



Transformations

News from Fistula Foundation, Spring 2014

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Spotlight on Where We're Helping Evangel VVF Center: Jos, Nigeria

For decades, Nigeria has been the most populous country in Africa. Today there are approximately 177 million people living there. Nigeria also has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, with as many as 630 out of 100,000 births ending in death for the mother. It is against this backdrop of need that Dr. Steve Arrowsmith, the Foundation's new Medical and Program Director, initiated fistula work in 1990, and helped create the Evangel Vescio-Vaginal Fistula Center (Evangel VVF Center) in 1992, as a ward entirely devoted to fistula within the larger hospital.

At the time Dr. Arrowsmith left the center in 1993, about 100 cases a year were being treated. Since then, the program has grown steadily; last year, the center performed 365 fistula repair surgeries. And, importantly, the Center has successfully made the critical transition from being led by expatriate staff, to having strong and dedicated local leadership. The facility contains a 40-bed ward, a large outpatient facility and hostel space.

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Understanding Obstetric Fistula

Many people understand that obstetric fistula is a childbirth injury caused by prolonged and unrelieved obstructed labor, that when left untreated leaves women incontinent. But, there is

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One Woman's Story

Belesa district, Ethiopia

Women and Health Alliance International (WAHA) is Fistula Foundation's partner at the Gondar University Teaching Hospital in Ethiopia. This is Heran's story, as told to our WAHA colleagues:

I have three children. Around 20 years ago during my first delivery I had an obstructed and prolonged labor. This resulted in a fistula with fecal and urine incontinence.

The worst for me was to not be able to attend any ceremony in my community. I couldn't wear any new clothes because I would have destroyed them. Can you believe that I spent 20 years without going to a wedding or to the church? I even stopped eating and drinking fearing the leakage.

I thought that this kind of medical repair was too expensive. But when I heard it was free in Gondar, I jumped on the opportunity.

For my future life I don't expect anything more than to go to the ceremonies with my friends. I don't need any husband; I am too old for that. I just want to sit with my friends without any fear and hope they will not laugh at me anymore.



Heran, 40 years old

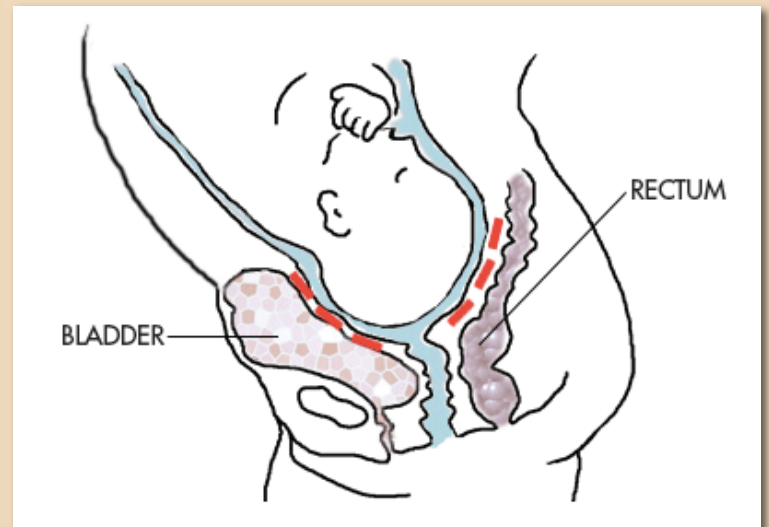
Heran was treated at the Gondar University Hospital by Dr. Mulu Muleta. She was cured of her fistula and has returned to her village.

Understanding Obstetric Fistula *continued from page 1*

often confusion about what exactly produces an obstetric fistula. Contrary to a common misconception, the injury is not due to ripping and tearing of tissue, rather it is due to pressure of the baby's head being pushed against the mother's pelvic bone by uterine contractions during labor. This pressure can cut off the supply of oxygenated blood, and the tissue, deprived of oxygen becomes "necrotic" or dead. It is the dead tissue that when it falls away creates the holes in the vagina, bladder and sometimes the rectum, which allow bodily waste to leak uncontrollably. Those holes are literally called "fistulas"; in layman's terms a hole between an internal organ and the outside world that should not exist.

The World Health Organization has labeled obstetric fistula the most devastating and serious of all childbirth injuries. It was eradicated in the United States more than 100 years ago. In fact, the site of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City is the location of a fistula hospital that closed in the 1890s.

