Tackling obstetric fistula in Madagascar

Operative care for women with obstetric fistula is 90% effective and only costs a few hundred dollars. Still, it is not an option for nearly one million women in Africa and South Asia. Operation Fistula aims to identify and treat every case of fistula in the Sava region of Madagascar, perfecting clinical interventions with a community model that will ensure women receive psycho-social reintegration after surgery.

**DURATION:** 2018

**CHALLENGE:** Access to Basic Services

**COUNTRY:** Madagascar

**PARTNER:** Operation Fistula

**CONTEXT**

The world has known how to effectively treat fistula since 1852. The same technique is still 90% effective today and costs a few hundred dollars. However, 99% of the one million women in Africa and South Asia living with fistula do not have access to it.

The problem is particularly severe in Madagascar, where an estimated 50,000 women suffer from fistula and only a few are identified and properly treated every year.

**ACTION**

Operation Fistula pilot programme aims to identify and treat every case of fistula in the Sava region of Madagascar. In this first year, 120 women suffering from this health problem who will be treated and the model required to coordinate the multiple professionals and to guarantee the continuum of care will be set up as follow:

- Community actors identify patients, who might try to hide their symptoms in fear of stigma
- The patient has access to a medical facility that can diagnose and direct her to the appropriate level of care
• The surgeon provides high-quality operation in a well-equipped facility
• Nurses provide comprehensive post-operative care prior to clinical discharge
• Social workers help reintegrate the patient into her community, building their vocational and life skills.

Pioneering an innovative funding model, Operation Fistula directly pays surgeons who successfully treat patients, as an incentive to treat more patients and not waste any resources on unnecessary overhead or underperformance.

Asking local surgeons to treat simpler cases and experts to treat more complicated cases, the organisation is also particularly attentive to building quality surgical capacity at first level hospital.

EXPECTED RESULTS
Sava region become the first developing world region to be fistula free.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY
Operation Fistula's innovative funding model fuels rapid growth and proves fistula surgery to be as cost-effective as vaccines. The United National Population Fund is replicating its evidence-based funding model and the government of Madagascar has engaged the organisation to help them treat all 50,000 Malagasy women living with fistula.