

About the project:

The feature illustrates the life of the Nigerian women who bear the shame of fistula, an abnormal opening between woman's vagina and bladder which leaves her a victim of stigma and shame despite the condition's prevalence in the northern part of Nigeria, in Jahun state.

In Jahun hospital there is one unit that offer treatment to the women who already have fistulas. Treatment isn't simply just about the surgery, but is multidisciplinary and aims to treat the whole person, not just the fistula. Dancing is just one of the many treatment approaches. These women have terrible stories and psychological injuries, and are often very malnourished. Treatment is, therefore, multidisciplinary and aims to treat the whole person, not just the fistula.

Captions:

- Maro Verli-Fistula_1 – “I did it”

At the beginning I thought I wanted to die. In these cases, family and husband don't want to live with you... I was lucky to have their support and the opportunity to receive treatment in this hospital.”

- Maro Verli-Fistula_2 – no control of the urine

Most women develop fistulas as a result of the same factors: giving birth without the assistance of a skilled birth attendant and early marriage. Most women who develop fistulas for these reasons are poor. An impoverished girl under the age of 18 has a higher risk of obstructed labor because they are often physically immature due to malnutrition, leaving the pelvis or birth canals not fully developed.

- Maro Verli-Fistula_3 – “new life”

There are not many doctors to do the repair surgeries for these women and the women are so poor, they cannot afford to go to a doctor when they are in labor

- Maro Verli-Fistula_4 – Care takers

Mothers or women friends from the family usually are the care takers that will need to stay weeks to support the victim.

- Maro Verli-Fistula_5 - Let me show you the path

Women are carrying over their babies in their back. They carry them while they are cooking, working, cleaning... every time to remind them the most important role they have. the one of the Mother.

- Maro Verli-Fistula_6 - I am a woman

Women who are under the treatment will spend many weeks in the hospital. And though it sounds tiring for them is an opportunity to feel again self-confident.

- Maro Verli-Fistula_7 - Look at me

There is little capacity for the newborn children when incubation after birth is necessary.

- Maro Verli-Fistula_8 – “It's my fifth child”

In some cases, women give birth before they are fully treated and this damage the treatment.

- Maro Verli-Fistula_9 – Every Wednesday they honor ourselves with a dance

Dancing is just one of the many treatment approaches.

- Maro Verli-Fistula_10 - Hope

It takes few seconds to save the life of that woman and to give life to a new one