Unfortunately, in the world's poorest countries and most rural areas, a majority of mothers are delivering babies at home without medical help. That sad truth is one of the reasons that complications from pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of death and disability for women of reproductive age in the developing world. The good news is, in the hands of a trained surgeon, most women with obstetric fistula can be cured through surgery.





Pictured left to right: Dr. Denis Mukwege, Georgetown University President Dr. John J. DeGioia, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and Ambassador Melanne Verveer.

Long Term Foundation Partner Honored by Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton

Dr. Denis Mukwege of Panzi Hospital Receives Award

In a February 26 ceremony held at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Panzi Hospital Founder, Dr. Denis Mukwege, was honored with the

Hillary Rodham Clinton Award for Advancing Women in Peace and Security. The award was created by Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security, led by executive director and Georgetown alumna Melanne Verveer, who most recently served as U.S. Ambassador for Global Women's Issues.

This year's award recognized outstanding male leaders who play a critical role in supporting women in building peace. Dr. Mukwege was honored for his work in founding Panzi Hospital, a facility in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo that provides treatment to women who are victims of sexual violence in this region of the world, termed by some as the "Rape Capital of the World". Dr. Mukwege is one of the Foundation's longest-term partners, having received funding from Fistula Foundation for traumatic and obstetric fistula repair since 2009. Dr. Mukwege has also been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Mukwege called for greater international action to end sexual violence against women in conflict areas, and shared his belief that the award "...sends an important message: we can put an end to sexual violence in conflict and in peace time by pressing for greater political will, by taking on the responsibility to protect, and by healing and empowering survivors. But first and foremost we must engage men and boys together with women and girls in the struggle to end patriarchal discrimination and gender based abuses."

Fistula Foundation CEO Kate Grant attended the award ceremony. "Denis Mukwege is an inspiration and his Panzi Hospital is a beacon of hope and healing for women who have suffered unspeakable acts of violence. Fistula Foundation is honored to fund fistula treatment that helps make women whole again as they rebuild their bodies and lives."



YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Democratic Republic of Congo | Long-term Foundation partner Panzi Hospital reported that 114 women received fistula repair surgery thanks to Fistula Foundation funding in 2013. Funds were also used to provide surgical training, and the hospital reports that five new doctors have conducted simple fistula reparations at the facility. Funds were also used to provide counseling and social reintegration to women who received treatment.

Dignity Necklace and Earring Set: \$175

Mother's Day Special!

*This Mother's Day, change one woman's life.
In thanks for your donation, we will give you a gift.*

For a limited time, honor your mother with our complete Dignity Necklace and Earrings set. When she wears these, your mother will be reminded of your beautiful gift which will restore a woman's health, in her honor.



If you would like your gift to arrive for Mother's Day

To make your donation, complete and mail in your check.
Or, simply give us a call toll free at 866-777-7777.

Dignity Scarves: \$95

In thanks for your donation of \$95 or more, we are delighted to offer you a choice from one of two impeccably styled, custom-designed 100% silk Dignity Scarves featuring an exquisite floral design in cheerful hues and a discreet signature in the bottom corner "The Fistula Foundation from despair to dignity." A full 3 feet by 3 feet square, this versatile accessory can be worn as a shawl, knotted around the neck or tucked over or under your favorite sweater or jacket. Your Dignity Scarf is presented in a gift box matching the scarf itself – perfect for gift-giving!



Dignity Necklace: \$150

In thanks for your donation of \$150 or more, we proudly offer you this silver-plated Dignity Necklace, presented in a lush black velvet jewelry box. This custom-designed necklace incorporates a single cultured pearl, the universal symbol of health and purity, into a drop pendant. A versatile choice, your Dignity Necklace will be perfect when worn on special occasions and/or casually elegant when paired with your favorite jeans.



Dignity Earrings: \$65

In thanks for your donation of \$65 or more, to express our gratitude for supporting the work of the Foundation, we proudly offer these silver-plated Dignity Earrings, presented in an attractive gift box. Custom-designed to complement the Dignity Necklace, your Dignity Earrings can be worn together as a set or separately. Our Dignity Earrings are a lovely and sophisticated choice and make a memorable gift as well.



Dignity Bracelet: \$125

The silver-plated Dignity Bracelet incorporates Fistula Foundation logo and the word Dignity in English on one side and in Amharic, the most common language in Ethiopia, on the other side of the central bead.

