



Transformations

News from The Fistula Foundation, Fall 2012

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New Recognition for
our Commitment to
Transparency

Half the Sky Documentary Debuts on PBS October 1 & 2

On October 1 and 2, the documentary film version of the book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, written by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, will air on PBS stations around the United States. In the film, Mr. Kristof takes A-list celebrity advocates America Ferrera, Diane Lane, Eva Mendes, Meg Ryan, Gabrielle Union and Olivia Wilde to ten different countries to introduce women and girls who are living under some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable – and fighting bravely to change them.



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In the Spotlight



Edna Adan Maternity Hospital Fistula Foundation Grantee Partner Shines on the Big Screen

The Edna Adan Maternity Hospital opened in 2002 in Hargesia, Somaliland, a project that was the lifelong dream of founder Edna Adan. Those who have read about Edna in the book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, will know that she is a woman of many firsts: the first woman in Somalia to drive, the country's first female qualified midwife, and the first lady of Somaliland after a marriage to the prime minister. Her career led her to a top post with the World Health Organization, where she stayed until retirement. Edna then cashed in her retirement savings to fulfill a lifelong dream of opening a hospital that could address the health problems facing women and children in the Horn of Africa, which suffers one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world.

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One Woman's Story

Habiba from Niger

Habiba was married at 16 and became pregnant with her first child soon after. As most women do in Niger, Habiba began labor at home, which soon became obstructed. She was sent in an ox-cart to the nearest hospital. By the time she received a Caesarian section, Habiba had been in labor for four days. Her baby did not survive.

While recovering in the hospital, Habiba realized that she was leaking urine; days of obstructed labor had created a fistula. Her husband learned of her

condition and sent word that she was not to return to his home.

Heartbroken and injured, Habiba moved in with her parents. Her depression grew as her fistula prevented her from seeing friends or venturing far from home. She worried that she would never find a husband or have children.

In August of 2011, Habiba received a successful fistula surgery provided by The Fistula Foundation's partner, Danja Fistula Center, a dedicated fistula surgery clinic in Danja, Niger.

When she returned to Danja for her six-month checkup, Habiba wore the ceremonial dress that she received from the Danja Fistula Center after her surgery. She still holds concerns about her future, but incontinence is no longer a barrier to living her life.

Before leaving the clinic, Habiba's doctors reported that she turned, smiled, and uttered words unfamiliar to her six months before: "I am happy."



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Half the Sky Documentary Debuts on PBS... *continued from page 1*

The film is part of a larger multimedia effort to engage people around the world in the Half the Sky Movement, a cross-platform initiative that utilizes film, web sites, social media, and games to demonstrate real-world solutions to ending the oppression of women and girls worldwide.

In the film, Fistula Foundation grantee partner Edna Adan Maternity Hospital will be featured prominently in a segment on maternal mortality. Actress Diane Lane traveled to Somaliland with Mr. Kristof to meet Edna Adan, who founded the hospital. In a blog post for the Half the Sky Movement web site this summer, Ms. Lane wrote, "Edna is a genuine inspiration and has earned every bit of respect and esteem she has won through her efforts in her patriarchal society. Edna personally suffered the harm and regret of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) at the tender age of seven, yet she is a champion of wiser methods which accommodate Somaliland customs, while progressing away from the countless fistulas and other miseries women, children and entire families suffer unnecessarily in reproduction."

HOST AN EVENT

Fistula Foundation supporters around the country will be hosting events on **October 2**, the night Edna's segment airs, to raise awareness and funds for women suffering with obstetric fistula. Learn more about the film, sign up to host your own event and download an event toolkit at

www.fistulafoundation.org/halfthesky.

Supporter Spotlight:

500 Miles Walked in 100 Days

Lindsey Robinson is a Circle of Friends Volunteer Ambassador for The Fistula Foundation. In her own words, this is how she raised enough money to fund one woman's fistula surgery:



Lindsey Robinson

5/3/2012: In mid-March I watched the film "A Walk to Beautiful." The documentary stayed with me, and I wanted to find a way to help in a more substantial way than the small amount of money that I was capable of giving. Eventually my desire to help combined with my desire to lose some weight before my 30th birthday (and my complete lack of inspiration in doing so) to form the walking program I am that I am calling "500 miles in 100 days."

