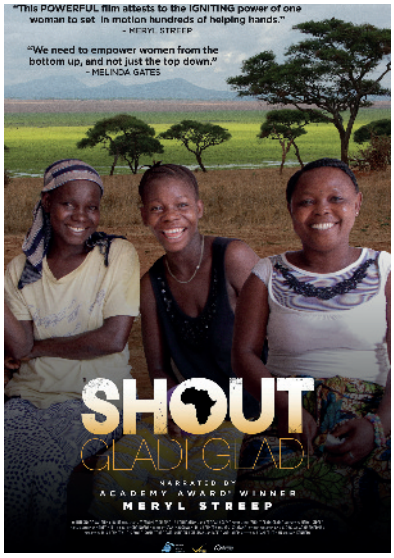
FREEDOM from FISTULA Foundation

Making life worth living

SEPTEMBER 2015

> Today an estimated 2 million women in Africa are suffering from obstetric fistula caused by obstructed childbirth

SHOUT GLADI GLADI



Watch the trailer

https://youtu.be/RaC8DLVUpBA

Shout Gladi Gladi - World Premiere of our film in New York

Narrated by Meryl Streep

On October 2nd, Shout Gladi Gladi, a documentary featuring the work of the Freedom From Fistula Foundation will be released in the USA. Narrated by Academy Award® winning actress Meryl Streep, Shout Gladi Gladi celebrates the extraordinary people who rescue African women and girls from obstetric fistula.

Directed by **Adam Friedman** and **Iain Kennedy**, and filmed in Malawi and Sierra Leone, the film spotlights the work of Ann Gloag, philanthropist and former nurse, and presents the patients as they tell moving stories of their struggles and triumphs. Everything culminates with the exuberant Gladi Gladi ceremony, a service of thanksgiving featuring much singing and dancing, that marks the day the women and girls return home to their families and communities, cured.

> "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."
>
> - BISHOP DESMOND TUTU

@ShoutGladi /ShoutGladiGladiFilm SHOUT GLADI GLADI www.shoutgladigladi.com

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Registered Charity No SCO39493

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Spotlight on Sierra Leone

Mum with newborn twins

Antenatal Clinic

Antenatal Clinic

Antenatal Clinic

Our amazing staff

It's been more than 15 months since the Ebola crisis hit Sierra Leone and thousands of men, women and children have lost their lives. The country's already weak healthcare system has been totally decimated and there is now a critical shortage of doctors throughout the country.

In May 2014 we had to make the decision to suspend our fistula service at our Aberdeen Women's Centre (AWC) in Freetown. We had to take this measure to protect our staff and other patients from potentially contracting the virus, due to the high percentage of patients that travel to our fistula clinic from rural areas of Sierra Leone and Guinea.

However, throughout this extremely difficult period, Aberdeen Women's Centre has continued to provide a high standard of maternity care, thanks to the hard work, compassion and dedication of our local team. More than 30 babies a week are currently being delivered at AWC and we have managed to continue our children's clinic which benefits the local community around the centre.

We are extremely proud of our AWC family, led by Dr Jeredine George, our lead doctor, and Augustine Kosia, our Centre Manager. They have excelled in the most challenging of circumstances and we hope to be able to visit them again soon.

With only a few confirmed Ebola cases in Sierra Leone, we are now planning to restart all our services before the end of 2015.

Malawi

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Our presence continues to grow in Malawi. We have the ability to treat up to 400 women and girls every year at our stand alone 35 bed unit in the grounds of Bwaila Hospital in Lilongwe. In addition, the success of our Ambassador programme has ensured that more women and girls suffering from obstetric fistula are aware of the Freedom From Fistula Foundation and know how to access our help.

On 27th March 2015 we organised a patient ambassador workshop at our Fistula Care Centre. The purpose of the workshop was to teach former fistula patients about obstetric fistula advocacy in order that they could educate their communities back home about the causes, prevention, and treatment of fistula and where treatment can be obtained. 20 former patients were selected to attend the work shop.

Since the launch of this project we have recruited 40 patient ambassadors and as at the end of August, more than 70 patients have been brought to the Centre for treatment by the Ambassadors and former patients.

Our first male ambassador...

