

Wouter Nolet Foundation

Annual Report 2023



Maternal Outreach Project at Mathonkara (Tonkolili District, SL)

Preface

In this Annual Report 2023 we are pleased to inform you about the progress of our charity activities in Sierra Leone. The Wouter Nolet Foundation (WNF) has been further developed towards its strategic goals: "more **Clinical Officers**, less **Maternal Risks**. The quality of our services and the strengthening of our organization have been central in our policy in this year of reporting. WNF's financial result was satisfactory.

During 2023, we awarded scholarships to 12 new students becoming **clinical officers** (mid-level clinicians) within different medical specializations. Supporting task sharing to mid-level clinicians is an inevitable strategy in a country that faces a significant shortage of medical officers. *For further reading I refer to chapter 2 of this report.*

To reach our aim to improve the maternal health services in rural areas in Sierra Leone we introduced an ultrasound outreach program for pregnant women in which more than 3750 ultrasound scans were performed. 443 women were diagnosed 'high-risk' and referred for hospital delivery. We are happy to provide a substantial contribution to limiting the **maternal risks** of this vulnerable group of women.

In order to evaluate and improve the interventions of the program, a research team from Denmark has conducted a quality research program. *For further reading I refer to chapter 3 of this report.*

During the year under review, particular efforts were made to strengthen the organization. Within the Maternal Outreach Project (MOP), the positions of Technical Supervisor, Head of Outreach and Outreach Officer have been further defined and provided with job descriptions. We take pride in the team's achievement of enhancing service quality and optimizing logistics operations for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

The Website (www.wnsf.nl) has been redesigned to bring it more in line with modern ways of communication. An electronic form of payment for smaller donations has been implemented. That turned out to be missing during our fundraising events.

The management and employees have once again worked hard to meet the daily challenges under difficult circumstances. Without them, we would not have been able to perform the outstanding results. We are very thankful to them.

The funding of our activities can only be made thanks to the contributions of our charity funds and donors. Their participations are crucial and guarantee the sustainability of our activities. This year, many new donors have found their way to the Foundation.

Pim Nolet
Chairman

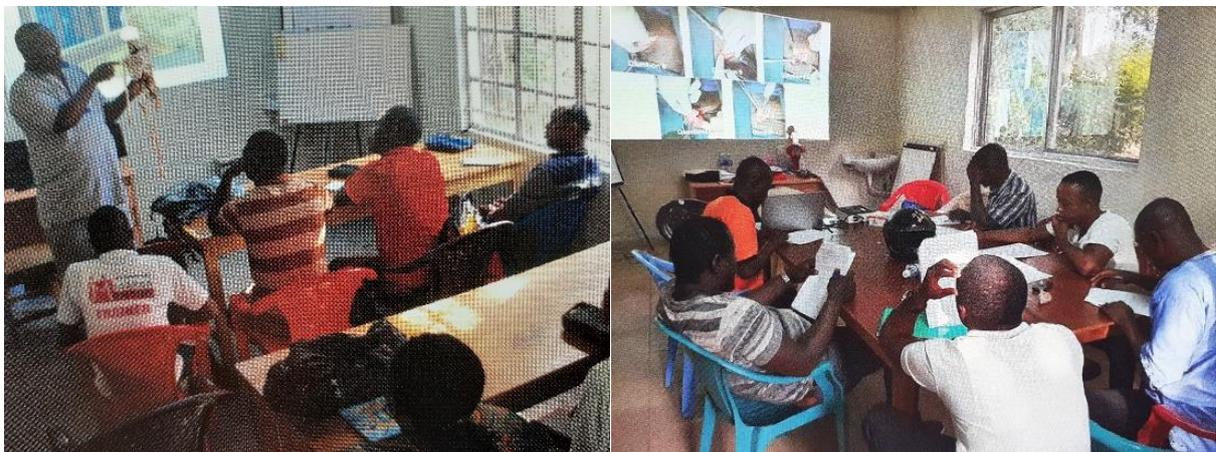
2. Wouter Nolet Scholarship Fund (WNSF)

WNSF offers scholarships to talented, motivated health care workers, enabling them to undertake one of the advanced training programs in medical specialties such as surgery/obstetrics, pediatrics and internal medicine. The advanced training programs are provided by 3 NGO's: CapaCare (Norway), German Doctors (Germany) and Partners in Health (USA). Graduates from the training programs become Clinical Officers, receive a bachelor's degree and are equipped with an operating license of the Medical and Dental Council in Sierra Leone. They are employed in the district hospitals and paid by the government. They may perform the operating tasks, for which they have been trained.



