



**Restore Hope: Liberia**  
**2021 Annual Impact Report**  
*serving our community*

# RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA

a program of the Restore Hope Fund @ Fiscal Sponsorship Allies, Inc.

## ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

FY 2021 • JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021

### INTEGRATING PROGRAMS FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA provides relief and empowerment to the most vulnerable in post-emergency communities through an innovative integration of health, education, and economic development, creating opportunity, changing lives and building resilient communities. RHL provides direct support to over 700 of the most disadvantaged/vulnerable women & children in Kolahun, Lofa County, Liberia. RHL's reach extends to Kolahun District at large, a population of

approximately 75,000, by supporting schools throughout the district, and Kolahun Hospital, a Ministry of Health District Referral Hospital.

### MISSION

To improve the health and well-being of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in post-emergency settings by providing basic health, education, and income-generating activities in order to alleviate extreme poverty and empower communities to become their own agents of change.



## TIMELINE

**[July]** RHL's former partner, Margret Geiraths-Nimene, passed away suddenly in July 2020. RHL is grateful for her partnership and for her enduring love of Liberia. She dedicated her life to service, and she is greatly missed.

**[July]** RHL was awarded a \$50,000 grant from Together Women Rise (TWR) to launch a new program, Integrating Mental Health & Women's Empowerment (MHWE) in Rural Liberia. RHL was the [July featured grantee for TWR](#).

**[August]** We said goodbye to a beloved member of the RHL community, Hawa Kanneh, who passed away in August 2020. Her children were among the first enrolled in RHL. She leaves behind three children, the oldest of whom is in the 8th grade. As one of RHL's Advisors said, "Hawa seemed always ready with a smile, even though her life seemed dauntingly challenged. It was a great privilege to have met Hawa."

**[October]** The MHWE project launched in October 2020 after contracting with a Certified Master Interpersonal Group Therapy Trainer, Ana Claudia-Andrade, and hiring a new full time staff member, Kolee Gboyo, to join RHL's team in Kolahun as the MHWE Program Manager. Recruitment and training of community members and RHL staff in Interpersonal Group Therapy began.

**[December]** RHL invited Advisors Dr. Andrew Cole and author Vamba Sheriff to join RHL's first virtual event, an evening of conversation with two sons of Kolahun.

**[December]** RHL began recruitment for its first full time Country Director in late 2020. After RHL's partnership with Margret Geiraths-Nimene, RHL's Board Chair, Dr. David Okiror, served almost two years as interim Country Director while maintaining a full-time clinical schedule at ELWA Hospital in Monrovia.

**[January]** Dr. Cole introduced RHL to the Liberian representative of the Gbande Land in the U.S., Mr. Elijah Combay. The Gbande is an ethnic group with

large presence in Kolahun and the surrounding areas. Mr. Combay, on behalf of the Gbande diaspora, wanted to provide donations to restart the Revolving Drug Fund (RDF) that Dr. Cole had started in the 1980s. RHL convened representatives of the diaspora and Liberians across Liberia to collaborate on a new RDF for Kolahun Hospital. RHL became a contributing member in the spring of 2021.

**[February]** Mr. Kumeinu Da-Tokpah came on board as RHL's Country Director in February 2021. Kumeinu



Da-Tokpah earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Liberia in 2016, with a focus on Agricultural Management. Mr. Da-Tokpah has worked in agriculture for over ten years. He has integrated agriculture into education efforts, created women-owned agricultural projects, and served as the Vice

Chairman of Hope Agriculture Company. In 2014, he co-founded Agrilife Liberia, supporting women's empowerment and educational opportunities through agriculture. He served as Executive Director from 2014 to 2021, when he joined RHL as Country Director. His expertise in community development and his focus on impactful, sustainable interventions are tremendous assets to RHL.

**[March-June]** RHL continued its programming including nurse visitations to children in the program, monthly hygiene materials and direct cash distributions to households, training peer health educators, and providing group therapy to women.

## PROGRAM NEWS

### HEALTH

#### REVOLVING DRUG FUND

In the 1980s, before the onset of the civil wars, Dr. Andrew Cole was the physician at Kolahun Hospital. Much like today, the availability of pharmaceuticals at the Hospital was unreliable. Dr. Cole approached the Gbande Land Cooperative in Kolahun and asked for a loan to start the RDF at Kolahun Hospital that aimed



to provide a reliable, affordable, and sustainable supply of drugs at the hospital. The RDF was a great success and Dr. Cole is still beloved by the Kolahun community today for his accomplishments. The Gbande people wanted to provide funds as capital to restart the RDF. RHL convened representatives of the diaspora and Liberian nationals to collaborate on a new RDF for Kolahun Hospital. RHL became a contributing member in the spring of 2021.

