

# MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SIERRA LEONE

England & Wales · Charity number 1105330

## Details

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**Status** Registered

**Legal form** Charitable company

**Company number** [05184106](#)

**Registered** 2004-08-05

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

## Contact

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**Address** 31 Grove Hill  
Emmer Green  
Reading  
RG4 8PN

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**Email** [mail@masierraleone.org.uk](mailto:mail@masierraleone.org.uk)

**Website** [www.masierraleone.org.uk](http://www.masierraleone.org.uk)

## Activities

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**Objects:** THE RELIEF OF SICKNESS AND THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH AMONG PEOPLE RESIDING PERMANENTLY OR TEMPORARILY IN SIERRA LEONE

**Activities:** Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports access to health care and urgent medical treatment for communities and individuals in Sierra Leone. Working with local partners in the government health service and with a range of local NGOs, we support training for health workers, awareness-raising around health issues, and provide a range of medication and equipment to under-resourced services.

## Classification

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- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Makes Grants To Organisations
- **What:** The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Overseas Aid/famine Relief
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

## Geography

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- **Area of benefit:** SIERRA LEONE
- Sierra Leone
- Reading

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-09-30	£91,827	£71,925	-	-
2023-09-30	£19,815	£79,446	-	-
2022-09-30	£77,709	£25,036	-	-
2021-09-30	£49,013	£58,283	-	-
2020-09-30	£116,473	£98,438	-	-

## Trustees

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Name	Role	Appointed
Tolu Olaniyan	Chair	2019-09-01
Leethen Bartholomew		2019-09-01
SARAH SNOW		

**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SIERRA LEONE**

England & Wales - Charity number 1105330

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# Accounts

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Medical Assistance

Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE



Medical Assistance Sierra Leone

# Annual Report

20<sup>23</sup><sub>24</sub>



Medical Assistance

Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE

Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports access to health care and urgent medical treatment for communities and individuals in Sierra Leone.

The organisation works with others to raise awareness of the key health and development issues facing communities in Sierra Leone – and to generate interest and support in meeting the health needs of the country.

Working with local partners in the government health service and with a range of local NGOs, Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports training for health workers, awareness-raising around health issues, and provides a range of medication and equipment to under-resourced services.

## 01. Introduction

The reporting year 2023 to 2024 saw the partnership work with the Sierra Leone Association of People with Albinism (SLAPWA) expand significantly in terms of activities and outreach with the PVF grant. Our collaboration with the University of Lancaster resulted in another successful proposal – this time for albinism awareness-raising activities, a website for SLAPWA, educational materials and further research work. SLAPWA Director attended a conference convened by the University of Lancaster and jointly presented a paper with Professor Charlotte Baker on the work of the Association.

We continued to deliver epilepsy support through the lead epilepsy clinic at Connaught Hospital, with a bulk order of drugs purchased at the end of the last reporting year. There is much work to do around epilepsy awareness-raising and we are delighted to form a working partnership with a new organisation of physicians, Medics for Epilepsy Support and Treatment. School awareness sessions are planned for the coming year, as well as the exploration of training opportunities for the physicians.

The report details MASL activities from October 2023 to September 2024.

## 02. Supporting people with albinism

Our work with the Sierra Leone Association of People With Albinism aims to address the lack of support for the practical health problems faced by those with albinism in Sierra Leone, and the stigma and subsequent discrimination which surrounds this genetic condition.

We delivered our second full year of activities with grant funds from PVF. This wide-ranging two-year project has seen SLAPWA develop from a small community group into a respected, impactful NGO with a significant profile in Sierra Leone, and strong international and regional partners in the disability and albinism sector. Most importantly the organisation has created something previously unseen in Sierra Leone: a large, close-knit community of people with albinism who meet regularly and are directly supported with life-transforming health and education inputs. The project total for registrations of people with albinism reached 564 by the end of September 2024, exceeding our target of 500 people. The creation of community and essential support for a group who face disabling stigma and who are not expected to live beyond their thirties is profound and is marking a new chapter for people with albinism in Sierra Leone. The newfound pride and confidence of the community is resulting in greater visibility in public spaces and in public life.

The SLAPWA skin clinic is delivering essential support and advice to people with skin lesions, as well as making referrals for surgery. The regional coordinators send photos to the clinic and advice is provided, as well as transport to Freetown for those requiring urgent attention.

We had a productive project visit to Sierra Leone in May 2024 with Professor Baker of the University of Lancaster. Prof. Baker delivered a staff training on albinism and human rights

and a project visit was made to Bo. As part of the funded work with the University of Lancaster, SLAPWA Director Mohamed Kamara visited the UK in September 2024 to present at and attend the 'International Conference on Witchcraft and Human Rights, past, present and future: Implementing UN Resolution 47/8'. This engagement resulted in an opportunity to join a consultation in Zambia on safeguarding in April 2025, strengthening SLAPWA's working relationship with the UN Independent Expert on the Rights of Persons with Albinism. Our joint research paper 'Positive Visibility: Demystifying Albinism in Sierra Leone' has been accepted by the International Journal of Disability and Social Justice for publication.



*SLAPWA Director Mohamed Osman Kamara and Professor Baker from the University of Lancaster present at the conference in September 2024.*

With the University of Lancaster grant, MASL and SLAPWA developed an activity-based resource for pupils called 'Understanding Albinism'. Launched in May 2024, this booklet clarifies myths about albinism, explains 'How to be a good friend to someone with albinism' and includes a word search. This resource is now being used as part of SLAPWA's school awareness-raising.

# Understanding Albinism

Albinism is a rare condition that is inherited. It is not contagious. People with albinism have less of a pigment (or colour) called melanin in their skin, eyes and hair.

Albinism occurs all over the world. People with albinism are often very pale, they cannot see well, and their skin and eyes are vulnerable to radiation from the sun. In all other ways people with albinism are just like everyone else. Both boys and girls can have albinism.

Albinism is more common in sub-Saharan Africa than in other parts of the world.

