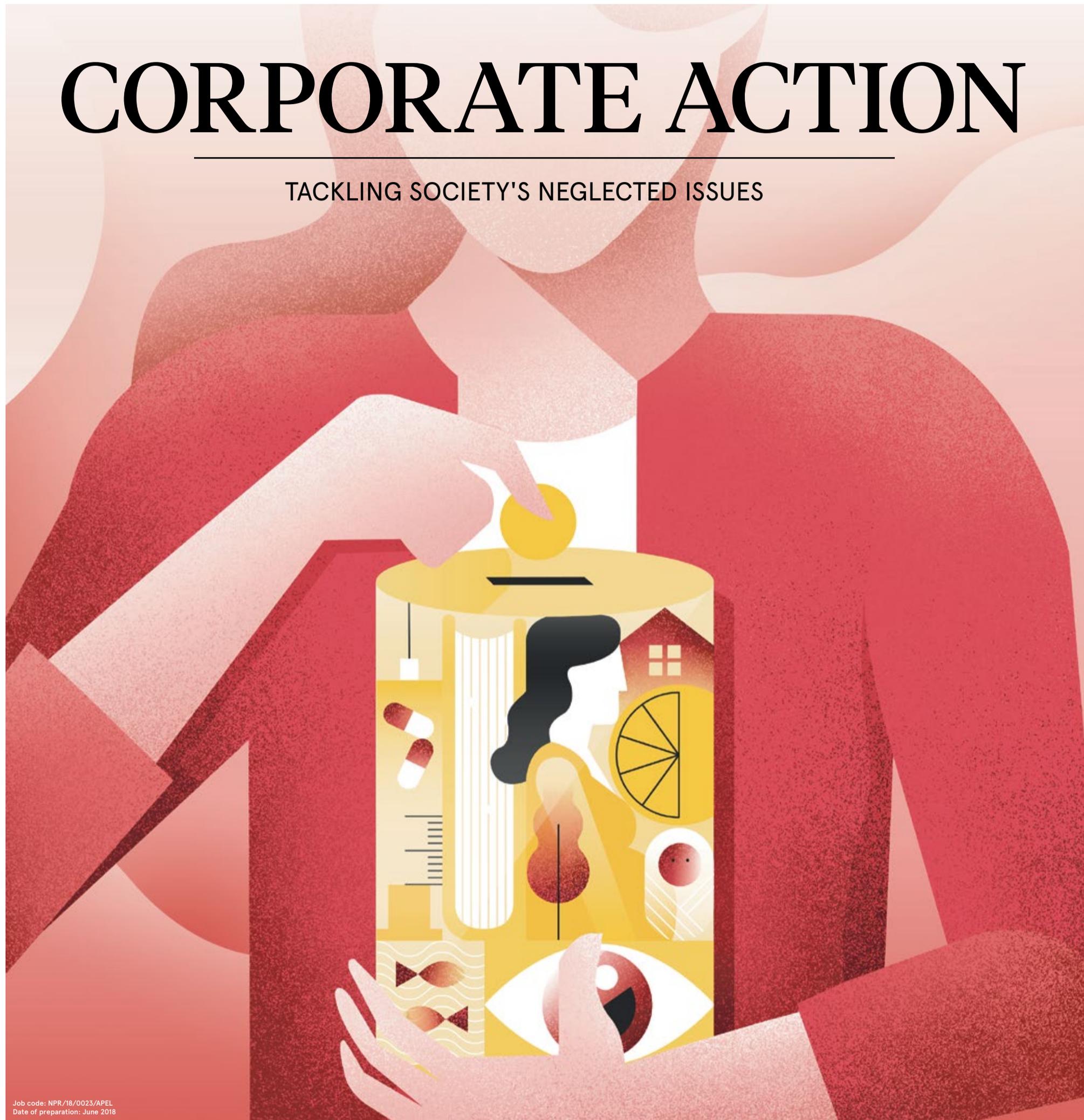


# CORPORATE ACTION

TACKLING SOCIETY'S NEGLECTED ISSUES



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Action  
on Fistula



# CORPORATE ACTION

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## OVERVIEW



# The fight against fistula

With so many worthy causes looking for support, why has a pharmaceutical company chosen to focus on a distressing condition that many have never heard of?