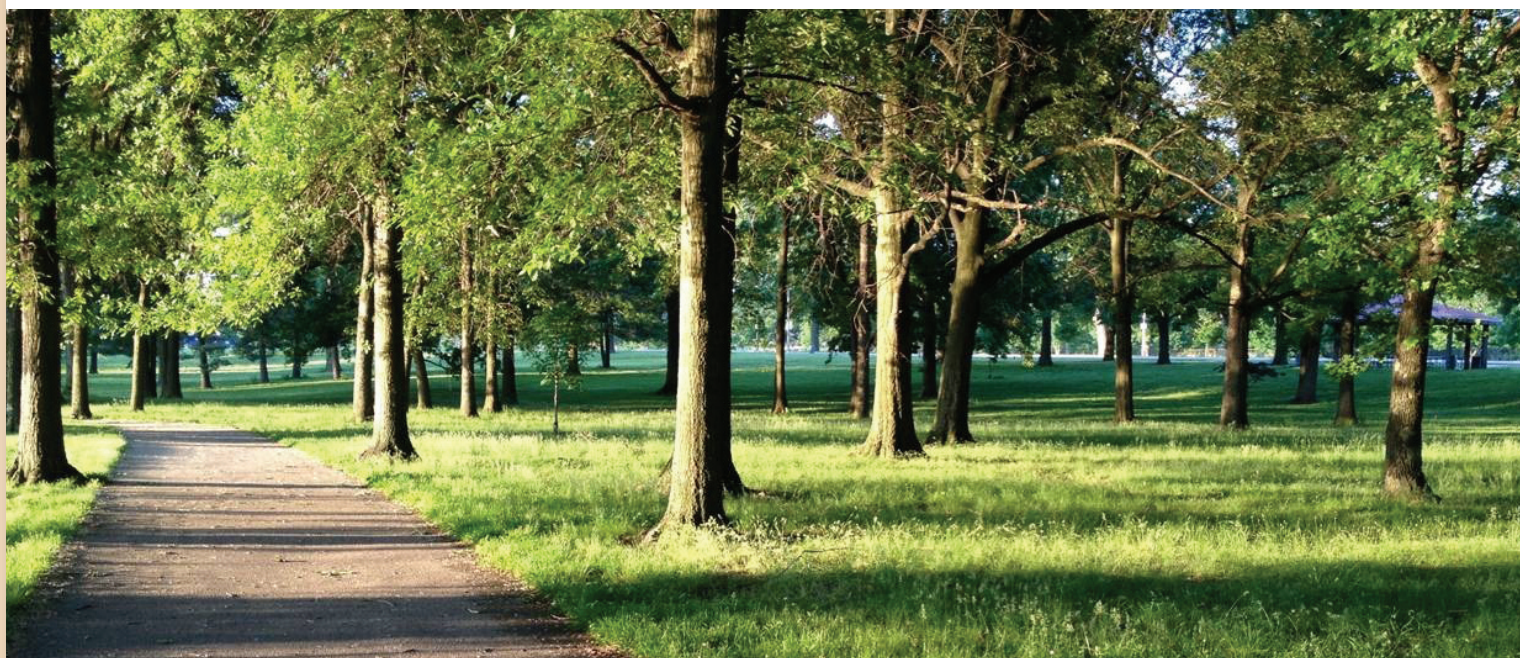
Since March 29th, I have walked more than 150 miles and have been telling my friends that I am doing it to raise money for The Fistula Foundation. I've asked people to "sponsor" me either per mile or with one-time gifts and plan to approach local businesses for support.

So far the going has been good. I was sore from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet for the first few weeks. Even if I don't lose another pound, I feel great about the exercise and fundraising I am doing. I am keeping track of my progress through an iPhone app called "Runkeeper" that I can publish to my Facebook page.

6/28/12: I am chugging along on my miles, but we are in a week-long string of 100 degree plus heat, and that is making it VERY DIFFICULT to get motivated!! I am already over 400 miles. You should see the shoes I have been wearing to walk. They were new when I started and now they have almost no tread on the bottom!

7/17/12: I made it 421 miles in 100 days (July 6th was the last day I kept count). It was 100 degrees by 10:00 a.m. here for several weeks, and I am not built to handle that kind of heat and sun! It's been a pleasure, and I look forward to doing more for The Fistula Foundation in the future!

Note: Lindsey's "500 miles in 100 days" appeal raised more than enough funds to pay for one woman's fistula surgery. Congratulations to Lindsey on walking 421 miles . . . that is an achievement in itself. We appreciate her thoughtfulness and generosity - not to mention her stamina! On behalf of the women these donations will be helping, we thank you, Lindsey.



