



At Fistula Foundation, we believe that no woman should live a life of misery and isolation, simply for trying to bring a child into the world. We strive every day to end the suffering of women injured in childbirth—and to ensure that no woman is left behind.

What Is Fistula?

A fistula is a hole. Obstetric fistula occurs when prolonged, obstructed labor causes a hole to open between the vagina and the bladder or rectum. It leaves a woman incontinent of urine, feces, or both. Surgery is the only cure.

What We're Up Against



Worldwide, 15% of all labors involve complications, and 1 in 20 women experiences obstructed labor.

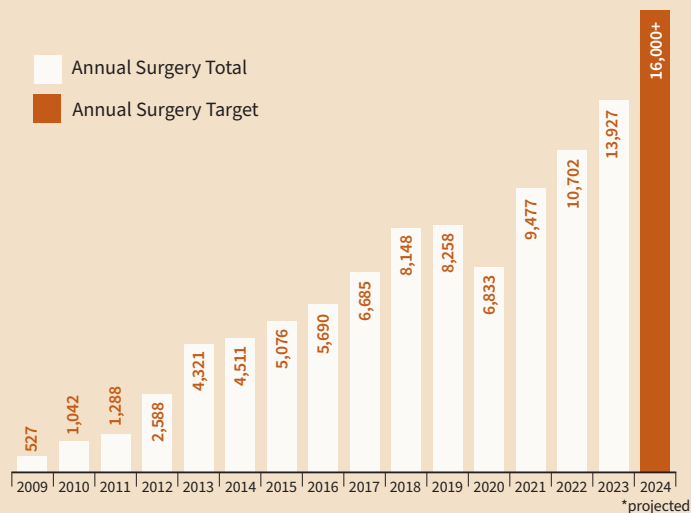


More than 33% of women in sub-Saharan Africa give birth without a trained healthcare provider present.



In most cases, a routine C-section will resolve an obstructed labor. In parts of the world where women cannot access this kind of care, they are at risk of developing a fistula.

What We're Doing



In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic dramatically affected partners' surgical output.

Since 2009, we have supported more than 100,000 surgeries—and we won't stop until every woman with obstetric fistula can access free, timely, high-quality care for this condition. Across our network of partners, the average cost of fistula repair surgery is only \$619.

Mariam from Tanzania

Mariam, a 20-year-old woman from the Province of Mara in Tanzania, went into labor in the early hours of a March morning. After two days of pushing with no progress, she delivered a stillborn baby. It was then that the leaking began. "Whether I sit or stand up, it pours down," said Mariam. Fortunately, thanks to our partners—including fistula advocates who spread awareness of fistula—Mariam did not have to suffer for years before she could access life-changing care. She was treated at Bugando Medical Center in Mwanza, Tanzania. Today, she is dry!



The Global Leader in Fistula Treatment

We provide more life-transforming fistula surgeries than any other organization in the world. Since 2009, we have supported more than 100,000 surgeries by working with more than 140 partners in 35 countries across Africa and Asia. In 2014, we launched a groundbreaking initiative in Kenya—the world’s first holistic, countrywide fistula treatment network. Later, we expanded our Fistula Foundation Treatment Network (FFTN) model to Zambia (2017), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2022), and Tanzania (2023). With each new FFTN, we aim to connect all women in all parts of a country with high-quality care.



You Can Count on Us



Our partners in the field do the work of changing women’s lives. That’s why 85 percent of our revenue goes to support programs in Africa and Asia. Because of our commitment to accountability, we consistently receive the highest rating from every nonprofit sector watchdog group. Fistula Foundation has earned a four-star rating from Charity Navigator every year since 2006. We are recommended by The Life You Can Save, an organization founded by the ethicist Peter Singer, and we were named a 2024 World Changing Ideas Honoree by *Fast Company* within the “Small and Mighty” award category.