

CapaCare Annual Report 2023



May 2024

Contents

Summary	3
CapaCare International	4
CapaCare Norway	5
CapaCare Sierra Leone	5
CapaCare Liberia	6
CapaCare Netherlands.....	7
Surgical Training Programme, Sierra Leone	9
- Project Locations	9
- Graduate Locations	11
- Renovation of Surgical Training Programme Student Quarters, Masanga Hospital	12
- Output Student and Graduate	13
- Surgical Output	14
- Impact of the Surgical Training Programme since inception in 2011	14
- Roles and Procedures	15
- Courses and Trainers	16
- Programme Support	18
Surgical Training Programme, Liberia	19
- Project Locations	19
- Surgical Output - Output Rural Rotation	20
- Roles and Procedures	21
- Courses and Trainers	22
- Programme Support	23
Media and Publications – Media Coverage	24
Media and Publications – Publications	25
Research and Collaborations	26
Presentations	27
Partners and Donors	28
Financial Overview	29

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Summary

Dear all,

CapaCare, as of 2023, continues to demonstrate its commitment to improving access to quality surgical care in resource-limited settings. Founded on the principles of sustainability and capacity building, our activities in Sierra Leone and Liberia address the critical shortage of surgical healthcare providers.

We are pleased to see that our activities in Liberia are progressing. The rural rotations for the residents in surgery and obstetrics are now well established. We have been able to establish a good collaboration with the Dutch Society of Surgery that has given the first courses to residents in surgery at the John F Kennedy Medical Center (JFK) in Monrovia.

In 2023 we concluded the third nationwide assessment of surgical activity in Sierra Leone, the two first were done in 2012 and 2018. To have in depth data on all operations performed in the country over a decade gives us a unique opportunity to evaluate the impact of our activities. Much has changed since our first students started in 2011, however our aims have not. Firstly, we want to improve access to surgical care for rural populations because they are the most disadvantaged; we want to strengthen surgical care in public hospitals because the government of Sierra Leone will be the main healthcare provider in the foreseeable future; and lastly we want to contribute to reduce maternal mortality that was among the world's highest a decade ago.

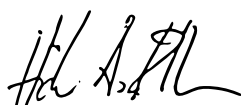
Over the last decade, there have been substantial changes in surgical care provision in Sierra Leone. There has been a considerable increase in volume of surgery, from around 24,000 surgical operations in 2012 to almost 40,000 in 2023. Nearly all of the growth seen the last decade is due to increased activity in governmental hospitals, which now perform more than 60% of all operations in the country, against 40% a decade ago.

There has also been a larger increase in surgical operations performed in rural areas compared with urban areas. Graduates of the Surgical Training Programme (STP) perform 55% of all operations in governmental hospitals and more than half of all operations outside Western Area.

Emergency obstetric care is the field where our graduates have had the largest impact. Fifty-seven % of all caesarean sections in 2023 were performed by a graduate of the STP. The national caesarean section rate has almost tripled during the last decade, however it is still far below recommended levels. We strongly believe this has contributed to bringing the maternal mortality ratio down from 837 to 443 in the last decade.

We are very proud of those results and I want, from the depths of my heart, to thank all that have made this tremendous achievement possible. Behind those results are extensive collaborations and contributions by so many people from all corners of the world.

Plenti tenki



Håkon A. Bolkan
CapaCare International Chairperson

Trondheim, Norway – May, 2024



CapaCare International

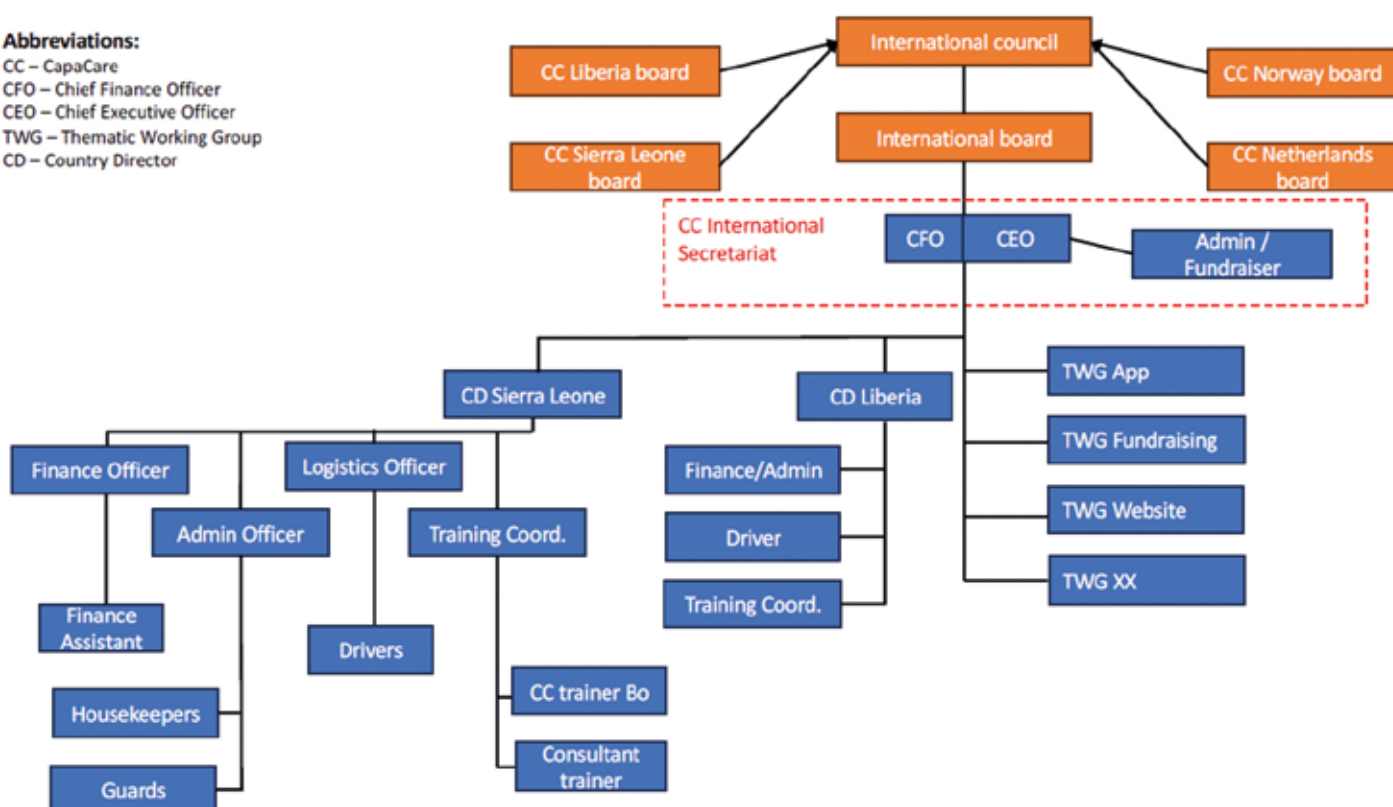
CapaCare International is the entity that oversees and coordinates the activities of all CapaCare Chapters. CapaCare International consists of the CapaCare International Council where two members of each national Chapter hold a seat. This is the highest decision-making body within the organisation. CapaCare International has an elected Board and is supported by a Secretariat (which previously consisted of an Administrator / Fundraiser and a Finance Officer) but during 2023 was expanded to incorporate a Chief Executive Finance Officer. The main responsibilities of CapaCare International is to decide on all major matters relating to the organisation in order to make sure all Chapters agree on

the activities of the organisation and how the organisation moves forward. This typically includes election of the CapaCare International Board, approval of the main activities of the whole organisation on behalf of all the Chapters, approval of an overall CapaCare budget, approval of the vision, mission, and strategy of CapaCare and finally grants membership to new national Chapters.

The CapaCare International Council had their annual meeting in June 2023 and met again in November for a budget / activity meeting for 2024. In between the Council meetings, the CapaCare Executive Board met digitally ten times in 2023.

Abbreviations:

CC – CapaCare
CFO – Chief Finance Officer
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
TWG – Thematic Working Group
CD – Country Director



CapaCare Norway

CapaCare Norway (CapaCare NO) has met online approximately bi-monthly over the course of 2023, and the Board has consisted of the following Members: Gunn-Berit Neergård (Chairperson), Øyvind Veel Svendsen (Secretary), Anne Engtrø Husby (Treasurer), Johan Ahlbäck (Board Member), Ayeshat Ibitoye (Board Member) and Håvard Askim Adde (Board Member).

For 2023 the Board had three active working groups. Firstly, our Logbook Application Group that followed up on logbook data collection and analysis throughout 2023. The group sends regular reports back to the logbook app users updating them on their registered surgical activity. A new version of the logbook app was developed in 2023 and is currently being tested, this new version will allow users to access statistics about their own registered activity in real time on a web page hosted by our collaborator CheckWare. We hope to be able to launch the new version of the app before the end of 2024. Throughout 2023 several improvements to the current version of the app were also implemented. Øyvind Veel Svendsen continues to lead the Logbook project.