Enock Phiri is a 27 year old single man who comes from the Dowa district of Malawi. Enock learned more about fistula after he brought his sister to the Centre. The staff from the Centre helped him to have a better understanding of obstetric fistula. Since his return to his community he has managed to bring 8 patients to the Centre. Word has spread throughout out his community about him being an advocate for fistula and the people in his community get in touch with him for information and advice about how to access treatment.

Women like Elstina...

Elstina is a 49 year old farmer who until recently had lived with an obstetric fistula for an incredible 22 years. Here is her story.

During her second pregnancy, Elstina gave birth to a still born baby and as a result developed a fistula. After suffering in agony and silence for over two decades, she finally found the courage to make her way to our Fistula Care Centre in Lilongwe, Malawi in June 2015, for treatment. We're thrilled to report that after a successful operation and recovery, Elstina is now free from fistula.

After surgery Elstina participated in our **PREP** programme (Patient Rehabilitation and Education Programme). She attended classes in literacy and numeracy and was successful in meeting the criteria for our **Bboxx** initiative. This innovative income-generation project utilises a portable solar-powered battery unit called a **Bboxx**. Once charged, the **Bboxx** can be used to power a variety of accessories. The main income-generation source is mobile phone charging. Elstina has now started her own phone charging business which has made her feel independent and empowered.

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Malawi

Crucial for the future, is the continued development of a sustainable and accessible maternity care system in Malawi.

Rotary Clubs across Scotland offer invaluable support to the The Freedom From Fistula Foundation. The three Scottish Districts came together to secure funding for the first ever Scottish multi-district Global Grant of **$200,000** towards the training of Nurse Midwife Technicians in Malawi.

We are delighted to advise that the first 20 students (14 ladies and 6 men) commenced their intensive three year training course at Ekwendeni College in May 2015. The Course comprises two years of general nursing followed by one year of midwifery training. All students had to sign a Government bond upon starting the course to confirm they would stay in Malawi to practice after the end of their training for a minimum of five years, thus ensuring that the numbers of skilled and experienced healthcare professionals, delivering high quality maternity care, is increasing. We are currently in the early stages of recruiting the next class of students who are expected to commence their training in October 2015.

Congratulations to the Community Midwife Technicians who recently graduated from St Luke's college, who will now put their skills and experience to use helping women and girls in the community.

Thanks to Charities Advisory Trust and Good Gifts for their donation enabling us to purchase bikes and packs for the new graduates.

New beginnings in Madagascar

Plans are underway to open a fistula care centre in Madagascar in Spring 2016, which will mark our fourth fistula country project.

The decision to open in Madagascar came through Ann Gloag's close association with Mercy Ships, which has been on outreach in Madagascar since April 2014. Through Mercy Ships, we learned of the 'huge fistula issue' in the country and the FFFF senior management team have since visited the country to witness the problem first hand.

An estimated **50,000 women and girls** are suffering from fistula in Madagascar, with thousands more developing the condition each year. Mercy Ships is providing free fistula care while their ship, the Africa Mercy, is in country from August 2015 to May 2015 and FFFF is supporting that programme, prior to starting a permanent service one the ship leaves.

Malawi Fistula Patient Feeding Programme

This programme feeds and improves the nutritional status of our patients before surgery, enhancing their recovery and rehabilitation.

Our Fistula Care Centre in Malawi has the capacity to treat more than **400** women and girls every year. These women are suffering from obstetric fistula caused by prolonged, obstructed childbirth and lack of access to maternity care. Left incontinent, they are often condemned to a life of solitude and despair. Freedom from Fistula Foundation helps these women by providing free surgeries to heal their fistulas. You can help these women and girls become healthy again.

Our Patient Feeding Programme is a vital component of our work, providing quality nutritious meals at a cost of £250 per week – that's approximately **£1 per patient per day**. Nutrition is an essential part of recovery and healing.

Show your support for these women and girls in Malawi by donating online **https://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/freedomfromfistula/malawi-patient-feeding-programme** and sending the page to your friends to encourage them to do the same!

Or donate by text: **Text FFGT15 £5** to **70070** to donate **£5**.

We hope to raise **£13000** through this campaign for our Fistula Care Centre.

#GIVING TUESDAY

#GivingTuesday (1st Dec 2015) is a global day of giving. After the sales of Black Friday and the online shopping boom on Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday is an opportunity to come together to show the world why it's good to give. Whether it's making a donation, volunteering your time or just spreading the word at the start of the Christmas shopping season, #GivingTuesday is a call to action for everyone who wants to give something back.