In thanks for your donation of \$125 or more, your Dignity Bracelet is presented in a special gift box.



...an's life forever, and share that experience with someone special in your life.
...ve can send a personalized card or gift to you or another person for you.

...her's Day, please place your order with us by phone or online no later than Friday, May 2.

...return the enclosed form by mail. Donate online anytime at www.fistulafoundation.org.
...756-3700 (408-249-9596 outside the US) Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific time.

Mother's Day Tribute Card: \$10

To thank you for your donation of \$10 or more, we will mail a Mother's Day Tribute Card to you or to someone special in your life. This card can be personalized to feature the handwritten name of your honoree and your name – a lovely way to celebrate Mother's Day this year and share with those you love how good it feels to help restore health to women suffering from fistula.



By far, the most inspiring Mother's Day gift imaginable is a Love-A-Sister gift. Join the Love-A-Sister program and cover the cost of one woman's free, safe fistula surgery.

Love-A-Sister Tribute Gifts

You may choose to fully sponsor one woman's surgery by making a one-time donation of \$450 or a monthly donation of \$37.50 for 12 months. In thanks, we proudly offer you this personalized certificate celebrating that this life-changing donation has been made in your name or in honor of someone you love.



Help Pay for a Portion of One Woman's Surgery

You may also choose to make a Love-A-Sister donation to help pay for a portion of one woman's surgery.

- \$240** can help provide transportation for 12 women in need of treatment
- \$85** can help provide nursing care for one patient
- \$50** can help provide either an anesthetist or lab tests for one patient's surgery

We offer this beautiful Tribute Card for all Love-A-Sister donors making contributions of \$50 or more, intended to help pay for a portion of one woman's surgery. Ideal as a gift, this large card is 6" by 9" in size and opens up to three colorful panels illustrating the Love-A-Sister donation choices mentioned above. Your card can be personalized to feature the handwritten name of your honoree and your name as well – a thoughtful added personal touch!





Fistula Foundation Welcomes New Medical and Programs Director

Dr. Steve Arrowsmith Joins Team Fistula

Renowned fistula surgeon and trainer Dr. Steve Arrowsmith joined Fistula Foundation in January as the organization's first Medical and Programs Director. Dr. Arrowsmith brings more than 27 years of experience and intensive fistula knowledge to the Foundation team, further strengthening our capacity to collaborate with partners on the

ground in Africa and Asia. As a long term partner surgeon and trainer for the organization, Dr. Arrowsmith will spend his time traveling to the Foundation's 38 partner sites to continue training new surgeons, help build new fistula treatment programs and strengthen those already established.

"I am honored to have Steve join our team," said Kate Grant, CEO of Fistula Foundation. "I've traveled with Steve and seen first-hand his tireless dedication to providing the best quality care to women who've already suffered so much. We are fortunate to have him now on "Team Fistula". He brings with him deep experience, extraordinary surgical expertise and a capacious heart that will certainly strengthen the Foundation and our ability to help provide high quality treatment to women in need."

Dr. Arrowsmith received his undergraduate degree from Miami University and his medical degree from the Medical College of Ohio. He is a urologist by training, but over the past 27 years he has become one of the world's most recognized and respected obstetric fistula surgeons.

"Fistula injuries vary widely, making them profoundly challenging to repair," said Dr. Arrowsmith. "Over the years, I have been able to help women receive free fistula care because of Fistula Foundation's support; I know of no other organization which so exemplifies what donors appreciate most: transparency, accountability and an unswerving focus on alleviating the suffering of women."

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK



Guinea | In Guinea's capital city of Conakry, Fistula Foundation partner Women and Health Alliance International (WAHA) has been working at the Ignace Deen Hospital to provide ongoing quality obstetric fistula care. Despite political instability over the course of this project, 175 fistula repair operations were performed during the one-year grant period funded by the Foundation. In addition to surgeries, funds were also used to refurbish equipment and treatment supplies, train fistula care teams in basic and advanced fistula care, establish patient identification and referral links to facilitate free transportation for patients and to implement community outreach and social support actions for patients before and after surgery.



Supporter Spotlight: Carolyn Cooper

Several years ago, Carolyn Cooper was introduced to Fistula Foundation's work through a video. She found herself drawn to the cause on an emotional level. "The bond you have with other women through childbirth is very powerful," she shared.