## Important Things to Know About Albinism

- Albinism is a genetically inherited condition. Sometimes there is only one person in a family with albinism, sometimes there are more.
- Albinism is a condition that people are born with and it lasts throughout life.
- You cannot catch albinism from someone.
- Albinism has nothing to do with the devil or a spirit or with special powers (for good or for evil). The only difference in people with albinism is in the amount of pigment that they produce.
- People with albinism have the right to do all the things that everyone else does: go to school, have a job, get married, have children, etc.

For information, advice and support regarding albinism please contact the Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism. (SLAPWA) on **076429890**

Life expectancy in Sierra Leone is currently 62 years (World Bank 2023); people with albinism in Sierra Leone have a life expectancy that is twenty-five years below this figure. With well-funded outreach, the continued development of new partnerships and efficient use of resources, SLAPWA and MASL firmly believe that the albinism community of 5,000 or so people in Sierra Leone can be supported and protected and able to achieve at a minimum the life expectancy that is shared by the rest of the population. We believe that this target is achievable and will lead our joint strategy, activities and capacity-building over the next ten years.

## 2.1 Provision of Sunscreen

We were delighted to receive another donation of Altruist Sunscreen in June 2024; a total of seven pallets of sunscreen (23,200 units of 50ml) were collected from a warehouse in the UK and shipped to Sierra Leone (funded by MASL). The sunscreen is enough for around one year's supply. The availability of free of charge sunscreen for all people with albinism whenever they need it is a core commitment for MASL and SLAPWA: sunscreen saves lives and brings people forward to be part of the community, to receive peer support and to address other essential health and socio-economic needs.



The consignment of Altruist sunscreen arrives at the SLAPWA office in Freetown.

## 03. Supporting people with epilepsy

MASL continued to work with partners to maintain the epilepsy clinic and medication supplies as the core service under the leadership of Dr Lisk, Consultant Neurologist.



*Consultant Neurologist Dr Lisk and Veena Callaghan, a UK nurse who has visited the project and provides support with fundraising for medication.*

We continue to support patients with six epilepsy drugs. We fundraise for and ship all of these drugs from the UK, except one - Roweepra. We are grateful for our partnership with the Row Foundation who annually donate cartons of Roweepra (levetiracetam); this quality generic drug has helped to manage seizures in patients who were not responding to the other drugs.

It takes years to train as a neurologist and wherever possible we aim to support trainee doctors with an interest in this area. Our working partnership with a new organisation of physicians, Medics for Epilepsy Support and Treatment, offers the opportunity to further enhance capacity in neurology and promote interest in epilepsy generally amongst health workers.



## 04. Fundraising and In-Kind Donations

We are very grateful to all those who have supported us this year with in-kind donations and fundraising. Our collaboration with Reading-based environmental group Green Ways provides the albinism project with essential quality second-hand protective items including long trousers, leggings, long sleeved shirts for men, women and children, as well as hats and sunglasses.



Over 11,000 people rely on the epilepsy medication that we purchase and ship to Sierra Leone. Apart from the donated medication from the Row Foundation, we do not have a grant for these costs and the funds are generated from individual donations, cake sales and through other creative methods. We would be very grateful for donations to support this essential expenditure; like many organisations in the voluntary sector we have seen a decline in donations as a result of the cost of living crisis.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to run a marathon, hold a cake sale or organise a fundraising event for Medical Assistance Sierra Leone. We can help with publicity, materials and other support required.

OUR SINCERE **THANKS** TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED OUR WORK THIS YEAR.



31 Grove Hill, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8PN  
 Email: [mail@masierraleone.org.uk](mailto:mail@masierraleone.org.uk), Web: [www.masierraleone.org.uk](http://www.masierraleone.org.uk)

\* Front page image shows SLAPWA members Jarieu and Aminata Mansaray



# Medical Assistance

Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE

1st Oct 2023 - 30th Sept 2024

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	last year
	U	R		
	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts &amp; Payments</b>				
<b>Receipts</b>				
Donations	3,851		3,851	6,648
Row Foundation			0	
Bart Caulker Foundation			0	
Souter Trust		3200	3,200	0
Pro-Victimis Foundation		52500	52,500	0
University of Lancaster		32,250	32,250	13100
Interest	26		26	67
Other				
Total receipts	3,877	87,950	91,826.93	19,815
<b>Payments</b>				
Albinism project		71,337	71,337	66,057
Clinic costs & nurse sponsorship			0	0
Epilepsy support	325		325	13,233
Fundraising & UK admin	263		263	155
Other costs				0
Total payments	588	71,337	71,925	79,445
<b>Net receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>3,289</b>	<b>16,613</b>	<b>19,902</b>	<b>(59,630)</b>
Cash funds at last year end	1,022	1,311	2,332	61,962
add net receipts/(payments) (above)	3,289	16,613	19,902	-59,630
Cash funds at this year end	4,311	17,924	22,235	2,332

## Statement of assets & liabilities at the year end.

Cash funds				
Current account			22,235	2,332

Signature of Trustee

Sarah Snow  
29 July 2025

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Medical Assistance Sierra Leone**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity,  
Registered Charity number 1105330, for the year ended 30 September 2024.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in  
accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('The Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section  
145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable  
directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my  
attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in  
any material respect:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or;
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the  
examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper  
understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



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Independent Examiner

29 July 2025

Name: Andrew Graves

5 Southview Park, Reading RG4 5AF

**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SIERRA LEONE**

England & Wales - Charity number 1105330

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# Accounts

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Medical Assistance

Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021 – 2022

Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports access to health care and urgent medical treatment for communities and individuals in Sierra Leone.

The organisation works with others to raise awareness of the key health and development issues facing communities in Sierra Leone – and to generate interest and support in meeting the health needs of the country.

Working with local partners in the government health service and with a range of local NGOs, Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports training for health workers, awareness-raising around health issues, and provides a range of medication and equipment to under-resourced services.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The reporting year 2021 to 2022 was one in which we worked on strengthening and maintaining our epilepsy support work, ensuring medical supplies to the clinics despite the rise in the cost of medication. We took our collaboration with the Sierra Leone Association of People with Albinism to the next level, securing some significant funding for capacity-building, awareness-raising, and a pilot skin clinic from Pro-Victimis Foundation (PVF).

