BETTER LIVES FOUNDATION

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2025

Better Lives Foundation
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Charity Registered in England & Wales Charity No.: 1122290

INTRODUCTION

The Trustees of the **Better Lives Foundation (BLF)** are pleased to present the Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2025.

Throughout the year, the Foundation has remained steadfast in its mission to deliver sustainable healthcare, education, and community development initiatives in Sierra Leone, one of the world's most economically challenged regions. With the continued commitment of our supporters, volunteers, and partners, BLF has provided essential medical services, expanded training opportunities, and strengthened local capacity to ensure long-term, sustainable impact.

A cornerstone of our work remains the dedicated support provided to the community of Yonibana. By leveraging our strong volunteer base alongside a highly capable local workforce, we continue to respond effectively to the medical, social, and educational needs of the region. Our network of local staff and international volunteers brings a broad range of skills, experience, and perspectives, united by a shared commitment to community development and resilience.

International volunteers continue to play a vital role in advancing our mission. Working closely with the team at **Yonibana Sai Hospital (YSH)**, they contribute specialist expertise, mentorship, and knowledge transfer to enhance clinical practice, operational efficiency, and service delivery. Their involvement fosters a culture of professional development, innovation, and continuous improvement within the hospital.

To support effective communication and ongoing capacity building, BLF has implemented regular virtual meetings and training sessions using platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp. These initiatives have strengthened coordination across teams and provided structured opportunities for staff development. Training topics have included patient care protocols, advanced medical techniques, and management practices designed to optimise hospital operations and improve patient outcomes.

Our governance framework places a strong emphasis on transparency, accountability, and strategic oversight. This ensures that resources are deployed responsibly and that all programmes remain aligned with the Foundation's long-term objectives. Through this collaborative and well-governed approach, we have continued to strengthen hospital infrastructure, enhance healthcare delivery, and broaden our impact within Yonibana.

By maintaining a clear focus on effective management and robust governance, the Better Lives Foundation continues to lay the groundwork for sustainable growth and enduring success in meeting the healthcare, social, and educational needs of the communities we serve.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

BLF was established to advance healthcare and education in Sierra Leone by providing free medical treatment, supporting the training and development of healthcare professionals, and promoting overall community wellbeing.

During this reporting period, our principal objectives were to:

- Deliver accessible, high-quality healthcare services at Yonibana Sai Hospital.
- Support the professional training and continuous development of healthcare workers.
- Improve maternal and child health outcomes within the community.
- Enhance facilities and infrastructure at the hospital and partner institutions.
- Strengthen community engagement and fundraising activities to ensure long-term sustainability.

Governance and Strategic Planning

Strong governance and effective strategic oversight remain central to BLF's operations. Trustees meet regularly via online platforms to review the progress and performance of the hospital project, ensuring that decisions are informed, timely, and aligned with the Foundation's objectives. These meetings provide a transparent forum for assessing operational performance, financial management, and strategic priorities.

Informed by ongoing monitoring of the global and local economic environment, trustees actively consider challenges such as inflationary pressures in Sierra Leone and their potential impact on project costs and resource allocation. This proactive and risk-aware approach enables the Foundation to adapt its strategies as necessary, safeguarding the continuity and effectiveness of hospital services.

Through robust governance and forward-looking strategic planning, BLF remains firmly committed to advancing the development of Yonibana Sai Hospital. Our emphasis on adaptability, accountability, and long-term sustainability ensures that we continue to meet the healthcare needs of the Yonibana community effectively, even in the face of external economic challenges.

Operational and Administrative Efficiency

The hospital's Heads of Departments from the UK have delivered a highly productive year, demonstrating strong leadership, innovation, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Through proactive problem-solving, collaborative planning, and regular inter-departmental meetings, teams have strengthened coordination and ensured alignment with the hospital's mission and objectives.

Operational efficiency has been significantly enhanced through the careful control of administrative costs, ensuring that the majority of resources and donations are directed toward frontline services and hospital programmes. This disciplined approach reflects BLF's strong commitment to financial stewardship and accountability.

The adoption of digital tools and automated systems has further streamlined workflows, improved record-keeping, and optimised resource allocation, enabling staff to focus more effectively on patient care. Ongoing performance reviews and feedback mechanisms have contributed to improved service delivery, higher patient satisfaction, and more effective use of resources.

