



# Transformations

News from Fistula Foundation, Fall 2013

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## Campaign 2014

### Help More Women Get Life-Changing Treatment

December is the most important month of the year for Fistula Foundation. Nearly half of our annual revenue for 2014 will be earned in the final two months of this calendar year – which means that our ability to provide treatment to women who are suffering from obstetric fistula next year is tied directly to the amount of funding we can bring in the door through December 31, 2013. Our goal is to grow the number of women we treat in 2014 by at least 30 percent. But we can't do that without you.

You have shown your commitment to transforming the lives of women with obstetric fistula in the past, and we are counting on you once again to help us deliver treatment and services to women who are suffering.

With a team of only five full-time staff, we work extremely efficiently to channel the funds you entrust to our care into the field to treat more women. We do this so effectively that we are consistently recognized and rated highly by the top charity evaluators in the industry: Better Business Bureau, Charity Navigator, Charity Watch, and Consumers Digest. We're also top-rated by GreatNonprofits, a charity review site that includes evaluations directly from supporters like you.

*2013 isn't over yet. Before December 31, can we count on you to make your charitable donation to Fistula Foundation?*



We know that for every single woman we treat, there are 50 more like her who are still suffering and still waiting for surgery. When you make a financial contribution before December 31, you have the power to help change lives. Women are waiting. Can they count on your support?



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## Country Spotlight: Angola

The Centro Evangelico de Medico do Lubango (CEML) is a general hospital that serves the large region of southern Angola; patients come from 250 km away and even from neighboring



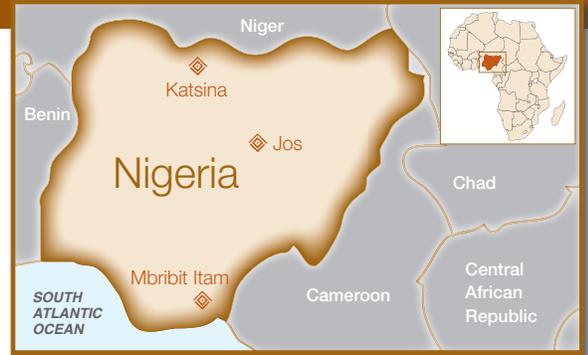
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# One Woman's Story

## Jos, Nigeria

Irekanmi is from Nigeria, where she was one of nine children. At fifteen, her father died and she had to live with her grandfather. A few months after she began living with her grandfather, he too died, and she had no choice but to enter into marriage at the appearance of the first suitor.



She became pregnant but did not go to the hospital because she was not aware that she needed to receive prenatal care. So, she labored at home for five days before finally delivering a stillborn fetus, which was soon followed by a continuous leakage of urine. Irekanmi lived with her incontinence for five years.

Initially her husband was caring and took her to a local hospital where three attempts to repair her obstetric fistula failed. It was then that her sister-in-law and mother-in-law began to mock her. They insisted that her husband should divorce her. Eventually she could bear the shame no more and she had to leave her husband and flee to her mother's house.

Irekanmi underwent two additional unsuccessful surgeries and had nearly given up hope of ever being healed. But fortunately her mother, who had saved money for a very long time, was able to bring Irekanmi to the site of a Fistula Foundation partner, the Evangel Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (EVVF) Center in Jos, Nigeria. Here, she finally received a successful surgery. After eight surgeries, Irekanmi was finally healed and relieved of her incontinence.

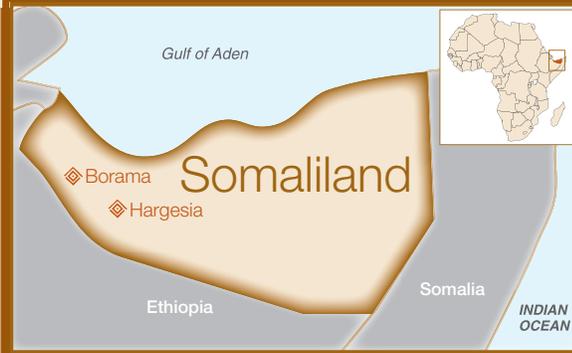
After her recovery at EVVF, she immediately enrolled in the center's rehabilitation training, through which she hopes to learn new skills that will allow her to support herself and live a better life when she returns to her village.

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK



### Somaliland

Donations to Fistula Foundation supported a visit by fistula and pelvic floor surgeon Dr. Lauri Romanzi to the Edna Adan University Hospital in Hargeisa and the Boroma National Fistula Hospital in Boroma. During her visit, 49 women at the two hospitals were treated for obstetric fistula and other incontinence problems. Support was also provided for fistula surgery training for five doctors.



In the next 30-40 years, \$30 trillion in assets will change hands in North America as Baby Boomers retire.