We are delighted at this support for the albinism work: over 80% of people with albinism in Sub-Saharan Africa will die from skin cancer between the age of 30 and 40 years (UN 2015). These deaths are entirely preventable with greater awareness, sun protection and access to skin care.

The report below details MASL activities from October 2021 to September 2022.

### 2. SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY IN SIERRA LEONE

MASL continued to work with partners on increasing the numbers of people accessing epilepsy treatment, and advocacy and support to those experiencing isolation and discrimination as a result of the condition.

We are prioritising maintaining the clinic and medication supplies as the core service, and delivering training, awareness-raising and support groups when resources allow. We were delighted to receive a grant from the Bart Caulker Foundation this year to support health worker training, medication and supplies. Project Consultant Neurologist Dr Lisk has identified two trainee medical doctors who are interested in neurology, and we will use some of these funds to help them with their final rotations so that they may apply for neurology-specific training.

We continue to support patients with six epilepsy drugs. We fundraise for and ship all of these drugs from the UK, except one - Roweepra. We are enormously grateful for our partnership with the Row Foundation who annually donate cartons of Roweepra (levetiracetam); this quality generic drug has helped to manage seizures in patients who were not responding to the other drugs.

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021 – 2022



### 2. SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM

There is very little support for the practical health problems faced by those with albinism in Sierra Leone, and multiple local beliefs surrounding the condition mean that the community experiences profound stigma and discrimination.

We have been working with the Sierra Leone Association of People With Albinism since 2019 on sunscreen support, medical treatment and awareness-raising. We were delighted to end this reporting year with news of a grant from Pro-Victimis Foundation. Our two year project, entitled 'Creating Community and Promoting Rights: Living a full and safe life With Albinism in Sierra Leone', aims to directly improve the health status and life opportunities of 1050 people with albinism in Sierra Leone through the promotion and facilitation of access to:

- sun protection
- skin cancer treatment
- a supportive community of peers

These activities will take place alongside targeted awareness-raising work to address stigma. This will include a Teacher's Guide and we are once again grateful to Michael Duff (duff.tv) for taking photos of SLAPWA members in school settings earlier in 2022 in preparation for this important booklet.

### 3.1 SHIPPING OF DONATED SUNSCREEN

Our partnership with sunscreen company Altruist Sunscreen continued and this year we were very pleased to be offered further supplies of sunscreen free of charge for the Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism. We fundraised to cover the costs of their shipment to Sierra Leone and these were distributed at 'Living Safely With Albinism' forums at locations across the country. The free sunscreen not only saves lives but brings people together to share experiences and create community; SLAPWA is developing a detailed understanding of the lives of its members which is informing its work.

### 3.2 PILOT DERMATOLOGY CLINIC

Dr Bitá Atika, a dermatologist working at a private hospital in Freetown, has continued to work with SLAPWA to voluntarily run skin screening clinics. We look forward to building on this work this year with the purchase of an electrocautery machine with the PVF project and securing a dedicated clinic space in SLAPWA's offices.

We continue to raise funds separately for the necessary and urgent surgeries for patients who are identified at the clinic. Surgical options only are available in Sierra Leone currently.

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021 – 2022



## FUNDRAISING

we do not have a grant for these costs and the funds are generated from individual donations, cake sales and through other creative methods. We would be very grateful for donations to support this essential expenditure, as well as any support for the cancer surgeries for Persons with Albinism. Like many organisations in the voluntary sector we have seen a decline in donations as a result of COVID.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to run a marathon, hold a cake sale or organise a fundraising event for Medical Assistance Sierra Leone. We can help with publicity, materials and other support required.

*Our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported our work this year.*

Medical Assistance Sierra Leone,  
31 Grove Hill, Emmer Green,  
Reading RG4 8PN

[mail@masierraleone.org.uk](mailto:mail@masierraleone.org.uk)  
[www.masierraleone.org.uk](http://www.masierraleone.org.uk)



Medical Assistance  
Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE



Registered Charity Number: 1105330

### 4. OTHER INITIATIVES

After last year's donation of a paediatric bronchoscope from Karl Storz, German manufacturer of bronchoscopes, we used the funds from our online fundraising page to buy vital spares to ensure the bronchoscope is always available and in use at the Connaught Hospital. These items were delivered to Dr Kabineh at the Connaught Hospital in 2022; the picture below was taken after the successful removal of a foreign object from the lung of a five year old child using the equipment.

We have continued to offer some financial support to the mother of triplets who found herself alone with the babies immediately after birth. This includes renting accommodation so that they remain close to the hospital until the triplets are older.

### 5. FUNDRAISING

We are very grateful to all those who have supported us this year with in-kind donations and fundraising. Over 11,000 people rely on the epilepsy medication that we purchase and ship to Sierra Leone. Apart from the donated medication from the Row Foundation,



# Medical Assistance

Sierra Leone

Action on maternal & child health and specialist care

1st Oct 2021 - 30th Sep 2022

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	last year £
<b>Receipts &amp; Payments</b>				
<b>Receipts</b>				
Donations	12,010	0	12,010	14,119
Row Foundation	0	694	694	2,854
Bart Caulker Foundation	0	9,500	9,500	
Souter Trust	0	3,000	3,000	
Pro-Victimis Foundation	0	52,500	52,500	11,749
interest	5	0	5	
other				20,291
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>12,015</b>	<b>65,694</b>	<b>77,709</b>	<b>49,013</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Albinism project	1,040	377	1,417	3,886
Clinic costs & nurse sponsorship	3,937	0	3,937	
Epilepsy support	11,622	7,431	19,052	52,442
Fundraising & UK admin	250	6	256	1,164
Other costs	375	0	375	791
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>17,223</b>	<b>7,813</b>	<b>25,036</b>	<b>58,283</b>
<b>Net receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>(5,208)</b>	<b>57,881</b>	<b>52,673</b>	<b>(9,270)</b>
Cash funds at last year end	9,289	0	9,289	18,559
add net receipts/(payments) (above)	(5,208)	57,881	52,673	(9,270)
Cash funds at this year end.	<b>4,081</b>	<b>57,881</b>	<b>61,962</b>	<b>9,289</b>

