

WEST AFRICA

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FISTULA FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2022

WE ARE SO EXCITED TO SHARE OUR OCTOBER UPDATES WITH YOU.

While our efforts in Sierra Leone have remained strong throughout the years, our media communications and newsletter updates have had to pause as a result of Ebola and Covid-19.

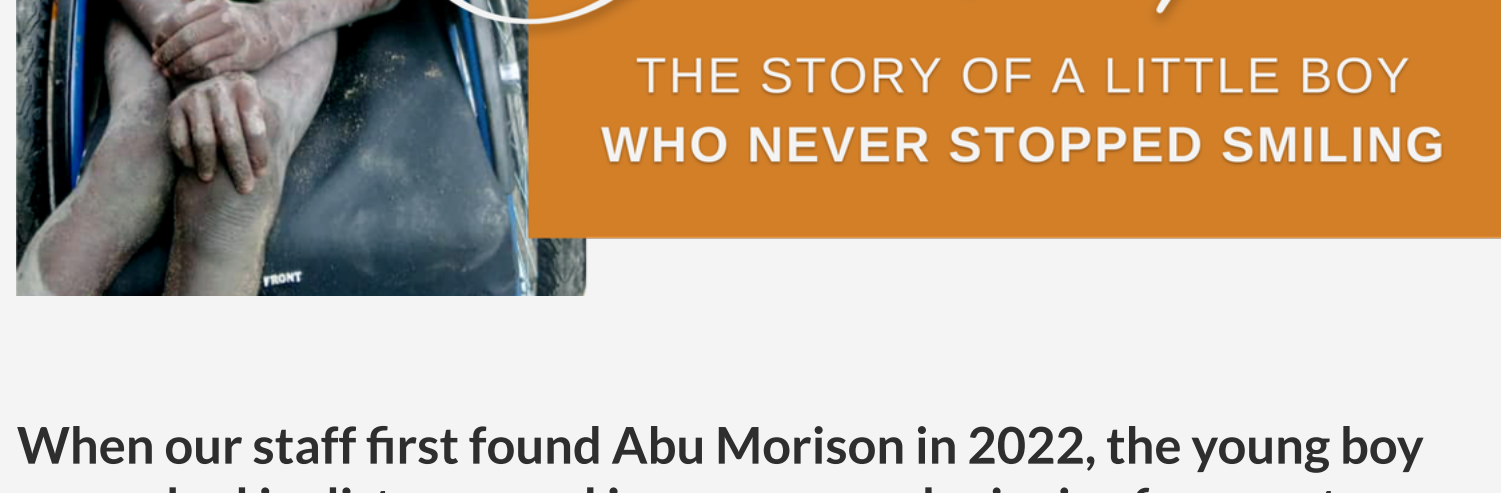
Thankfully because the Covid-19 Pandemic is beginning to slow down, we are excited to bring back our newsletter to share amazing stories of generosity and healing with you!



We are dedicated to bettering the health, wellbeing, and livelihood of the underprivileged people living in West Africa, one of the poorest areas in the world.

STORY OF THE MONTH

We proudly care for many disabled and orphaned children in Sierra Leone. Each month we will highlight one of our children's stories.



When our staff first found Abu Morison in 2022, the young boy was caked in dirt, covered in scrapes, and *grinning from ear to ear*.

We believe Abu contracted polio at an early age, resulting in a condition that forced him to crawl on his hands and knees. The young boy had never seen a life higher than the ground.

On the date of his birth, May 5th, 2010, his father abandoned their family, leaving Abu's mother to raise him on her own. When we first met him at the age of 11, Abu shared that he sadly does not have any memories of his father and does not remember what he looks like. But despite the odds against him, Abu was determined to go to school each day. He slowly crawled a mile and a half over rocks and gravel just to get to class every morning and back home in the afternoon. Through everything, Abu continued to smile, his face lighting up every time he spoke. He was especially excited to show us his very impressive spelling and counting abilities. He introduced us to his family and has always been extremely polite. Abu is truly an inspiration to us all. When our team talked with him about his daily journey, he explained that his "brother" walked alongside him holding both of their books and supplies. We soon understood that the brother Abu was referring to was his best friend and neighbor, Hassan. There is very little time that the two boys do not spend side-by-side. They are often found working on homework, sharing jokes, and eating meals together.



