beneficiaries to 106.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Four RHL beneficiaries graduated from secondary school wishing to attend the local community college. RHL responded with support by creating a process for those students who maintain passing grades and who agree to return to Kolahun to work for each year RHL supports them in post-secondary education. RHL instituted a scholarship fund, in memory of Rob & Liz Rufsvold, to ensure more aspiring students will have the opportunity to further their education.

A scholarship fund will provide opportunities to go to college.

The after-school tutorial program continues to be well attended. We now have six tutors, each assigned to specific grades, to support the students' education. Several positive developments have increased the program's quality including a large donation of books, weekly home visits to students who live too far to attend the tutorial center, and a monthly reporting requirement to ensure monitoring and transparency.



HEALTH PROGRAM

While RHL has worked to redirect its monthly nutrition support to provide cash distributions via mobile money, the logistics have proved too challenging and the mobile money system in Liberia too limited. Food distributions have continued monthly, without disruption, over the course of the year. Going forward, RHL will continue food distributions through the rainy season of the coming year and then transition to direct cash distribution, until such time that the mobile money system in Liberia is more advanced. Liberia is no longer food insecure and we have no malnutrition amongst our beneficiaries. Yet, Kolahun remains beset by poverty and cash distributions will provide households with the agency to meet their most pressing needs, while also supporting the local economy.

RHL's strength lies in its direct contact with beneficiaries and households. By providing opportunities in health, education, and economic development, we ensure that the program is addressing the whole person, the whole household. Home visits are an essential component to our holistic approach and the Program Coordinator has been conducting home visits weekly providing psychosocial support, as well as encouraging ongoing dialogue between caregivers and RHL.

Due to a near fatal health incident with one of our beneficiaries, RHL made the decision to hire a Registered Nurse to be based in Kolahun full time to enable us to more closely monitor the health status of our beneficiaries as many have significant health challenges and the health system in Kolahun remains very limited.

In early June, our newest staff member, Gladys Zabay, RN, relocated to Kolahun and began her work with RHL. She is making weekly home visits to assess the health and wellbeing of our beneficiaries and is responsible for the overall health and nutrition program. Having an RN on staff will ensure better health outcomes for the children, many of whom need specialized care, and will enable RHL to grow the health program in time.

Though her work has just begun, she has already made some very important observations and recommenda-

tions to strengthen the program. She will be improving the efficacy of health promotion messages with locally appropriate visual aids. She will be tracking more detailed health data to ensure each beneficiary is being monitored attentively. She will also be assessing the morning Health Talks at the Kolahun hospital, which RHL initiated, to ensure the messages are accurate, appropriate, and effectively shared. She echoes the dire situation of medications and the lack thereof in Kolahun, which is a hardship for many, particularly a number of our beneficiaries.

One way that RHL has expanded the health program and reached out into the community is by meeting a request of the community for Sexual & Reproductive Health curriculum in schools. RHL staff in Kolahun worked with the Peace Corps Volunteer in the area to hold S&RH workshops in the schools, which older students, caregivers and school staff attended. These will be held periodically at various schools in the area with annual training workshops for peer leaders.

Having an RN on staff will ensure better health outcomes.



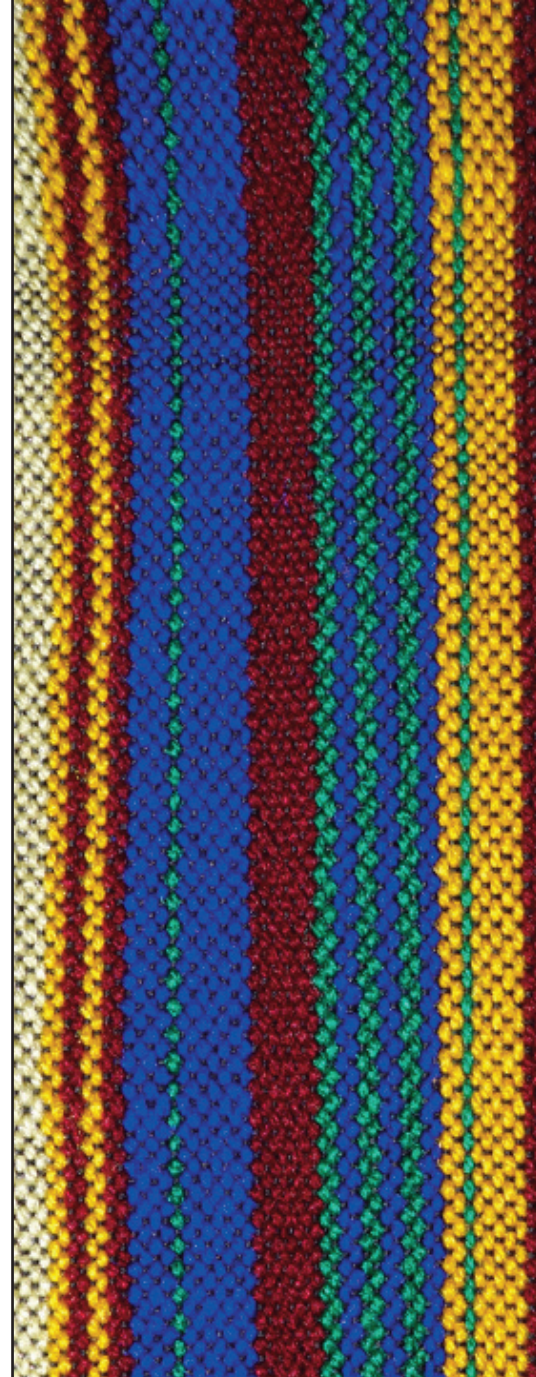
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Women's Weaving Cooperative continues with its second cohort of apprentices. RHL was successful in securing a grant from Friends of Liberia to support the Cooperative. We are exploring markets for the Country Cloth they weave in Liberia and the U.S. and have had a number of them sold at the GERLIB clinic in Monrovia.