### Statement of assets & liabilities at the year end.

Cash funds			
Current account		61,962	9,289

Signature of Trustee

27 Jul 2023

Sarah Snow

27-Jul-23

*Robert J.*  
27/7/23

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Medical Assistance Sierra Leone**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022  
Charity number 1105330

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

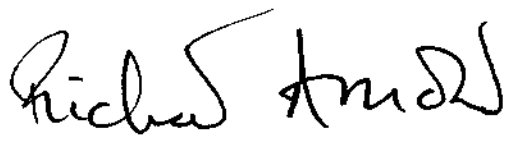
### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

 27/7/2023

Name: Richard Arnold ACA (ICAEW membership no. 7374835)  
Address: Unit 6, Bulldog House, London Rd, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10 9EU  
Date: 27th July 2023

**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SIERRA LEONE**

England & Wales - Charity number 1105330

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# Accounts

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2020 – 2021

**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SIERRA LEONE**  
supporting access to health care and  
urgent medical treatment for communities  
and individuals in Sierra Leone.



Medical Assistance  
Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020 – 2021

**Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports access to health care and urgent medical treatment for communities and individuals in Sierra Leone. The organisation works with others to raise awareness of the key health and development issues facing communities in Sierra Leone – and to generate interest and support in meeting the health needs of the country. Working with local partners in the government health service and with a range of local NGOs, Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports training for health workers, awareness-raising around health issues, and provides a range of medication and equipment to under-resourced services.**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The reporting year 2020 to 2021 was a challenging one, with COVID impacting on the work of our partners in Sierra Leone and affecting our ability to generate support for the range of work taking place. COVID resulted in people staying away from health services for fear of catching the virus and we saw smaller numbers of new epilepsy patients over the year.

We continued to send PPE to clinics and NGO delivery partners, as partners reported a lack of available protection. Epilepsy awareness-raising activities took place with much smaller groups, including individual households. The Epilepsy Support Workers also took on COVID awareness as part of their role, working closely with local health teams.

This year saw the end of our large three-year programme with Pro-Victimis Foundation, with joint funding from the UK's FCDO. The project outcomes are significant – over 6,000 new patients have come forward for treatment and there is a greater awareness of epilepsy in the communities where the project has been most active. However we cannot remain complacent: around 90% of people with epilepsy in Sierra Leone are not receiving treatment. Patient numbers need to increase dramatically and with urgency; we remain committed to working with

partners to bring epilepsy treatment to as many people as possible.

MASL continues to work with partners on increasing the numbers of people accessing epilepsy treatment, and advocacy and support to those experiencing isolation and discrimination as a result of the condition. We are prioritising maintaining the clinic and medication supplies as the core service, and delivering training, awareness-raising and support groups when resources allow.

Our work on supporting Persons with Albinism expanded this year; we were pleased to receive a very generous

donation of pallets of sunscreen from Altruist and together with the Sierra Leone Association of Persons With Albinism (SLAPWA) we published a booklet on *Advice & Support For People With Albinism and Caregivers*. The sunscreen was distributed nationally by SLAPWA at multiple forums, along with sunglasses and other protective materials. Pilot ophthalmology and dermatology clinics began in Freetown.

The report below details MASL activities from October 2020 to September 2021.

### 2. SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY IN SIERRA LEONE

Our large epilepsy project, funded by Pro-Victimis Foundation and match-funded by UK Aid/FCDO came to an end this year. Over the project's three years we reached over 6,000 additional patients with epilepsy, meaning that there are now around 11,000 patients registered across the country. The evaluation showed that awareness-raising is contributing towards reduced stigma and promoting a more accurate understanding of epilepsy. We are seeing people come to clinic sooner after their first seizure as information about the condition and the availability of clinics becomes more widely available.



Image: Mary Johnson at school in Freetown

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020 – 2021

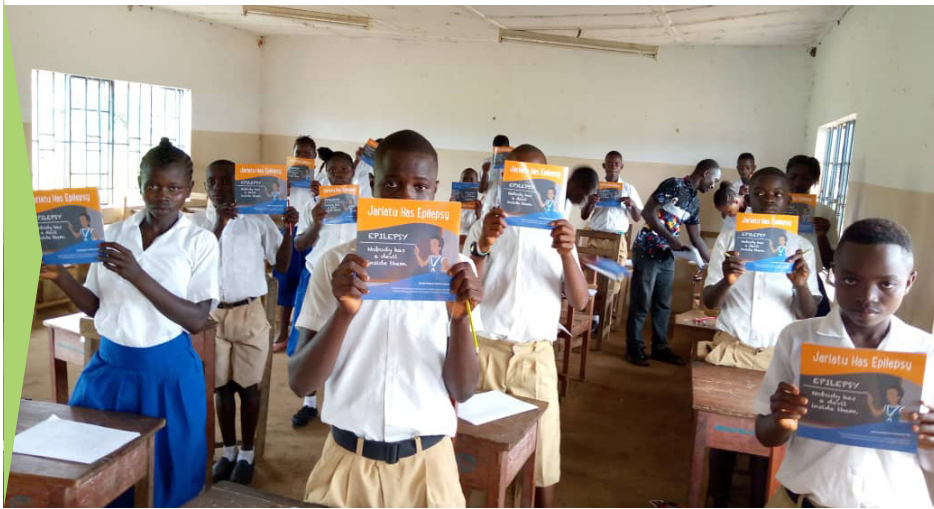


Image: Distributing the *Jariatu has Epilepsy* books in Mano, Dasse

We support patients with six epilepsy drugs. We fundraise for and ship all of these drugs from the UK, except one - Roweepra. We are enormously grateful for our partnership with the Row Foundation who annually donate cartons of Roweepra (levetiracetam); this quality generic drug has helped to manage seizures in patients who were not responding to the other drugs.