Thanks to our amazing donors, we were able to give Abu the proper nourishment he needed and a wheelchair to get to and from school. However, that mile and a half trip each morning and afternoon was still tiring for the now 12 year old, even in his new wheelchair. With his mother's permission, we helped transfer Abu to a new school just down the road from his family home. Thankfully his trip would be shortened, but we then worried about how the change would affect his bond with Hassan. We are happy to report that Hassan's family lovingly transferred him to Abu's new school so the two "brothers" could stay together. Now Abu and Hassan travel just up the road together, leaving more time for laughter, play, and practicing their counting and spelling.



Our staff stopped by Abu's home to check on his progress and give the two boys ice cream earlier this month. When we arrived, Hassan easily lifted Abu from the ground and gently set him in his wheelchair. Our team members asked them how often he helps him get in and out of his wheelchair, and the boys smiled and said every day. Soon after, we handed Abu his very first ice cream cone, and while we were reaching for Hassan's, Abu had already shared a bite with his best friend.

Young Abu's story is one of selflessness, perseverance, and, above all, friendship. We are so excited to see the amazing things that Abu will do with his intellect and positivity as we continue to help him overcome any medical obstacles that stand in his way.

PLEASE ENJOY A SHORT VIDEO OF ABU AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER



We have had the privilege of working with Dr. Augustine Mannah for over a decade now. He first met our founder, Dr. Darius Maggi, while working at the Bo Government Hospital in 2009, and the two quickly became friends, bonding over their shared desire to provide well-rounded, quality care to their patients.

Because the healthcare in the country was so poor, women would often experience prolonged labor that could last anywhere from 5 to 15 days. Not only were the women often left childless, but they also developed obstetrical fistulas that left them leaking urine and feces uncontrollably. Isolated from their communities and often unable to have children again, the women of Sierra Leone were suffering greatly. Our foundation prioritized obstetrical fistula repairs and understood that, with proper care and treatment, these women could become continent, be reintroduced to their villages, and have the possibility of safely giving birth to children again.