Construction of our Vocational & Education Training (VET) center in Kolahun has begun.

Our partner MAGIF has secured a grant from the German Embassy to build a Vocational and Education Training center in Kolahun. This center will provide much needed shelter for the Women's Weaving Cooperative and provide a space for trainings such as the 4-month business skills training to be offered in the fall of 2018. RHL purchased one acre of land, located on the main road into town, to be the site for the center. The construction has begun and the community at large is very pleased with the addition of new infrastructure in Kolahun, a space to be used for the community's good.



OTHER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS

The Kolahun Crescendo Project began with co-founder Dr. Barbara Burke's visit to Kolahun in the spring of 2018, distributing cameras to women and girls in the community to begin capturing their lives on camera. This project was borne out of Ann Jones' previous work in Kolahun in 2007. This project will be ongoing and RHL hopes to display the photographs in an exhibit to promote RHL's work.

We collaborated again this year with Anything Is Everything, a nonprofit created by one of our advisors, Darlington Martor. His team delivered a shipment of donated goods to the children and caregivers of RHL.

*With adequate resources,
we can meet challenges.*

Overall, RHL has continued its regular support of beneficiaries, increased its presence in the community through the S&RH trainings, purchase of land, new staff, creation of the Scholarship and Emergency Medical Fund, and securing funding for the WWC and Vocational & Education Training Center. However, there remain many challenges ahead.

Expanding our donor base and garnering support from foundations is critical to our sustainability. With adequate resources, the challenges of staffing and program expansion are feasible.



*A shipment of donated goods
was delivered to the community.*

RHL is making concerted efforts to expand its fundraising through foundations and individual donors. RHL held its second end-of-year fundraising drive, which was modest in its results. We have decided to send quarterly newsletters as a means to reach potential donors in our database rather than compete with the end of year fundraising.



ACTIVITIES

(The information for this section was compiled from the monthly activity reports.)

Programmatic Developments

- End of year online fundraising campaign through Network for Good, a donor software management system to which RHL has subscribed.
- Hiring of a Liberian national Registered Nurse to be stationed in Kolahun, full time.
- Continued partnership with Anything is Everything (AIE) nonprofit, providing our beneficiaries with donated goods.
- Recipient of two grants: Friends of Liberia and the German Embassy, for support to the WWC and the building of a Vocational Education & Training (VET) Center, respectively.
- The purchase of 4 lots (approximately 1 acre) of land in Kolahun to be the site of the VET center.
- Set up two reserve funds: The Rob & Liz Rufsvold Scholarship fund and an Emergency Medical Reserve fund.

Educational Support

- All able school aged children enrolled in schools.
- Supplied each child with book bag, books, writing utensils, uniforms, donated clothing, and sanitary care items for girls.
- Paid West African Examination Council (WAEC) fees for students in the graduating class wishing to pursue higher education.
- Tutoring school is running Monday through Thursdays 3:00-5:30 with one tutor assigned to conduct home visits to those students residing too far to the tutorial school to attend.
- Approximately 250 library books donated to RHL, currently in use at the office and tutorial school.
- Held meetings with teachers and guardians.

Guardian Participation

- Conducted monthly home visits.
- Provided psychosocial support to guardians (as well as children) during monthly home visits.
- Guardians met with school administration and requested regular meetings in the future for information sharing.
- Adult literacy classes are offered two days a week.
- All guardians signed the Child Protection Policy.
- Guardians attend the monthly caregiver's meeting held by RHL.