We were pleased to also receive support from Row Foundation this year for the schools awareness-raising work. Our publication *Jariatu Has Epilepsy* is being used in schools across the country. Martyna Foday of Freetown Teachers College has been helping to take these books into the community:

*'I cannot emphasise how much these books are needed. In Semabu in Njala Komboya chiefdom, I heard about a girl by the name of Baby Sam with epilepsy. People believed she was devil-possessed. One morning she was washing her clothes in the river and she had a seizure. The other girls with her were too afraid to help - they left her and ran to the village to report what had happened. By the time that people came to help from the village she had drowned. I have shared the books with the teacher in charge at*

*the local school - who happens to be the father of the late Baby Sam. He is using the reader to educate pupils as well as their parents about epilepsy. Once you start a conversation about epilepsy you really see how the condition is found across all of our communities - and the lack of information and support is causing so much pain and problems for people.'*

MASL and our partners welcomed the news in July 2021 that the United Nations Human Rights Council passed the first ever resolution on Harmful Practices: Accusations of Witchcraft and Ritual Attacks (HPAWR). We had submitted some evidence to this process based on the lived experience of people with epilepsy and sickle cell disease with whom we work in Sierra Leone. Huge thanks to the Witchcraft and Human Rights Information Network for leading on this important work; the resolution will now be followed by a report and recommendations for Member States.

### 3. SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM

MASL began working with the Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism (SLAPWA) in 2019. There

are multiple local beliefs and myths surrounding albinism in Sierra Leone and very little support for the practical health problems faced by those with the condition.

*'Studies in Africa suggest that most people with albinism die from skin cancer between the ages of 30 and 40'.\**

It is estimated that over 80% of Persons With Albinism in Sierra Leone will die an early death from skin cancer. Protective sun cream is expensive in Sierra Leone and out of reach of most people. Protection from the sun prevents cancer, saves lives and needs to start from an early age.

#### 3.1 Shipping of Donated Sunscreen

Our partnership with sunscreen company Altruist Sunscreen continued and this year we were very pleased to be offered 5 pallets of sunscreen (8,000 tubes) free of charge for the Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism. We fundraised online to cover the costs of their shipment to Sierra Leone and these were distributed at 'Living Safely With Albinism' forums at multiple locations across the country. For over 95% of the Persons with Albinism attending the forums, this was the first time that they had used sunscreen.

#### 3.2 Production of Advice Booklet

With the support of the University of Lancaster and NGO Standing Voice, MASL and SLAPWA developed a Sierra Leonean version of Standing Voice's guide for Persons With Albinism (which they had developed for the Malawi context). We commissioned new photographs (kindly donated by Michael Duff of duff.tv), designed and printed the booklet. The booklet has been distributed widely at 'Living Safely With Albinism' forums where the sunscreen was also given out along

\*Report by I.Ero, Independent Expert for the United Nations, 2015.

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020 – 2021

with donated sun protection clothing and umbrellas collected by MASL from Reading Buses and Great Western Railway lost property offices.

### 3.3 Pilot Eye Care Clinic with Ophthalmologist

In June 2021, to mark International Albinism Awareness Day, we funded a one-day eye clinic at a private practice. The ophthalmologist saw 30 people over the day, provided detailed prescriptions and advised on eye care. We are now working through the prescriptions with our fundraising efforts, purchasing appropriate glasses for those who attended.

### 3.4 Pilot Dermatology Clinic

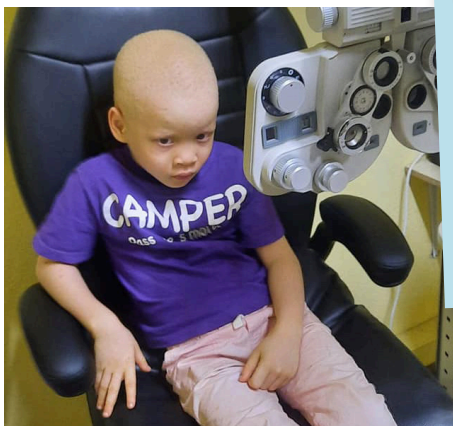


Image: Jeremiah Charles undergoes an eye examination

Dr Atika, a dermatologist working at a private hospital in Freetown, is working with SLAPWA to run skin screening clinics. So far over 50% of attendees require urgent surgery for suspected skin cancer. We are now seeking support for these surgeries and arranging our own fundraising to try to cover the costs which range from £500 to £1,000 per person depending on the number of operations needed, the medication and the care required for recovery. As always, patients in Sierra Leone are required to cover all hospital costs including food.



This is support that is urgently needed; in the last year we have lost SLAPWA members to cancer despite multiple operations as surgical treatment started too late to be effective. Surgical options only are available in Sierra Leone currently.

## 4. OTHER INITIATIVES

Wherever possible we aim to use our contacts and networks to support health care initiatives in Sierra Leone. This year we responded to a call for a paediatric bronchoscope after seeing an urgent request for help on twitter by a Sierra Leonean doctor:



Pharm. Dr. Catherine Jackson-Cole  
@jacksoncolec

2. An 8 month old and a 10 year old are lying in connaught waiting for a bronchoscope. They have foreign bodies in their airway. I was tempted to post the xray to give a visual but I refrain. The sad story is there is no bronchoscope at Connaught, and none at Emergency hosp...

We started a fundraising page and also reached out to Karl Storz, German manufacturer of bronchoscopes. They kindly agreed to donate a paediatric bronchoscope and we have since used the funds raised at that point (£4,000) to buy vital spares.

Through the Epilepsy Support Worker in Kabala we were alerted to the birth of quadruplets and also triplets within a very short period. We offered initial assistance to the quadruplets who quickly gained media attention and offers of support from multiple individuals and organisations. The mother of the triplets found herself alone with the babies and we have been offering more long term practical

support for the family, including renting accommodation so that they remain close to the hospital until the triplets are older.

## 5. FUNDRAISING

We are very grateful to all those who have supported us this year with in-kind donations and fundraising. Over 11,000 people rely on the epilepsy medication that we purchase and ship to Sierra Leone. Apart from the donated medication from the Row Foundation, we do not have a grant for these costs and the funds are generated from individual donations, cake sales and through other creative methods. We would be very grateful for donations to support this essential expenditure.

