

A letter from Ethiopia

Two simple words: Thank you

Looking back at years, at how it all started, I can't help but smile. I am simply amazed by how the Fistula Center in Assella has gradually metamorphosed: thanks to the Ethiopia Fund's unwavering support, it is now a safe haven where victims of fistula find protection from a cruel world, a place of restoration where they feel dignified, a retreat where they make peace with the past and learn to embrace their womanhood again.



Last Thursday was certainly one of the proudest days in my career as we headed to Assella with our friends from the Ethiopia Fund to assess the progress that has been accomplished since their last visit. In a one year period, it is safe to say that humongous strides have been made. And it is all thanks to your precious support.

As the renovation works are coming to an end and as it has been furnished with new colourful bed sheets, bedcovers and curtains, the Fistula Center is now looking brand new. A garden, where the fistula patients will be able to rest during the day has also been set up.



What moved me most during this unforgettable journey was witnessing once again the inaudible language of the hearts: despite the language barrier, our Norwegian friends managed to communicate with the fistula patients. Through an exchange of hugs, of looks and smiles, they were able to capture the burden of the women's secret storm. They understood the trials and tribulations the patients had gone through before getting to the Center and appreciated their incredible resilience.



Once again, our friends from the Ethiopia Fund did not come empty-handed; they came bearing gifts: clothes, shoes, jewellerys, blankets... Excitement was in the air as we all experienced the joy that comes from giving and the joy that comes from receiving. Through these gifts, they showed these broken hearts that the world tends to forget that they are worthy human beings: worthy of beautiful things, worthy of attention, worthy of adequate care, and most importantly, worthy of love.

As the women wore the necklaces and the blankets that were given to them, a beautiful explosion of colours happened. One of my favourite memories of our journey was the moment the patients stood smiling at the entrance of the Center, forming an exquisite rainbow.



By supporting the Fistula Center in Assella, you are giving each and every woman who comes to Center seeking help something absolutely priceless: hope. You are giving her back the dignity she had so unfairly lost, you are helping her find peace mind, you are turning dead end roads into open boulevards.



I truly wish all the supporters of the Ethiopia Fund could have been part of this journey to the Fistula Center to witness the beautiful and complex art of re-building lives.

In the name of all Ethiopian women, thank you for your contributions.

Dr. Mulu Muleta
Head-of-Mission
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