



Winter 2017



Welcome to our new newsletter

The last few months have been very busy across all of our projects in Africa and we are delighted to share highlights from Sierra Leone, Malawi, Kenya and Madagascar from 2017.

This year, we treated our oldest ever patient - 97 year old Risper from Kenya. She is a remarkable woman and we are delighted to share her story with you.

To help more women like Risper, we are launching our '12 Days of Christmas' appeal. We would love your support to raise vital funds before the end of the year with 100% of donations going direct to help women and girls in our projects.

Enjoy this update and Thank You for your continued support.



In her words...

"The solar station will help me a lot, it will help me make my own business so I can buy things like soap and provide food and clothes for my family"

Fistula Survivor - Veronika

Record Breaking!



October was a record breaking month at the Aberdeen Women's Centre in Sierra Leone with **282** births in our maternity ward! Enormous credit and thanks go to our wonderful team of midwives and doctors who work tirelessly every day to ensure our patients receive loving, respectful and safe care within Aberdeen Women's Centre. **THANK YOU!**

thank you

Sierra Leone

The devastating mudslide in Freetown in August left many of our patients and staff without their homes or possessions and, tragically, five staff also lost 43 family members between them.

With more than 1000 people killed and around 3000 left homeless, many of them children, the need is huge. At FFF HQ in the UK, we were overwhelmed with the response to our appeal for help, with more than 50,000 items donated from across Scotland which were then sent to Sierra Leone in a 40ft container. The first container has arrived and donations have been distributed to those in need.



Our Program Coordinator, Elo Otobo, visited some of the flood victims to help distribute some emergency supplies.

"The mudslide in Freetown on the 14th of August had devastating effects on families. In many cases, multiple generations were washed away as family compounds were destroyed in the disaster. It was extremely moving and a great honour to meet with some of those affected, listen to their stories and contribute in a small way to their recovery and healing. I am continually moved to see the resilience of Sierra Leone's people despite the number of difficulties they face. They are extremely welcoming and kind people who are truly grateful for donations and aid from overseas."

On a positive note we were delighted to receive a visit from HRH The Princess Royal in April. The Princess Royal commemorated the opening of the upper extension at Aberdeen Women's Centre by unveiling a plaque and visited the fistula and maternity wards as well as the paediatric outpatient clinic.



Risper's story

At 97 years old, Risper is the oldest patient to have received treatment this year.

Risper hails from Muranga county which is about 73 KMs from Nairobi.

Risper had fistula for over 50 years

Risper developed fistula during her third delivery and lost her child too after being in labour for 3 days.

Having lost all her further 7 babies during delivery, her family and the community was not very friendly to her and often referred to her as "the childless woman".

Understandably, Risper was very traumatised by her experience and as time went on, she became withdrawn from her community. The pain she endured is evident even today and Risper says she would rather not talk about the experience.

Today, after visiting FFF, Risper is fully healed and dry. She currently stays with her niece and other family and is well cared for, welcomed and loved in the community.



Malawi

48 patients were treated in our two week fistula 'camp' in October, with the support of UNFPA Malawi. In addition to receiving their free surgeries, a variety of education activities took place including lessons on cooking, sewing, beading, knitting and crocheting.

Two of our team also ran literacy and numeracy classes for all the patients and counselling sessions were available throughout. The 'Taoloka' ceremonies, a celebration of when the patient is going home, were lively and emotional.

Well done to the team who worked so hard!



Kenya

Despite a difficult year in Kenya with doctor and nurses strikes across the country, as well as the disputed elections, nearly 200 women have been helped by our team so far this year.

We are also embarking on a new project for 2018 that will see us have our own dedicated space for a permanent fistula program in Nairobi. The pilot phase will be completed in December with a view to starting the permanent program by the end of January.

Our team are raring to go and working very hard to make it all happen.



Madagascar

More than 200 women and girls have been treated in Madagascar this year thanks to the skill and dedication of the Malagasy team and a rotation of visiting surgeons from our other African projects and beyond.

Patients travel for days to reach our Center and enjoy being pampered while they are with us.

With repairs and maintenance now taking place in the Center until the end of the year, we all look forward to surgeries starting again in 2018.



Shout Gladi Gladi

In October, our UK team held a screening of Shout Gladi Gladi at the Bvlgari Hotel in London. Around 100 guests enjoyed watching the 40min version of the film, followed by a lively and engaging Q&A with Ann Gloag and our Malawi Country Director, Margaret Moyo. Everyone then enjoyed learning more about the charity during a reception and an amazing £8000 was raised to help with FFF's work in Africa.



Special thanks to...



Good Gifts is an amazing organization that provides a refreshing alternative to all those unwanted gifts. Instead of traditional gifts, the buyer visits the Good Gifts website (www.goodgifts.org) and purchases an item for a charitable cause. For FFF, this is generally a bicycle for one of our patient ambassadors in Malawi, just like Lisinje and Emily (pictured). Since January of this year, Good Gifts has donated an amazing £7,800 to FFF.

The **Aminata Maternal Foundation** is an Australian charity dedicated to empowering women in Sierra Leone by focusing on maternal health and the creation of sustainable communities. Following a visit to the Aberdeen Women's Centre last year, it is committed to supporting our Dream Team project - a peer-to-peer female empowerment group providing education and practical support to our teenage patients, in addition to the maternity care they receive at the AWC. So far we have received an incredible £24,000 from the Foundation with more to follow.

NYC marathon

A huge thank you to FFF's very own Development Director Angela McCabe who completed this year's New York Marathon on the 5th of November!

Angela ran the marathon in an impressive 4 hours, 21 minutes and 11 seconds. What an incredible feat! Angela has raised nearly \$2000 for the foundation through her efforts.

If you're interested in completing your own challenge event and raising money for FFF, please contact us at info@freedomfromfistula.org or call 1-646-590-2707



FFF Christmas Campaign

Give the gift of freedom from fistula this Christmas **PLEASE VISIT**

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/freedomfromfistulafoundationusinc/twelvedays>
to donate or see the enclosed pay-in slip for other ways to donate



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