



Medical Assistance

Sierra Leone

ACTION ON SPECIALIST CARE



Medical Assistance Sierra Leone

# Annual Report

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



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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.





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.



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Find us on



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

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