Secondly, the Child Hernia Repair Project (established in 2022) has progressed as planned during 2023. After obtaining ethical approval in Norway and Sierra Leone, a research nurse was hired locally to recruit patients and

collect data at the four hospitals and through home visits. Johanna Mona, a master's student in Global Health, has been on the ground in Sierra Leone, organising and initiating data collection, which will continue through 2024 and parts of 2025. During the year, Johanna has played a crucial role in the project, and will in 2024 finalise a master's thesis on barriers and enablers to hernia surgery, based on interviews with patients' guardians, and hospital staff. The Child Hernia Repair Project is led by Johan Ahlbäck.

Thirdly, the Fundraising Group has merged with the Communications / Social Media Group, and the team has grown into an international collaboration with the other CapaCare Chapters. The Fundraising and Communications group has worked to increase private donations and coordinating digital fundraisers across Chapters. The Group has also maintained the social media channels of CapaCare on Instagram and Facebook and maintained the website. Volunteers were recruited towards the end of 2023, and we are happy to start 2024 with a strong team of former and new volunteers.

Throughout the year, CapaCare Norway has focused on strengthening the Norwegian Chapter by recruiting volunteers to join their working groups. This has happened, for instance, through free advertisement for volunteer positions through Frivillig.no.

CapaCare Sierra Leone

CapaCare Sierra Leone (CapaCare SL) was established in 2015, and is currently registered at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development under registration number NNGO/634/2022-23. The Board oversees CapaCare's activities in Sierra Leone and advises both the local management in Masanga and the International Board. The activities of CapaCare SL are reported later under the section **"Surgical Training Programme, Sierra Leone"**. During 2023, the Board met twice in person in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Observers were invited to the meeting, including senior surgeons from Connaught Hospital and Obstetric Professor from the leading maternity hospital, PCMH in Freetown.



Masanga Hospital, Sierra Leone



Jackson F. Doe Memorial Regional Referral Hospital, Tappita, Liberia

CapaCare Liberia

CapaCare Liberia was established in 2021 with the aim to improve access to surgical care in Liberia by training health workers. In 2022, we received NGO accreditation from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and started the first training activities in collaboration with the Liberian College for Physicians and Surgeons (LCPS), John F Kennedy Medical Center (JFK) in Monrovia and Jackson F Doe Regional Referral Hospital (JFD) in Tappita.

CapaCare aims to increase the availability of essential obstetric and surgical services for the population with limited or no access to surgical care in Liberia. We support the specialisation for medical doctors in the fields of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Surgery by implementing surgical training. The two main activities in 2023 were to:

- Provide rural rotation for residents in JFD Hospital in collaboration with LCPS, JFK and JFD.
- Provide specific, skills-based surgical and obstetric training courses for health workers.

In order to strengthen our activities in Liberia, we formalised our collaboration with the Dutch Surgical Society (Nederlandse Vereniging voor Heelkunde) and Lifebox in 2023.



Pilot visit and training in Surgical Oncology at JFK in collaboration with the NVVH. Left to right: Dr. Ayun Cassell, Juul Bakker, Dr. Inne Borel Rinkes, Dr. Peter S. Coleman and Tom Gresnigt.

CapaCare - Netherlands

The objectives and our activities in 2023 were as follows:

1. To improve the quality of the education of health care workers by:

a. Selecting and guiding (guest) facilitators and trainers for the Surgical Training Programme

As in previous years, CapaCare NL organised debriefing for all trainers of obstetric modules. Also, a clear need has been expressed by the Training Coordinators to expand the debriefing to the trainers of surgical modules as well. A start has been made in 2023, which will be implemented further during 2024.

b. Supporting the Training Coordinators in Sierra Leone and offering 'peer-to-peer support - 'intervision'

In 2023, after evaluation it has been decided to phase out the former way of undertaking intervision of our Training Coordinators and Consultant Trainers in Sierra Leone. The main reason for this was the exit of our main lead on intervision in the Board and the conclusion that the chosen structure no longer met needs and expectations. To ensure intervision is replaced, CapaCare NL began working on a new structure. We aim to finalise this process and start implementing in 2024. This new structure will be expanded to all expat staff in both Liberia and Sierra Leone.

c. Financial support to the Sierra Leone and Liberia Chapters

In 2023 the purchase of one Toyota Land Cruiser for our Programme activities in Sierra Leone was completed. This was achieved in collaboration with support from our partner Wilde Ganzen.

CapaCare NL also uses its funds to contribute financially to specific activities or general running costs within our Programmes in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This only occurred to a limited extent in 2023.

2. Fostering 'lifelong learning' of graduates of the Surgical Training Programme

During 2023, CapaCare NL contributed to the further development of our graduates by organising and conducting a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course in Sierra Leone about 'Evidence Based Medicine'. This course was well received and to build further on this a working

group was established to develop a more extensive course to expand the academic knowledge of our students. This will be continued over 2024.

As in previous years CapaCare NL facilitated participation of Surgical Assistant Community Health Officers (SACHOs) in the Global Health Summer School of Utrecht University. In 2023 we succeeded in finding a grant to fund this activity. With this VIS-I Grant we also ensured participation from Sierra Leone in 2024 and we aim to expand this to participants from Liberia as well.

3. Establishing, reinforcing, and maintaining a network of (new) partners within and externally to the Netherlands

a. Collaboration with the Dutch Society of Surgery (NVvH)

In 2023 a Memorandum of Understanding between CapaCare Liberia and the NVvH was finalised and signed. This sealed a three-year collaboration. The partnership consists mainly of support to the postgraduate curriculum in surgery in Liberia. In 2023 the first training module (oncological surgery) was delivered. For the upcoming years approximately three courses per year will be delivered. Subjects will be selected in consultation with our Country Director and/or Training Coordinator in Liberia and the relevant local authorities.

b. Collaboration with the Wouter Nolet Foundation (WNF)

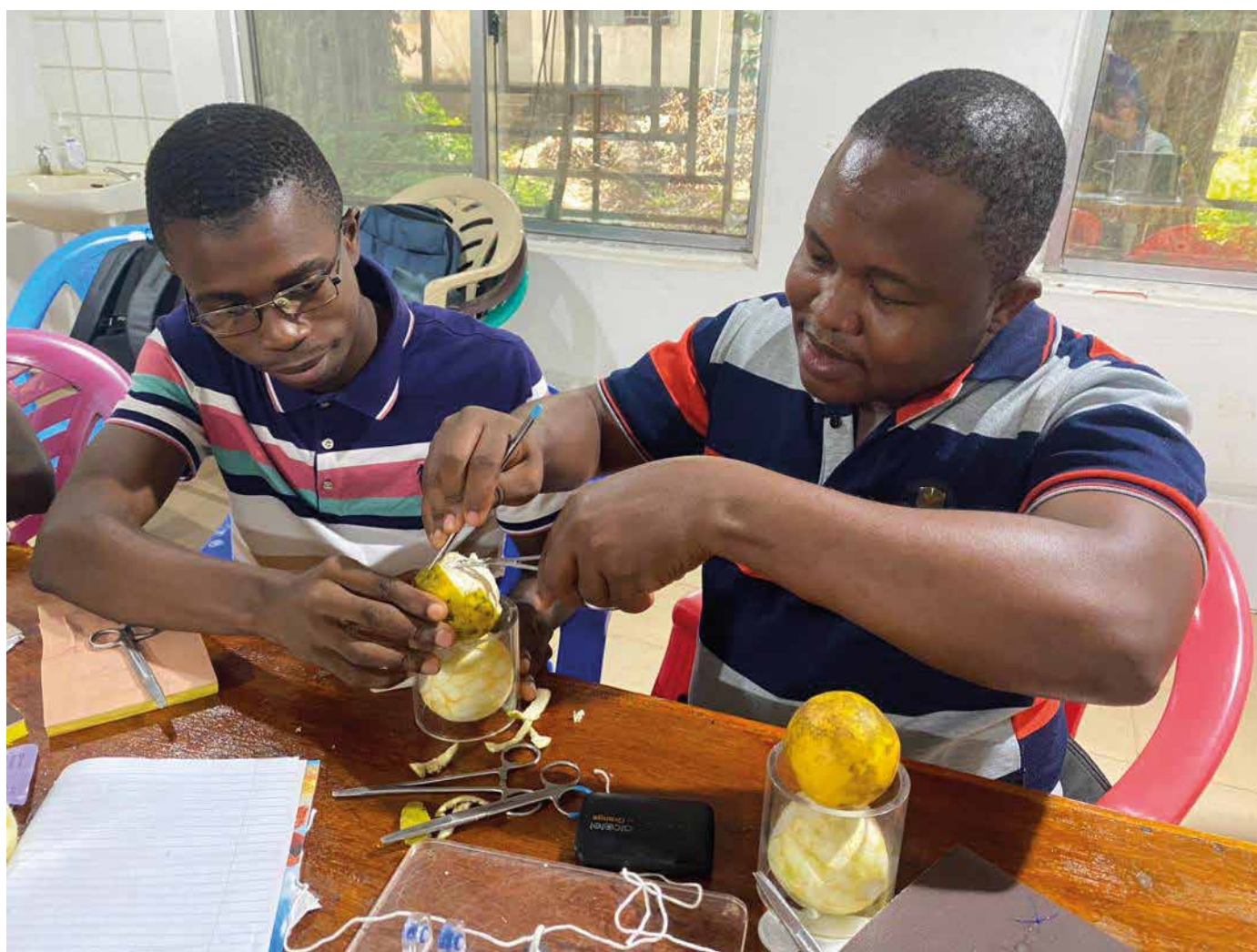
As with previous years, Capacare NL has assisted the Wouter Nolet Foundation in the selection of suitable candidates for their Scholarship Programme in 2023. This Scholarship Programme structurally supports students in the internal medicine, paediatric and surgical training programmes in Sierra Leone with a financial grant. This allows students to better concentrate on their education.