Demand for middle level clinicians

Sierra Leone has an estimated population of about seven and half million people. The average life expectancy at birth is about 54 years due -in part- to heavy disease burden. Contributory to the low life expectancy are poor health care infrastructure and inadequate health human resources. To cope with the increase of health care demand, the health work force should be adequately remunerated and well trained with the appropriate competences and required skills. The institutional capacity for training has been re-assessed by the Government and the conclusion was that every effort should be made to upscale in-country middle level clinicians with training in various medical specialties.



Specialization trainings

Following this recommendation, the 3 NGO's, mentioned above, operate a 3-year advanced training, each in its own medical specialization. Students, selected for the trainings, have previously followed a 2-year basic medical education at the School of Clinical Sciences in Makeni. The School is one of the best training institutions in that region of Sierra Leone through the establishment of the well-equipped infrastructure, qualified health manpower and balanced teaching program. The program is based on the principles of problem-based learning to facilitate student-centered knowledge transition, approaches and techniques.



Our monthly grants cover the personal costs of the students, including purchase of transportation, food, clothes, mobile data and communication. The scholarship applies to the entire period of the 3-year specialization training, including a last one-year housemanship.

Our scholarships

In 2023 we have issued 12 new scholarships to German Doctors students. The other 2 NGO's (CapaCare and Partners in Health) did not commence new batches in 2023. At the time of publication of this Annual Report we received another 5 scholarship applications of Partners in Health students. We expect CapaCare starting a new batch in 2024 as well. Our first sponsored students are in the third year of study and as such no one has graduated yet.

	Batch Feb. 22	Batch May. 22	Batch Oct. 22	Batch Mar. 23	Batch Oct. 23	Total
CapaCare	2	6	5			13
German Doctors			6	6	6	18
Partners in Health			5			5
Total	2	6	16	6	6	36

In the reporting year the scholarship Selection Committee has introduced a new set of more extensive criteria. Instead of enrolling applicants based on their CV's and Motivation Letters, the results of their previous exams at the School of Clinical Science in Makeni were taken into account. This gave a much better insight in the qualifications of the students.

Before being granted a scholarship, the student has to sign the WNSF Terms & Conditions agreement to adhere to some strict conditions under which the scholarships are provided. For example, he/she declares that he/she may lose the scholarship in case of unprofessional behavior during the study or academic performance below a certain minimum standard.

3. Maternal Outreach Project (MOP)

Sierra Leone has one of the world's highest Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) reaching 443 per 100,000 live births. By way of comparison: in the Netherlands, only 4 women die per 100,000 deliveries. And out of every 1,000 babies born in this West African country, 109 don't make it to the age of five.

A pilot study by Masanga Hospital in 2020 revealed that most maternal complications and deaths happened to high-risk pregnant women who attempted delivery outside a hospital. A complex web of health system challenges contributes to these worrisome outcomes. Poor infrastructure, delays in health seeking behavior and a low socio-economic environment are among the most important contributing factors.



MOP running

The aim of the running project is to improve the maternal health services in the rural areas by dedicated, low-cost interventions focusing on diagnosis, referral to the nearest hospitals and early treatment of complications. At the same time, outreach visits to the villages are used to inform the communities about birth planning. Women are made aware of hospital births and husbands get more involved in birth planning.

WNF started the MOP project to create an opportunity for the WNSF sponsored students to operate as certified ultrasound scanners within the maternal outreach interventions. They may gain a wealth of work experience in rendering obstetrics services in maternal health.