### **COVID AWARENESS & PREVENTION**

The District Health Team and the Kolahun Hospital extend thanks and appreciation to RHL for the continual support provided to the hospital and the district at large in helping to fight the deadly coronavirus. RHL supported the work of Community Health Workers for four months (April to July 2020) to monitor and screen for suspected cases. RHL also conducted education sessions around Kolahun District to increase awareness of COVID-19 and conducted regular health talks at the hospital.

### **HOME VISITS**

RHL's RN on staff continued home visits to monitor the health and well-being of the 80 households RHL supports. During these visits, RHL Health Coordinator Gladys Zabay assesses the health of the children, their home environment, and uses the opportunity to provide information on relevant health issues including COVID 19. Each child enrolled is visited on a quarterly basis.



### **DIRECT CASH TRANSFERS**

Thanks to RHL donors, RHL has continued direct cash transfers at \$20 per household per month to supplement basic nutritional needs. This amount was increased last year from \$10 to \$20 due to the additional burdens COVID has caused including rising food insecurity in the area. 80 households receive this direct cash transfer monthly.

### **HEALTH & HYGIENE MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION**

RHL disburses soap to households monthly. Sanitary pads and condoms are offered to adolescents and additional mosquito nets were distributed this year to ensure that each child sleeps under their own mosquito net.

### **PEER HEALTH COUNSELORS**

With school open again, RHL's peer health counselors restarted their in-school sessions engaging students in discussion and providing accurate information on sexual and reproductive health and how to reduce transmission of COVID.

### **INTERPERSONAL GROUP THERAPY**

RHL launched its MHWE project this year, thanks to a grant from Together Women Rise. RHL hired Ana Claudia-Andrade, an independent consultant (a clinical psychologist who is a Certified Master Interpersonal Group Therapy provider) to train and supervise a group of ten providers (RHL staff, local hospital staff, and community members). Due to the pandemic, training and supervision took place via Zoom. After training, each trainee offered Interpersonal Group Therapy (IPT-G) to an individual patient followed by a group of five to six women under weekly supervision. In August 2021, COVID-19 cases increased in the Kolahun area, which necessitated a change to tele-counseling. Trainees are piloting tele-counseling with the second cohort of women participating. For year two, another cohort of providers will be trained with the aim of scaling up the intervention.

During the first year, ten women received individual psychotherapy and 43 received group interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT-G). 100% of them had reached remission after 12 weeks of treatment, using the standard PHQ-9 measurement tool (PHQ-9  $\leq$  5 for two consecutive sessions). IPT-G is proving highly



efficacious in reducing depression, and seven trainees were able to learn and apply IPT-G in the community.

Additionally, four independent evaluators (Kolahun residents) participated in a three-day monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training conducted by Bryan Cheng of Columbia University's Global Mental Health Lab and Ana Andrade. These evaluators are conducting the baseline, end line, and follow up surveys to determine the impact of the project.

## **EDUCATION**

### **TUTORING**

Throughout the pandemic, RHL tutors have gone out into the communities to do safe home visitations to ensure beneficiaries are reading regularly and working on their literacy skills. Liberia Reads!, with which RHL partnered for literacy training, provided reading materials on COVID-19 for the program's use.

### **PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Thanks to donors, RHL paid for 96 students to enter school and provided their uniforms and school supplies for a successful return after the disruption due to COVID.

### **LIBRARY**

Over the years, RHL has been given numerous books for children to encourage reading and increase their skills. Brenna Blazis, a former Peace Corps Volunteer, returned to Liberia in June and volunteered numerous hours to RHL and set up a beautiful, functional library for the children in Kolahun. Thank you, Brenna!

### **SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

The Rob & Liz Rufsvold Memorial Scholarship Fund has supported four Kolahun students at Lofa County Community College and a computer vocational school in the area. This year, the Scholarship Committee, based in the Kolahun area and inclusive of community leaders, selected 18 students to be awarded scholarships to Lofa County Community College and Presbyterian College in Lofa County.

## **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

### **WOMEN'S WEAVING COOPERATIVE**

RHL has been supporting a Women's Weaving Cooperative since 2017, started by a group of women participating in RHL's adult literacy classes who were seeking greater economic empowerment. After the lockdown ended, the women returned to the Vocational Education & Training Center to restart the weaving apprenticeship program they conduct. Interest in joining the cooperative has grown tremendously, with 32 women coming to enroll.

As part of the MHWE program, RHL is collaborating with the National Cooperative Development Agency of Liberia to provide governance workshops and financial training in addition to registering the Cooperative as a legal entity providing a pathway for greater opportunities. Mr. Gboyo, the newly hired MHWE Program Manager, is from the Kolahun area and speaks the vernacular of the women in the Weaving Cooperative. Together they are making great strides towards their goal of a profitable, independent Kolahun Women's Weaving Cooperative.