Through a systematic selection procedure, 12 students for the paediatric training programme and five students for the internal medicine programme were selected for a grant in 2023. A total of 13 students in the surgical training programme, 18 students in the paediatric training programme and ten students in the internal medicine training programme now receive a scholarship through the Wouter Nolet Foundation.

4. Fundraising

In 2023 the CapaCare NL Chapter sought more collaboration in fundraising efforts with other Chapters (specifically Norway). This has resulted in joint fundraising activities. A dedicated Fundraising and Communications Working Group has been established. The most significant fundraising activity of 2023 has been the Christmas Fundraiser during December – the central theme of this fundraiser was ‘Train the Trainers’.

Another fundraising achievement has been the establishment of a donation page specifically for Dutch donors. With this new page it's now possible for Dutch donors to use iDEAL for their donations.



Basic Surgical Skills training for Medical Doctors. Masanga Hospital.

Surgical Training Programme, Sierra Leone

Project Locations

Since 2011, Masanga Hospital has been the home of the Surgical Training Programme (STP) in Sierra Leone. All students commence their basic training in Masanga before rotating to other partner hospitals around the country. A strong culture of education and training at Masanga Hospital has developed, making it the ideal environment for this programme.

We recruit Community Health Officers (CHOs), Physician Assistants (PAs) and Medical Doctors (MDs) to the programme. CHOs graduate from the programme as Surgical Assistant CHOs (SACHOs) and to date 95% of our graduates are the SACHO cadre, with the remaining number being Medical Doctors. Since our formalised MoU in 2022 our collaboration with the School of Clinical Sciences in Makeni allows their PA students to join CapaCare and graduate from the programme as Clinical Officers in Surgery and Obstetrics. We have a small but increasing number of Medical Doctors interested in joining the Surgical Training Programme.

The course starts with an introductory week, orienting them to the team, the hospital departments, daily routines, protocols and expectations. This is followed by intensive competency based training including basic surgical skills, a basic obstetric course and abdominal surgery. A combination of theoretical classroom-based teaching, practical sessions in the skills lab, bedside teaching and supervised clinical

work on the wards and operating theatre builds a strong foundation for the students.

In 2023, after 12 months of basic training in Masanga, the students continued their clinical rotations in partner hospitals across Sierra Leone, for two rotations of five to six months each. During these rotations, the students are periodically invited back to Masanga for additional courses as part of the curriculum. The overall aim is to ensure students gain knowledge, skills and experience in the management of obstetric and surgical emergencies and bring them to the highest standards possible.

At the end of their second year, upon successful completion of the rotations and all relevant courses a final exam is conducted. The examination is conducted by CapaCare, but led by specialists from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) and includes a written component followed by an oral exam. Successful students enter a one-year internship stage which includes three months of obstetrics and three months of surgery in the two largest tertiary Governmental hospitals in Freetown, and the remaining six months posting in district hospitals. The internship is facilitated by the School of Clinical Sciences Makeni through the MoHS.

Sixteen of the surgically most active hospitals in Sierra Leone with experienced surgeons, obstetricians and/or surgically

inclined Medical Officers were active partners of the Training Programme in 2023 (**Figure 1**). These partner hospitals are selected on the basis of their surgical capacity, coverage of supervision, and the availability of surgical tutors. The hospitals and their national and international staff have

offered their premises to the Programme, ensuring that each candidate is exposed to the most skilled tutors presently available in the country.

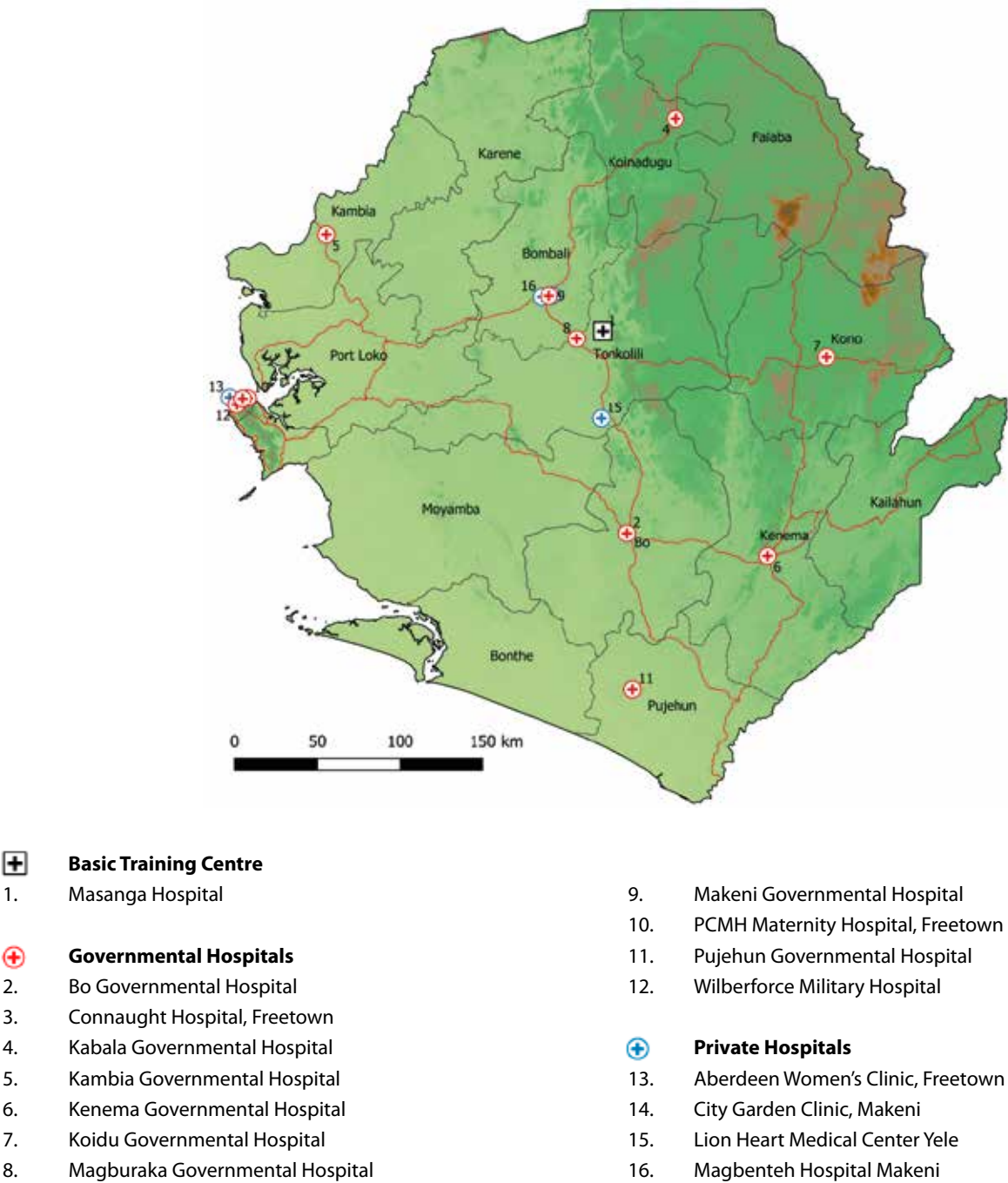
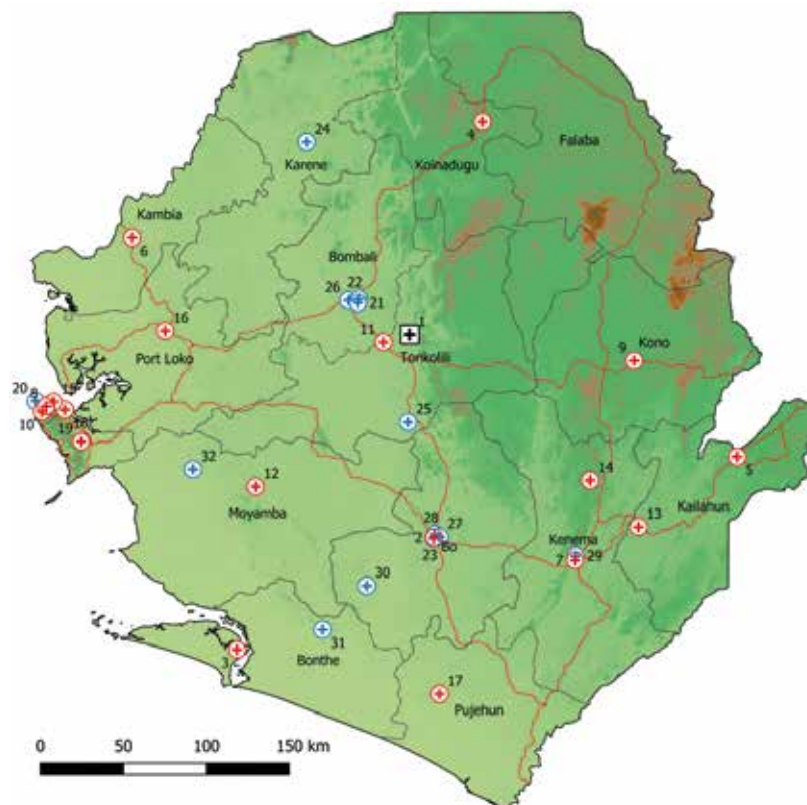


Figure 1: Training Hospitals – Surgical Training Programme, Sierra Leone in 2023.