By maintaining a strategic focus on operational and administrative efficiency, BLF continues to strengthen hospital performance, uphold donor confidence, and support the long-term sustainability of high-quality healthcare services for the Yonibana community.

CHARITY ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Yonibana Sai Hospital remains the cornerstone of the Better Lives Foundation's mission, continuing to provide free, life-saving healthcare to thousands of patients across Yonibana and surrounding communities. As the only facility in the region offering free medical care, the hospital plays a vital role in addressing critical gaps in access to healthcare and continues to expand both the range and quality of its services.

Key achievements during the year included:

- **Oral and Dental Health Programme:**
  Led by BLF's Director of Dentistry, **Dr. Bijal Sisodia-Shah,** the dental team delivered essential oral healthcare to a large number of patients suffering from long-standing dental pain and untreated conditions. This programme not only alleviated immediate suffering but also laid important foundations for the future establishment of Sierra

Leone's first Dental Teaching Hospital, an initiative that will significantly strengthen national dental capacity.

- **Surgical and Emergency Care:** The hospital provided free emergency and surgical interventions, including hernia repairs and other life-threatening procedures. These services directly saved lives, including that of Dauda, a seven-year-old child whose condition required urgent surgical intervention, care that would otherwise have been inaccessible to his family.

- **Maternal and Child Health:** A major milestone was achieved in September 2023 with the hospital's **first successful caesarean section**, marking a significant step toward comprehensive maternal healthcare services. This development represents meaningful progress in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality in the region.
- **A Mother's Love, A Community's Care:**

Aminata, nine months pregnant and living in a remote village, faced significant risks due to limited healthcare access and poor nutrition. When labour began, her husband Amadu transported her urgently to Yonibana Sai Hospital. The hospital team acted swiftly, providing skilled, free medical

care. Aminata safely delivered a healthy baby girl, Fatmata, and both mother and child are now thriving. This powerful story exemplifies the life-changing impact of BLF-supported healthcare in rural Sierra Leone, made possible by the generosity of our donors.

SUMMARY: SURGICAL CAMP & EDUCATION (DEC 2024 – JAN 2025)

BLF operating at YSH, continues to provide vital zero-cost healthcare services in Sierra Leone. YSH is the only free hospital in the country and serves as a referral centre for local Peripheral Health Units (PHUs), with the nearest government hospital located 4–5 hours away. The hospital delivers comprehensive services including maternal health, surgery, paediatrics, dentistry, ophthalmology, laboratory services, education sponsorship, continuous professional development (CPD), and social outreach.

From **15 December 2024 to 6 January 2025**, BLF successfully conducted a **23-day Surgical Camp and Education Programme** to address critical unmet surgical needs across the Yoni, Petifu, and Malal chiefdoms, communities heavily dependent on manual labour and disproportionately affected by untreated surgical conditions. The camp was particularly significant given the imminent exit of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Holland from Sierra Leone, which is expected to leave a major gap in healthcare provision.

During the camp, **109 patients** (77 male and 32 female), ranging in age from **19 months to 75 years**, received free surgical interventions. Procedures included inguinal and femoral hernias, hydroceles, lipomas, testicular torsion, and inguinoscrotal hernias. Patients travelled not only from the three chiefdoms but also from districts and towns across the country, including Freetown, Mile 91, Waterloo, and over 20 surrounding villages. The programme resulted in life-saving surgeries and enabled many patients to recover and return to their livelihoods.

The surgical camp also served as a vital **training and capacity-building opportunity**. Local staff observed and participated in best practices related to surgical protocols, theatre etiquette, and patient safety. In addition, new medical equipment was introduced, including an ultrasound machine in the maternity unit and a digital microscope in the laboratory. Staff were trained on both devices in January 2025, resulting in faster diagnostics, improved accuracy, and more timely patient care.

BLF's long-standing **Educational Sponsorship Programme**, launched in 2008, was further highlighted. To date, 86 local volunteers have received support to pursue education from **Secondary** to **University level**. Over 80% have completed their studies, with many now employed at Yonibana Sai Hospital. The programme has significantly reduced school dropout rates in the Yoni Chiefdom from 60% to 30%, strengthening local human resources and long-term healthcare sustainability.