This #GivingTuesday we'll be highlighting the Malawi Fistula Patient Feeding Programme

KNH CAMP

In June, over 1500 women from villages and towns across the whole of Kenya were screened for obstetric fistula at the 10th annual free medical camp at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH). 200 women were diagnosed and received free fistula repair surgeries. Thanks go to our partners – Flying Doctors Service of Africa and Royal Media Kenya - who helped us to deliver the camp.

Among the recipients of life-transforming operations were Rose N., a 31 year-old single mother, who had been born with a congenital fistula; Irene, a 23 year-old woman, who had lived in almost total isolation since developing fistula ten years ago; Beatrice, an 81 year-old mother, who developed a fistula during the birth of her third child over 40 years ago; and Rose M., an 87 year-old woman, who had lived with fistula for over 5 decades.

Our work at KNH is on-going throughout the year. 47 year-old Hannah missed out on the opportunity to attend the annual camp but was able to get to KNH a couple of weeks later. She was screened, diagnosed, and has already benefited from a successful repair surgery.

ST MARY'S

St Mary's Mission Hospital (SMMH) is our latest project site in Kenya. We have entered into a partnership agreement to provide medical and surgical services to improve the prospects of women suffering from obstetric fistula.

In our first six months we have transformed the lives of sixty women, aged from 20 to 80.

We are also training various staff in the screening and classification of fistula, holistic pre- and post-operative care of patients, theatre nursing, and surgical techniques, which will enable us to expand and develop our fistula services in Kenya using local staff.

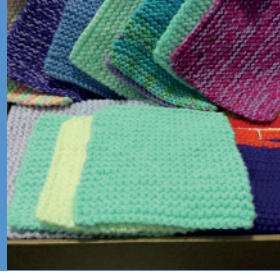
CASE STUDY

In her mid-20s, Medza struggled with a difficult labour whilst giving birth to her third child. Her baby did not survive and she developed incontinence. She did not understand what had happened and began to withdraw from her surroundings. As the 'third wife' she became isolated within her own household.

Over 25 years later, Medza heard about FfFF from her sister-in-law, Luvuno. Luvuno had been healed from fistula at St Mary's Hospital in Nairobi and she encouraged Medza to travel from Malindi to seek treatment. Medza was admitted on 8th July and received a fistula repair surgery.

Medza is no longer withdrawn and downcast. She is optimistic for her future and is pleased that after all those year of shame and stigma she is going to be dry. She is looking forward to sleeping on a mattress rather than a bed of sacks.

Your donations...



Having sent containers off to Kenya and Malawi, we now are able to receive donations of knitting again. We are limited with storage space and currently are unable to accept any items not on the wish list below. If you have other items to donate, please consider www.knitforpeace.org.uk or www.blythswood.org. **If you are making a donation please ONLY send the following:-**

- **Knitted Squares (5" / 6" / 8")**
- **Knitted Baby Cardigans / Matinee Jackets Prem Baby to 0-3 months sizes ONLY**
- **Adults T-Shirts**
- **New Adult Fleeces / Jumpers**
- **New Crocs / Shoes**

Thank-you

We remain indebted to everybody who supports us in our work - helping to make life worth living for thousands of women and girls across Africa. Every donation of money, goods and time really does make a huge difference to the support we can offer –

Special thanks go to:

Smalls for All for underwear; Knitters across the UK for squares & clothes; Rotary Clubs across Scotland for their ongoing support; and the Soroptimists of Dundee, Perth, and Falkirk for their support.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you are inspired by what you have read and would like to get involved in supporting us, there are many ways in which you help:

- **Invite us to speak at school, at work or at a community group you are involved in**
- **Make a donation and help towards the cost of a life-changing fistula operation**
- **Run, cycle, walk and raise funds in sponsorship (see our challenge page). 100% of our administration costs are covered by our Founder so you can be sure that every £1 raised goes directly to funding surgeries to help women in Africa**
- **Organise your own fundraiser (checkout our fundraising tool box for ideas!). We can provide literature and help you promote it**
- **Introduce us to corporate sponsors who may be interested in our work**
- **Follow us on Facebook and Twitter**

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