

Sierra Leone Program

At Last Mile Health, we partner with governments to build strong community health systems that extend primary healthcare to the world’s most remote communities. Founded in Liberia in 2007, we now work in four countries—including Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, and Sierra Leone—with over 14 million people served by community health workers supervised, skilled, supplied, or salaried in partnership between a Ministry of Health and Last Mile Health. Our vision is a health worker within reach of everyone, everywhere.

Last Mile Health’s approach

Last Mile Health partners with governments to strengthen exemplary national community health systems where community health workers (CHWs) are skilled, salaried, supplied, and supervised as part of a well-functioning community health system, operating at national scale, and integrated into broader public health systems via data and financing. We call these the Six Ss.



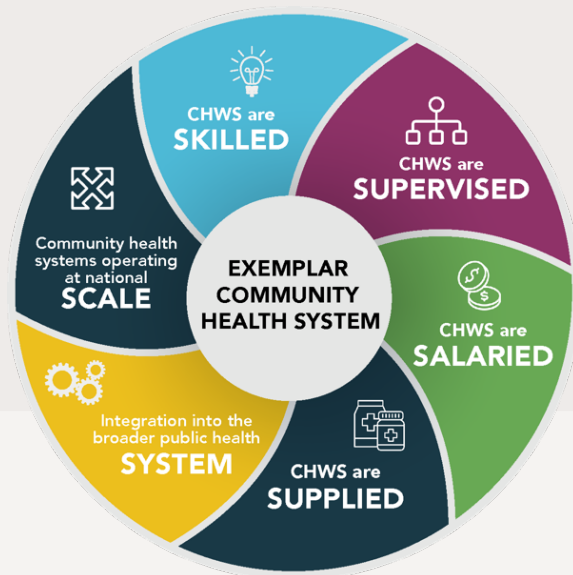
+ Why community health workers in Sierra Leone?

In communities out of reach of the nearest health facility, community health workers are prepared to provide quality primary care.

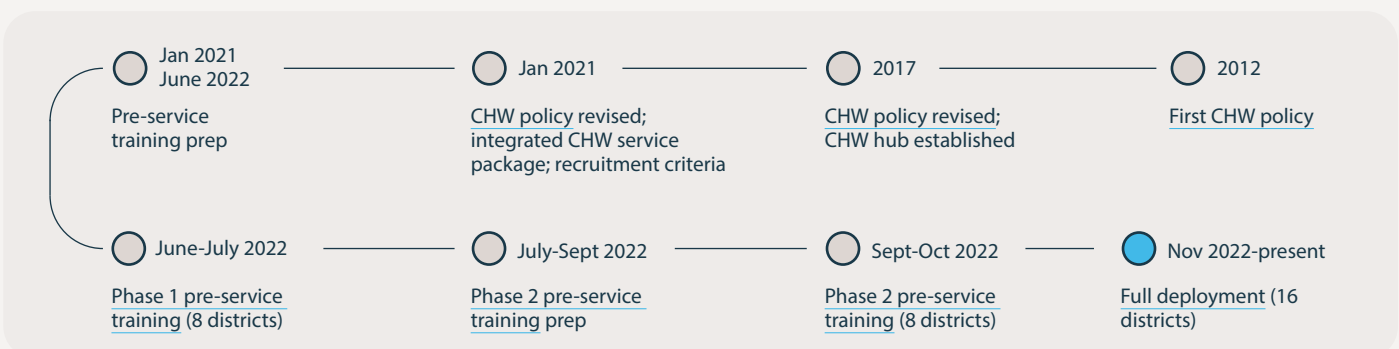
Sierra Leone is considered to be one of the deadliest places in the world to give birth, with 443 mothers dying out of every 100,000 live births. Equally devastating, 1 in 8 children die before their fifth birthday, with infant mortality rates of 75 deaths for every 1,000 live births and an under-five mortality rate of 122 deaths for every 1,000 live births. These unacceptable mortality rates are driven by lack of access to care: with under three doctors for every 40,000 people and 57% of the population living in rural communities, geography and income levels are strong contributors to health inequities.