Overall, the Surgical Camp and Education Programme demonstrated BLF's critical role in delivering life-saving healthcare, strengthening local capacity, and addressing urgent gaps in medical services. The initiative reaffirmed the foundation's mission to provide sustainable, high-quality healthcare and education to underserved communities across Sierra Leone.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Building local capacity through education and training remains central to BLF's long-term vision for sustainable healthcare.

- **MCH Aids Training at Njala University:**
  BLF representatives Fatmata Kanu and Esther Joy Fatorma commenced advanced training in maternal and new-born care, supported by Helping Children Worldwide. This initiative strengthens the hospital's readiness ahead of the full launch of its maternal health department and enhances clinical standards.
- **Student Engagement and Clinical Placements:**
  The hospital hosted eight nursing students from the Yangadie Institute of Community Health Science and Technology for a two-month post-basic placement. Students gained hands-on experience in patient care, clinical

procedures, and community health, contributing to workforce development while supporting hospital operations.

- **Ongoing Professional Development:**
  Regular in-service training sessions were delivered on key topics including postpartum haemorrhage, antenatal care, safe delivery practices, and new-born care. These sessions have played a vital role in improving clinical outcomes and reducing maternal and infant mortality.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Maintaining safe and functional infrastructure remains essential to service delivery. During 2024 & 2025, the hospital faced challenges due to wear and tear, including significant roof damage that required urgent repair to ensure patient safety and continuity of care.

In January 2025, the region experienced an outbreak of M-Pox. In response, the hospital swiftly constructed an emergency isolation area, demonstrating its ability to respond effectively to public health threats and protect both patients and staff.

Sustainability and resourcefulness continue to guide infrastructure development. A fallen tree near the hospital guesthouse was repurposed into wooden benches for the patient waiting area, an example of creativity, resilience, and community collaboration in action.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

BLF remains deeply committed to community engagement, education, and social development beyond clinical care:

- **Robanka Community School:**
  Many pairs of shoes were donated to pupils, many of whom received footwear for the first time, symbolising a small yet meaningful step toward dignity, inclusion, and opportunity.

- **Sponsorship of Medical Studies:**
  BLF continues to support Dr. Foday Fofanah as he progresses through his studies in Medicine and Surgery at King Ceasor University, Uganda, investing in the next generation of healthcare leadership.
- **Music and Mental Health Advocacy:**
  BLF Patron Renu Gidoomal represented the Foundation at the House of Lords, speaking on the transformative role of music in supporting individuals living with dementia and depression.
- **Awareness and Social Change:**
  BLF supporters joined Devi Patel's Live Chat Podcast hosted by BLF Ambassador Alimatu Dimonokene MBE, an award-winning activist and expert on gender-based violence, who shared insights and strategies for driving meaningful social change.

FUNDRAISING, PARTNER AND SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT

The generosity and commitment of BLF's supporters remain the driving force behind our work:

- **Easyfundraising Campaign:**
  Over £500 was raised through online shopping partnerships, supported by 66 donors. This continues to grow as more awareness if promoted through social media.

- **Sponsored Walks:**
  Community fundraising events at Richmond Park successfully raised in excess of £3,300 and awareness for hospital projects.

- **Awards and Recognition:**
  BLF was nominated for Charity of the Year by The Family Network UK and won the National Recognition Business Awards 2024, recognising the Foundation's positive social impact.

- **Patron Recognition:**
  Patron Renu Gidoomal received the Dharma Dubey Special Award for Community Service from IIW Inspiring Indian Women, reflecting the strength and dedication of BLF's leadership.

- **Christmas Challenge – "Save a Baby This Christmas":**
  Thanks to match funding from **The Big Give**, the campaign raised **£9,000.00** between 3rd – 10th December, with every donation doubled. This initiative provided vital support to families in need and highlighted the power of matched fundraising.

- **Hope4Smile Volunteer Visit:**
  Ajay and Niyanta Shah of Hope4Smile, alongside Devi Patel and Kiran Parmar, spent two weeks in Sierra Leone witnessing BLF's work first-hand. Their visit to Yonibana Sai Hospital included sorting and distributing essential items such as books, clothing, blankets, and medical supplies. Significant improvements were made to the hospital laboratory and guesthouse, and four laptops were donated to support outreach, education, and awareness programmes in surrounding villages. These resources will enhance health, hygiene, and FGM awareness campaigns, ensuring vital information reaches local leaders in accessible formats.