Graduate Locations

After successful completion of the training, the SACHOs and Clinical Officers (COs) are posted by the government to different hospitals (**Figure 2**). The number of hospitals where the SACHOs are posted remained the same as 2022, at 32

hospitals. These include both governmental and private non-profit hospitals and have an essential role in the provision of emergency obstetric and surgical care in the country.



- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>+ Basic Training Centre</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Masanga Hospital <p>+ Governmental Hospitals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Bo Governmental Hospital 3. Bonthe Governmental Hospital 4. Kabala Governmental hospital 5. Kailahun Governmental Hospital 6. Kambia Governmental Hospital 7. Kenema Governmental Hospital 8. King Harman Road Hospital Freetown 9. Koidu Governmental hospital 10. Lumley Governmental Hospital 11. Magburaka Governmental Hospital 12. Moyamba Government Hospital 13. Nixon Memorial Hospital Segbwema 14. Panaguma Governmental Hospital 15. PCMH Maternity Hospital Freetown 16. Port Loko Governmental Hospital | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Pujehun Government Hospital 18. Rokupa government hospital Freetown 19. Waterloo New Hub Hospital <p>+ Private hospitals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Aberdeen Women's Clinic, Freetown 21. Branda Medical Center, Makeni 22. City Garden Clinic, Makeni 23. Dr Yila Hospital Bo 24. Kamakwie Wesleyan Hospital 25. Lion Heart Medical Center, Yele 26. Magbenteh Community Hospital Makeni 27. Mamasa Hospital Bo 28. Mercy Hospital Bo 29. Nyayia Hospital Kenema 30. Serabu Catholic Hospital 31. UMC Hospital Rotifunk 32. UMC Hospital Matru |
|---|--|

Figure 2: Graduate locations Sierra Leone in 2023.

Renovation of Surgical Training Programme Student Quarters, Masanga Hospital

Funding for this project came from the AFAS Foundation in the Netherlands. AFAS has been supporting Masanga Hospital for several years. They have also made funds available for the improvement and extension of the STP student quarters.

The original STP houses consisted of three rooms with outside toilets. With help from Dutch engineering firm Alpha Plan we made a new design for the existing houses. We created four rooms with inside toilets and more windows for better ventilation. In 2023, we remodelled two existing houses according to this design. Students are very happy with their improved accommodation. We are using the same design for the construction of a new student house in 2024. When the project is finished capacity will have increased from nine to 20 students.

Renovation of the existing student houses was undertaken by the Masanga Technical Association, chaired by Haasan Andrew Koroma. The Association consists of craftsmen from Masanga and surrounding villages. People who have been working on and off for CapaCare and Masanga Hospital for a period of more than ten years. The collaboration with the Masanga Technical Association has been very successful. Their skills and family income increased, students have better housing, AFAS has value for money and we have a reliable and local partner for construction work.

The photos are from the first renovation project; block C. Thereafter in 2023 they renovated block A and B and now they are working on the communal area.



Demolition phase.



Work in progress



The renovated student quarters.



Construction team from Masanga Technical Association - names from left to right, Hassan Koroma (AJ), Samuel Bangura, Abdul E Turay, Foday M Sesay and John Sesay.

Output Student and Graduate

In 2023, we had 37 continuing students in the Surgical Training Programme. Of the 37 students, 31 were in Masanga Hospital or posted in various partner hospitals across the

country whilst six students were in their final year doing their internship in PCMH, Connaught Hospital, Kenema Government Hospital and Bo Government Hospital.

	January 2023		December 2023	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Basic training	26	5	14	3
Housemanship	5	1	10	2
Graduates (MD)	76	6	88	8

There were 21 supervision trips to our students in various partner hospitals throughout 2023 – these visits enable CapaCare to keep close contact with supervisors and students in partner hospitals. The visits are joint monitoring and supervision trips in collaboration with representatives from CapaCare, the SCSM and MoHS.

In 2023, a total of fourteen students finished their surgical training. Of these, seven are SACHOs, five Clinical Officers and two MDs. These graduates have now been posted by the MoHS. A graduation ceremony is planned for 2024. The total number of graduates since the inception of the programme is 96, of which 75 are currently active surgical providers and of these, 84% work in rural areas of Sierra Leone.

Due to financial constraints there was no new intake of students to the STP in 2023, however we are actively working

to resolve this and a new cohort will start in April 2024.

During 2023, there were regular meetings with the School of Clinical Sciences in Makeni, with whom we have an MOU since 2022 for training of their Physician Assistant students. This MOU also involves other NGO partners, namely German Doctors (Paediatric training) and Partners in Health (Internal medicine training). We aim to align our work with our partners and collaborate for better outcomes with health education training.

Throughout the core training programme, National Trainers (SACHOs) were trainers alongside International Trainers and during 2023, almost all courses included a national trainer.

Surgical output

Since the start of the Programme in 2011, the students and graduates combined have participated in and performed more than **76,000 surgeries**. The total **number of operations recorded in our logbook system for 2023 alone was 2,702**. It is mandatory for students within the

initial two years of training to track surgical operations. In 2023 these students performed 2,174 operations, while the voluntary registration from those in housemanship were 163, and the graduates performed 363 operations.

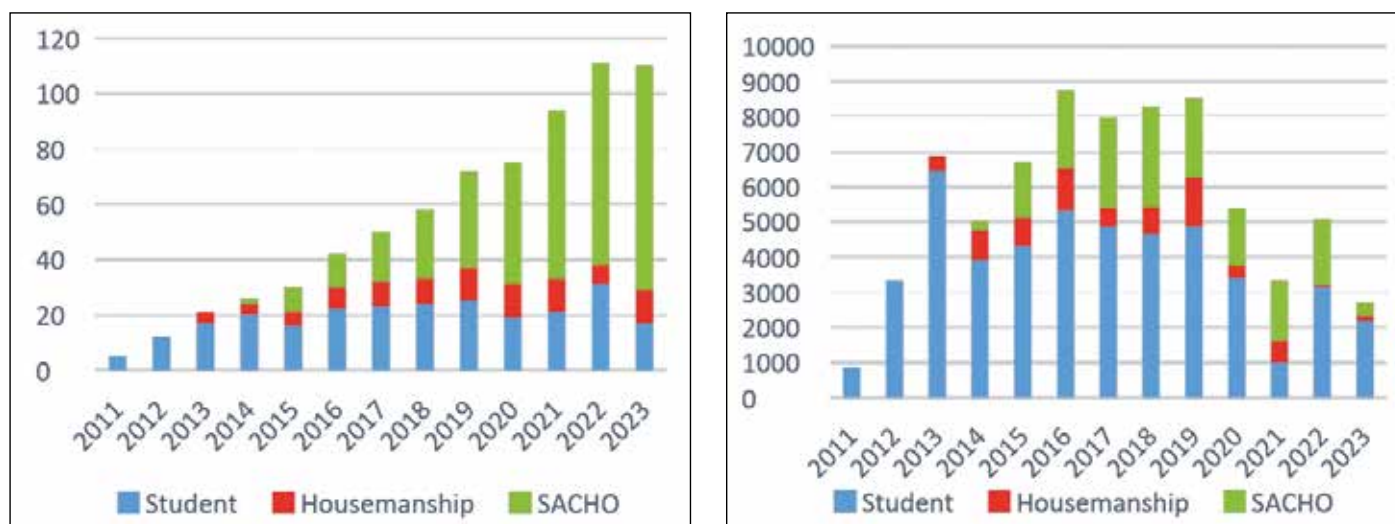


Figure 3: Accumulated number of students, interns, and graduates (left) in the programme and annual volume of surgical activity (right) since the start of the programme in 2011.