**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.

# 8 Years in a Row: 4 Stars from Charity Navigator



## Fistula Foundation Recognized in Top 1%

For the eighth consecutive year in a row, Fistula Foundation is proud to receive a four star rating – the highest available – from Charity Navigator, the United States' premiere charity evaluator. This ranking puts Fistula Foundation in the top 1% of all charities rated.

Last year Charity Navigator received almost five million visits by donors who rely on the site's unbiased analysis of more than 6,000 American charities.

In a letter to Fistula Foundation, Ken Berger, President and CEO of Charity Navigator, wrote, "Fistula Foundation outperforms most other charities in America. This 'exceptional' designation from Charity Navigator differentiates Fistula Foundation from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust."

Charity Navigator is one of the largest and most influential charity raters in the United States. Their mission is to guide intelligent giving by examining tens of thousands of non-profit financial documents and assessing their performance. Ratings are given based on the charity's financial health and accountability or transparency.

"Fistula Foundation is only able to do the work we do because of the donations our supporters entrust to our care," said Kate Grant, CEO of Fistula Foundation, "We're thrilled to be able to demonstrate, once again, that we are responsibly using these funds to treat more women who suffer from obstetric fistula."

*"Only 1% of the charities we rate have received at least eight consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Fistula Foundation outperforms most other charities in America."*

*~ Charity Navigator*

**Thanks to your thoughtful five-star reviews, Fistula Foundation is now a Top-Rated Charity on GreatNonprofits!**



*I have been a donor for several years to this most worthy foundation. I know without a doubt that I am helping change women's lives when I contribute. This organization is highly rated and I know that my dollars are helping unfortunate women, not going to unnecessary administration costs. The handwritten thank you notes I receive for each donation are an added bonus!*

*~Shelley10*

*Fistula Foundation provides ordinary donors with a uniquely affordable opportunity to make a transformative difference in one woman's life. They communicate exactly what they will do with your contribution and then follow through. They offer the chance to demonstrate your feminist values with concrete action.*

*~margaretingordon*

*One of the most worthwhile charities in the world today. The money donated goes to help women, not to push paper. I will continue to support The Fistula Foundation for the rest of my life.*

*~htimage*



## U.S. Federal Employees

The Office of Personnel Management has extended the CFC allocation deadline to Jan. 15, 2014. During this allocation season, we hope you'll consider sending your 2014 Combined Federal Campaign contributions to Fistula Foundation via CFC#11521.

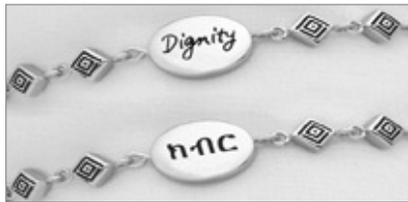
## Dignity Earrings: \$65

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 match 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 our 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.

## 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 to wear on special occasions and casually elegant when paired with your favorite jeans.



## 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!



## Assorted Note Cards: \$15

These blank note cards, provided in exchange for your donation of \$15 or more, feature women who have been treated by Fistula Foundation



partners. Each package of note cards includes eight blank 5x7" cards in four different designs, packaged in a gift box. Now, every time you send a card to a friend or loved one, you'll be spreading the joy that women feel after receiving successful surgery.



life forever, and share that experience with someone special in your life.  
Send a personalized card or gift to you or another person for you.

To make your donation, complete and return the enclosed form by mail. Donate online anytime at [www.fistulafoundation.org](http://www.fistulafoundation.org). Or, simply give us a call toll free at 866-756-3700 (+1 408-249-9596 outside the US) Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time.

To ensure the best possibility of your gift arriving by December 24 (continental U.S. only), please place your order no later than December 17.

## Beads of Hope: \$20 - \$30

Beads of Hope necklaces and bracelets are handmade by women living in Uganda. Proceeds from these items will be used to heal women suffering from obstetric fistula, funding treatment at Fistula Foundation grantee partner sites throughout Africa and Asia. Each item is shipped in a colorful, handmade bag sewn by women in the Democratic Republic of Congo who are recovering from or waiting for fistula or prolapse repair surgery, provided by Fistula Foundation partner HEAL Africa.



- Beads of Hope Bracelet, \$20
- Beads of Hope Necklace, \$30 (approximately 24.5")



*This Holiday Season, change one woman's life forever by presenting a friend or loved one with a Love-A-Sister tribute gift, which helps pay for 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.



## Holiday Tribute Card : \$10

To thank you for your donation of \$10 or more, we will mail a customized Holiday Tribute Card to you or to someone special in your life. Your Holiday Tribute Card can be personalized to feature the handwritten name of your honoree and your name as well – a thoughtful added personal touch!