The obstetric ultrasound examinations are conducted weekly alternatively between 5 Community Health Centers (CHC's), serving a catchment area of 35 small villages. A selected group of local villagers (Maternity Agents) are trained by the MOP team to mobilize the communities, mediate to overcome barriers and serve as advocates for safer child birth. If a high-risk pregnancy is identified a referral letter is handed out with a clear advice to give birth at the nearest Hospital (Masanga or Magburaka). In case of emergency, the woman is referred to the national ambulance service (NEMS) of Sierra Leone.

The MOP team consists of 15 specialized, scanning staff and outreach nurses, supervised by 1 Dutch medical doctor. The team runs the project according to the strategic goals set by a Steering Committee. The project will be further developed independently and ultimately transferred to Masanga Hospital (or any other local institution) in 3-5 years.



In the first year of existence (Sep 2022/Sep 2023) more than 3750 ultrasound scans were performed of which 443 were diagnosed as 'high-risk' and referred to Masanga Hospital. Only 34 women (8%) followed the advice to go to the hospital. This low percentage gives an indication that more attention should be given to the follow-up of the women referred.

Indicators	Sept. 2022/2023	
	plan	actual
1. Visits to villages	50	44
2. Ultrasound scans performed	3500	3760
3. High-risk pregnancies diagnosed	350	443
4. Referred women showed up at Masanga	100	34
5. Maternity Agents trained	10	42

Such a project can only be rolled out successfully if some strict conditions are met:

1. Running of an efficient intervention-logistics system.
2. Deployment of a selected group of local trained villagers (Maternity Agents) who are able to bridge the gap between the women and the health providers.
3. Collaboration with Traditional Birth Attendants in the villages and midwives in the CHC's towards referring of high-risk pregnant women.

MOP research

In order to evaluate the outreach interventions, a research project has been started and added to the running project. The research aims to assess broadly the influence of the program on pregnant women in rural villages. The research team evaluates the interventions for better understanding of:

- The effect of the interventions on facility birth
- How and why women make decisions around child birth
 - o zooms in on the vulnerable group of adolescent pregnancies
- The cost effectiveness of the operations.

This will hopefully ensure that future interventions are meaningful and affordable.

A reduction of the Maternal Mortality Ratio is hardly measurable for us. The MOP program can only identify the pregnant women that carry a high risk and encourage them to go to the nearest hospital for facility birth. If properly managed, the program has everything in it to save lives and limit maternal risks.

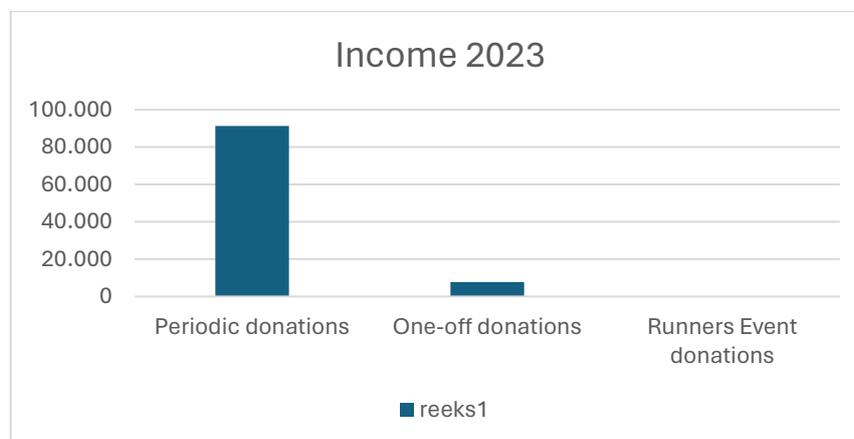
4. Annual Financial Report 2023

Income and Expenditures				
		2023	2022	2024 Budget
Income				
	Periodic donations	91.350	67.250	85.000
	One-off donations	7.778	22.967	10.000
	Runners Event donations	0	10.806	0
	Interest from saving account	552	0	1.000
	Total Income	99.680	101.023	96.000
Expenditures				
	Funding WNSF	17.897	20.712	25.000
	Funding MOP running	27.591	14.951	45.000
	Funding MOP research	0	18.587	10.000
	Overhead	1.808	2.116	2.000
	Total Expenditures	47.296	56.366	82.000
	Operating Result	52.384	44.657	14.000

