



2017 Health & Nutrition Annual Report

Opportunity. Dignity. Hope.





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Illnesses that would be easily treated or are uncommon in much of the world continue to cause misery and unnecessary death in Sierra Leone. Poor nutrition, diarrhea, HIV/AIDS, malaria, anemia, tuberculosis, and complications during childbirth are but a few examples. World Hope International (WHI) is responding to the sheer scale of the problem by focusing on high impact interventions that improve the health, wellbeing, and survival of women and young children. Through all our health programs, WHI is working to strengthen the public health system so that in the future all Sierra Leoneans will have access to high quality & affordable healthcare and prevention services.

Enable The Children

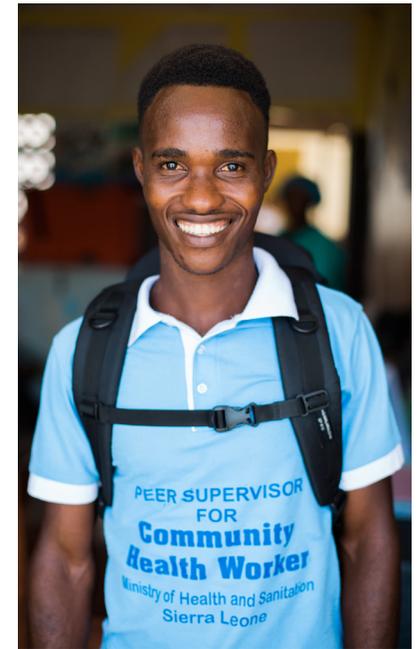
The Enable the Children (ETC) program provides physical therapy and occupational therapy, care, and support services to approximately 700 children living with disabilities in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Staff visit patients in their homes and teach families and caregivers how to support children with disabilities using play, developmental positioning, and feeding support, which allows families the opportunity to learn to provide at-home care and treatment. As cultural beliefs lead many mothers to place blame upon themselves when a child is born with a disability, ETC works with mothers so they understand each child's medical case and to reassure parents that they've done nothing wrong.

ETC does not stop with medical care and therapy. Through child sponsorship, children's school fees are covered, which affords for these children the otherwise unlikely opportunity to attend school. The program also provides small-business start-up grants to families



who have had to change their pattern of work to allow for care to be provided for the child at home. ETC also works with local carpenters, tailors, and technicians to provide specialized equipment for patients including specially-designed chairs, standing frames, leg gaiters (to support standing and walking), and drop-foot supports. The program also provides wheelchairs to patients in need.

In 2017, ETC trained five rehabilitation therapy workers and assistants, three family support workers, and one pastoral support worker. These individuals, combined with existing staff, conducted 138 disability clinics where 504 new patients were admitted into the program. Therapists provided 1,616 therapy home visits, provided specialized equipment to 179 children, provided business start-up grants to 24 families, and supported 70 children with school sponsorship. Staff met with 313 local leaders to help them understand the unique needs of children with disabilities, and conducted 61 family support group meetings.



Community Health Workers Improve Health Access

In rural Sierra Leone, access to healthcare is poor because of limited health facilities, few providers, and long distances to receive care. In order to address the high maternal and child mortality rate in the country, WHI is training Community Health Workers (CHWs)—the main providers of health services in rural Bombali district—in disease surveillance, reproductive health, maternal and child health, and community-based management of malnutrition.

In 2017, with support from UNICEF and the district health management team, 1,120 CHWs completed a training on maternal and child health, including basic treatment for malaria, respiratory infections, and diarrhea. CHWs provided more than 17,000 consultations, treating 17,357 cases of malaria, 984 cases of pneumonia, and 2,484 cases of diarrhea for children under five. CHWs also screened 31,176 cases of acute malnutrition. CHWs provided home visits to 8,581 pregnant women, and conducted 8,463 post-natal visits to identify complications and provide counseling for breastfeeding and basic sanitation.



Helping Babies Breathe

Too many babies die at birth unnecessarily either because of lack of resuscitation skills by the birth attendants or lack of basic tools needed at delivery. Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) intends to build the capacity of first-line healthcare workers responsible for conducting or assisting in deliveries. HBB is a concise training on infant resuscitation at the village level or low resource setting geared towards those assisting in deliveries targeting the first minute after birth (“Golden Minute”) when either the infant should be breathing spontaneously or have assisted ventilation with bag and mask. The pictorial-based training facilitates easy learning and the emphasis on hands-on experience.