Community health workers can close the distance for rural and remote communities when they are trained and equipped to provide quality primary care.

“We don’t have a health facility,” says community health worker Fatmata Koroma. “Seeing the suffering of children and women in the community, health issues are many. I am happy to become a community health worker. I will now be in the position to help my community.”



+ National Community Health Worker Program timeline



+ Our track record in Sierra Leone

Last Mile Health first began working in Sierra Leone in 2021, and our initial work was focused on equipping health leaders with high-quality training during the COVID-19 pandemic. The success of this work led to deeper engagement with the Ministry of Health focused on the community health worker program and policy.

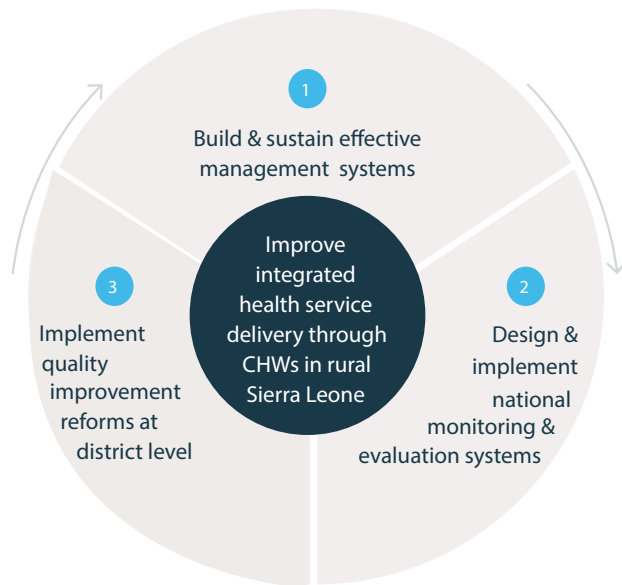
As of June 30, 2024, Last Mile Health and the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health supported:



1,371
community and frontline workers to provide quality, community-based primary healthcare services

586,675
people with improved access to healthcare

+ Sierra Leone program model



Goal

Partner with the Ministry of Health to demonstrate a more effective community health worker program with improved supervision, data use, and training to strengthen management and improve performance.

Learning lab districts will inform national reform to improve the quality of integrated health service delivery in remote and rural communities.

- 2021 **Ministry of Health and Sanitation Digital Classroom:** Digital application with eight-course COVID-19 series deployed to 500+ frontline health workers across six districts; in 2023, trained six information and communication technology staff on app management
- Guided journey on financing community health programs:** 32 learners enrolled in a facilitated seven-course series on community health financing
- 2022 **Freetown City Council community engagement course series:** 100 learners participated in a seven-course series on community engagement via a blended approach (online and in person)
- Community health worker training quality assurance:** 32 quality assurance officers trained to conduct visits across 288 training sites during CHW pre-service training; 16 district monitoring and evaluation officers trained in data quality assurance; debrief and action planning meetings facilitated with government staff to address training challenges
- 2023 **Strengthening subnational management of CHW program:** 64 CHW focal persons trained on subnational management of national program; 16 district technical working groups set up inclusive of a national reflection and action planning meeting
- Exemplars in Global Health community health worker recruitment criteria adherence and training quality:** Collected, analyzed, shared results, and action planned on adherence to CHW recruitment outcomes and training quality data with 128 stakeholders at three dissemination events across the country
- Community health worker supportive supervision:** Digital CHW supportive supervision tool developed and pretested with 41 CHWs and 15 peer supervisors in Kambia district; 32 Ministry staff trained on the tool for use in national CHW supervision; 256 CHWs supervised with the tool nationwide
- 2024 **Exemplars in Global Health community health worker program performance assessment:** Co-designed and implemented a mixed-method research study to assess CHW program performance and provide a prototype for a rapid monitoring framework for the CHW program. Disseminated results with district and national stakeholders to inform a CHW program quality improvement plan.

Looking ahead

We envision a responsive and resilient national program of community health workers delivering quality care to improve health outcomes for people living at the last mile in Sierra Leone.