### **KOLAHUN ACTION COMMITTEE**

In 2007, the International Rescue Committee supported a global photo-journalism project called Global Crescendo, culminating in a photography exhibit at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The journalist leading the project was Ann Jones who went to Kolahun to include the voices of Liberian women in the project. The overarching goal of Global Crescendo was to give voice and expression to women survivors of gender-based violence as a means of advocacy. Ms. Jones invited women in Kolahun to take photographs of their lives. The women used the photos to raise awareness in their communities about the effects of gender-based violence. Over the years, the group, now the Kolahun Action Committee (KAC), has continued its advocacy at the local level. Through the MHWE program, the KAC is becoming a legally recognized Community Based Organization and will be integral in community outreach and screening for the Interpersonal Group Therapy component of the MHWE program. RHL has provided the KAC with cameras to restart the photography aspect of their advocacy, which was so impactful during Global Crescendo.



## LETTER – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Restore Hope has grown in both depth and scope this year, marking a new path forward in serving the community of Kolahun. We've strengthened each sector of work, sending more high school graduates to college, introducing an evidence-based health program to address mental health disorders, and increased support to two women's groups (the Weaving Cooperative and the Kolahun Action Committee, which advocates against gender-based violence).

The challenges to launch the MHWE program cannot be overemphasized, from the ongoing difficulties with internet connectivity in rural Liberia to the complexity of rolling out a brand-new program in the field. The commitment of our team to continuing the training and rollout of the group therapy component has been exceptional. Ana Andrade, the consultant who has been conducting the clinical training, and Bryan Cheng, who has trained and supported our team in data management, have carried the project forward going above and beyond their roles to ensure that women in Kolahun have access to this proven intervention. Without such commitment, we simply would have had to stop the program for an undetermined amount of time.

The organization is beginning a new journey with Mr. Da-Tokpah serving full time as Country Director. His leadership and tireless efforts have already proven valuable to the organization. We look forward to continuing this journey with Mr. Da-Tokpah and the RHL team to fulfill the organization's mission.

Many thanks to each and every donor who gave, whether monetary donations, in-kind gifts, and/or precious time. Your contributions are providing opportunities and HOPE.

## HIGHLIGHTS

We have partnered with the Kolahun Hospital, Liberian diaspora groups, and Liberian nationals to create the Kolahun Hospital Revolving Drug Fund, a sustainable solution to a decades long problem of drug shortages at the Hospital.

To address the debilitating effects of depression in women, RHL launched a community-based treatment option utilizing the evidence-based, World Health Organization-endorsed Inter-personal Group Therapy model.

RHL is supporting the development of a profitable, independent cooperative by partnering with the National Cooperative Development Agency, which is working with the Women's Weaving Cooperative in leadership structure, financial skills, and legally registering the Cooperative.



## RHL'S WORK IN NUMBERS

- 120 children receiving RHL's full package of support: school fees, nurse visitations, library access
- 80 households receiving cash for nutritional support
- 22 peer counselors held 16 health sessions at schools across the district with youth ranging in age from 10 to 28
- Out of the 23 weavers who opted for a \$25 microloan, 57% have paid in full; 30% are making payments; 13% are outstanding
- 348 home visits were conducted this fiscal year during which a health, nutrition, and psychosocial assessment was made
- 100% of beneficiaries reported sleeping under a mosquito net
- 97% of beneficiaries reported eating two meals a day
- RHL is providing scholarships to 18 students for higher education



**FY2021 RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA ANNUAL EXPENSES**

<b>RESTORE HOPE</b> <b>FY2021 Income &amp; Expense Report</b> <b>July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021</b>	
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Income	Amount
Donations	193,794
Grants (Together Women Rise, Year 1 of a 2-year grant)	25,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>218,794</b>
Total In-Kind Contributions of Time & Effort (Incl. Exec. Dir., 2 senior physician Public Health/Program Experts)	<b>280,066</b>

Expenses	
<b>DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS</b>	
Health	58,697
Education & Training	19,297
Economic & Enterprise Development	650
Direct Program Support (Transportation, Office, Comms, Field Office, Human Resources)	63,939
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>142,583</b>
<b>INDIRECT PROGRAM COSTS</b>	
Executive Director	22,040
Development/Fundraising & Media/Communications	22,384
Strategic Planning & Organizational/Program Development	6,650
Office & Software	3,566
Banking Fees, merchant & fiscal sponsor fees, state filings	4,676
Accounting & Bookkeeping	2,373
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>61,689</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>204,272</b>
<b>NET INCOME after EXPENSES</b>	<b>14,522</b>



**DONOR LIST: Thank you to RHL's FY2021 Donors. Your generosity powers this work.**

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**RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA**  
HEALTH • EDUCATION • OPPORTUNITY

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**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** In the aftermath of the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak, many children became caregivers for their younger siblings, and grandmothers became the surrogate Ol Ma for extended “families” within the village. RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA was born from this adversity to help fill the gaps. And we all learned how communities provide the strength and resilience to overcome even the most challenging days.