Over 3,000 health care workers and volunteers in 258 health facilities and four nurses training schools have been trained by WHI, in partnership with the ministry of health staff. WHI has trained nursing students in each district, and numerous health care workers report of babies lives saved.

45 Facilitators have been trained throughout the three districts, creating a strong base of trainers who will continue monitoring and training. In order to maintain the momentum, WHI is concentrating on strengthening the follow-up training with ministry of health staff, with a goal of establishing a new, national protocol.

Critical Follow-Up Care for Ebola Survivors

Sierra Leone suffered greatly during the recent Ebola outbreak, but the survival rate increased to more than 50% due to improved clinical care and earlier treatment. Many of those who survived the disease were left with complications ranging from psychosocial to vision complications, hearing loss, joint pain and headaches. WHI continues to be a key part of Sierra Leone’s Ebola recovery effort.

Ensuring that survivors received timely and appropriate medical care was supported and improved through a system of Survivors Advocates—survivors of Ebola who were trained to do monthly home visits. Over 4,500 home visits were made, over 500 visits to health facilities supported, and over 175 referrals to advanced medical care supported through the new referral system. Referral coordinators and Clinical Training Officers are two of the ongoing positions



that were created and have been adopted in the government health system and continue to provide critical support and improved access to all patients.

In 2017, a WHI-hosted Child’s Social Therapy Day was very successful. 133 children survivors under age 17 were invited to a day of celebration: food, games, relays, group activities, singing, drama, and discussion groups. While WHI’s programming officially ended in September 2017, many models of care for Ebola survivors were adopted and are ongoing.

Child Health and Mortality Prevention Surveillance

Despite reductions over the past two decades, childhood mortality remains high, particularly in low income settings. The basic question of “why are our children dying at such a high rate?” echoes throughout Sierra Leone and numerous countries worldwide. CHAMPS is a multi-country, long-term surveillance program targeted at understanding cause of death in children under five. In partnership with Emory University, the Gates Foundation, and Center for Disease Control, Bombali Shebora Chiefdom in Sierra Leone was selected as the latest site.

WHI’s medical surveillance role includes organizing a reporting structure, collecting and recording all data, ongoing training of community and facility reporters, conducting verbal autopsies, reviewing all clinical records for data and developing an improved data record collection. Since the beginning of the pilot in 2017, WHI received 157 notifications of death with the highest percentage of those being “still-births,” followed by infant deaths.

Ambulance Services

Sierra Leone is one of the worst places for pregnant women, and delay in seeking care and lack of an effective and functioning emergency system contributes to this problem. This year, WHI’s three ambulances transported over 1,000 patients, primarily pregnant women. Getting women to the hospital faster has saved the lives of many women and their babies. Recently, the Makeni Regional Hospital ambulance made four transports in one night—three of which were for a delivery of twins! All lives were saved. Unfortunately, late referrals and lack of resources—like no emergency medical technician (EMT) available—still can result in fatal outcomes.



Ukweli UTI Test Strips

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) are the most common bacterial infections among women, and are particularly common among pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa¹. An untreated UTI can spread to the kidneys resulting in severe kidney damage, can cause birth complications, and increase vulnerability to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Very few UTIs are diagnosed in a timely fashion in developing countries with fledgling health care systems, and many go unreported due to lack of education, stigma, and inability to reach a clinic for diagnosis.

In 2017, WHI trained 273 health workers and pharmacists in 16 facilities in the use of the Ukweli test strips for screening urine for UTIs and diabetes. All trained health workers received test strips, and 635 people were reached through outreach and awareness activities. On average, 43 people were screened per location, with an average of four positive diagnoses per location. WHI supported the treatment of all cases. The Ukweli venture plans to use the results from the study to implement a sustainable business surrounding urinalysis screening in Sierra Leone, as 105 health workers reported an increased income as result.

Preventing and Treating Malnutrition

Malnutrition is known to be an underlying cause in 30% of all deaths of children under five. In Sierra Leone, malnutrition remains a key government priority, and in Bombali district, an estimated 6,330 children are malnourished. In partnership with the ministry of health and UNICEF, WHI continues to work with 2,000 mother support groups in 1,788 communities, providing forums for infant and child nutrition best practices. In 2017, WHI facilitated malnutrition screening of 94,591 children, and referred 359 cases of severe acute malnutrition. WHI supplied Vitamin A supplements for 32,358 children, and another 48,103 children received deworming medication. In collaboration with the ministry of health, WHI aired regular local radio discussions on maternal and child nutrition topics, which reached people beyond Bombali district with critical health information.

¹PLoS One, "Contribution of urinary tract infection to the burden of febrile illnesses"





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