



A Conversation with Freedom From Fistula

Freedom From Fistula and Rotary International.. our
partnership story

*Serving to Change Lives – the difference you make transforming the lives of women and
children in Africa.*



#Rotaryresponds #Peopleofaction





Who we are

Dame Ann Gloag, co-founder of the Stagecoach transport company, set up **Freedom From Fistula** in 2008 to help women and children in Sierra Leone, Malawi and Madagascar. The charity provides free surgeries to heal their fistulas; free maternity care to reduce the prevalence of fistula; an outpatient clinic for children up to 15 years; education, empowerment and income generation projects to help patients reintegrate into society post surgery; sexual and gender based violence medical care, counselling, support and rehabilitation; and training for healthcare professionals to build capacity in healthcare systems in the countries in which the Charity works.



Founder Dame Ann Gloag

In 2020, despite the challenges of a global pandemic, our hard working teams provided essential care for women & children in need.



18,500

Primary Health Care consultations provided to children aged 0-15 in 2020



8855

Immunisations given to protect children aged 0-15 in 2020



4000+

Women provided with family planning and commodities in 2020



3395

Babies safely delivered in 2020



219

Fistula surgeries performed in 2020



22

Sexual and Gender Based Violence survivors provided with counselling & medical support in 2020





Partnership working

Over many years Rotarians around the world have worked in partnership with Freedom From Fistula to offer invaluable support to the charity. GG1411138 provided funding for the 3 year training of 60 nurse midwife technicians in Malawi, GG1525603 funded the purchase of 2 landcruisers kitted out as ambulances which provide a lifeline for the team in Malawi, enabling them to reach patients in the most remote and rural parts of the country and GG1981430 supported us in improving Fistula, Maternity and Child Healthcare in Sierra Leone.

Watch Dame Ann Gloag presenting at Rotary Convention in Toronto in 2018 <https://bit.ly/3m52OKL>



How your support helps women & children in Africa

£2 helps us feed a patient during their stay

£5 helps us provide a consultation at our Children's Clinic

£50 helps us provide literacy, numeracy & vocational lessons

£100 helps us provide a safe birth for mother and baby

£500 helps us provide a fistula surgery and rehabilitation

100% of donations to Freedom From Fistula go directly to the projects. The Gloag Foundation covers all Freedom From Fistula's administration costs.

A PATIENT'S JOURNEY TO FREEDOM



DONATE TODAY

The need

Frightened.... abandoned.... ostracised and suffering... in silence.

These are just a few of the words and phrases used by an estimated 1 million women and girls across Africa to describe their life, or better put, existence, living with an obstetric fistula – a childbirth injury caused by prolonged obstructed labour and lack of access to maternity care. Tragically, the baby usually dies and the mother is left incontinent, often shunned by her family and community and condemned to a life of shame, isolation and despair. The injury can also be caused by violent rape.

Freedom From Fistula (FFF) (www.freedomfromfistula.org.uk) is a UK based charity (SC039493) that runs fistula, maternal health and child health projects in Sierra Leone, Malawi and Madagascar, providing an holistic approach to fistula care and focusing on free treatment, prevention, rehabilitation of patients, as well as the training of medical professionals. Our holistic approach also encompasses a patient rehabilitation, education and empowerment programme (PREP) which comprises counselling, literacy and numeracy classes, arts and crafts classes and small business and income generation classes.

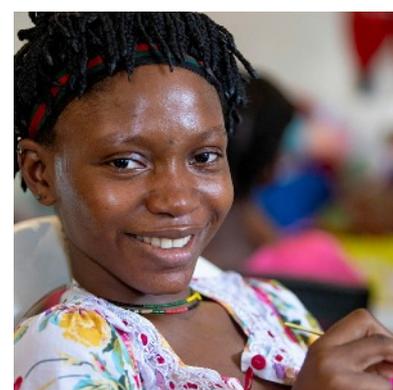
In each of the countries where we work, we are the only full time, dedicated fistula care centre available to patients and are considered Centres of Excellence by the respective Ministries of Health.

The Charity's aims are twofold – firstly, we provide free surgeries to as many women as possible – restoring their dignity and quite literally giving them back their lives.

However, we want to stop obstetric fistulas occurring in the first place and to do this we need to provide a holistic approach that includes free and accessible maternity care; surgeries delivered by skilled and experienced medical staff; family planning advice for men and women; free FGM advocacy; education and vocational skills for fistula patients and free out-patient clinics for children up to 15 years. We also provide training for nurses, midwives and doctors, in turn building capacity in healthcare systems in the countries in which the Charity works.

The women treated range in age from young girls (our youngest patient to date was 5 year old victim of rape) through to women in their 70's and 80's (our oldest patient to date was 93) a great number of whom have suffered from fistula for many years.

'At first, I didn't see myself as a human being since people didn't want to be around me. Now I see healing and it's like life has returned again' Aminata, Sierra Leone



Emily's story

Emily was married at the age of 18 and lived with fistula for 14 years following complications during the birth of her 6th baby.

Emily was devastated until she received a visit from one of our former fistula patient ambassadors. She was brought to our Fistula Care Centre in Malawi where she received treatment. Emily is now FISTULA FREE.

During her stay at the centre Emily attended our educational classes as part of our Patient Rehabilitation Education Programme (PREP). She was especially fond of the numeracy, literacy and business classes and gained knowledge she was able to use to help make her new business enterprises a success.

To ensure our patients have as many opportunities to go back into society and succeed and thrive in life we offer a number of initiatives including Solar Charging Stations, Reusable Sanitary Pad and Patient Ambassador programmes.

Emily received a solar charging station that she can use to charge phones. The profit from her small enterprise has allowed her to purchase pigs which she can sell locally. Emily was also selected to be one of the former patients to make reusable sanitary pads in her home district. She received a manual sewing machine and some start up materials. Emily sells her pads in schools and at womens gatherings. Her income helps support the family and raise them out of poverty, provide funds to educate her children and Emily hopes to save enough to one day build another house for her family.

After Emily was discharged she felt the need to help other woman facing the same problem she had. She started sharing her experience during womens gatherings and has now been trained as a patient ambassador. To date she has brought 11 patients to our centre, all of whom have been cured.



Making Life Worth Living

I never thought I could gain so much from suffering from fistula. In a way this has been a blessing to me because I have a few businesses that the Fistula Care Centre made possible for me. I am grateful to Freedom From Fistula for all the things they have done for me and for curing me. I am fistula free and I have peace in my life. Please continue the good work you are doing, you have transformed my life. God bless you always

Emily

SHOUT

GLADI GLADI

Oscar® winner Meryl Streep narrates Fistula Documentary

‘SHOUT GLADI GLADI’, documents the efforts of Freedom From Fistula as we work with some of the world’s most destitute women. The feature-length film, the first documentary to be narrated by Meryl Streep, focuses on women’s health in Africa with a particular emphasis on fistula - a common, debilitating condition which renders women and girls injured after childbirth. Watch a 10 minute version of the film here <https://bit.ly/2ThRRc8>



Contact us for more information on partnership working, support in raising funds, to make a donation or to organise a zoom presentation to your Club or District

Contact Sue Hope, or Rotarian Jo Pawley (PDG D1020) by email:

Email Sue sue@thehopeconsultancy.org.uk

Email Jo jo.pawley@talktalk.net

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TODAY**

www.justgiving.com/campaign/rotaryinpartnershipwithfreedomfromfistula

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