

DINING FOR WOMEN
Interim Progress Report 1 from Fistula Foundation
January, 2017

Your Impact

Fistula Foundation is deeply thankful to **Dining for Women** for choosing us as a charity worthy of your support since 2005. We are humbled and grateful to have been selected by Dining for Women as a grant recipient of your October, 2015-17 Sustained Program, providing \$60,000 to be distributed over a three year period, and helping fund fistula surgery for the women of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea and South Sudan.

You are helping change lives in Democratic Republic of Congo

According to this grant’s agreement guidelines, your grant payment of \$20,000, received January 22, 2016 helped change lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo through our fistula treatment project with our partner HEAL Africa which has recently concluded. The following is a final report on the project.

HEAL Africa has been performing fistula repair since 2003. Their main facility is in the large town of Goma in Eastern DRC, but much of their recent work has focused on surrounding rural areas in the region. This includes sending outreach teams into rural areas to raise awareness, identify new patients in need of treatment, and facilitate their transport to Goma. In some cases, mobile surgical teams are dispatched to community medical centers in an effort to make care more accessible to rural populations. These mobile surgical teams also train local surgeons in safe delivery procedures, Caesarian sections and emergency obstetric care. As a result of our last grant, 101 women received free surgery – an especially significant accomplishment in light of the challenges faced in the region (extremely poor road conditions, presence of armed militias, etc.). In addition to providing free fistula surgeries and pre-and post-operative care, HEAL Africa teaches women how to sew, read, write and weave through HEALing Arts, a skill-building program for women who are awaiting or recovering from fistula surgery. As a reflection of our high regard for this dedicated fistula treatment partner, a portion of our funding covers their running costs. These funds keep their operations running smoothly to ensure that these surgeries are carried out and HEAL Africa remains a high-performing fistula treatment partner.

Number of fistula surgeries
your grant helped make
possible here: **120**

Project Budget

Outreach.....	\$500
Fistula surgeries.....	\$50,400
Supplies and equipment.....	\$12,080
Social reintegration / rehabilitation.....	\$16,600
Running costs	\$15,317
Total project budget.....	\$95,856
Actual spending	\$94,897

As you know, Fistula Foundation thinks about the work we do as helping “one woman at a time.” Following is the story of one woman whose life was changed through last year’s support of this partner. Gifts to Fistula Foundation directly helped make her fistula surgery and healing possible, and helped this hospital team continue getting the job done, and done well.

One Woman's Story: Balela* from Democratic Republic of Congo

Balela* is from Lisala in northwestern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She is 45 years old. She developed an obstetric fistula 18 years ago, while giving birth to her first child. She shares:

My disease started in 1998 when the AFDL was fighting against the Zaire Armed Forces to chase Mobutu. During the war, my family and I fled till we hid ourselves in the bush, while I was pregnant. My pregnancy was progressing normally.

When time to give birth came, I went into labor and gave birth in the bush, where there was no health center, nor doctors or nurses. I was assisted by midwives in that bush. I was told that my baby was big and he could not be delivered normally and the midwives forced until the baby came out. ... unfortunately I gave birth to a stillborn

... since that very moment I started leaking urine and my bed was always wet at all times.

In the months and years that followed, Balela's family helped her seek treatment, but it was unsuccessful. After enduring five failed surgeries by unskilled health workers, she says, "With all these surgeries, I lost all my hope." Her husband left and remarried; she now lives with her parents. She found comfort in her mother, who helped her get a job. For the last 12 years, despite dealing with the challenges of her chronic health condition, Balela has been able to support herself working as a schoolteacher.

Last summer, she heard a radio ad that changed her life—skilled physicians from HEAL Africa in Goma would be coming to Lisala to provide free fistula repair surgeries.

Today, thanks to your support, Belela is finally able to sleep in a dry bed. She can go about her daily activities without worrying about the constant incontinence that plagued her for 18 years. "I am forgetting the terrible trouble I went through," Balela says, adding:

I really got an exceeding joy and I will go all over to testify to my family and my community the way I recovered my health and that through this care I experienced God's hand.

For me the greatest feeling of contentment is that God will bless all the partners of this HEAL Africa hospital and all its partners.

Thanks indeed!

* - For privacy reasons, this fistula patient's name has been changed.



A photo of fistula patient Balela is not available. Shown at left is a photo of one fistula patient recently treated during this fistula treatment project.

Credit for this photos is courtesy of HEAL Africa. Fistula patients have provided a signed release that their stories and photos may be used for all Fistula Foundation promotional purposes, including information provided to Dining for Women.

You are helping change lives in Guinea

According to this grant's agreement guidelines, your grant payment of \$20,000, received November 22, 2016 is helping change lives in Guinea through our fistula treatment project with our partner **Women and Health Alliance-International (WAHA)**. Fistula Foundation receives biannual reports from our fistula treatment partners. And since this project has very recently begun, we intend to provide an update on its

progress in our next grant report to Dining for Women. Following is a brief overview of the project and one fistula patient's story.

Through our partner WAHA, we are funding provision and expansion of high-quality fistula care in Guinea by supporting the National University Hospital Ignace Deen in the capital city of Conakry. Support from Fistula Foundation has allowed the hospital to renovate the urology and fistula ward and purchase critical medical supplies and equipment. An ongoing training program has been established for surgeons at the hospital, allowing them to operate on more complex cases of fistula on a routine basis. In 2015, 75 new surgeries and 3 fistula training visits were conducted. Another important component of support from Fistula Foundation is outreach. The hospital is expanding its community mobilization and outreach campaigns with the goal of reaching more women and informing them that free treatment is available. They also engage in dialogue with communities to address the social stigma attached to fistula and provide accurate information in an effort to raise awareness and establish social support networks for fistula patients before and after surgery.

Number of fistula surgeries
your grant will help make
possible here: **200**

Project Budget

Outreach.....	\$9,600
Fistula surgeries.....	\$101,000
Supplies and equipment.....	\$5,000
Social reintegration / rehabilitation.....	\$14,000
Transportation for fistula patients.....	\$20,000
Total.....	\$149,600

One Woman's Story: Fanta* from Guinea



Fanta is from Lansanaya Barrage. When it came time to deliver her baby at home, she experienced prolonged, obstructed labor. The doctor from her local health clinic was contacted to come help. She was then referred to her local hospital. Caesarean surgery was performed. Her baby did not survive. And Fanta developed obstetric fistula. She says that urine flowed uncontrollably out of her body. She endured this injury for two years. Successful fistula surgery was performed on Fanta by Dr. Guirassy at the National University Hospital Ignace Deen. Her first surgery failed because her fistula was large. The second surgery was a success. And Fanta says that she is no longer suffering from the uncontrollable leaking of

urine.

** - For privacy reasons, this fistula patient's name has been changed.*

Credit for this photo is courtesy of Women and Health Alliance International. Fistula patients have provided a signed release that their stories and photos may be used for all Fistula Foundation promotional purposes, including information provided to Dining for Women.