

The Problem

One million women worldwide needlessly suffer from untreated childbirth injuries that cause incontinence. Surgery could cure them.

Obstetric fistula and perineal tears are childbirth injuries that can occur when a woman has a prolonged, obstructed labor but is unable to access an emergency C-section. If left untreated, a fistula or perineal tear will cause a woman to leak urine, stool, or both for the rest of her life. All too often, she becomes a social outcast, unable to care for her family or meaningfully contribute to society.

Fistula is a symptom of poverty, gender inequity, and inadequate health systems. It persists in low-income countries across Africa and Asia.

Surgery is the solution—and Fistula Foundation is the global leader in providing it at scale.
\$633, on average, can give a woman a new life.



Sumy Sadurni

Surgery has a long-term, transformative impact on the health and wellbeing of women like Foster (above).

A Solution That Scales

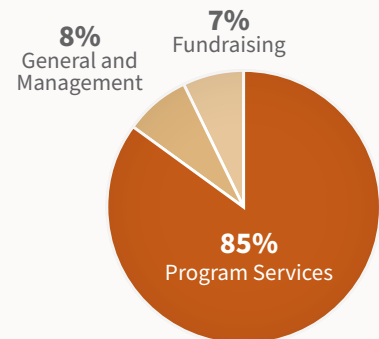
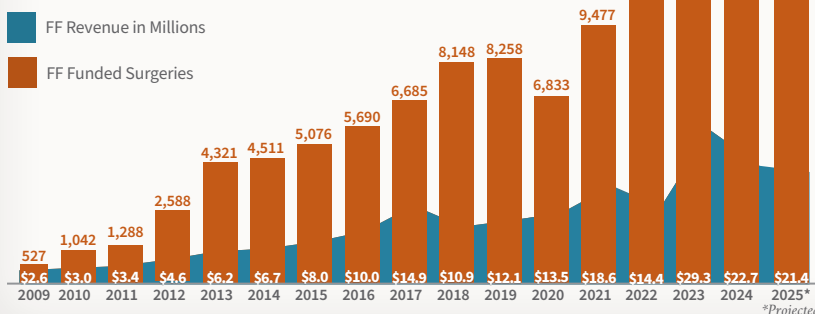
We amplify the efforts of local providers in Africa and Asia to build capacity where it's needed most.

Through a cost-effective, research-backed approach, we partner with local healthcare providers and fund life-transforming surgeries to reduce wait times for care and end needless suffering *now*. Strategic investments in other core interventions—healthcare provider training and community outreach—improve quality of care, reduce stigma, identify patients in need, and successfully reintegrate women into their communities post-surgery.

In May 2023, we received the largest gift in the organization's history—\$15 million from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. We deployed the money immediately to deliver life-transforming care at rapid scale, bolstering the capacity of existing partners to provide more surgeries, and recruiting new partners to extend our reach into areas of high need. We grew from supporting roughly 10,000 surgeries (2022) to more than 16,000 (2024)—a 55% increase in two years. By Q1 of 2025, all of the funds had been spent and at least 10,000 additional lives were transformed.

Since 2009, we've provided more than 100,000 free, life-transforming surgeries to women in need.

While our revenue has increased by a factor of 9, our surgery total has increased by a factor of more than 30.



\$.85 of every \$1 donated goes straight to the field—because that's where lives are changed.

By the Numbers

We fund **150+ local hospitals and community organizations** across **30+ countries** to find, treat, and reintegrate women into their communities. On average, across our partners:



A woman **lives with fistula** for 5.7 years before she is treated, and she is **27 years old** at the time of injury



A surgery that costs **\$633** can cure a woman's incontinence, and restore her health



Surgery has an **87%+ success rate**



A single surgery can provide **40+ years of restored health**

Our Record of Impact

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for *The New York Times*, Nicholas Kristof, describes fistula surgery as “an example of an almost miraculous intervention that transforms lives.” Kristof named Fistula Foundation as a 2024 Holiday Impact Prize winner for our highly effective work to make the world a better place.



A Case Study in Kenya

In Kenya, the site of our longest-standing countrywide program, research found that:

- Surgery is highly effective: **91% of surgeries** resulted in full continence at discharge;
- Surgery transforms lives: more than **85% of women treated** reported being able to fully socialize, work, and function normally one year after surgery—compared with 18% who reported normal functioning before surgery; and
- Our care reaches every corner of the country: women from **all 47 counties of Kenya** were referred for treatment through our partner hospitals.



RECOMMENDED BY

**The Life
You Can
Save**

“Fistula Foundation runs a high-quality, cost-effective global program, which I am proud to support.”— Peter Singer, co-founder of The Life You Can Save

Local Teams Drive Results

In 2024, 90% of the surgeons whose work we funded were residents of the regions served by our programs. Our African-based program team is 100% locally managed, and our eight medical and program advisors from around the globe include fistula surgeons and professionals with decades of experience in the field of fistula care. An all-female leadership team ensures that we are focused on growing our bottom line: the number of women we help.



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Our Vision for the Future

Our ultimate vision is to end the needless suffering of women with untreated childbirth injuries by eliminating the wait for care. We aim to leave no woman behind.

To date we have funded more than 100,000 life-transforming surgeries, restoring more than two million years of healthy life since 2009. Within the broader ecosystem of maternal health, Fistula Foundation is laser-focused on treating the one million women who are suffering from childbirth injuries right now. Despite the acute need for care, and our partners demonstrated capacity to do more, we simply don't have the funds to cover more surgeries for women in need. We can end their needless suffering now, with your help.

For more information, contact Chief Partnerships Officer Lindsey Pollaczek | lindsey@fistulafoundation.org

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