Balance Sheet			
		31-12-2023	31-12-2022
Assets			
	Current bank account	5.237	7.405
	Savings bank account	141.553	87.000
	Commitment periodic contracts	162.750	205.600
	Total Assets	309.540	300.005
Liabilities			
	Equity	142.730	90.345
	Provision project funding	162.750	205.600
	Provision SLL account	4.060	4.060
	Total Liabilities	309.540	300.005

Income

It was a financially healthy year for the Wouter Nolet Foundation (WNF) with a positive cash flow. The increase in periodic donations of 36% compared to 2022 is striking. This is partly due to the fact that our donors enter into a long-term relationship with us. In 2023, no 'Runners Event' took place, so unfortunately this did not generate any income.



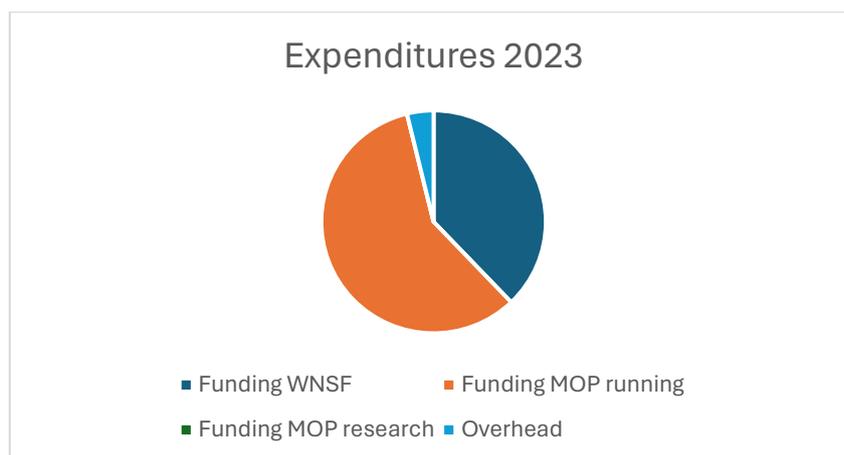
Expenditures

Expenditures could be kept well under control. Costs consisted mainly of money that was spent directly on our projects in Sierra Leone: Wouter Nolet Scholarship Fund (WNSF) and Maternal outreach project (MOP).

The WNSF project was expanded with 12 students (36 in total). The distribution of the grants took place through a uniform payment protocol that was run through our local Bank account in Sierra Leone. In view of the enormous inflation, the monthly scholarships paid out were adjusted for inflation.

The MOP project experienced strong growth. The activities have been budgeted in detail. A distinction has been made between running costs and research costs. Both activities were operated well within budget, thanks to the cost control of the local management.

The management in the Netherlands could be carried out for a minimum of costs. The website (www.wnsf.nl) was also renewed on a voluntary basis. Overall, overhead costs amounted to 4% of expenditures, well within the target of 10%.



Balance sheet and Profit & Loss statement

As far as the balance sheet is concerned, it can be noted that the Foundation has built up equity of more than € 142.000. Together with the commitment based on periodic contracts, this creates a healthy financial position with more than sufficient resources to ensure the continuity of our projects in the coming years.

The item 'Provision SLL account' represents for most part unpaid scholarships at year end. This amount of money is reserved on our Bank account in Sierra Leone.

Accountability

The foundation employs a Dutch doctor, on location in Masanga, who is ultimately responsible for the 'local' finances in Sierra Leone and reports to the treasurer in the Netherlands on a monthly basis. An audit committee has checked the financial records of the Foundation. No irregularities have been observed and the committee has approved the financial statements and granted discharge to the board of WNF.