Together, these partnerships and initiatives continue to make life-changing healthcare and community development possible in rural Sierra Leone.

IN MEMORIAM: DR. CHUDA KARKI

During the year, the BLF mourned the loss of **Dr. Chuda Karki**, a much-loved volunteer and respected member of our medical team. Dr. Karki served with the Foundation since 2018, leaving a lasting impact through his exceptional compassion, skill, training and dedication to patient care.

His kindness touched the lives of many, both within the communities he served in Sierra Leone and among his colleagues and friends. We extend our deepest condolences to his wife, **Anju**, and the entire Karki family.

Dr. Karki's legacy of selflessness and humanity continues to inspire all of us at BLF. His memory will remain an enduring reminder of the profound difference one individual's compassion can make in the lives of others.

COMMUNICATION, AWARENESS & COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Throughout the year, BLF maintained a strong and consistent presence across digital platforms, sharing impactful updates, success stories, and on-the-ground insights to strengthen engagement and transparency. Communications initiatives included monthly updates, festive campaigns, and compelling video highlights featuring volunteers and partners working directly within communities. The Christmas message from the CEO captured the essence of BLF's mission, expressing gratitude, compassion, and a collective commitment to creating sustainable, long-term change.

BLF remains steadfast in its dedication to delivering excellence across **Healthcare, Sociocare, and Educare** services. This commitment is embedded in every aspect of the foundation's work, from compassionate, patient-centred care to the implementation of innovative solutions that address complex social and educational challenges. Guided by the core principles of service, innovation, and collaboration, BLF continuously strengthens its impact through strategic partnerships with both local and international stakeholders. These collaborations enable the foundation to leverage diverse expertise and resources,

resulting in sustainable programmes tailored to the unique needs of the communities it serves. Through this unwavering focus on quality and integrity, BLF continues to drive transformative change, fostering healthier and more resilient communities in Sierra Leone and beyond.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Through the collaboration of international and local volunteers, BLF has significantly expanded the reach of Yonibana Sai Hospital, extending healthcare access from a 15 -mile radius to 51 miles. These partnerships have enhanced the hospital's capacity to deliver high-quality, accessible medical care, ensuring that even the most vulnerable populations receive essential support. Community confidence has grown steadily as BLF's message and proven results in delivering safe, reliable, and compassionate medical services reach increasingly remote areas.

This expansion reflects the growing reliance on and demand for BLF's free medical services. Communities that previously had limited or no access to healthcare now benefit from life-saving treatments and holistic care delivered with professionalism and empathy. By continually broadening its reach and strengthening service delivery, Yonibana Sai Hospital is breaking down barriers to healthcare access and transforming lives across a wider geographical area.

ADDRESSING MATERNAL AND INFANT MORTALITY

In response to Sierra Leone's alarmingly high maternal and infant mortality rates, BLF has prioritised the development of critical healthcare infrastructure to address this urgent challenge. A targeted fundraising campaign has been launched to enhance the Neonatal and Maternity Wing at Yonibana Sai Hospital, ensuring access to essential medical support, life-saving equipment, baby supplies, and hygiene products. These improvements are designed to provide expectant mothers and new-borns with a safe, supportive environment for care and recovery.

A significant milestone was achieved with the successful performance of the hospital's first caesarean section. This landmark achievement marks a major advancement in the hospital's capacity to deliver comprehensive and specialised maternal healthcare services. It represents a vital step forward in improving health outcomes for mothers and infants, offering renewed hope to

families who previously faced substantial risks during childbirth.

This progress underscores BLF's unwavering commitment to reducing maternal and infant mortality through enhanced infrastructure, skilled medical personnel, and community-centred care. By continuing to prioritise maternal health, the foundation is laying the groundwork for a healthier, safer, and more resilient future for communities across Sierra Leone.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW BLF AMBASSADOR – JORDAN GLOVER

We are delighted to announce that **Jordan Glover**, best-selling children's author, has joined the **BLF** as a new ambassador. Jordan, author of the acclaimed *Wonder Team* series, holds a History degree from the University of Edinburgh and a Master's with Distinction in Creative Writing from the Open University. A former primary school teacher, she has long been passionate about education and charity work.