Impact of the Surgical Training Programme since inception in 2011

Following on from the previous nationwide surveys in 2012 and 2017, we once again conducted this research in 2023 to further understand the national picture of the surgical workforce and volume. In 2023, 78 facilities performed surgeries in Sierra Leone of which 69 (88.5%) shared data. Surgical volume rates increased from 400 to 505.5 procedures per 100,000 population between 2012 and 2023. The public sector became the main provider performing 60.5% of all operations in 2023, up from 39.6% in 2012 (**Figure 4a**).

Rural surgeries increased by 55.4% over the decade, far more than in urban areas. In rural areas, there was a transition from non-specialised physicians performing 46.2% of operations in 2012 to associate clinicians trained by CapaCare performing 54.9% in 2023. Nationwide caesarean section (CS) rates increased from 1.4% (2012) to 5.3% (2023). CS were in 2023 mostly performed in public facilities (85.5%) by associate clinicians (57.7%).

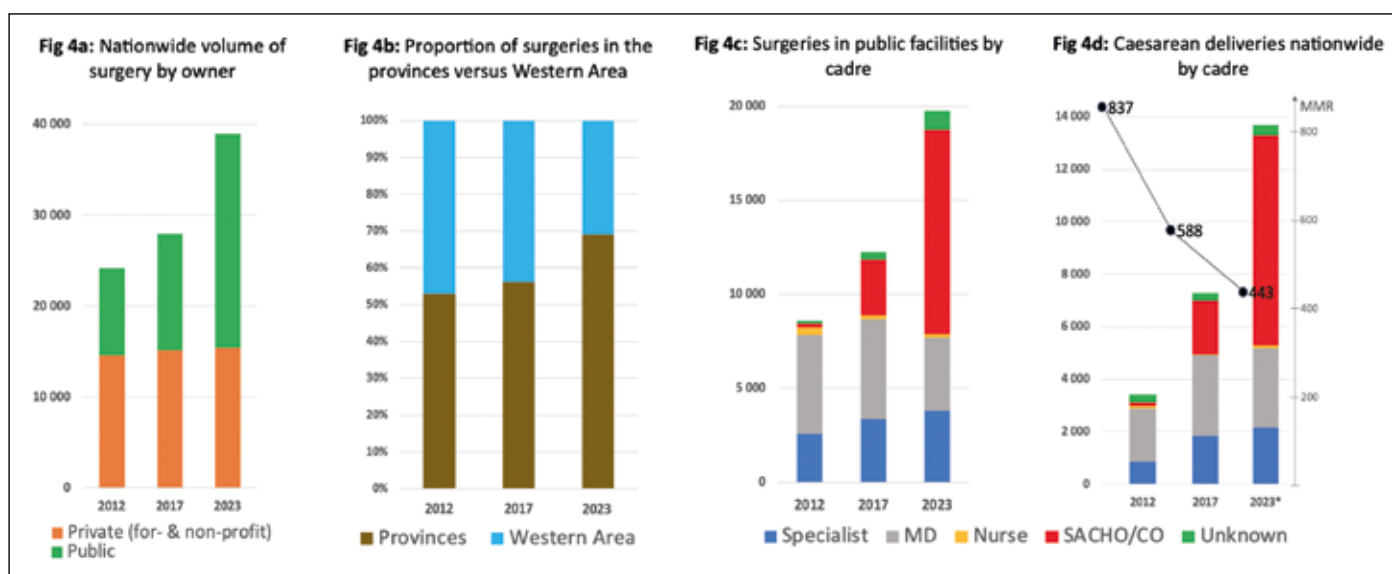


Figure 4a-d: Data from the Nationwide Survey undertaken in 2023.

However, our recent data on the surgical volume and providers also reflects the tremendous lack of Specialist Surgeons. To enable holistic support in surgical education and to strengthen task sharing in Sierra Leone at the educational level, CapaCare started to engage in Specialist training in October 2023.

Our Resident Surgeons Thomas Ashley and Katja Maschuw have so far been supporting the clinical routine, delivered bedside-teaching and on table training in Connaught University Hospital on a monthly basis. This time has served to explore the way towards a structured and robust educational support for Specialist training in the future. The introduction of formalised support started step by step in the beginning of 2024 and will be reported on in detail in the next annual report.

Role and procedures

The most common procedure for the students in 2023 was inguinal hernia repair. The most common procedure for the

graduates was caesarean section. The graduates performed over 98% of their surgeries fully independently.

Students (incl. housemanship)				Graduates		
No	Procedure	n	%	Procedure	n	%
1	Inguinal hernia repair	636	27.2	Caesarean section	153	41.9
2	Caesarean section	234	10.0	Inguinal hernia repair	66	18.1
3	Appendectomy	147	6.3	Appendectomy	42	11.5
4	Laparotomy	126	5.4	Umbilical hernia repair	21	5.8
5	Umbilical hernia repair	108	4.6	Laparotomy	15	4.1
6	Scrotal hydrocele	75	3.2	Hysterectomy	9	2.5
7	Skin graft	53	2.3	Myomectomy	9	2.5
8	Cystectomy	48	2.1	Cystectomy	7	1.9
9	Hysterectomy	47	2.0	Scrotal hydrocele	4	1.1
10	Strangulated hernia repair	46	2.0	Ventral hernia repair	4	1.1
Total		1,520	65.0	Total	330	90.4

Table 1: Top 10 procedures for students and graduates in 2023.

Students (incl. housemanship)				Graduates		
No	Role	n	%	Role	n	%
1	Surgeon supervised	853	36.5	Surgeon independent	358	98.1
2	Surgeon independent	796	34.1	Assisting	7	1.9
3	Assisting	671	28.7	Surgeon supervised	0	0
4	Observing	17	0.7	Observing	0	0
	Total	2337	100.0	Total	365	100.0

Table 2: Role during operation for students and graduates in 2023.



Caesarean section underway at Masanga Hospital.

Courses and Trainers

A core element of the STP is module-based training by international and national tutors. These training modules are conducted in Masanga by Gynaecologists, Midwives, Orthopaedic Surgeons, Paediatric Surgeons, Surgeons and Surgical Assistant Community Health Officers (SACHOs).

In 2023, the international trainers came from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom. All international tutors are engaged on a voluntary basis. CapaCare provides support for transportation, accommodation, visas, and vaccines. The local tutors receive

an honorarium for the training they provide. In 2023, 13 training modules were conducted.

In addition to the core training programme, continuous professional development (CPD) courses have been a key part of CapaCare's activity in 2023. Sixteen courses were provided with a total of 137 participants (45 SACHOs & 92 MDs). Importantly this training involved both international and national trainers, a key aspect to consider in the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Module	Trainees	Duration	Month	Tutor	Number of intl. trainers	Local trainers	Partici- pants	(female)
Abdominal Course	STP	2 weeks	January	Katja Maschuw (S), Amara Conteh (SACHO), Sandi Ghanga (SACHO)	1	2	7	2
CPD Obstetrics	MDs	1 week	January	Arvind Subramaniam (G)	1	0	10	3
Urology	STP	3 weeks	January	Dag Halvorsen (S), Katja Maschuw (S)	2	0	13	3
Emergency Obstetrics	STP	2 weeks	January	Arvind Subramaniam (G), Samuel Robert Koroma (SACHO), Yembeh (SACHO)	1	2	7	2
CPD Trauma	MDs	1 week	February	Prof. Oluwadiya (O)	1	0	10	3
CPD Surgical Skills	MDs	1 week	February	Katja Maschuw (S), Thomas Ashley (S)	1	1	10	6
Abdominal Refresher	STP	1 week	February	Katja Maschuw (S), Sandi Ghanga (SACHO), Ishaika Konneh (SACHO), Amara Conteh (SACHO)	1	3	6	2
Wet Lab(Pig Course)	STP	4 days	March	Thomas Ashley (S), Amara Conteh (SACHO), Ishaika Konneh (SACHO)	0	4	7	2
Anaesthesia & Emergency Medicine	STP	1 week	March	Maik Brouwer (RA), Lamin Fofanah (AN)	2	0	6	2
CPD Burns	MDs	1 week	April	Maria Bakker (TD), Amara Conteh (SACHO)	1	1	7	3
CPD Burns	SACHOs	1 week	April	Maria Bakker (TD), Amara Conteh (SACHO)	1	1	8	0
Refresher Abdominal	STP	1 week	May	Katja Mashuw (S), Thomas Ashley (S), Sayo Kanneh (SACHO), Ishaika Konneh (SACHO)	1	3	10	2
CPD Refresher Obstetrics	SACHOs/ MDs	1 week	July	Arvind Subramaniam (G)	1	0	7	2
Refresher Obstetrics	STP	1 week	July	Arvind Subramaniam (G), Samuel Robert Koroma (STP)	1	1	10	1
Anaesthesia & Emergency Medicine	STP	1 week	July	Aatish Patel (IMC), Lamin Fofanah (AN)	1	1	7	2
CPD Emergency Obstetrics	MDs	1 week	July	Arvind Subramaniam (G)	1	0	6	4
CPD Global Surgery	SACHOs	1 week	July	online	x	0	12	0
CPD General Surgical Emergency	SACHOs	1 week	August	Katja Maschuw (S), Thomas Ashley (S)	1	1	7	0
CPD QI Course Evidence Based Medicine	SACHO	2 days	October	Tom Versteege (TD)	1	0	9	0
QI Course Evidence Based Medicine	STP	1 day	October	Tom Versteege (TD)	1	0	11	2
CPD QI Course Evidence Based Medicine	MDs	2 days	October	Tom Versteege (TD)	1	0	6	1
CPD Paediatric Surgery	SACHOs	3 days	November	Judith Lindert (PS)	1	0	9	0
CPD Paediatric Surgery	MDs	3 days	November	Judith Lindert (PS)	1	0	10	1
CPD Obstetric Ultrasound	MDs	2 days	November	Friederike Rothe (G)	1	0	10	1
CPD Open Fracture	MDs	1 week	November	Wouter ten Cate (TSC), Pim Bongers (S), Matthijs Botman (PSC)	3	0	6	0
Trauma	STPs	1 week	November	Wouter ten Cate, Pim Bongers (S)	2	0	16	3
Obstetric Ultrasound	STPs	2 days	November	Friederike Rothe (G), Emmanuel SM Tamba (SACHO)	1	1	10	1
CPD Obstetrics	MDs	1 week	December	Friederike Rothe (G)	1	0	10	2
Research Methodology	STPs	1 week	December	Lecturers from College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences in Freetown	0	5	19	5
Totals					31	26	266	53