### MARTIN BARROW

**W**hen it comes to raising money for cancer, there isn't much people will not do: run marathons, bake cakes, shave their hair. Mental health, once the Cinderella of charitable causes, can these days call on royalty. People scared of heights will jump from planes or abseil down the tallest buildings if they believe it will end cruelty to dogs or cats.

How far would you run for obstetric fistula? Would family and friends support you if you held a pub quiz to raise money to pay for treatment? The chances are you would have to begin by explaining what fistula is and that is no easy task.

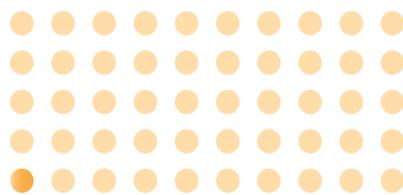
It takes courage and deep commitment for an organisation to embark

on a charitable initiative to support the treatment and care of women in Kenya affected by obstetric fistula. Yet this is what Astellas Pharma Europe, the pharmaceuticals company, did in 2014 with an ambitious programme to help thousands of women rebuild their lives.

Obstetric fistula most commonly occurs among women who live in the poorest countries, who give birth without access to medical help, suffering excruciating pain for days before the baby is finally dislodged. The baby rarely survives.

An obstetric fistula is a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder that is caused by prolonged obstructed labour, leaving a woman incontinent. The labour produces contractions that push the baby's head against the mother's pelvic bone. The soft tissues between the baby's head and the pelvic bone are compressed and do not receive adequate blood flow. The lack of blood flow causes this delicate tissue to die and, where it dies, holes are created between the bladder and vagina or

**Obstetric fistulas most commonly occur among women who live in the poorest countries, who give birth without access to medical help**



**1 in 50**

For every one woman that gets treatment, at least 50 go without

**30k**

backlog of cases estimated before the Astellas programme got underway

**4.5k**

women in Kenya are targeted to get access to fistula treatment by 2020, under the Action On Fistula programme

**3k**

women in Kenya develop obstetric fistula each year



01



02



03

between the rectum and vagina, causing incontinence.

A woman with fistula is often rejected by her husband and pushed out of her village due to her smell. And for every woman that gets treatment, at least 50 go without.

If there is such a thing as an “unsexy” cause, obstetric fistula probably is it. Yet when Astellas went searching for an inspirational corporate-giving programme, obstetric fistula presented itself as the ideal choice.

Astellas wanted to identify how best to create a corporate giving initiative which would leverage its commitment to building access to medicines. Working with Forster Communications, it ran a strategic review and identified obstetric fistula. It then located a geographical area to focus its efforts. Kenya was selected as fistula was a significant issue there, particularly in rural communities. Some 3,000 women in Kenya develop obstetric fistula each year, with the backlog of cases estimated at 30,000 before the Astellas programme began. The country also had sufficient infrastructure to run a programme; analysis identified that Kenya had hospitals with spare beds but a need for more trained fistula surgeons.

Astellas chose to partner with the Fistula Foundation, an international charity with a successful

**01** Action On Fistula supporters join a community awareness day in Kenya to educate men and women about obstetric fistula and destigmatise the condition

**02** Astellas and Fistula Foundation visit a fistula survivor at her home

**03** Patient at the Jamaa Mission Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya

track record of providing fistula treatment in more than 30 countries. The Fistula Foundation had a vision to transform the way fistula was being treated in Kenya by building a countrywide network of hospitals and community outreach organisations. They had an ambitious and comprehensive plan to reach women in even the most rural areas, bring them to treatment at a fully equipped facility with highly trained surgeons and, post-surgery, support their medical rehabilitation and social reintegration. With seed funding from Astellas, Action On Fistula™ was created.

Christina Chale, Action On Fistula project lead at Astellas, says: “The results speak for themselves. We have the satisfaction of seeing a programme that is sustainable deliver real change to

thousands of women, to their families and to their communities. And we have seen real engagement and commitment by our employees to be part of this.”

Astellas contributed €1.5 million to help the Fistula Foundation set up and run the programme for the first phase of Action On Fistula, which ran from 2014 to 2017. The second phase of Action On Fistula is a €3.9-million programme from 2017 to 2020, run by Fistula Foundation. It is part-funded by a €750,000 grant from Astellas, with the remainder being generated by the Fistula Foundation. Furthering their company’s commitment, Astellas Pharma Europe employees also raised around €35,000 for the Fistula Foundation through fundraising events and individual contributions.

to travel long distances for treatment. The network of sites and surgeons work closely together, sharing information and resources, and creating a strong community of practice that will be sustained far beyond the duration of the initiative.

