SPECIAL REPORT:
TERREWODE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
GRAND OPENING - AUGUST 16, 2019

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TERREWODE Women's Community Hospital Opens its Doors

Worldwide Fistula Fund (WFF) is exceptionally pleased to announce that the TERREWODE Women’s Community Hospital (TWCH) is on the verge of opening its doors to the community. The specialized women’s hospital, for treatment and management of fistula and other childbirth related injuries, is located in Eastern Uganda in the city of Soroti. This women’s hospital is the first in East Africa and the third in Africa. Although services began in mid-2019, the hospital is to be officially opened by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on August 16, 2019.

The hospital represents WFF’s philosophy clearly and concisely: to partner with local leaders and organizations in low-resource countries to increase capacity to address women’s health care needs in their countries.

On the Cover: Alice Emasu leads a March 2019 construction tour for Soja Orlowski (WFF Executive Director), Mary Rose Keller and Dr. Tracy Spitznagle (WFF Board Members).

Fistula Explained

Obstetric fistula is a complex injury that requires special care. The physical and psychological consequences of this childbirth injury are debilitating and heartbreaking. During obstructed labor, a hole develops between the birth canal and the bladder or rectum leaving survivors leaking urine or feces – and sometimes both – through their vagina. If that wasn’t devastating enough, these women almost always endure the loss of their baby, social isolation, stigma and loss of dignity.

The Holistic Approach

WFF has truly found an exceptional partner in Alice Emasu and TERREWODE. Together we share a belief that the model for change requires service well beyond surgical intervention. Prevention initiatives, intensive outreach, transportation assistance, along with social reintegration and empowerment, are necessary to advance physical and emotional healing. Additionally, counseling to facilitate the rebuilding of family and community relationships as well as vocational training are all necessary to rebuild dignity and inclusion.
Hospital Leadership

WFF has been partnering with TERREWODE and its Executive Director, Alice Emasu Seruyange, since 2010. Alice traveled and observed across Uganda the real life issues confronting women and girls related to birth injuries. She founded TERREWODE in 1999 as an NGO to give a voice to those women and girls, and aimed at improving their health and empowering them with a focus on obstetric fistula. She designed a successful holistic fistula service model based on the analysis from her multi-country obstetric fistula research, partially funded by WFF, while she attended Washington University in St. Louis.

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Hospital Expectations

Opening the dedicated TERREWODE Women’s Community Hospital has been Alice’s dream. Two new funders, International Fistula Alliance and TERREWODE Women’s Hospital Fund supported construction. WFF’s ongoing funding support (since 2010) continues as the hospital launches. TWCH opens with a 30-bed surgical suite and a 30 bed reintegration wing, and expects to serve up to 600 women per year. This will triple their current capacity.

In addition to surgical service and reintegration programming, TWCH is developing their physical therapy program with the guidance of WFF Board Director Dr. Tracy Spitznagle, Professor of physical therapy at Washington University in St. Louis. Physical therapy can be vital for full recovery after fistula surgery, strengthening pelvic floor muscles that were weakened because of stress from the injury.

Grand Opening

On August 16, 2019, the president of the Republic of Uganda, his Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, is expected to officially open the hospital. Other dignitaries expected at the opening will include Ministers, Members of Parliament and Ambassadors, representatives of international organizations and partners, district leaders and women and girls that have been treated for fistula injuries. Soja Orlowski, WFF Executive Director and Dr. Tracy Spitznagle will travel to Uganda along with WFF Founder Dr. Lewis Wall to represent WFF for the official opening ceremonies.

Our Gratitude

Please accept our deepest appreciation for the support you’ve provided, which has allowed WFF to foster this long awaited and noteworthy accomplishment. Our work in Uganda and the operations of this hospital would not have happened but for your commitment and generosity.

We are truly grateful to share this update on the great strides that you’ve helped us make. As the project transitions from the construction phase to the long-term operational phase we are committed to ongoing programming funding and we hope that we can count on your continued support to help us make preventable, treatable childbirth injuries a thing of the past.

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