Table 3: Anaesthetic Nurse (AN), Gynaecologist (G), Internal Medicine Consultant (IMC), Orthopaedic Surgeon (O), Paediatric Surgeon (PS), Plastic Surgeon Consultant (PSC), Resident in Anaesthesia (RA), Surgeon (S), Surgical Assistant Community Health Officer (SACHO), Surgical Training Programme students (STP), Trauma Surgeon Consultant (TSC) and Tropical Doctor (TD).

Apart from the trainers, there were also a number of support visits, mostly to offer programme support.

Purpose	Duration	Month	Support Staff & Research
CapaCare International Executive Board	1 week	January	Håkon Bolkan (CCI EB)
Caesarean Deliveries Research Project Stay (started in November 2022)	8 months	Jan-June	Josien Westendorp (NTNU, NL) with family of four
CapaCare Norway	1 week	March	Magnus Endal (P)
Nationwide Surgical Assessment	3 months	Sept - Nov	Elisabeth Øvreås, Mali Furre, Maria Svenggaard (NTNU)
Paediatric Hernia Surgery research	3 months but ongoing study	Sept - Nov	Johanna Mona (NTNU)
German Doctors	2 weeks	Sept - Oct	Erik Wehrens
CapaCare International Executive Board	1 week	October	Alex van Duinen (CCI EB)

Table 4: CapaCare International Executive Board (CCI EB), Norwegian University for Science and Technology (NTNU) and Photographer (P).



Global Surgery Amsterdam, Open Fracture Course at Masanga Hospital.

Surgical Training Programme, Liberia

Project Locations

The postgraduate training in Liberia is accessible for Medical Doctors with at least two years of working experience. The training takes three years, with rotations in different departments. Residents are evaluated annually before starting the next year. One of the requirements of the Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons (LCPS) and the West-African College of Surgeons (WACS) during postgraduate training is a rural attachment.

In 2022, CapaCare started training activities to support postgraduate training in Surgery and in Obstetrics & Gynaecology in Liberia. The surgical training is divided into two main activities:

1. Rural rotation for residents in Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology.
2. Surgical and obstetric skills courses.

The main location for CapaCare's training activities in Liberia is situated at the Jackson F. Doe Memorial Regional Referral Hospital in Tappita, Nimba County. For Medical Doctors who are specialising in Surgery or in Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Jackson F. Doe Hospital serves as a location for their rural rotation. This rotation takes place in the 2nd or 3rd year of postgraduate training for a duration of 2-3 months.

For the postgraduate training programmes in Liberia, the John F. Kennedy Medical Center in Monrovia, Montserrado County is the main training hospital. CapaCare is supporting the postgraduate training in Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology here by delivering different surgical training courses.

In addition, in 2023 field visits to potential partner hospitals in Liberia were conducted.



- Rural Training Hospital**
 1. Jackson F. Doe Hospital, Tappita
- Training Hospital**
 2. John F. Kennedy Medical Center, Monrovia

Figure 5: Training Hospitals – Surgical and Obstetric Residents Training in Liberia, 2023.

Surgical Output

Output Rural Rotation at JFD, Tappita, Nimba County

The number of residents that are eligible for a rural rotation in JFD hospital highly depends on the total number of residents in the postgraduate training programmes. The residents in Surgery have a rural posting in their 2nd year of training, whereas for Obstetrics & Gynaecology this takes place in the 3rd year. The academic year is from September to August, with an exit exam in the 3rd year taking place in June.

At the start of the academic year in September 2022, there were three residents in Surgery entering their 3rd year, and two in their 2nd year. For Obstetrics & Gynaecology, five completed their training in June 2023, and four residents started their 3rd year in September 2023. A total of six rotations were conducted in JFD during the course of 2023 (**Table 5**).

Number	Year	Arrival	Specialisation	Gender	Postgraduate Year	Duration (weeks)	Surgical procedures during rotation*
1	2023	January	Surgery	M	3rd	10	42
2	2023	January	Surgery	F	2nd	10	32
3	2023	March	OBGYN	M	3rd	6	14
4	2023	May	OBGYN – rotation anaesthesia	M	3rd	2	N/A
5	2023	December	Surgery	F	2nd	3#	9
6	2023	December	Surgery	M	2nd	3#	7

*Includes procedures performed independently, with assistance and assisting.

Three weeks in 2023, rotation continues in 2024.

Table 5: Overview of rural rotation for postgraduate training at Jackson F. Doe Hospital in 2023.



Operating Theatre and Anaesthesia at Jackson F. Doe Memorial Regional Referral Hospital, Tappita, Liberia.

Roles and Procedures

In 2023, the residents participated in 90 surgical procedures during their rural rotation. This gives an average of 11 surgical procedures per month (four weeks) of rural rotation in JFD. In 56.7% of these operations the resident was the

surgeon (either independent or supervised), whereas in 43.3% of cases they were assisting. The most performed procedures during the rural rotation since its start in 2022 are displayed in **Tables 6 & 7**.

Order	Procedure / indication	n	% of total
1	Caesarean section	47	44.8
2	Salpingectomy	17	16.2
3	Abdominal hysterectomy	15	14.3
4	Myomectomy	7	6.7
5	Vaginal hysterectomy	4	3.8
6	Tuboplasty	4	3.8
7	Ruptured uterus repair	3	2.9
8	Pelvic organ prolapse surgery	3	2.9
9	Dilatation and curettage	1	1.0
10	Debulking surgery	1	1.0
	Total	102	97.1

Table 6: Top 10 procedures Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

Order	Procedure / indication	n	% of total
1	Inguinal hernia repair	106	46.7
2	Exploratory laparotomy	26	11.5
3	Umbilical hernia repair	13	5.7
4	Appendectomy	11	4.8
5	Debridement	10	4.4
6	Hydrocele	9	4.0
7	Excision	5	2.2
8	Scrotal exploration / Fournier's gangrene	5	2.2
9	BPH	4	1.8
10	Cholecystectomy	4	1.8
	Total	193	85.0

Table 7: Top 10 procedures General Surgery.

Courses and Trainers

In total, there were four skills-based courses in 2023 with a total number of 73 participants. **Table 8** gives an overview of the courses. Two scheduled courses were postponed to 2024 due to travel restrictions during the election period from 1st of October to 1st of December 2024.

Training module	Time period	Location	Parti- pants Surgery	Parti- pants OBYN	Medical students	Parti- pants Other	Participants Total (female)	Trainers
Surgical oncology / pilot visit (NVVH)	February (1 week)	JFK ¹	21		23	3	47 (9)	Inne Borel Rinkes, Tom Gresnight (NVVH)
Surgical oncology	February (3 days)	JFD ²					+/- 10	Inne Borel Rinkes, Tom Gresnight (NVVH)
Surgical interventions & hernia	March (1 week)	JFK	6	-			6 (3)	Katja Maschuw
Basic Surgical Skills and Emergency Interventions PGY1	September (1 week)	JFK	6	4			10 (1)	Katja Maschuw, Thomas Ashley
Traumatology (NVVH)	Postponed to 2024 (elections)							
Emergency obstetrics / pilot visit (ISMRH)	Postponed to 2024 (elections)							

1 John F. Kennedy Medical Center, Monrovia, Montserrado County

2 Jackson F. Doe Hospital, Tappita, Nimba County

Table 8: Overview of skills-based courses in 2023.



Surgical Interventions Course, Liberia.

In addition to international trainers, CapaCare Liberia also received Programme support and research visits during 2023. **Table 9** below, details these visits.