The view from one of Lindsey's walking routes.

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

The Fistula Foundation is thankful for partnerships with Direct Relief International (DRI) and Women and Health Alliance – International (WAHA), who work on the ground directly with our grantee partners.



DRI reports that in **Kenya**, Nyanza Provincial General Hospital used our funding to provide fistula repair training to 17 health providers, and made fistula treatment available to 106 women between June 2011 and June 2012. In their report, they wrote: *"This project would not have been possible without the support of The Fistula Foundation. [This] grant support enabled more women to receive treatment that would have otherwise gone without, or resulted in waiting for many months for treatment."*

In **Chad**, our partner WAHA reports that Fistula Foundation funding was used by the new Center for Reproductive Health and Fistula Repair for fistula surgical training. They were also able to provide fistula treatment to 160 women.



HEAL Africa reported that donor funds were utilized to perform 128 fistula operations on 100 different women between two hospitals in rural towns Wamba and Idjwi in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**. Funds were also used to train hospital staff in these two locations to safely perform Caesarian section deliveries. Staff were also trained how to prepare fistula patients before their surgery and to offer physical therapy and appropriate nutrition for women after surgery.



Training the Trainers: Standardizing Fistula Surgery Training Worldwide



(International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics) created the first-ever Global Competency-Based Training Manual, a groundbreaking tool released last year that many believe will change the landscape of fistula repair surgery.

The Fistula Foundation is actively supporting this work, having funded a London-based project coordinator to implement FIGO's fistula training initiatives as well as the first five surgical fellowships provided through the FIGO program.

The biggest single obstacle to increasing treatment for the number of women with fistula is the lack of appropriately trained fistula surgeons. That's why Fistula Foundation partner FIGO

In July, Fistula Foundation Board member Dr. Elneil edited the training manual, convened a meeting in Dakar, Senegal. The training was held in African countries that have signed the manual, creating a pool of appropriately trained fistula surgeons.

The project is already working to train more surgeons according to Dr. Elneil. "It has made a difference and has promoted harmony in the field and a focus of direction. From here, we will focus on midwifery training and community education," she said.

While the training manual has been adopted in many countries, nongovernmental organizations are implementing exciting developments from the July manual, making it becoming part of the standard postoperative care.



Meet the Surgeon: Dr. Steve Arrowsmith

Dr. Steve Arrowsmith has spent 25 years traveling throughout Africa and Asia performing fistula repair surgeries and working to mentor and train new fistula surgeons in the field. Three years ago, he gave up his medical practice in New Mexico to focus on fistula repair in the developing world full time and is now a key partner surgeon of The Fistula Foundation.

In April of this year, Dr. Arrowsmith spent time in Bangladesh working with our grantee partner, Hope Foundation Hospital in Cox's Bazar. We caught up with him by telephone just before he departed for Niger to visit another Foundation partner, the Danja Fistula Center:

How is the problem of obstetric fistula different in Asia vs. Africa?

As the years have gone by, I've figured out that fistula is really different everywhere and it's difficult to use the same set of preconceived notions and policies wherever you go. On the other hand, it's also very similar. Fistula is a disease of poverty, and poverty can happen anywhere – that's the way I try to think of it.

What is unique about the fistula care being provided by Hope Hospital in Bangladesh?

Hope Hospital was founded by Dr. Iftikher Mahmood, a pediatrician who lives in Florida. He grew up in the Cox's Bazar area of Bangladesh and wanted to do something to help those who live in the region, which is very poor despite the beautiful beaches and tourist hotels nearby. It's a strategic place to do good work and the hospital has several outreach clinics in the area, even on some of the nearby islands where they are the only center providing medical services at all. In addition, the main hospital is located very close to the Burmese border and a large number of women and children being treated here are refugees. I'm sure it would be difficult to get into Myanmar to provide care, so this is a great way to serve that population indirectly.

Given the years you've spent working on this issue, what gives you hope for the future of fistula care?

When I started working in this field 25 years ago in Liberia, I used to joke that I was one of the top five fistula surgeons in the world – because there were only four of us! Our work was done as individuals then, in isolation without a real evidence

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Member Dr. Suzy Elneil, who authored and led the first FIGO Train-the-Trainer meeting held in French, for nine French-speaking countries in support of this effort to expand the role of midwives and nurses as fistula surgeons.

transform the fistula treatment world, make everyone accountable to each other in the field. There is a sense of unity of purpose and other things are starting to blossom, such as community outreach worker program support,”

has been adopted by a number of different organizations and institutions, one of the most important meetings was the possibility of the manual being a post-graduate curriculum in French West Africa.