As BLF Ambassador, Jordan will focus on advocating for **maternal health awareness**, particularly in Sierra Leone, supporting our mission to make motherhood safer and more positive for women. Her experience, creativity, and dedication make her an inspiring addition to the BLF family.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES & RESILIENCE

During the year under review, Better Lives Foundation (BLF) encountered a number of significant operational challenges that tested the organisation's resilience and resourcefulness. Among the most pressing were fires affecting the hospital compound, structural damage to critical hospital facilities due to high winds and a sharp increase in demand for free healthcare services at a time of limited financial resources. In addition, the foundation faced an ongoing need for consistent and sustainable funding to support staff training, maternal health programmes, and other essential initiatives.

Despite these constraints, BLF remained steadfast in its mission. Through the generosity of donors, the dedication of volunteers, and the commitment of local and international partners, the foundation continued to deliver and, in some areas, expand vital services to communities in need. These challenges reinforced the importance of long-term planning, infrastructure resilience, and diversified funding streams to ensure continuity of care.

URGENT INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

Hospital Roof Damage

A major structural concern emerged at Yonibana Sai Hospital with significant damage to the roof, posing an immediate risk to patient safety and the continuity of hospital operations. This issue became increasingly critical with the onset of the rainy season, as prolonged and heavy rainfall threatened to exacerbate the damage, potentially leading to water ingress, compromised hygiene standards, and disruption of essential medical services.

The roof plays a fundamental role in safeguarding the hospital's infrastructure, medical equipment, staff, patients, and visitors. Without urgent repairs, there was a substantial risk of service interruptions that could have severely affected the hospital's ability to provide life-saving care to the surrounding communities. Securing emergency funding was therefore a top priority. Timely intervention enabled the hospital to stabilise the structure, prevent further deterioration, and maintain uninterrupted healthcare delivery. This response was crucial in protecting the facility's long-term functionality and ensuring continued access to essential medical services for the population it serves.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SAFETY CHALLENGES

Fire Damage to the Hospital Compound

During the peak of the dry season, a series of fires broke out on neighbouring land, fuelled by extreme heat, dry vegetation, and strong winds. The fires spread rapidly beyond their point of origin, crossing into the hospital's compound with devastating consequences. All wooden fencing surrounding the property was destroyed, leaving the hospital perimeter exposed and significantly increasing security and safety risks.

In addition to the structural damage, the fires destroyed newly planted remembrance trees within the compound. These trees represented a meaningful investment of time, resources, and community involvement, intended to provide long-term shade, environmental benefits, and a space of reflection for patients, staff, and visitors. Their loss was both practical and symbolic, underscoring the vulnerability of the hospital to environmental hazards.

The aftermath of the fires required urgent clean-up, repairs, and rebuilding efforts, placing additional strain on already limited resources. Nevertheless, BLF responded with determination, prioritising safety and restoration while continuing to deliver essential healthcare services. These events highlighted the growing impact of climate-related risks and the need for improved protective measures to safeguard critical healthcare infrastructure in the future.

An ongoing vegetation clearance programme has been established in collaboration with local community members, who have generously volunteered their time and labour, particularly on weekends, to support this vital initiative. The programme focuses on systematically removing dried and highly flammable vegetation from the immediate surroundings of the hospital, guest house, solar panel installations, and the electricity and generator facilities.

This proactive effort plays a critical role in reducing fire risk, protecting essential infrastructure, and safeguarding patients, staff, volunteers, and visitors. By creating

clear buffer zones around key operational areas, the programme enhances site safety, improves accessibility, and contributes to the long-term resilience of the hospital compound, particularly during the dry season.

The strong partnership with the local community reflects a shared commitment to protecting the hospital as a vital community asset. Their continued involvement not only strengthens preventative safety measures but also fosters local ownership, collaboration, and sustainability in maintaining a secure and functional healthcare environment.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE (2025 – 2027)

Looking ahead to 2025 – 2027, BLF has set out a clear and ambitious roadmap focused on strengthening infrastructure, expanding specialist services, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Yonibana Sai Hospital. These priorities reflect the growing healthcare needs of the communities served and BLF's commitment to delivering high-quality, accessible, and sustainable care.

