

By way of background

Sierra Leone has a population of approx. 5.4 million people. According to the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation, in 2020 the MMR was 1070/100 000 live births and the infant mortal rate 154.4/1000 live births. These rates are ranked third and first respectively for poor outcomes globally. <https://mohs.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Data-bulletin-Jan-June2020-3-1.pdf>

Women have limited access to skilled maternity care providers, particularly in the regional areas, where care is provided by elder women/traditional birth attendants. Midwifery workforce mapping undertaken in 2017 suggest there are less than 500 practicing midwives. This is significantly less than the 3000 midwives required to meet the maternal and newborn health needs of the community. (National Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023).

Once midwives graduate, they are often left to manage extremely ill mothers and babies with little or no support. The scarcity of resources available limits their ability to access consistent continuing professional development and peer support. Mentoring has been identified as a mechanism to sustain, diversify and increase midwifery workforce in maternity settings across the globe.