Like many organisations in the voluntary sector we have seen a decline in donations as a result of COVID.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to run a marathon, hold a cake sale or organise a fundraising event for Medical Assistance Sierra Leone. We can help with publicity, materials and other support required.

**Our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported our work this year.**

Medical Assistance Sierra Leone,  
31 Grove Hill, Emmer Green,  
Reading RG4 8PN

[mail@masierraleone.org.uk](mailto:mail@masierraleone.org.uk)  
[www.masierraleone.org.uk](http://www.masierraleone.org.uk)



Medical Assistance  
Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE



Registered Charity Number: 1105330



# Medical Assistance

Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE

	1st Oct 2020- 30th Sep 2021			last year £
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	
<b>Receipts &amp; Payments</b>				
<b>Receipts</b>				
Donations	14,119		14,119	6,108
Grants:				
Pro Victimis Foundation		11,749	11,749	66,000
FCDO		10,391	10,391	37,918
ROW Foundation		2,854	2,854	1,460
Rotary Club of Reading Matins	340		340	
Small Charities Coalition		940	940	
HMRC JRS	8,600		8,600	4,734
other receipts		21	21	253
<b>total receipts</b>	<b>23,059</b>	<b>25,954</b>	<b>49,013</b>	<b>116,473</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Epilepsy Support				94,324
comprising:				
Staff salaries in Sierra Leone		1,141	1,141	36,245
UK salary costs (financial & project mgmt)		11,878	11,878	13,433
Health worker training costs		9,111	9,111	7,482
Other epilepsy support costs	8,472	21,839	30,310	37,164
			0	
Fundraising & UK Admin	1,164		1,164	876
Maternal Child Health Support	791		791	106
Albinism Association project	3,886		3,886	2,868
			0	
other costs			0	265
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>14,313</b>	<b>43,969</b>	<b>58,283</b>	<b>98,438</b>
<b>Net receipts/ (payments)</b>	<b>8,745</b>	<b>(18,015)</b>	<b>(9,270)</b>	<b>18,035</b>
transfers between funds	(1,974)	1,974		
cash funds at last year end	2,518	16,041	18,559	524
cash funds at this year end	9,289	0	9,289	18,559

### Statement of assets & liabilities at the year end

Cash funds			
Current account		9,289	18,559

Signature of Trustee

Sarah Snow  
26-Jul-22

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Medical Assistance Sierra Leone**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
Charity number 1105330

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

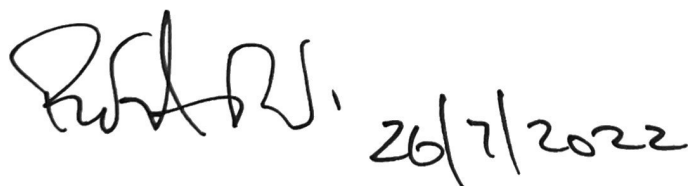
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met or
  
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



Name: Richard Arnold ACA (ICAEW membership no. 7374835)  
Address: Unit 6, Bulldog House, London Rd, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10 9EU  
Date: 26th July 2022

**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SIERRA LEONE**

England & Wales - Charity number 1105330

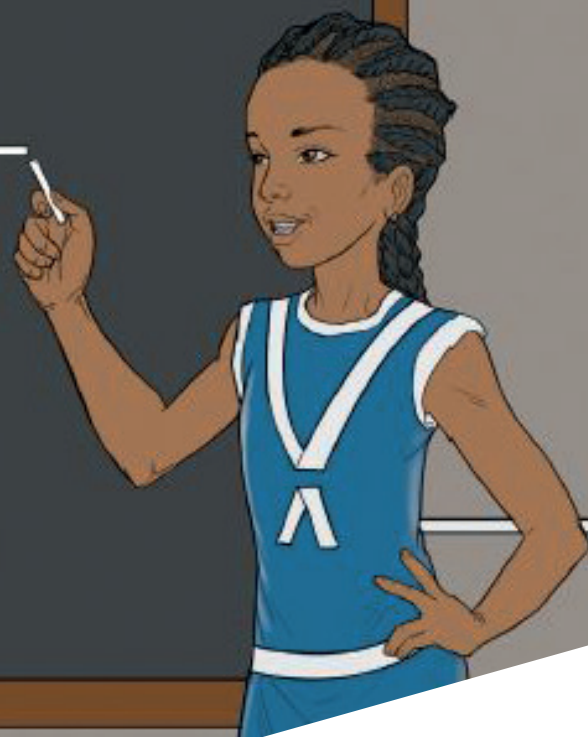
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# Accounts

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# EPILEPSY

Nobody has  
a devil  
inside them.



## ANNUAL REPORT 2019 – 2020

**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SIERRA LEONE**  
supporting access to health care and  
urgent medical treatment for communities  
and individuals in Sierra Leone.



Medical Assistance  
Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019 – 2020

Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports access to health care and urgent medical treatment for communities and individuals in Sierra Leone.

Working with local partners in the government health service and with a range of local NGOs, Medical Assistance Sierra Leone supports training for health workers, awareness-raising around health issues, and provides medication and equipment to under-resourced services.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The arrival of COVID-19 in Sierra Leone has placed extra strain on a health system which was already experiencing huge capacity and resource-related issues. At the time of writing (March 2021), it is generally understood that COVID-19 is yet to reach its peak in Africa: “The best advice for Africa is to prepare for the worst and prepare today,” said WHO director-general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

We have sent pallets of sanitiser, masks and cleaning fluid to our clinic and NGO delivery partners. COVID has impacted on aspects of project delivery in a number of ways. It affected the size of public gatherings, resulted in the closure of schools and caused people to stay away from health services for fear of catching the virus. Our epilepsy awareness-raising activities took place with much smaller groups, often visiting households at a safe distance. The Epilepsy Support Workers also took on COVID awareness as part of their role, working with local health teams.