Key objectives for the coming period include the completion of urgent roof repairs and broader infrastructure improvements to safeguard hospital operations and patient safety. BLF has already shipped containers in 2024 / 2025 of essential medical equipment and furniture to further enhance clinical capacity and improve patient care environments. A major strategic focus remains the expansion of the Maternal and Newborn Health Wing at Yonibana Sai Hospital, building on recent progress to address maternal and infant mortality and strengthen outcomes for mothers and new-borns. A generous donation of 20 baby incubators and 20 infra-red lights have ready been shipped to the facility from China.

In parallel, BLF is advancing the development of Sierra Leone's first Dental Teaching Hospital, a landmark initiative designed to expand access to

oral healthcare while simultaneously strengthening local training and professional development. The foundation also aims to deepen community partnerships and expand local healthcare training programmes, ensuring skills transfer, workforce development, and long-term resilience within the national health system. To support these ambitions, BLF is committed to strengthening fundraising and grant-writing capacity to secure consistent funding and ensure the sustainability of operations.

EXPANSION PLANS AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Plans for the hospital's expansion remain under continuous review to ensure alignment with community needs, available resources, and evolving economic conditions. The proposed expansion includes the construction of new medical and training units designed to enhance service delivery across multiple specialties. Budgetary requirements for these initiatives are reassessed regularly to maintain financial prudence, adapt to changing circumstances, and ensure that each phase of development remains feasible and impactful.

Through the tireless dedication of volunteers, staff, and trustees, BLF remains unwavering in its mission to support and strengthen Yonibana Sai Hospital. Despite ongoing global and local challenges, the foundation's focus on delivering sustainable, high-impact healthcare services to the community continues with determination and purpose.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

BLF continues to work closely with its architect, surveyors, and construction partners in Sierra Leone. A construction company based in Freetown is actively engaged in producing eco-friendly interlocking bricks and has commenced construction of the party wall as part of the next development phase. A comprehensive eco-friendly master plan has now been finalised, outlining the phased development of a Neonatal and Maternal Wing, Dental Wing, Eye Wing, Pharmacy, Radiology Centre, full Laboratory Services, and a dedicated Library to support training and research.

To ensure technical excellence and clinical relevance, individual committees for each specialist area, including Optometry, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Pharmacy, and Dental Services, meet regularly to finalise operational plans and develop structured teaching and training curricula. These committees provide consistent progress updates to the Trustees, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and strategic alignment of all fundraising efforts.

IMPACT AND GROWING DEMAND

The overarching objective of the expansion programme is to enhance community healthcare services while strengthening human resources capacity within Sierra Leone. As access to care continues to improve, demand for services has increased significantly, with patients travelling from increasingly distant regions to seek treatment at Yonibana Sai Hospital. Reflecting this growing trust and reliance, the hospital recorded a further 18% increase in patient ailments treated compared to the previous year, further reinforcing the urgency and importance of the planned expansions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Trustees and leadership of the Better Lives Foundation extend their deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to every individual and organisation that has supported our mission throughout the year.

Our journey has been made possible through the compassion, generosity, and steadfast commitment of our donors, volunteers, partners, and friends. Our supporters have played an indispensable role in helping us deliver free healthcare, training, and given hope to some of the most vulnerable communities in Sierra Leone.

To our **donors**, your kindness has turned challenges into opportunities. Whether through monthly contributions, fundraising efforts, or one-off gifts, you have provided the lifeblood that sustains our hospital, equips our clinics, and enables life-saving

interventions every single day. Your generosity has healed bodies and has uplifted spirits to restore dignity to countless individuals who might otherwise have been forgotten.

To our **volunteers**, both in the UK and on the ground in Sierra Leone, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude. Your selfless dedication, skill, and compassion exemplify the very essence of humanity. You have travelled great distances, worked long hours, and faced challenging conditions, and your commitment has never wavered. Through your actions, you have embodied the heart and soul of the Better Lives Foundation.

To our **partners and collaborators**, including medical institutions, NGOs, community leaders, and government representatives, thank you for standing with us in pursuit of a shared vision. Your guidance, expertise, and collaboration have strengthened our impact and ensured that every project we undertake is sustainable, ethical, and community-led.