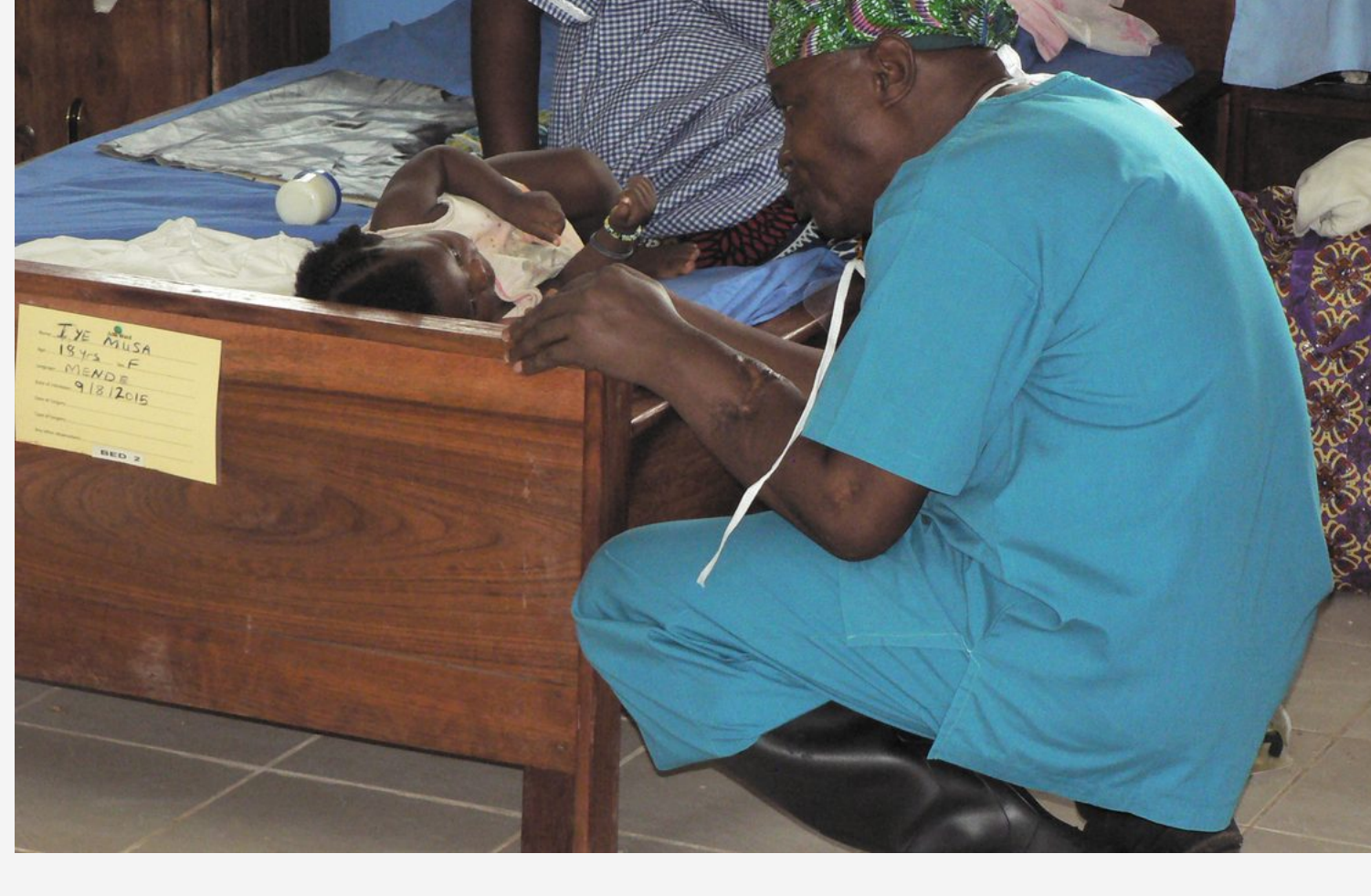
Dr. Maggi's first trip was in 2002, and in 2004, he started coming to Freetown, Sierra Leone on a very regular basis to perform obstetrical fistula surgeries. In 2008, we moved to Bo to continue our work for the women of Sierra Leone. In 2012, Dr. Mannah officially joined our team. He worked directly with the patients, ensuring that all of their medical needs were met. He fed them, cared for their ailments, and ensured that they were comfortable and healthy before their surgery.

When reminiscing about his time at the WAFF fistula center, Dr. Mannah said "I've always been kind to my patients. We have to encourage them. They have come to a place to heal." Those words continued to ring true throughout his time with our foundation. When asked what he feels most proud of during his work with fistula patients, this is what he had to say:

"I've always been kind to my patients. We have to encourage them."

They have come to a place to heal."

"Any time someone comes to the doctor, and he or she gets well, I think you feel good about it. These people will come home smiling, and I always try to put a smile on their face."