Having also read Nicholas Kristof's columns in the New York Times featuring women struggling to overcome the stigma of obstetric fistula, she was moved to do more. She visited Fistula Foundation's website and learned about our Love-A-Sister program. She was thrilled to find that a \$450 donation would provide repair surgery for one woman, transforming her life forever. With two sisters of her own, Carolyn thought that making a donation through the Love-A-Sister program would have double meaning for her, as a way not only to honor her sisters Elizabeth and Nancy, but also to honor and care for her global sisters in need.

"As a mother, I understand the struggles of women, although [fistula patients'] struggles are so much more physical," Carolyn said, adding, "I love these women's courage, how they keep going...I know what it takes as a mother to keep going even when you think you can't. I am so inspired and have such respect for them and know of no better way to honor them."

Carolyn is a monthly contributor to the Foundation, but this year has already made her second Love-A-Sister donation on behalf of her two sisters, fully funding two women's obstetric fistula repair surgeries. Carolyn: your generous gift of love and life is appreciated. It will live on in a woman's smile, her care for her children and in her participation in her community.



Spreading the Word: Voice of America

In March, Fistula Foundation CEO Kate Grant appeared on the NTV network in Bangladesh, in an interview with Voice of America's Bangla news service. During the show, Ms. Grant was able to highlight the progress made in Bangladesh and much of Asia to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates generally, and the pioneering work of Fistula Foundation partner, the Hope Foundation for Women and Children of Bangladesh, and their hospital in Cox's Bazar.



Afghanistan | Nine surgeons have been trained at CURE International Hospital in Kabul through the facility's ob/gyn fellowship, thanks to funding from Fistula Foundation. This fellowship is working to expand access to competent vaginal delivery and C-sections, helping to prevent obstetric fistula. In addition, Foundation funds are also being used to provide physical therapy, psychological support, transportation, meals and housing for women who receive treatment at the hospital.

Women's Rights are Human Rights



Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton Hosts Reunion of Delegation to Landmark U.N. Women's Conference

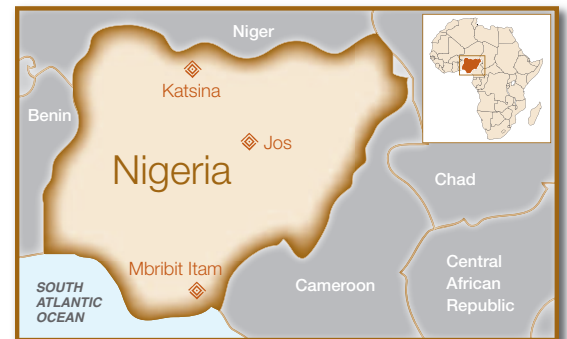
Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted a reunion at Georgetown University of the United States Delegation to the 1995 UN Women's Conference; Secretary Clinton was the Chair of the delegation. Fistula Foundation CEO, Kate Grant, who was member of the delegation, attended the event, held February 26th. The conference was the last United Nations Meeting dedicated to developing a global agenda to advance women's rights. It became a historic event in large part due to a courageous speech by then First Lady Clinton in which she declared, "Women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights," a phrase that became the battle cry of a global movement.

In a piece for *The Huffington Post* celebrating Secretary Clinton's retirement from the State Department last year, Ms. Grant recalled the event, "As Clinton left the stage, the American delegation, where I was seated, overflowed with exuberant pride. There were high-fives. There were tears. There were hugs. I looked out over the audience with delegates representing virtually every nation on earth to hear a thunderous applause and watch many delegates taking to their feet, a sea of women and men giving Hillary one big 'you go, girl.' I wished I had an American flag to drape on my shoulders when I walked out of that room."

Spotlight on Where We're Helping - Jos, Nigeria

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In the wake of the global financial downturn in 2009-10, the hospital lost crucial funding from two large outside funders. Fistula Foundation was able to provide critical support in 2011, and according to Dr. Lengmang, it was Fistula Foundation funding that is the sole reason the Center is alive and operating today. Last year, a very special Foundation donor stepped in to fund Evangel's operations for two years. While this wonderful woman chooses to stay anonymous, we are tremendously grateful, as is the team at Evangel VVF, for her selfless generosity and deeply caring heart.



Do your estate plans reflect the values you care about?

Contact Fistula Foundation at (866) 756-3700 for details on how to help women suffering from fistula as you plan your legacy.