

September 29, 2025

Policy Plan – Stichting Worldwide Initiative for Rh Disease Eradication (WIRhE)

1. Objective

The Stichting Worldwide Initiative for Rh Disease Eradication (WIRhE) works to **eliminate Rh disease as a preventable cause of newborn death and suffering worldwide**. Our objective is to save lives by ensuring that **Rh-negative mothers and their families have access to the knowledge, tools, and care necessary to prevent Rh disease**.

Why This Matters

Rh disease is a completely preventable condition, yet it continues to claim lives and cause lifelong disabilities:

- Approximately **114,000 newborns** and at least **50,000 fetuses** die each year due to Rh disease.
- Approximately **50% of women globally** who require preventive care to prevent Rh disease, before or during pregnancy, do not receive it.
- Over **98% of cases of Rh disease are preventable** with timely testing and treatment.
- Rh disease disproportionately affects **low-resource settings**, where basic blood testing and treatment are often unavailable.

Human Impact:

- Without preventive care, multiple complications are common, including severe anemia, hydrops fetalis, jaundice, stillbirth, and long-term disability.
- Families are affected by repeated pregnancy losses, trauma, social stigma, and the burden of caring for affected children with lifelong complications.

What WIRhE Does

WIRhE works globally to close these gaps through:

- **Community-Centered Solutions:** Partnering with healthcare professionals and local organisations to provide timely testing, treatment, and maternal and newborn care resources.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Connecting healthcare workers across regions to share data, resources, and best practices to improve maternal and newborn outcomes.
- **Awareness and Advocacy:** Educating communities, healthcare workers, and policymakers to highlight the urgent need for action to prevent Rh disease.

Mission Statement:

No woman should lose a child to a preventable disease. WIRhE's mission is to **ensure every mother has access to the care and information she needs to save her baby's life**, no matter where she lives.

Current Funding Context:

- WIRhE has received a **€100,000 grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies**, which is currently being used to strengthen the organisation, fund small pilot projects, and build strategic foundations for long-term impact.
- Funds are allocated to **organisational improvements, small-scale regional projects, advocacy campaigns, and coordination activities**, ensuring transparency and mission alignment.

2. Mission and Vision

Mission:

Eliminate preventable newborn deaths and suffering caused by Rh disease by supporting healthcare workers, local organizations, and families with the tools, knowledge, and advocacy needed to prevent Rh disease.

Vision:

A world in which **Rh disease no longer causes preventable suffering and every mother has equitable access** to life-saving care.

Values:

- **Equity:** Ensuring safe pregnancies for all women, especially those in low-resource settings.
- **Partnership:** Collaborating with local communities, health professionals, and organizations to create sustainable solutions.

- **Integrity:** Acting transparently, grounded in science and lived experience, ensuring lasting impact.

3. Revenue Sources

WIRhE's funding comes from:

- **Grants** from foundations and philanthropic organizations (e.g., Bloomberg Philanthropies).
- **Donations** from individuals and corporate partners.
- **Fundraising campaigns and events.**
- **Partnership contributions**, including project co-funding or in-kind support.

All incoming funds are **recorded transparently** and monitored under board oversight.

4. Expenditure

Management of Funds:

- The **Board of Directors** oversees all financial transactions and approvals.
- The **Foundation Coordinator / Executive Director** manages day-to-day fund allocation, reporting regularly to the board.

Planned Use of Funds:

1. **Foundation Coordination & Governance:**
 - Salaries for Foundation Coordinator to ensure strategic continuity.
 - Administrative and operational costs.
2. **Field and Regional Projects:**
 - Partnership building and local capacity strengthening.
 - Community outreach programs, workshops, and awareness campaigns (e.g., currently in Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali, Tanzania, Colombia).
 - Field visits, data collection, storytelling, and multimedia outputs for advocacy.
3. **Communications and Advocacy:**
 - Development of advocacy materials, policy briefs, newsletters, and multimedia content.
 - Awareness campaigns targeting communities, healthcare workers, and policymakers.
 - Coalition-building and partner engagement.
4. **Program Development:**
 - Creation of toolkits (e.g., lower-middle income country (LMIC)-ready Rh Toolkit) for rapid adoption of prevention practices.

- Support for new regional initiatives and pilot projects.

Principle: Funds are used **only for mission-aligned activities**, ensuring transparency, accountability, and impact. The Board approves each initiative.

5. 2–3 Year Vision and Plan

Year 1–2 (2025–2026):

- Strengthen **regional coordination** by moving from one WIRhE Board, to regional boards across the globe, each continent having its own Regional Board. The main Board of Directors will remain the Dutch members who have established the Foundation.
- Implement **communications and advocacy initiatives**, including newsletters, webinars, and storytelling campaigns.
- Connect with more local members to identify blood and pharmaceutical access gaps, and co-develop community education tools, and advocacy campaigns.
- Develop **policy briefs and donor concept notes** to support future funding and advocacy.
- Expand **capacity-building** efforts for healthcare workers to improve maternal health and Rh prevention.

Year 3 (2027):

- Roll out **larger-scale global awareness campaigns** integrating lessons learned from regional projects.
- Strengthen **knowledge-sharing networks** for healthcare workers across countries.
- Expand **project portfolio** to new high-need regions using LMIC-ready Rh Toolkits.
- Establish **sustainable governance and funding structures** for long-term operational stability.
- Monitor and measure **impact indicators** (e.g., women reached, clinicians trained, toolkits used, advocacy milestones).

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved access to life-saving information and services for Rh-negative mothers.
- Strengthened local health systems and partner capacity.
- Enhanced visibility of Rh disease prevention in global maternal health advocacy.
- Long-term reduction in preventable newborn deaths caused by Rh disease.