



# Restore Hope: Liberia - 2021

## Mental Health & Women's Empowerment



*“When women gather, great things will happen.” ~ Leymah Gbowee*

# RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA

*Health. Education. Opportunity.*

## WHO WE ARE

In Liberia, a debilitating mental health crisis persists in a context of extreme poverty. The country has suffered fourteen years of brutal civil war, the largest Ebola epidemic in human history, and pervasive gender-based violence. **Women and girls have suffered the most.**

RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA (RHL) provides relief and empowerment to the most vulnerable WOMEN and CHILDREN through an innovative integrated program of:

- **Health**
- **Education**
- **Economic development**



As part of our efforts to build resilient and sustainable communities in Liberia, we provide direct support to **over 600 of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable women & children** in the country's Kolahun District (population of about 75,000). We also support schools throughout the District; and the Kolahun District Hospital, a Ministry of Health referral hospital.

## WHY IT MATTERS

According to the World Health Organization, more than 40% of Liberians suffer from post-traumatic

stress and/or a major depressive disorder. Yet fewer than 1% of Liberians have access to mental health services. In 2018, Liberia ranked 181st out of 189 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index. According to a 2015 World Bank report, **88% of Liberians were living on less than \$1.25 a day.**

Multiple, consecutive emergencies are particularly debilitating for women and have a direct, negative impact on their children, while **severe, pervasive mental illness is preventing fulfillment of even small gains in women's economic and social empowerment.**

## WHAT WE DO

For the last six years, RHL has been implementing programs that meet the expressed needs faced by the people of the Kolahun region. In late 2020, we began **integrating a mental health intervention with women's empowerment activities:**

- **RHL has launched a 12-week evidence-based interpersonal group therapy (IPT) program for women, the first in Liberia.**
- **The program is integrated with existing women's groups, such as the RHL Women's Weaving Cooperative.**
- **This integrated approach provides a sustainable and scalable program for on-going mental health support while advancing women's economic and social empowerment.**

## IMPACT

We expect that by treating 350 women in Lofa County, Liberia over the next two years:

- 85% of them will experience a reduction in the intensity of their depression (based on PHQ-9)
- 65% of patients will experience a reduction in anxiety and PTSD (based on GAD-7 and PTSD-8)
- 85% of these women will report higher social and economic empowerment scores



## SCALING

The need for accessible treatment for clinical depression is already exceeding standard population estimates. In our first outreach and screening, 88% of women were found to be clinically depressed. The neighboring Foya District, also in Lofa County, has already expressed interest in RHL bringing this program to their district.

The demand is high and is overwhelming current clinical resources. What is needed to support these highly vulnerable women and provide them a way out of despair and into a future filled with possibilities, is a scalable, evidence-based, community-centered mental health program like the WHO endorsed Interpersonal Group Therapy intervention.



## SUPPORT FOR THIS PROGRAM

TOGETHER WOMEN RISE (formerly Dining for Women) has provided a \$50,000 grant, partial support for the first two years of the project. RHL is seeking an additional \$100,000 to cover the anticipated expenses for the first three-year project cycle.

## CONTACT

We would love to talk with you and provide more information. Please contact:  
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[www.restorehopeliberia.org](http://www.restorehopeliberia.org)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1) TOGETHER WOMEN RISE: RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA — Integrating Women's Empowerment, Economic Development and Mental Health in Rural Liberia: [www.togetherwomenrise.org/programs/restore-hope-liberia](http://www.togetherwomenrise.org/programs/restore-hope-liberia)
- 2) RHL PROJECT FACTSHEET: Integrating Women's Empowerment, Economic Development and Mental Health in Rural Liberia: [www.togetherwomenrise.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.07-RHL-PFS.pdf](http://www.togetherwomenrise.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.07-RHL-PFS.pdf)
- 3) RHL PROJECT VIDEO — Integrative Program for Women's Mental Health, Social and Economic Empowerment: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=545DHIElfo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=545DHIElfo)





# RESTORE HOPE: LIBERIA

HEALTH • EDUCATION • OPPORTUNITY

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