

At last there is a reason for a smile to those women with birth injury called- Fistula

A year after UNFPA conducted pull repairs of women affected with fistula in the North East Capital of Borno State, a program that got over 60 women repaired during the week-long campaign, there were smiles across the state. Interest among women with the condition piqued and this generated an increase in visits to the medical facility, hence another round of routine repairs was agreed between the state and UNFPA for the backlog to be cleared.

With the funding support of Canada and KOICA the United Nations Population Fund renovated the hospital theatre and equipped it for the campaign. Till date, the theatre functions and conducts routine repairs by the trained surgeons. This has attracted more women from the rural areas to having repairs done at the centre.

Bintu Modu is a beneficiary of the pull repairs, in her words, "*I feel lucky because now my community have accepted me and I do attend gathering, while before the repairs I can't go out because of shame and smell that follows me, I am no more wet and I come from my house to the centre to learn skills, we even do some sewing cloths and making of soap, it feels great my life has changed for the better*"

UNFPA continues to provide the safe-space for women to come and have a sense of belonging, information on their reproductive health and rights, skills acquisition while supporting the health facilities with the procurement and proposition essential medications for fistula repairs in the Maiduguri Fistula Centre for the treatment. Currently, over **200** VVF patients are receiving skills acquisition and livelihood support programme, with **10** survivors of VVF and other vulnerable women part of the reintegration and resilience building program.

Other services provided include psychosocial support provided by mobilized community psychosocial support outreach teams. There is also provision of medical equipment and supplies, including a 3-months' vocational skill and empowerment trainings for 200 repaired indigent fistula survivors involving the engagement of psychosocial counsellors.



Some survivors of VVF working in the UNFPA supported dignity production/Women Empowerment centre in MMC