Purpose	Duration	Month	Support staff & Research
Programme support and introduction	5 days	January	Håkon Bolkan, Chairperson CapaCare International Executive Board (CCI EB)
CapaCare Norway	1 week	March	Magnus Endal, Photographer (P)
Programme support and introduction	5 days	September	Ard Gerrits, Chief Executive Finance Officer CapaCare International (CCI S)
Research data collection	4 weeks	September	Douglas Weru Alice, Master Student Global Health (NTNU)

Table 9: Other visits for Programme support and research to Liberia 2023 - CapaCare International Staff (CCI S), CapaCare International Executive Board (CCI EB), Norwegian University for Science and Technology (NTNU) and Photographer (P).



Scientific Reading Course, Masanga Hospital with Tom Versteeg.

Media and Publications

– Media Coverage

During 2023 we established an international Communications Working Group with solid interaction between the four Chapters. This has led to several changes for the future.

CapaCare's main communication channels are through our website www.capacare.org and social media. According to Google Analytics, our website received c.5,875 page views by more than c.1,875 unique users in 2023. Google Analytics moved to a standard (GA3 -> GA4) last year which essentially made us lose data for Q1. We have therefore used the data from Q2 - Q4 which is fairly evenly distributed to reach our approximate figures.

Unfortunately, the website has had some issues with its server capacity and an outdated design of the website template. Thus, there has been a need to update or rebuild the website for it to be compliant with the current standard of websites. In 2023 we found the means to rebuild the website, and we created an international team focusing solely on this development. The 'Website Revision Working Group' is led by Tom Versteeg (CapaCare NL).

In 2023, CapaCare continued to increase our presence on social media. Our Facebook site has 1,300 followers, and we posted 37 posts in 2023. The posts had various content, from insight into our surgical courses to fundraising events. We promoted one fundraising campaign across Chapters, the 'CapaCare Christmas Fundraiser'. We also continued to build our presence on Instagram. We shared content through posts and stories for 42 days in 2023. In 2023 the number of followers on Instagram increased slightly, from 665 followers in 2022 to 717 followers in 2023. Our followers on Facebook and Instagram are mostly women (63-70%) of all ages, living in Norway, Sierra Leone and in the Netherlands.

Towards the end of 2023 we took several measures to increase our visibility on other social media platforms, such as LinkedIn and X. CapaCare had inactive accounts on these platforms, and we are aiming to re-establish our presence in the years to come.

Media and Publications

– Publications

Underscored – Contributions from CapaCare Board members, staff, trainers, trainees and graduates.

Scientific (peer-review) publications:

1. van Kesteren J, Meylahn-Jansen PJ, Conteh A, Lissenberg-Witte BI, van Duinen AJ, Ashley T, Bonjer HJ, Bolkan HA. Inguinal hernia surgery learning curves by associate clinicians. *Surg Endosc*. 2023 Mar;37(3):2085-2094. doi: 10.1007/s00464-022-09726-5
2. Adde HA, van Duinen AJ, Andrews BC, Bakker J, Goyah KS, Salvesen Ø, Sheriff S, Utam T, Yaskey C, Weiser TG, Bolkan HA. Mapping population access to essential surgical care in Liberia using equipment, personnel, and bellwether capability standards. *Br J Surg*. 2023 Jan 10;110(2):169-176. doi: 10.1093/bjs/znac377.
3. Lindenbergh KC, van Duinen AJ, Ahlbäck JG, Kamoh J, Bah S, Ashley T, Löfgren J, Grobusch MP, Sankoh O, Bolkan HA; PRESSCO 2020 study group. Prevalence, incidence, repair rate, and morbidity of groin hernias in Sierra Leone: cross-sectional household study. *BJS Open*. 2023 Jan 6;7(1):zrac158. doi: 10.1093/bjsopen/zrac158.
4. Dutta R, Tuli S, Shukla M, Patil P, van Duinen AJ, Thivalapill N, Ghoshal R, Jayaram A, Roy N, Gadgil A. Geographic and socioeconomic inequities in cesarean delivery rates at the district level in Madhya Pradesh, India: A secondary analysis of the national family health survey-5. *Glob Health Action*. 2023 Dec 31;16(1):2203544. doi: 10.1080/16549716.2023.2203544.
5. Patil P, Nathani P, Bakker JM, van Duinen AJ, Bhushan P, Shukla M, Chalise S, Roy N, Gadgil A. Are LMICs Achieving the Lancet Commission Global Benchmark for Surgical Volumes? A Systematic Review. *World J Surg*. 2023 Aug;47(8):1930-1939. doi: 10.1007/s00268-023-07029-x. Epub 2023 May 16.
6. Ashley T, Ashley HE, Wladis A, Nordin P, Ohene-Yeboah M, Rukas R, Lipnickas V, Smalle IO, Holm K, Kalsi H, Palmu J, Sahr F, Beard JH, Löfgren J, Bolkan HA, van Duinen AJ. Standardised Competency-Based Training of Medical Doctors and Associate Clinicians in Inguinal Repair with Mesh in Sierra Leone. *World J Surg*. 2023 Oct;47(10):2330-2337. doi: 10.1007/s00268-023-07095-1. Epub 2023 Jul 14.
7. Patil P, Nathani P, Bakker J, Van Duinen A, Bhushan P, Shukla M, Chalise S, Roy N, Gadgil A. Authors' Reply: Are LMICs Achieving the Lancet Commission Global Benchmark for Surgical Volumes? A Systematic Review. *World J Surg*. 2023 Dec;47(12):3439-3440. doi: 10.1007/s00268-023-07171-6.
8. van Duinen AJ, Gyedu A. Task Shifting and Task Sharing to Strengthen the Surgical Workforce in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review of the Existing Literature. *World J Surg*. 2023 Dec;47(12):3081-3082. doi: 10.1007/s00268-023-07228-6. Epub 2023 Nov 11.
9. van Kesteren J, van Goudoever LAE, Conteh A, van Acker GJD, Bonjer HJ, Bolkan HA. Technical Perspective for Video Based Assessment of Surgeries in Low-Resource Settings. *J Surg Educ*. 2023 Apr;80(4):495-498.

Research and Collaborations

PhD projects related to CapaCare (2023)

1. Håvard Askim Adde - Understanding the Present to Better Build the Future: A Nationwide Evaluation of the Surgical Environment, its Workforce, Operative Output, Geospatial Accessibility, and Associated Economic Value in Liberia.
2. Josien Westendorp - Clinical Decision Making for Caesarean Deliveries in Sierra Leone.
3. Juul Bakker - How to achieve surgical advancement: a research project on training requirements and implementation strategies in Liberia.

@2. From November 2022 until June 2023 Josien Westendorp, Global Health NTNU PhD student and CapaCare NL Board Member, stayed with her family of four in Masanga, Sierra Leone in the CapaCare pink house. Her project focuses on clinical decision making for caesarean deliveries in the task-sharing context. The COVID pandemic forced her to postpone her data collection and now she was happy to go! This project is financially supported by Helse Midt Norge utenlandstipend and the Lærdal Foundation. With the support of the management team and help of local research assistants and NTNU students, she recently completed this quantitative data collection in the ten busiest rural governmental hospitals in Sierra Leone. Qualitative data collection is planned for the autumn of 2024. We are curiously awaiting the results!

Research Projects in 2023

1. A nationwide assessment of surgical activity and capacity in Sierra Leone.
2. A nationwide assessment of anaesthesia activity and capacity in Sierra Leone.
3. Paediatric hernias in Sierra Leone.
4. Caesarean section decision-making in Sierra Leone.
5. Surgical training needs assessment Liberia.
6. Evaluation of 10 years postgraduate training in Liberia.

*Back (left to right): Priyansh Nathani, Alex van Duinen.
Front: Juul Bakker, Anita Gadgil, Priti Patil.
Mumbai, India*

Research collaborations

India

Since 2020, CapaCare has been collaborating with partners in India on several research projects, which has resulted in four joint publications in the field of Global Surgery.

From 26 September to 3 October 2023, Alex van Duinen (CapaCare International Executive Board Member) and Juul Bakker (Country Director, CapaCare Liberia) visited partners in New Delhi and Mumbai. In New Delhi, our team participated in a meeting centred on the 'Operative Care Course on General Surgery Procedures'. This meeting combined the piloting, testing, and refining of operative procedure modules aimed at training and assessing healthcare providers working in low-resource settings in a cost-effective manner. The meeting also provided a platform for scientific discussions and to exchange valuable insights on surgical practices and training methodologies tailored to low-resource settings with colleagues from India.

The journey then extended to Mumbai, where they visited colleagues from the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre Mumbai. Together, we discussed how to build a robust research partnership, and we developed research projects. We believe this visit has solidified our commitment to advancing surgical care worldwide, and it will provide new research opportunities for young researchers from the different settings where we work.





World Health Organization (WHO), Operative Care Course for Surgical Procedures, 29th September, 2023.