## Supporter Spotlight: 8th Graders in Costa Rica Help Treat Fistula

Over the last two years, students in the 8th grade class at Lincoln School in Barrio El Socorro, San Miguel de Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica, have raised nearly \$10,000 toward Fistula Foundation's efforts to treat women who are suffering from obstetric fistula.

Inspired by a teacher who has a passion for current affairs, the students have been committed to helping heal women with obstetric fistula. They have organized various fundraising activities including bake sales, screenings of the film "A Walk to Beautiful," and have held jeans days – a popular activity at their school where uniforms are otherwise required.

Upon sending the class donation, the supervising teacher wrote, "One of my students put it best when he said, 'These women are amongst the most courageous and brave in the world. It is truly the poor and destitute who are strong. They are my heroes.'"

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK



### Afghanistan

Over the last year, Fistula Foundation's support of an OBGYN fellowship at the CURE International Hospital in Kabul graduated two doctors in the past six months and continued the advanced training of four GYN surgeons and five female doctors. They report treating over 80 women and are well on their way to reaching their goal of 150 women treated by the end of December.





## Dr. Sohier Elneil Named as New Foundation Board Chair

As the final board meeting of 2013 came to a close last month, Fistula Foundation thanked Board Chair Kassahun Kebede for his eight years of leadership, and welcomed Dr. Sohier Elneil into the Board Chair role. Dr. Elneil has big shoes to fill, but her

extensive medical background, global reputation as a leader in the treatment of obstetric fistula and her engaging personal style will make her a strong chairperson.

Dr. Elneil currently serves as a consultant in urogynaecology and uroneurology at the University College London Hospital and the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. Her leadership in the fistula community extends to various committees including the International Continence Society, where she serves as chair, and the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), for which she authored and edited the organization’s – and world’s – first Global Competency-Based Training Manual. The manual is a groundbreaking tool that is revolutionizing the fistula treatment landscape by standardizing fistula surgeon training and ensuring a high quality of patient care.

Dr. Elneil grew up in Africa, where she became passionate about women’s health at a young age. After a surgical internship in Ethiopia where she treated patients who suffered from vesico-vaginal fistulas and female genital cutting, Dr. Elneil was inspired to dedicate her life to the treatment of women’s reproductive health issues.

“I was amazed that somebody can live [with fistula] for so many years and lose everything in their life, yet it took forty minutes to put them back together again,” said Dr. Elneil, adding, “I had to be involved. Being from Africa myself, I felt it was my duty.”

Dr. Elneil realizes that the problem of obstetric fistula cannot be solved by individuals. By being a part of committees and organizations, Dr. Elneil hopes she can contribute to the international effort to end the suffering caused by obstetric fistula.

“Fistula Foundation plays an important role on the global scale,” said Dr. Elneil, “I’m proud to be part of such an organization and I hope to help move the organization forward in a positive way.”

### Help give a woman a new life.

Fistula Foundation is dedicated to ending the suffering caused by the childbirth injury of obstetric fistula, because we believe no woman should endure a life of misery and isolation simply for trying to bring a child into the world.



## Fistula Foundation Board Of Directors

### CHAIR

Kassahun Kebede

### DIRECTORS

France Donnay, MD

Sohier Elneil, MD

Kate Grant (ex-officio)

Sarah Omega Kidangasi

Stephen Saunders, Esq.

Robert Tessler, Esq.