“Developing an integrated approach to fistula management is becoming key to managing fistula patients,” said Dr. Elneil, adding that “the support of The Fistula Foundation is critical to the continual training of new doctors coming into the field. The United Nations Population Fund representative at the meeting spoke highly of the input of The Fistula Foundation in helping facilitate this approach. The Fistula Foundation has an extremely good reputation with all of the attendees.”

Doctors attending this meeting traveled from Benin, Niger, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali and Guinea, reported Dr. Elneil. In addition to expanding implementation of the training manual, participants discussed the importance of emphasizing prevention of obstetric fistula and the issues of transportation links and the infrastructure of hospitals and clinics to perform fistula surgeries.

“Having the support of nine Francophone countries in the development of standardized training for fistula surgery is unprecedented and very much a first time this has occurred – the widespread adoption of the manual was very exciting,” said Dr. Elneil.

What You're Saying:



Ann Constantine The Fistula Foundation is my charity of choice not only because of it's stellar reputation and knowing that my donations are being used properly, but because the Fistula Foundation does something so simple yet so important - they restore dignity - something, I believe, no human being can live without. No woman should have to suffer the indignity of a fistula and supporting this foundation is something I will continue to do year in and year out.

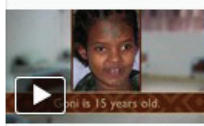
July 26 at 5:42pm · Unlike · 2



Nonprofit Organizations

If you read the NYT Bestseller "Cutting for Stone" this summer, then you read about a condition called Fistula which affects women of birthing age in the developing world. Well... here's a real-life case of Fistula in a young Ethiopian woman and the story of how The Fistula Foundation helped her survive her condition:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty_gnLsjXWc&feature=plcp



One Woman's Story: Goni in Ethiopia

www.youtube.com

Goni lives in Ethiopia. Married at a young age, she became pregnant soon after. Her labor became obstructed and she lost the baby. The obstructed

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New Energy Portal, Bärenherz Stiftung, Shanna-Marie and 2 others like this.

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Monique O'Reilly I give \$10 out of every paycheck. Wish I could give more. As a woman who has children, I feel an extra special empathy with these women in need. THANK YOU SO MUCH for helping them. hugs^10.

July 26 at 6:58pm · Edited · Unlike · 3



Life4African Mothers

@Life4AM

@OperationOF @Fistula_Fdtn This a great work you're doing wonderful things to fight this awful condition & give women their lives back!

12:54 AM - 16 Aug 12 via web



Decorno

@Decorno

Thanks! @Fistula_Fdtn is one of the most efficient charities. If you're looking for a way to do good, consider this awesome organization.

08:46 AM - 31 Aug 12 via Twitter for iPhone



Half the Sky by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

Nicholas Kristof's nonprofit recommendations get an A grade! Among his great picks that are also Half the Sky partners are Acumen Fund, BRAC, The Fistula Foundation, Girls Are Not For Sale and Room to Read: World Change Starts with Educated Children (Official).

Check out our 32 partners who are doing great work to empower women and girls around the world:

<http://www.halftheskymovement.org/partners>



Nicholas Kristof gets an A in Philanthropy - GreatNonprofits' Blog

greatnonprofits.org

Nicholas Kristof gets an A in Philanthropy - The latest news and trends about nonprofits, charities, donors and

View Post · Remove Tag · July 27 at 10:46am

The Endangered Species, Empowered Communities Project, Tina Hale, Lovely Singh and 83 others like this.

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Recognizing our Commitment to Transparency

Valued Partner



GUIDESTAR®
Exchange

PARTNERS IN TRUST

The Fistula Foundation has received the GuideStar Exchange Seal, a leading symbol of transparency and accountability provided by GuideStar USA, Inc., the premier source of nonprofit information. The Seal demonstrates The Fistula Foundation's deep commitment to nonprofit transparency and accountability.

The GuideStar Exchange is an initiative designed to connect nonprofits with current and potential supporters. Millions of people visit GuideStar to learn more about nonprofit organizations, and the GuideStar Exchange allows nonprofits to share a wealth of up-to-date information with GuideStar's many audiences.

"We have worked hard to showcase our progress toward our mission, and our long-held belief in being transparent about our work," said Fistula Foundation CEO Kate Grant. "Adding the GuideStar Exchange Seal to the recognition we've already received from the Better Business Bureau and CharityNavigator reaffirms our deep commitment to transparency with the funds our supporters so generously entrust to our care."

