



# The Maternal Center of Excellence

Sierra Leone faces some of the highest maternal and newborn mortality in the world. **And that is changing** thanks to ongoing efforts to strengthen healthcare systems. Leveraging global design and construction expertise, through this project, Build Health International is advancing healthcare infrastructure.





Envisioned as a "beacon of hope" for dignified and trusted maternal care, the Maternal Center of Excellence opened its doors to receive patients on February 14, 2026.

# A Beacon of Hope

The **Maternal Center of Excellence (MCOE)**, which forms part of Koidu Government Hospital (KGH) in Kono stands as a landmark achievement in ongoing efforts to improve maternal and neonatal health outcomes in the country.

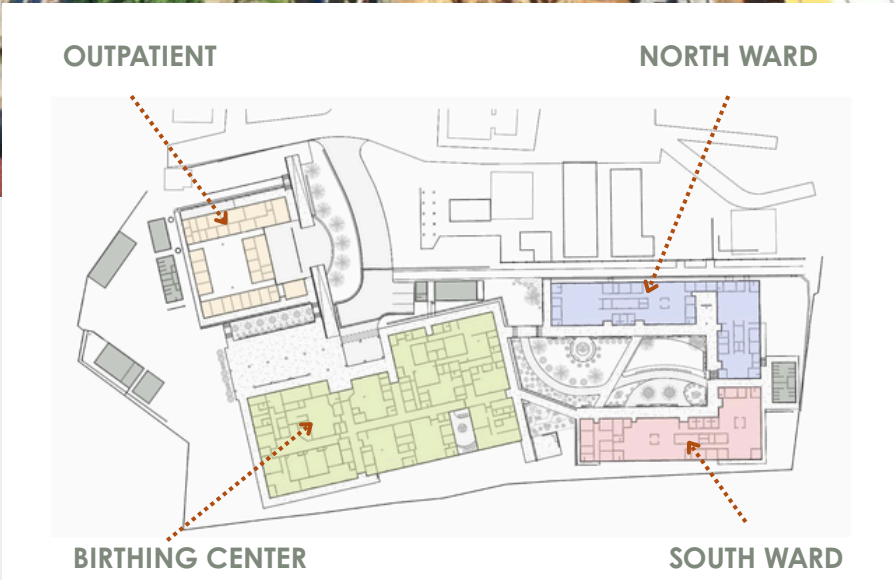
This state-of-the-art facility, which was designed and built in close partnership by Build Health International and Partners In Health, will not only provide exceptional clinical services but also serve as a regional hub for training healthcare workers.

By combining advanced medical services with a commitment to sustainability, dignity, and patient-centered care, the MCOE will transform healthcare access for women and children across Sierra Leone and neighboring countries.





Construction on MCOE broke ground in October 2022. The first phase of the project represents completion of North Ward, South Ward, and Birthing Center, with the Outpatient Department set to open in 2026. Other site work includes a robust medical oxygen piping system and throughways that connect to Koidu Government Hospital (KGH).



# Facility Numbers



120-bed facility



4 buildings, 3 operating rooms, and 1 NICU



160,000 + people served by KGH



2,700 deliveries at KGH per year



Interior of the North Ward, which includes antenatal and postnatal wards, post-delivery counseling, a loss ward, and a staff courtyard.

# Design Considerations

## Energy Efficient

To reduce dependency on an unreliable grid, the facility integrates natural ventilation strategies, with backup from both utility and generator sources. Low louvers bring in cool air while high louvers and pitched roofs release hot air while ceiling fans support circulation. Large pitched and slanted roofs over semi-enclosed waiting areas improve airflow and reduce heat buildup.

## Climate Responsive

Due to the country's heavy rainy season, all critical exterior pathways are covered to allow patients to access different areas without rain exposure.



Example of one of the exterior pathways that connect different buildings throughout the facility, protecting both patients and staff from adverse weather.



At the peak of its construction, the construction workforce at MCOE was comprised of 65% women from the community of Kono.

# Patient and Community Centered

## Maternal and Neonatal Care Innovations

Recognizing long travel distances and limited transport options, a mother's dormitory with outdoor kitchen was added so discharged mothers can remain close to their babies admitted to the NICU.

Screen walls, dedicated stillbirth and loss wards, and discreet youth care areas uphold and enable privacy.

## Infection Control

Wards include isolation rooms with private bathrooms and exterior entrances, with PPE anterooms for staff.

The NICU is divided into two wards, including in-born (babies delivered at the hospital) and out-born (babies referred from other facilities.)

## Education and Community Engagement

Shaded seating and group gathering areas are designed to promote health education.



Many workers at the site of MCOE construction have learned valuable leadership skills and trades, with roles as electricians, welders, carpenters, and quality assurance managers.



# Community Impact



**Laurent Sika**

Director of Construction  
Build Health International

“BHI’s major **construction efforts at MCOE are generating employment**, stimulating the local economy, and laying the groundwork for Kono’s development for decades to come. [The project is also] embedding workforce development and capacity-building training across both the construction phase and hospital operations to create a generational legacy that empowers this community from within.”



**Isata Dumbaya**

Director of Reproductive, Maternal,  
Neonatal, and Child Health  
Partners In Health Sierra Leone

“Currently at the Koidu Government Hospital, we offer **prenatal, antenatal, delivery, family planning, adolescents and family services, cancer, screening, and treatment – all of which will be transferred to MCOE.**

Antenatal clinic and follow up clinic and group clinic will be additional services at MCOE, which have space and resources to do those things.”



**Dr. Austin Demby**

Minister of Health  
Government of Sierra Leone

“The Maternal Center of Excellence reflects the power of partnership in advancing maternal and child health in Sierra Leone. Together with PIH and BHI, **we are making lasting improvements that will benefit generations to come.**”

# Future Investment in Sierra Leone

## Dorma Distribution Center

To meet the operational needs of the MCOE and adjoining Koidu Government Hospital, BHI and PIH have designed and built 31,000-square-foot CMU pre-fabricated warehouse, located just 10 minutes from the MCOE. This facility can store up to 3,200 pallets of lifesaving clinical and nonclinical supplies, ensuring that essential medications and equipment are consistently available.



## Dorma Training Center and Dormitories

The 60-bed dormitory will be equipped with a dining area, kitchen and lounge area. The training center features one classroom, two lecture halls and two simulation labs including observation rooms, as well as a computer lab and library. Future healthcare professionals will receive hands-on guidance and continuous support from experienced clinicians, cultivating both their technical expertise and compassionate patient-centered care.



## KGH Campus Developments

Koidu Government Hospital serves nearly 200,000 patients a year. To meet demand, BHI and PIH are undertaking several campus improvement projects that will improve operational efficiency. A massive electrical upgrade is underway, which will better meet energy demands. Other projects include a laundry facility, incinerator and waste management building, canteen and training center, and screening and entrance pavilion.



*To learn more about partnering with BHI's design and construction teams, please contact [info@buildhealthinternational.org](mailto:info@buildhealthinternational.org).*



Build Health International improves access to and builds capacity for dignified, affordable, and high-quality healthcare infrastructure in resource-constrained settings around the world.

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