Presentations (online and in-person): chronological

The most significant presentations by CapaCare staff and Board Members in 2023 were:

NTNU, Institute for Public Health and Nursing, Trondheim Norway, March 2023:

- Presentation by Håkon Bolkan on "Global Surgery Overview and CapaCare".
- Presentation by Håkon Bolkan on the International Global Nursing Day, Utdanning og opplæring av medisinsk helsepersonell i bistandsarbeid.

St. Olavs Hospital, Trondheim, Norway, June 2023:

- Presentation by Håkon Bolkan, Fredagsforelesningen: "Oppgavefordeling i kirurgi i Vest-Afrika – kan vi lære noe her?"

University Medical Center Utrecht, Global Surgery and OBGYN Summer School 2023, July 2023:

- Presentation by Håkon Bolkan on "Task-sharing in surgery and CapaCare".

Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerpen, Belgium, September 2023:

- Presentation by Håkon Bolkan on "The public health approach to Surgery".

The International Federation of Gynaecology & Obstetrics (FIGO) 9th October 2023: World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics in Paris:

- Poster presentation on the long-term outcomes of caesarean sections in Sierra Leone by Josien Westendorp.

Global Health Day, "Leaving no one behind", Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), 24th of October 2023:

- Presentations by Håkon Bolkan on "Global Surgery Overview" and by Juul Bakker on "CapaCare Liberia: The role of partnerships and research in building a program".
- Poster presentation by Josien Westendorp on "the long-term outcomes (five year follow up) of caesarean sections in Sierra Leone".

European Conference on Tropical Medicine and International Health (ECTMIH), November 2023:

- Presentation by Håkon Bolkan on "Long-term maternal outcomes 5 years after caesarean section in Sierra Leone – a prospective cohort study".
- Presentation by Håkon Bolkan on "Estimating the economic value of surgical activities and costs inflicted by unmet surgical needs in Liberia".

Partners / Donors

CapaCare has continued collaboration with our main partners in 2023. Those have been the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Torunn and Olé's Stiftelse, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). All of them have supported CapaCare for several years already. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and Trondheim University Hospital St. Olavs have contributed with research funds for the evaluation of our initiatives via three PhD Scholarships, and medical students writing their master thesis related to CapaCare's work.

Since 2015 CapaCare has been an Implementing Partner of UNFPA in Sierra Leone. Annual and quarterly plans and budgets are submitted to UNFPA, and our finances in Sierra Leone have been audited by both internal and external UNFPA auditors as well as the registered accountant firm Bertin & Bertin in Sierra Leone. In 2023 the UNFPA grant under which CapaCare was funded came to an end. Our team in Sierra Leone jointly with UNFPA representatives are working on the continuation of the collaboration.

Masanga Hospital continued to be one of our main implementing partners and our main training site in Sierra Leone. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) is an important partner in incorporating the training programme and our graduates into the Sierra Leonean healthcare system. They also support us by taking part in the selection process of new candidates and overseeing the internship – the last part of the training. Together with the Ministry and the

School of Clinical Sciences Makeni (SCSM) we have continued working on sustaining the programme and expanding local ownership.

In Liberia we have continued our collaborations in providing rural rotations and skills-based training courses for postgraduates in Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology. We do this in collaboration with the Liberian College for Physicians and Surgeons (LCPS), John F Kennedy Medical Center (JFK), and Jackson F Doe Regional Referral Hospital (JFD). Besides that we've further formalised our partnership with the Dutch Society of Surgeons (NVvH) in an MoU and are exploring a partnership with the International Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Working Party (ISMR&H) of the Dutch Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (NVOG). Both partnerships are focused on facilitation of training. In addition we also established an MoU with Lifebox.

In the Netherlands we have successfully partnered with the Wilde Ganzen Foundation in the past to support our programmes in Sierra Leone and Liberia. During 2023 we started exploring options for the continuation of this partnership for the upcoming years.

We would like to thank every individual supporter, donor, agency, Trust and Foundation for their invaluable support. Without this, our work would not be possible.



Ministry of Health and Sanitation



Financial Overview

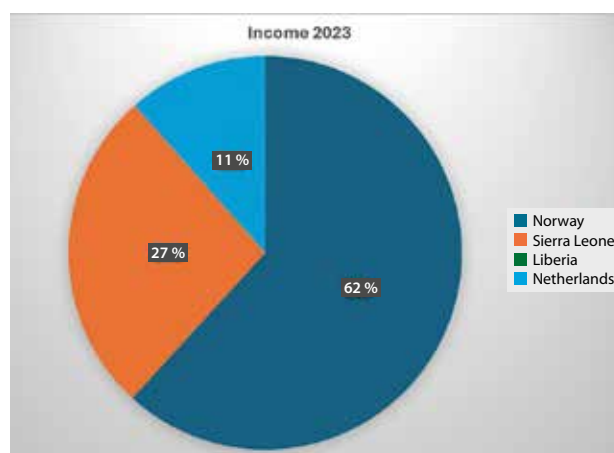
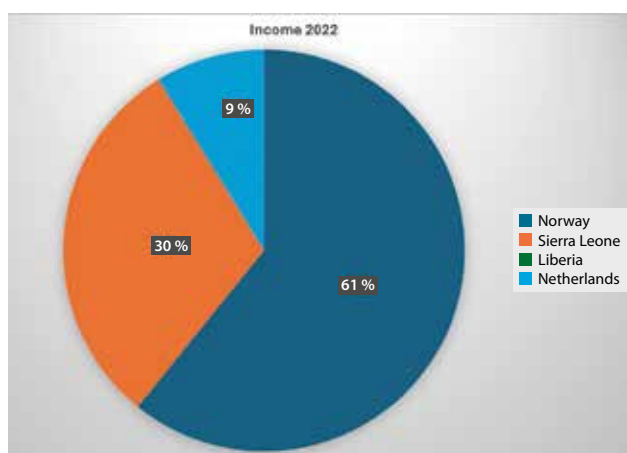
Finance – key figures

Our annual reports give an overview of our finances and will be available on the website.

Income

Income in 2023 was 5,639,380 NOK. This has been an increase of 54% compared to 2022, where it was 3,663,172 NOK. Most of our income has been earmarked for the Surgical Training Programme in Sierra Leone, however we've also received research funds and unrestricted funds during 2023. Of our

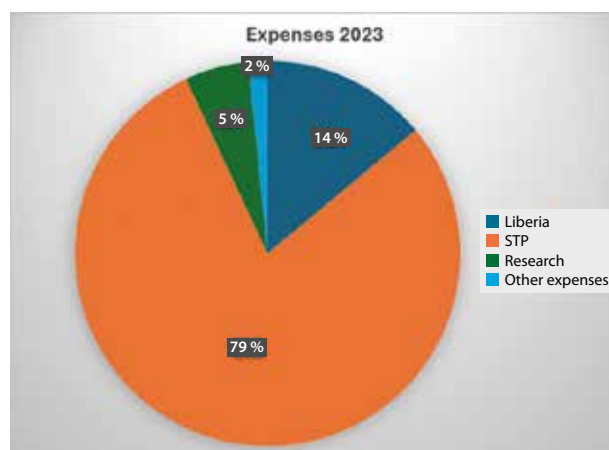
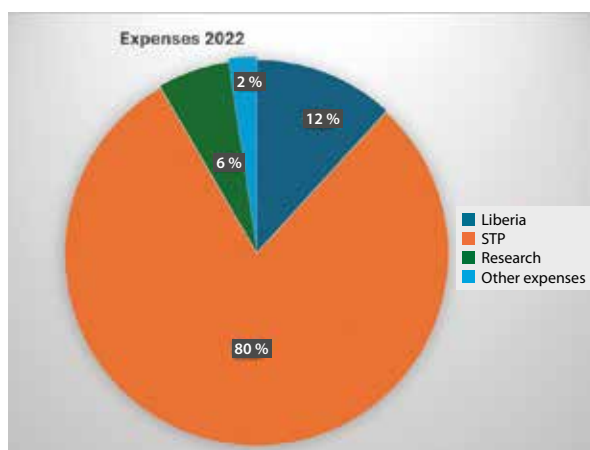
income the majority has been received via the Norwegian (NORAD) and the Sierra Leonean (UNFPA) Chapters (see chart Income 2023). At the moment we don't have Liberian local income streams. Our programme there is running on the remainder of funds from previous years.



Expenditure

During 2023 all CapaCare Chapters had a total expenditure of 5,773,844 NOK. This is an increase of 24% compared to 2022. The majority of expenses, like previous years, have been for the Surgical Training Programme in Sierra Leone (see chart

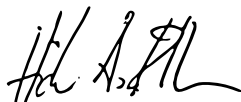
Expenses 2023), although the part allocated to our Liberia Programme has again increased. This stipulates the urgency of finding local funding streams for our Liberia activities.



**We would like to thank everybody that has contributed to the work of CapaCare
and for the support that we have received!**

CapaCare International Executive Board

Trondheim, Norway
Monrovia, Liberia
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Malahide, Ireland
Mangochi, Malawi



Håkon Angell Bolkan
Chairperson



Alex van Duinen
Board Member



Erik Wehrens
Board Member



Pieterella Pieterse
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Dorothee van Breevoort
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