Linda Tripp

Teri Whitcraft

Larry William, MD

Susan Wilson

## We’re Helping Women In:

Afghanistan

Angola

Bangladesh

Chad

Congo

Ethiopia

Guinea

Kenya

Nepal

Niger

Nigeria

Pakistan

Senegal

Somalia

Somaliland

Sudan

Tanzania

Uganda

Zambia

## Country Spotlight: Angola...continued from page 1

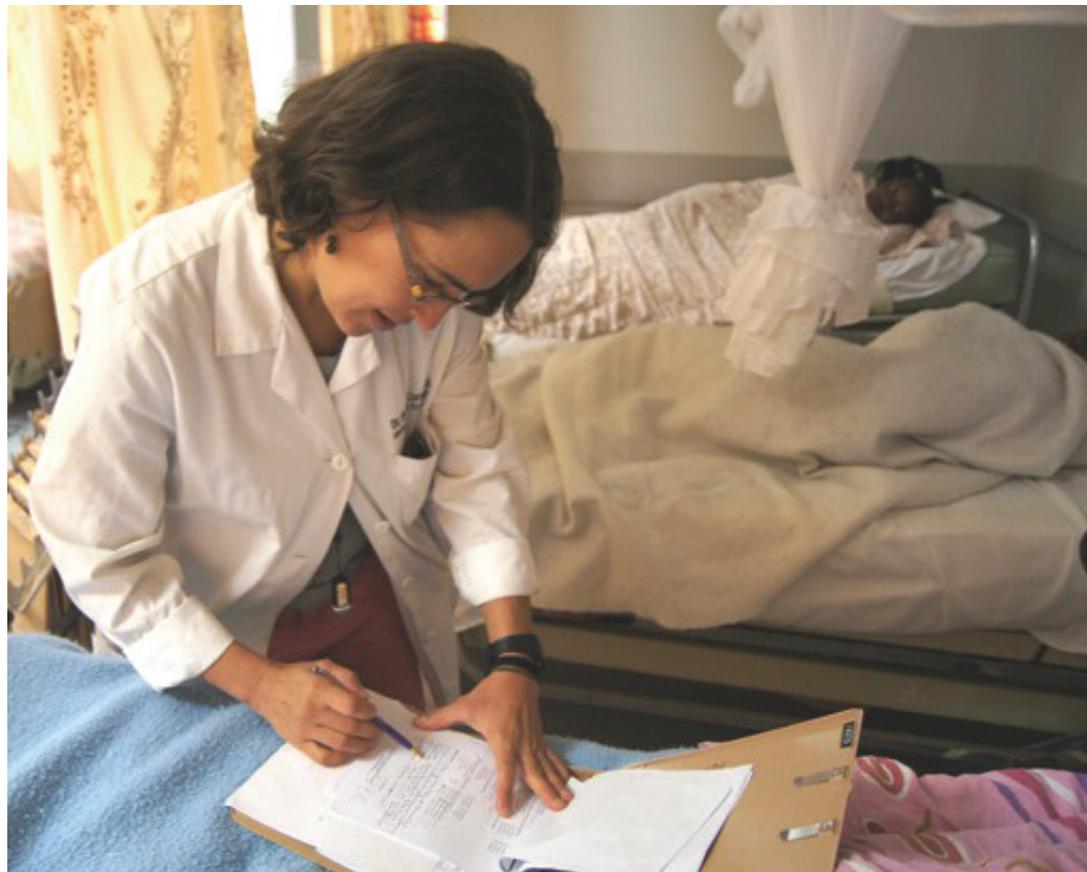
Namibia to receive treatment. Angola has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world with 1 in 29 women dying in childbirth and less than half of births attended by a health care professional. All of these conditions make CEML a critical fistula care center.

In an effort to reduce the prevalence of fistula, CEML has partnered with Mission Aviation Fellowship to establish remote rural clinics that are connected to the central hospital via air transport and treat people who otherwise would have no access to health care. This outreach is critical for fistula treatment since most of the women suffering from obstetric fistula live in rural areas and have no knowledge of the nature of their condition or of the existence of a surgical cure. As word spreads through the outreach program of CEML, more and more women are learning about the availability of fistula surgeries in Lubango and are coming to the hospital for treatment. But for every woman who is treated at CEML, there are hundreds more who continue to suffer in isolation in Angola.

Our hero at CEML is Dr. Stephen Foster, who built the hospital in 2006 and has expanded his facility, with help from the Fistula Foundation and your donations, to include fistula repairs for 85 women annually since 2009. Dr. Foster was born to a missionary family in Angola and carries on the tradition of missionary surgery to the impoverished with 35 years of experience in fistula repair. He is committed not only to treating as many women as possible, but also to building the capacity for his fellow surgeons at CEML to repair fistulas, both simple and complex.

In April 2013, we helped to further Dr. Foster's goal by sending Dr. Steve Arrowsmith, a renowned fistula surgeon and trainer, to Lubango to provide additional training to Dr. Foster's staff. In just two weeks, they were able to repair 25 fistulas while simultaneously training new surgeons in the complex art of fistula surgery. CEML is one of our longest-standing partnerships and we are proud to fund their fistula activities, which include outreach to identify fistula patients, transportation for women with fistula, medical costs of surgery, and nutritional support during the patient's stay at CEML.

CEML is a busy hospital that treats all types of medical emergencies and surgery, and the fistula program is entirely funded through your donations. Without the support of Fistula Foundation, CEML would not have the ability to provide surgeries to women with fistula who cannot afford treatment. According to the Global Fistula Map, CEML is one of two fistula surgery providers in Angola and the only one in southern Angola. Over the past five years, Fistula Foundation has donated \$450,000 to the fistula program at CEML to fund over 400 surgeries, provide transportation and food for fistula patients, and conduct outreach into rural Angola to identify new patients who may have been outcasts for many years because of their condition. With your help, we will continue to support the amazing work of Dr. Foster and his colleagues, who provide much needed fistula care for women in Angola.



**Dr. Priscilla Cummings makes patient rounds at CEML**