Community Engagement & Advocacy

- Meetings held with local authorities, including the Mayor, District Commissioner, and Paramount Chiefs.
- Attend monthly NGO Health Coordination meeting for Lofa County.
- Attend the Health Sector meeting.
- Meetings held with school principals.
- Meetings held with CSOs and Faith Communities, local churches.
- Vulnerable Women's Group formed of women whose husbands have died or "left".
- Coordinated health talks with Hospital.
- RHL has provided the Kolahun Hospital with an in-kind donation of diesel fuel in response to an urgent request for support as they experienced a funding gap and could not operate their generators.
- Initiated the Kolahun Crescendo Photography project

Health Care

- Provided monthly food distribution to beneficiary households with rice, beans, oil, and soap.
- The newly employed RN began work with RHL in Kolahun at the beginning of June.
- One beneficiary, with significant health needs, was transferred to Monrovia due to the lack of sufficient health care available in Kolahun and is being supported by an approved foster family in Monrovia.
- Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH) peer-to-peer training was conducted in collaboration with Peace Corps Volunteers.

Income Generating Initiatives

- The Women's Weaving Cooperative continues with its second cohort of apprentices.
- A 4-month business skills training is being planned for the apprentices (past and present cohorts).
- Approximately 75 bolts of country cloth have been produced by the WWC.

CHALLENGES

The greatest organizational challenge RHL faces is to prioritize and limit the scope of our support to what the current budget can achieve, while at the same time developing a strategic direction for the organization and designing expanded programming, as we aim to garner financial support.

While we received our first external grant from Friends of Liberia to support the WWC, and our partner, MAGIF, secured a grant from the Germany Embassy to build the VET center, we have not raised the funds needed to implement the program to its fullest.

Interesting donors, small and large alike, will continue to be our greatest challenge in the coming fiscal year.

On the program side, we are proud of the dedication and personal devotion of the staff in Kolahun and recognize their critical role in implementing quality programming. We are working to build their management and administrative capacity by requiring more detailed reporting and we will continue to require timely and transparent communications from the field.

The context in Liberia continues to be difficult in terms of public health care, lack of essential medicines in particular.



PROGRAM NEEDS

The program needs are many and the community needs are great. RHL is the only organization on the ground in Kolahun. It is estimated by our Program Coordinator that approximately 400 children could benefit from enrollment in RHL. A large number of hand pumps in Kolahun are not functioning. Their repair would improve the health of the community. And many homes in which our beneficiaries reside are in need of repair.

More staff on the ground in Kolahun, both local and international talent, would most certainly improve the quality and oversight of the program. RHL is exploring options in light of this need for the coming fiscal year.

The hiring of a registered nurse fills an important need to ensure the health of our vulnerable beneficiaries is being monitored by a skilled professional. While RHL does not operate a clinic or health care facility, having an RN on staff will ensure that each child receives timely and appropriate care.

While the Tutorial School remains well attended and the tutors motivated, the students and tutors would greatly benefit from a literacy expert/teacher trainer. RHL is looking into this option for the coming year.

The WWC continues to attract new students and their production rate has begun increasing. A fair-trade market is needed to purchase the cloth, whether domestically or internationally. RHL is exploring several avenues for the bolts of Country Cloth as well as the possibility of value added products.

RHL is actively working to develop a more successful fundraising strategy. We are continuing to look for foundations that may be interested in our work and we are exploring every avenue of support.

With more funding, we could enroll 400 additional vulnerable district children, provide greater learning opportunities, and increase our support to Kolahun Hospital.

LESSONS LEARNED

One of our most significant lesson learned this past year was that we need a new direction for online fund-raising. While the program on the ground continued with regular programming and new initiatives (the S&RH trainings), RHL's support staff and advisors spent a far greater amount of timing on the end of year fundraising than on program support or other fund-raising opportunities for very little return. This was a hard lesson to learn, but one that will redirect our efforts next year.

We also learned that we needed more skilled staff in Kolahun to monitor the health needs of our beneficiaries. We answered that need by hiring a registered nurse to be based in Kolahun full time assuming responsibility for all aspects of the Health Program.

PLANS FOR FY 2019

RHL's plans for the next fiscal year include:

- A third and fourth cohort of apprentices for the WWC
- Implementation of the 4-month business skills training workshop for the WWC
- Cash distributions in place
- Completion of the construction of the VET center
- Incorporate and gain 501(c)(3) status
- Publish quarterly online newsletters
- Kolahun Crescendo Photography Exhibit
- Parenting Skills Workshop
- Students' Summer Camp

FY2018 BUDGET vs. ACTUAL EXPENSES July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018		
	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenses 12 Months
Health & Nutrition	32,100	21,150
Education & Training	25,666	13,344
Economic & Enterprise Development	5,825	-
Direct Program Support	40,225	16,656
Total 12 months program budget & expenses	\$ 103,816	\$ 51,150

RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA donations are administered by the **TIDES FOUNDATION**.

The TIDES FOUNDATION 501(c)3 is a family of donor-advised funds that share a social entrepreneurship mission. Founded in 1976 in San Francisco, the TIDES FOUNDATION has worked with more than 15,000 individuals and organizations to make the world a better place.

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS:

Anything Is Everything
 Friends of Liberia
 German Embassy in Liberia - People of the Federal Republic of Germany
 Margret Gieraths-Nimene Foundation



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