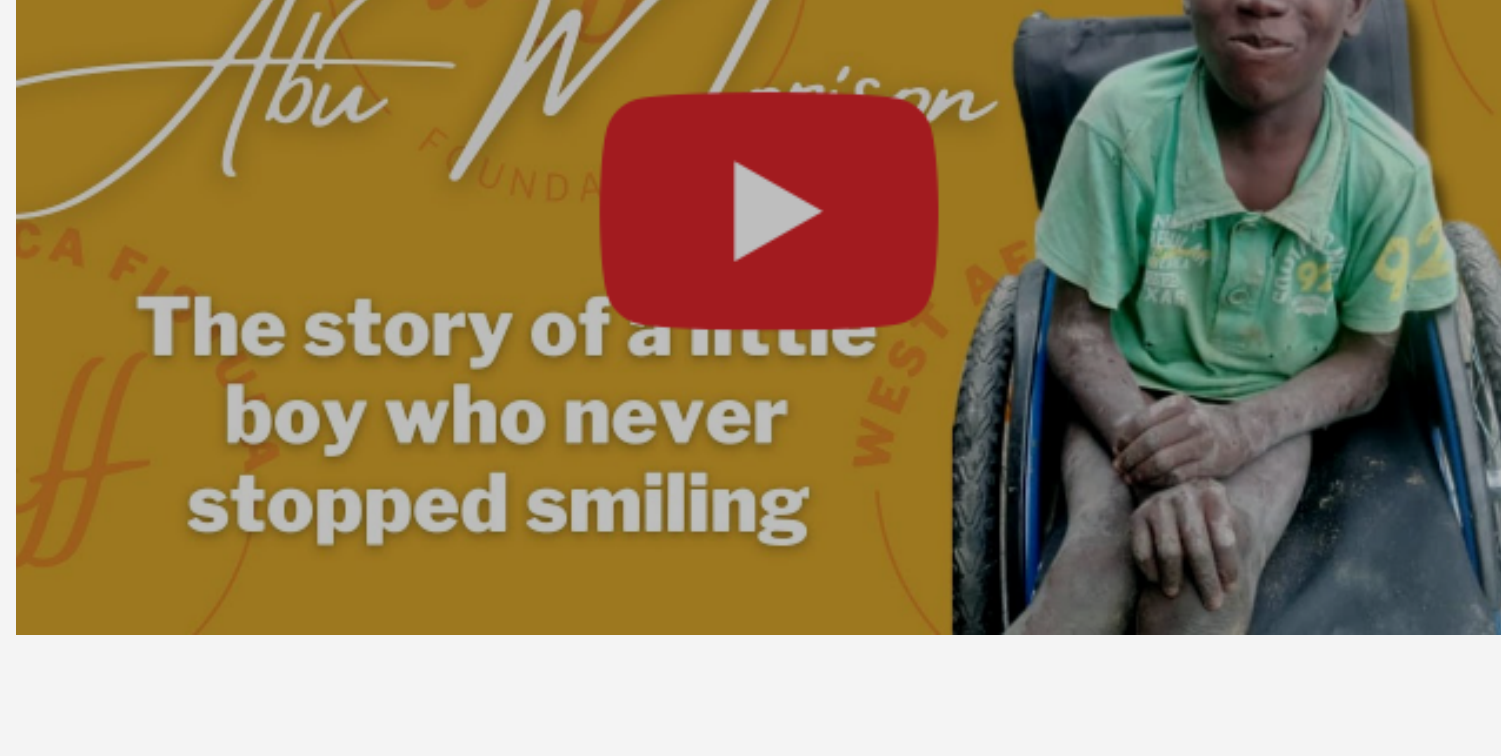


When Ebola hit Sierra Leone in 2014, the fistula center had to slow down operations to ensure the safety of our patients and staff, but we asked Dr. Mannah to continue to follow up on some of our previous patients to ensure their successful recoveries. He showed them the same care and thoughtfulness that he has for so many patients before them. We are so grateful to work with him as our foundation continues to prioritize providing the best care possible for the people living in Sierra Leone.



THE STORIES OF
MAMBALU SAMA AND
MEMUNA MANSARAY

CLICK THE VIDEO BELOW TO WATCH ABU'S JOURNEY



CLICK HERE TO DONATE

A note from our founder, Dr. Darius Maggi

I am grateful that we have the opportunity to care for those who need it most, especially in a time when we often live with excess. I would like to encourage you to read and reflect on the words of Proverbs 16:3 this month as we continue to do the work that God calls us to do.

"Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established."

Learn more about the history of our foundation at www.WestAfricaFistulaFoundation.org



Newsletter written and designed by
Jordan Lemming

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