The focus of MASL continues to be on increasing the numbers of people accessing epilepsy treatment, and providing advocacy and support to those experiencing isolation and discrimination as a result of the condition. The project underwent an external evaluation in August 2020 which commended the work and

provided recommendations for the continuing expansion of project activities:

*‘Behind the numbers we have seen a real and transformative impact on the lives of people with epilepsy through the cessation and reduction of seizures of those under treatment, the advocacy on behalf of patients and the increased overall awareness of accurate information enabling more people to access treatment and support’.*

Dr Abdulai Dumbuya,  
Abtech Solutions

This year we also developed our work further with the Sierra Leone Association of People With Albinism (SLAPWA), who share many of the same experiences of stigma and lack of appropriate health care that people with epilepsy experience. The report below details MASL activities from October 2019 to September 2020.

### 2. REACHING PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY IN SIERRA LEONE

Our national programme working from three Epilepsy Hubs - Freetown, Kabala and Bo – continued to deliver awareness-raising and support, following government guidelines. Three Epilepsy Support Workers (ESWs) are based at each Hub, collaborating with health clinics, schools, places of worship and with community leaders – and bringing

### MAFERE KEITA:

#### Forty Years of Uncontrolled Epilepsy Brought To An End

Maferé Keita, 54, a mother of three children was one person who accessed treatment this year as a result of the project’s awareness-raising activities. Maferé is a charcoal seller who had lived with epilepsy for over 40 years. She explained “*I travelled far and wide seeking help for my epilepsy from one traditional healer to another. I have gone through pains, molestation, violence as a result of my disability ....*” Maferé sobbed and showed the scars on her head.

*“Last year my husband told the Chief Imam in our Mosque to drive me away and I was not to pray in the mosque any longer because I have had seizure twice in the mosque. I was suppressed by my husband and I had to leave the mosque and started to pray at home alone”.*

Then one day Maferé was selling charcoal and a customer told her about the Epilepsy Association.

*‘ I went straight to the Epilepsy office to get more information and I was told to go for medication on Thursdays at the Connaught Hospital. It is over two years now I have not experienced any seizure as a result of the medication from the hospital’.*

patients forward for treatment. The ESWs continue to pro-actively identify disabled people in the community who also have epilepsy and to help them to access the local clinics. Our collaboration with the Sierra Leone Autistic Society continues and we have supported their new Autism Inclusion Centre.



MASL Trustee Tolu Olaniyan delivered epilepsy awareness and training sessions for patients in three locations in October – Bo, Freetown and Kabala. The training focused

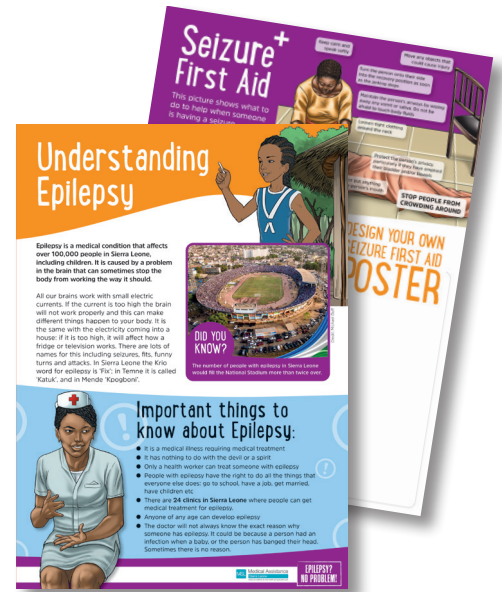
on ‘Living Safely With Epilepsy’ and was timed to coincide with Sudden Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP) awareness day. The emphasis was on reducing risks for patients with epilepsy, working towards improved patient outcomes. The patient forums were well attended, attracting 215 people in total. All sessions involved full patient participation; patients valued the opportunity to talk about all aspects of their condition. We are reminded time and time again that the profound stigma associated with epilepsy destroys self-esteem, relationships and families.

## 2.1 Raising Awareness and Reducing Stigma

This year we were able to complete the development of our primary school publication ‘*Jariatu Has Epilepsy*’. Based on the journey to treatment of one of our patients in Freetown, the book tells a story of a young girl’s alternative treatment and the intervention of an Aunt; at the back of the book there is a summary of key epilepsy messages and the Helpline number. Over 70,000 copies of the book were produced and shipped to Sierra Leone where they are being used at awareness-raising sessions.

An accompanying 4-page schools activity worksheet was also

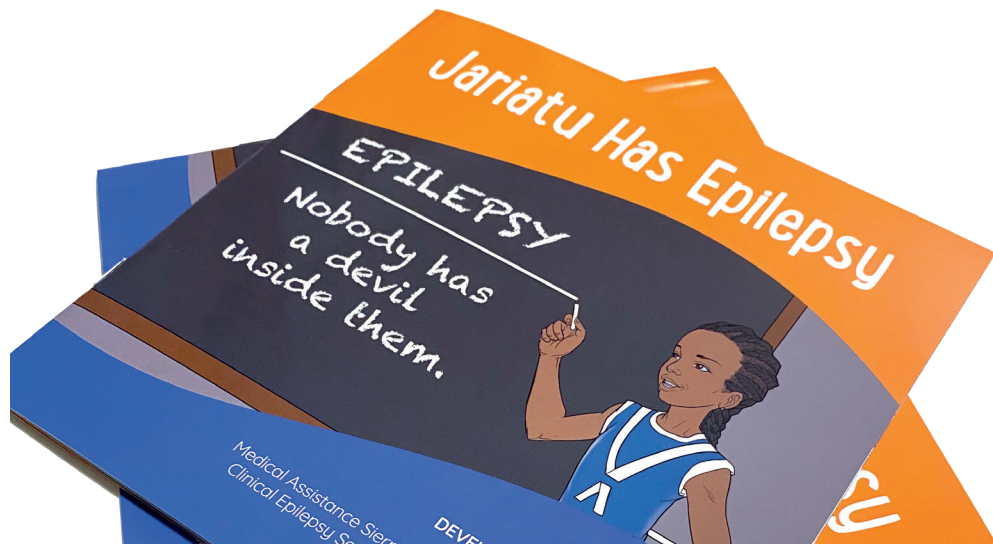
developed. Both the book and the activity resource are available free of charge from our partners in Freetown. Other organisations working on epilepsy in Africa have expressed interest in using the resources and a Gambian version is in development.



