

**THE WENCHI METHODIST HOSPITAL  
FISTULAR REPAIR PROJECT IN Ghana**

**INFORMATION SHEET**

The Wenchi Methodist Hospital was established in 1955 by the combined effort of the Methodist Church and the people of Wenchi. The hospital started as a dressing unit. It has grown into a referral medical centre for the Bono, Ahafo and the Northern Regions of Ghana. It is one of the Flagship Healthcare and Social Justice projects of the Methodist Church Ghana. Besides treating everyday illnesses of people in the community, the hospital provides high-level medical care to poor people at no cost.

One such service is surgery to repair physical vaginal fistula, medically called Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF). VVF is an abnormal communication between the vagina and the bladder, usually resulting from complications during protracted childbirth. It leaves the patient incontinent. Most VVF patients in Ghana are abandoned by their families and cast out of their communities. Since 2006, in partnership with one Dr. Alan Miller from Northern Ireland, the Wenchi Methodist Hospital in Ghana has been performing free repair for women suffering from VVF. The first woman to be treated was discovered by the then Diocesan Bishop of Wenchi Diocese on his pastoral visit to one of the villages. He saw a woman living in a hen coup and when he inquired, the family told him that the woman was a witch. Drawing closer, the Bishop smelled the stench and immediately knew why she had been abandoned. He arranged for her to have the surgery at the hospital, after which she lived a healthy life. Most VVF patients are unable to afford the surgery, yet with the free treatment from the Wenchi Methodist Hospital they are able to get back their lives and able to earn their own income to cater for themselves and their dependents. They are therefore liberated from the injustice and abuse they would have continuously suffered.

Currently, there are no funds to continue the project. Patients who report to the hospital with VVF are treated. Some are able to contribute to their treatment, but most are unable. The hospital currently subsidizes the cost of treatment and patients who genuinely cannot afford are treated free of charge. For the successful treatment of one patient, a minimum of £320.00 is needed. This will cover, among others, the surgery, transportation, feeding and hospital accommodation for about a month.

Cyncoed Methodist Church decided in 2019, to start a new Overseas Charity Project, from 2020 to support the Wenchi Methodist Hospital Fistula Repair Project in Ghana. This would normally be a three-year project of raising funds and sending it to the Hospital to use for the purposes stated and to receive feedback and progress reports. Unfortunately, with COVID-19 disrupting us and the finances of the church dipping, we have not been able to do anything yet.

Various activities have been planned to raise £5000 or more from now till May 2023 and end the project.

As part of the fundraising for this project, you are invited to a Ghana Evening on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 4:00 pm at Cyncoed Methodist Church. Activities will include worship, food, and entertainment. We will hope to raise funds at this event and others to support the project. Your support will therefore be valuable to the hospital and the patients of VVF in Ghana.