

## PHASE III

### Country Situation at Baseline

- **Profile of typical fistula survivor:** The majority of fistula patients are aged below 20 years, it is not uncommon to find girls of ages 13-14 with fistula in the north. However, older multiparous women are developing fistula primarily because of low access to both basic and EmOC. The majority of the women were from the North, illiterate, poor and of low socio-economic status, and their injuries resulted from childbirth complications.
- **Caseload:** Dr. Kees Waaldijk is a reputable surgeon who carries out many of Nigeria's fistula repairs. Dr. Anne Ward and Dr. Upuji are also well-respected doctors who have experience in fistula surgery. In the eleven site visits, there were over 1100 recorded operations in the past year. Most of these took place in Babbar Ruga and Murtala Specialist Hospital, where services are free.
- **Barriers:** Lack of education for girls limits skilled health care-seeking behaviors during pregnancy and delivery. There is also limited access to health care facilities (especially emergency obstetric care) due to geography and availability.
- **Cultural context:** In some communities of Nigeria, it is taboo for a girl to reach menarche in her mother's house; it is therefore crucial that she be married before this event occurs.

#### SELECTED INDICATORS

Total population (millions)	127.1
Total fertility rate (2000-2005)	5.42
MMR (per 100,000 live births)	800
% births with skilled birth attendant	35
birth among women 15-19 (per 1,000 live births)	103
IMR (per 1,000 live births)	79

*Source: UNFPA State of World Population, 2004*

### Facilities Available to Treat Fistula

There are seven facilities dedicated to fistula repair around the country. While expertise for fistula repair exists in most of the teaching hospitals and federal medical centres; there are no separate fistula theatres, except in Ebonyi Federal Medical Centre.

1. Babbar Ruga Hospital, Katsina
  - Two wards and an operating theatre for fistula repair. Dr. Kees Waaldijk runs the centre assisted by one other doctor and two nurses, all of who are trained in repair. Babbar Ruga is a major training site and performs about 400 repairs per year
2. The Laure Fistula Centre at the Murtala Specialist Hospital Kano
  - Beds, 30 of which are in the OB/GYN department, four consultants, seven medical officers, and four house officers in the OB/GYN department. There is a dedicated fistula section within the hospital with its own operating theatre and 35 beds for both pre- and post-operative care. There is also a nearby fistula hostel/rehabilitation centre with 48 beds, where post-operative cases are sent for both post-operative care and rehabilitation. Dr. Kees Waaldijk is a visiting surgeon and performs fistula surgery three days a week; when he is away, two doctors and three nurses have been trained to do repairs.

3. Family Life Centre and Hospital, Imbricit Itam, Akwa-Ibom State (Faith-based)
  - Two gynaecology wards: one ward has 22 beds and is for post-operative care; the other ward has 16 beds and serves as pre-op or recuperation. A women's hostel with 30 beds is available for relatives or attendants to women in recovery. Dr. Anne Ward and one other trained doctor do fistula repairs.
4. Evangel VVF Centre, Jos, Plateau (Faith-Based)
  - 20-bed ward and a 30-bed hostel, two permanent fistula surgeons are based in the facility, Dr. Jonathan Karshima and one other doctor and some visiting surgeons; two nurses trained in fistula do repair, one social worker.
5. Maryam Abacha, Women and Children Hospital, Sokoto
  - 50 beds in a recently renovated ward, Dr. Abdullahi Gada has been recently trained and is currently doing repairs. The fistula centre depends on visiting doctors, particularly Dr. Waaldijk.
6. The Birnin Kebbi Special VVF Centre
  - Dr. Wara manages this Centre that has about 40 beds, there are two trained nurses. The Centre also depends on Dr. Waaldijk for many of the repairs.
7. Faridat Yakubu VVF Centre, Gusau
  - This centre has 32 beds and is managed by a consultant general surgeon, and has two trained nurses. Dr. Waaldijk visits to conduct repairs in the facility.

### **UNFPA Programme Achievements**

- Nigeria's Fistula Task Force found in a recent assessment that while strong capacity to repair fistula exists, current efforts remain limited in scope and are uncoordinated. Recent federal and state government involvement, including the creation of a multisectoral national task force is encouraging. The task force has, with support from UNFPA, developed a national strategic framework and plan of action for the eradication of obstetric fistula, which will form the basis of all fistula-related efforts.
- A documentary on obstetric fistula has been developed which is being made available to media houses in high prevalence states for airing.
- The Family Life Centre has employed two part-time surgeons and three full-time nurses for fistula repair and care. The Family Life Centre has been connected to the national grid for the supply of electricity, helping to cut down the huge costs of electricity in the area. The Family Life Centre now has adequate accommodation for four nurses and four doctors; the space can also be used to house visiting health professionals.

### **Partners**

1. Ministry of Health
2. MOWA (Ministry of Women's Affairs)
3. Nigerian Red Cross: will provide vehicles to address transportation problems; set up tents in different sites for pre- and post-operative care during the Fortnight Blitz; carry out community level advocacy work.