Continuing our related work on witchcraft accusations and subsequent harmful treatment, Trustee Sarah Snow presented with Mary Penn-Timothy of the Sierra Leone Autistic Society at a two-day online forum on ‘Witchcraft beliefs in the context of public health issues’. The aim of this work is to produce a toolkit for practitioners to help to demystify the common public health conditions associated with beliefs in witchcraft. The initiative was led by the University of Lancaster in the UK, the Witchcraft & Human Rights Network and the UN Independent Expert on Persons with Albinism.

## 2.2 Building Clinical Epilepsy Capacity

To date we have trained over 3,700 health workers across the country. Ongoing training ensures that new staff receive detailed epilepsy training and that other staff have refresher training, with the opportunity to share



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019 – 2020

concerns and challenges. This year the project team delivered training for over 100 health workers in Makeni in February 2020, as well as the usual epilepsy modules at the School of Nursing in Freetown and at COMAHS, the medical school in Freetown.

For the clinical side of the work, we are focused on creating a community of well supported professionals with access to training and resources for themselves and patients. Dr Lisk and the clinical team plan to secure registration with the International League Against Epilepsy at the next Convention, which will result in a Sierra Leone Chapter of this global association of health care professionals and scientists working on epilepsy. This will create a supportive structure for the further development of clinical capacity-building which will also enable access to funds and further professional training opportunities with the ILAE, as well as opportunities to directly partner with MASL and other organisations. Dr Lisk, founder of the current clinical service and the country's only adult neurologist, is now retiring and a replacement will need to be trained. We are working closely with Dr Alusine Jalloh, Sierra Leone's first and only qualified Paediatric Neurologist, and are exploring opportunities for funded training in adult neurology for one of the health professionals involved in the epilepsy project.

We continue to benefit from significant quantities of free anti-epilepsy medication through our partnership with the US-based Row Foundation. This commitment involves the provision of Roweepra, a quality generic medication suitable for the vast majority of patients, including pregnant women. The other medication – five types – we fundraise for and purchase from the UK, with shipping every twelve weeks.

### 3 SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM

We have been working with the Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism this year as they raise awareness of their experiences of discrimination and stigma, and generate support for the specific health issues faced by Persons with Albinism. There are multiple local beliefs/myths surrounding the condition and very little support for the practical health problems faced by those with albinism.

Over 80% of people with albinism in Sierra Leone will die an early death from skin cancer. MASL has been supporting the medical costs of a mother with albinism who is receiving treatment for advanced skin cancer.

This year, after a fundraising drive around International Albinism Awareness Day in June, we were able to buy and send over 1000 bottles



of Altruist sunscreen to SLAPWA which were given out free of charge to Persons with Albinism. Our new partnership with sunscreen company Altruist Sun Screen means that we can now buy sun screen at greatly reduced

prices – just £1.20 per tube of high quality cream. This year we want to extend this support to include locally produced sun-protection hats and donated SPF 50 clothing which will be distributed at regional forums.

### 4 FUNDRAISING

We are very grateful to all those who have supported us this year with in-kind donations and fundraising. Over 11,000 people rely on the epilepsy medication that we purchase and ship to Sierra Leone. Apart from the donated medication from the Row Foundation, we do not have a grant for these costs and the funds are generated from individual donations, cake sales and through other creative methods. We would be very grateful for donations to support this essential expenditure. Like many organisations in the voluntary sector we have seen a decline in donations as a result of COVID.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to run a marathon, hold a cake sale or organise a fundraising event for Medical Assistance Sierra Leone. We can help with publicity, materials and other support required.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported our work this year.

Medical Assistance Sierra Leone, 31 Grove Hill, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8PN  
Tel: 0118 3751432

[mail@masierraleone.org.uk](mailto:mail@masierraleone.org.uk)  
[www.masierraleone.org.uk](http://www.masierraleone.org.uk)



**MSL** Medical Assistance  
Sierra Leone  
ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE

Registered Charity Number: 1105330



# Medical Assistance

## Sierra Leone

Action on maternal & child health and specialist care

	1st Oct 2019 - 30 Sep 2020			2018-19 £
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	
<b>Receipts &amp; Payments</b>				
<b>Receipts</b>				
Donations	6,108		6,108	1,061
Grants:				
Pro-Victimis Foundation		66,000	66,000	40,000
DFID		37,918	37,918	
ROW		1,460	1,460	
JRS		4,734	4,734	
Refunds		253	253	
Joffe Charitable Trust		0	0	15,000
Rhododendron Trust		0	0	1,000
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>6,108</b>	<b>110,365</b>	<b>116,473</b>	<b>57,061</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Epilepsy Support		94,324	94,324	100,319
comprising:				
<i>Staff salaries in Sierra Leone</i>		36,245		38,340
<i>UK salary costs (financial &amp; project mgmt)</i>		13,433		15,600
<i>Health worker training costs</i>		7,482		8,375
<i>other epilepsy support costs</i>		37,164		38,004
Fundraising & UK admin	876		876	2,116
Clinic costs & nurse sponsorship	106		106	10,143
Albinism Association Project	2,868		2,868	394
other costs	265		265	
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>4,114</b>	<b>94,324</b>	<b>98,438</b>	<b>112,972</b>
<b>Net of receipts/ (payments)</b>	<b>1,995</b>	<b>16,041</b>	<b>18,035</b>	<b>(55,911)</b>
transfers between funds				
cash funds at last year end	524		524	56,435
cash funds at this year end	2,518	16,041	18,559	524

### Statement of Assets & Liabilities at the end of the period

Cash funds			
Current account		18,559	524

Signature of Trustee

Print Name

SARAH SNOW

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Medical Assistance Sierra Leone**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
Charity number 1105330

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

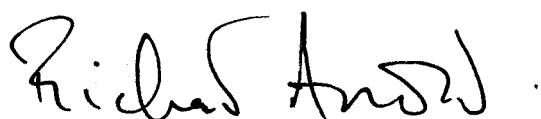
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met or
  
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



Name: Richard Arnold ACA (ICAEW membership no. 7374835)  
Address: Unit 6, Bulldog House, London Rd, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10 9EU  
Date: 28th July 2021