Edna Adan Maternity Hospital... *continued from page 1*

Edna and her hospital are the central feature of a segment on maternal mortality in the upcoming documentary film version of “Half the Sky,” scheduled to air on PBS stations throughout the United States on October 1 and 2, and internationally at a later date.

The film will give an unflinching look into the state of maternal healthcare in the region, which is still recovering in many ways from a tragically destructive 11-year civil war that ended in 1991. Somaliland sees itself as separate from Somalia to the south but it is not an officially recognized country. This unrecognized status makes it hard for citizens to leave the country and extremely difficult for foreign aid to get in; there are no banks and the economy is cash-based.



Life can be especially difficult for women, who face cultural expectations for bearing a large number of children even if

it means their own health is put at risk. Every year, one baby in eight dies in infancy, and 4,000 Somali women die in childbirth. “Women and girls must seek permission from a male family member – which sometimes ends up being their son or grandson – to leave the house for any reason at all, including health care and life-threatening medical emergencies,” explained urogynecologist and Fistula Foundation partner surgeon Dr. Lauri Romanzi in a conference call earlier this year discussing her efforts to treat women with fistula at the Edna Adan Maternity Hospital. “I evaluated women who needed care but had to go and ask permission of their husbands. Some we saw again, but



some just never came back. We called, but they never came back,” reflected Dr. Romanzi.

“Edna’s hospital is a prime example of what we strive to fund at The Fistula Foundation. Her work has earned the respect of her community, and women know that they can rely on her hospital for high-quality treatment provided in a culturally-sensitive manner,” said Kate Grant, CEO of The Fistula Foundation, who recently returned from a trip to visit Edna in Somaliland.

The Fistula Foundation has been a main supporter of fistula repair surgeries at Edna’s hospital since 2009. Donations from Fistula Foundation supporters have funded construction of a new operating room dedicated to fistula treatment, which opened in 2011 with the aid of our partner organization, Direct Relief International. Last year, 144 fistula surgeries were completed at Edna’s hospital through foundation support, and more surgeries have been funded this year through grants to doctors like Dr. Romanzi, who travel for extended periods of time to perform surgeries that change women’s lives.

“In the last decade, Edna’s hospital has delivered over 12,000 babies and has ended up as the “go-to” center for anything medical,” said Ms. Grant. “Her hospital is truly a Phoenix of hope and health for everyone in the region.”

“Edna Adan’s visionary leadership is saving and transforming the lives of multitudes of women in Somaliland. She’s my definition of the word ‘hero’.”

– Kate Grant, CEO, The Fistula Foundation



To learn more about the Edna Adan Maternity Hospital, tune in to Half the Sky on PBS October 1 and 2, or visit the hospital web site at www.ednahospital.org

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Meet the Surgeon... *continued from page 5*

base or standardization of any sort. Now there are real opportunities for NGOs to come together in groups of teams to collaborate. The whole thing has really exploded in terms of interest in the level of care. The other thing I see in terms of change is that African surgeons are starting to take up leadership roles in fistula care, and that's wonderful to see.

So many organizations receive funding from the government and because of that are obliged to fund government programs overseas, too. Or there are faith-based organizations that only fund faith-based care providers overseas. What I think is really cool about the way Fistula Foundation funds projects is that funds are given based on need,

whether that need is at a government-sponsored hospital, faith-based hospital, or privately funded hospitals like Hope Hospital in Bangladesh, which was started by one man who wanted to help the people where he grew up.

You provide fistula training and care in so many places. Is there anywhere that really feels like "home" when you're on the road?

That's definitely Danja Fistula Center in Niger for me, where I'm headed next. I had a lot to do with the planning from 15 years ago until our opening day in February of this year. I have deep relationships with the people that live there.

Training a surgeon is a process and I like to go back, and back, and back, teaching how to treat women with more complicated cases each time I go. I like to stay in touch between visits and am often sent case descriptions, pictures, and even ultrasound images from the surgeons I mentor, which really establishes a network. One of the really gratifying things about my job is that I can bounce around from place to place and find people like Dr. Nrinmoy Biswas at Hope Hospital in Bangladesh and Dr. Itengré Ouédraogo at Danja Fistula Center, who are real jewels and worth the investment and time in training and mentoring them in advanced fistula repair, because they are making real sacrifices to do what they do.