To our **supporters**, those who walk beside us in spirit, share our message, and keep our mission alive through advocacy, events, and encouragement, your faith in our cause gives us the courage to keep going, even in the face of adversity.

Together, we have achieved more than we ever could alone. Every life saved, every child educated, every mother supported, and every community empowered stands as a testament to what can be accomplished when compassion is turned into action.

As we look ahead, we do so with immense gratitude and renewed hope. Your continued belief in our mission fuels our determination to build a healthier, fairer, and more compassionate world. From the depths of our hearts, thank you for walking this journey with us.

STATEMENT FROM THE CEO

This year has been one of profound compassion, resilience, and shared purpose. Despite the challenges we have faced, BLF has continued to uphold its commitment to providing accessible, high-quality healthcare and education to some of the most underserved communities in Sierra Leone.

Each milestone we have achieved, from expanding medical and dental services to training the next generation of healthcare professionals, has been made possible through the unwavering dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters

around the world. Their collective efforts have transformed lives, offering treatment but also hope, dignity, and a renewed sense of possibility to those who need it most.

The continued generosity of our donors and partners inspires us to persevere in our vision of a world where healthcare is a universal right, a privilege determined by circumstance. Every contribution, every act of kindness, and every hour of service brings us closer to that reality.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on strengthening healthcare infrastructure, expanding training programmes, and building sustainable systems that empower communities to thrive independently. Together, we are healing individuals, we are nurturing resilience, fostering education, and creating lasting change.

On behalf of the entire Better Lives Foundation team, I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported us throughout the year. Your compassion fuels our mission, your trust sustains our work, and your belief in a better future continues to light our path forward.

Devi Patel,
Chief Executive Officer
Better Lives Foundation

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity's financial position continues to be underpinned by a diverse range of income streams, primarily comprising philanthropic donations, institutional and individual grants, and volunteer-led fundraising initiatives. Donations and grants represent the largest proportion of total income, complemented by funds raised through community-based events and supporter engagement. In addition to financial contributions, the charity benefits significantly from in-kind donations, particularly medical equipment and supplies, which help to reduce procurement costs and maximise the impact of available resources.

Philanthropic support remains essential to sustaining core operations and service delivery. Funds are allocated to critical areas including the procurement of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) materials and the day-to-day running of Yonibana Sai Hospital. Expenditure also covers staff salaries in Sierra Leone, infrastructure development and maintenance, utilities, food provision for patients, patient transportation and any emergency needs. Transportation costs remain a significant expense, largely

driven by the shipment of medical supplies and equipment from the UK. Rising global logistics and fuel costs have had a notable impact on sea freight charges during the year.

Investment in human capital continues to be a priority. The Sponsored Education Programme has expanded, enabling more students to access education and training, while continuous professional development for key medical personnel remains an ongoing commitment. These investments are critical to strengthening local capacity, improving service quality, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Strategic investments in renewable energy have delivered tangible financial benefits. The expansion of solar energy infrastructure has reduced reliance on auxiliary power sources, resulting in lower fuel consumption and improved cost efficiency. In parallel, the charity has taken proactive steps to manage financial processing costs by diversifying its banking and payment platforms. This approach has helped to reduce foreign exchange losses, minimise international remittance fees, and manage costs associated with credit and debit card transactions and digital payment services.

The Surgical Team's mission in December 2024 took place against a backdrop of economic instability and rising inflation. These conditions contributed to increased costs for essential medicines and higher travel and logistical expenses, particularly given the challenges of accessing remote medical locations. Despite these pressures, the mission was successfully delivered, reflecting careful financial management and strong operational planning.

The trustees maintain robust financial governance and oversight, ensuring that accurate records are kept and that financial reporting complies fully with regulatory requirements. This commitment to transparency, accountability, and prudent financial management continues to strengthen stakeholder confidence and provides a clear and reliable picture of the charity's financial health as it works toward long-term sustainability.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are maintaining accurate records of the charity's income and expenditure, providing a transparent depiction of its actual financial standing in compliance with The Charities Act 1993.

ACCOUNTANT

The financial statements have been prepared by an independent accountant of the charity.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees
BETTER LIVES FOUNDATION

Dr Mike Rafferty
Trustee
18th December 2025