Action On Fistula was recognised at the 2017 Better Society Awards for its work with the Fistula Foundation in the Partnership with an International Charity category and the 2017 Communiqué Awards for the Excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility category.

Ms Chale highlights the importance of partnering with a credible charity with the capability to deliver on its commitments. “I cannot stress enough how significant it was to be able to work with the Fistula Foundation and the role they played in the success of this initiative,” she says.

The original three-year programme has been extended to 2020 with an ambitious target to provide surgery for an additional 2,000 women with fistula. There are plans for two more treatment centres and training for a further six surgeons. Action On Fistula also wants to train ten fistula nurses to support women during treatment and establish twenty support groups across Kenya to provide psychosocial assistance, economic empowerment and income-generating activities to return to their communities.

Ms Chale recommends that from the outset, corporate partners should work towards tangible outputs with a measurable impact and consider how they will measure success, in a credible and holistic way.

She would have no hesitation in encouraging organisations to follow their example by supporting a smaller charity and a cause with a modest public profile. “Don’t be afraid of smaller charities,” she says. “Be prepared to embrace causes that may not yet be popular, but are just as deserving of public support. You can make a real difference.” ♦

Kate Grant, chief executive of the Fistula Foundation, says: “Fistula is not an issue that most people know or care about. The predominant injury is a hole in the vagina. There are not many things that are tougher to talk about than that.

“This project has been extraordinarily successful in terms of the number of women we have been able to reach. It has been heartening to be able to give them the priceless gift of health that has made it possible for them to take their place with their families and with the community.”

The programme has created a long-lasting legacy. More than 3,500 women have received life-changing obstetric fistula reconstructive surgery. It has significantly increased surgical capacity in Kenya to treat the condition by training six fistula surgeons to global competency standards set by the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics.

It also set up six treatment centres across Kenya providing fistula surgeries on a routine basis. With greater access to treatment, closer to where they live, women are no longer placed on waiting lists to receive surgery, nor are they forced

**For Action On Fistula to continue this proven, life-changing work, additional financial support is critical and they are actively seeking partners to help continue this work. Anyone interested should contact the Fistula Foundation at [www.fistulafoundation.org](http://www.fistulafoundation.org)**

**“The results speak for themselves. We have the satisfaction of seeing a programme that is sustainable deliver real change to thousands of women, to their families and to their communities**

## FUNDING

CHARLES ORTON-JONES

For companies wanting to make a charitable donation, the choice is dazzling. The Charity Commission regulates 184,047 charities in England and Wales alone. Most businesses stick to the big brands. In fact, research suggests that the top 1,000 charities soak up 89 per cent of all donations in the UK. The largest ten charities have three times the income of the smallest 100,000 combined.

Smaller charities can focus on wonderful causes, which escape the view of the mega-charities. They can be better run and offer closer working relationships with donors. So, is there a case for corporate donors seeking out a smaller charity to back?

Deutsche Bank thinks so. It has a strong track record of working with smaller charities. It runs a Charity of the Year scheme to identify new causes and asks candidate charities to explain the impact a relationship might have. Recently it selected Autistica, a charity funding autism research. "It is a shame that more companies don't work with smaller charities like Autistica that has big ideas and potential," says Autistica director of fundraising Sarah Bissell. "Small charities can offer a flexible, fast-moving approach that can make for transformative collaborations."

There's no need to lower investment criteria for small charities; far from it. Deutsche Bank selected Autistica precisely because it was able to provide a convincing long-term plan for growth and impact.

Smaller can also mean local. A business that wants to demonstrate commitment to the neighbourhood is better off looking at a cause with local roots. Orchard Media and Events Group discovered precisely that when it moved to a new office in Cardiff. "We took the keys in December 2016 and, as soon as we got there, the homelessness issue hit us harder than we imagined. Right on our doorstep, quite literally," says Orchard director Tim Powell.

Orchard found a homeless charity to support. Mr Powell says: "Huggard is a homeless charity



## Why choose a small charity?

Smaller charities often support less well known, but very worthy causes – it's time they received a bigger share of corporate donations

right in the heart of Cardiff, just around the corner from us, and we liked their approach and the practical way they help street sleepers. Huggard appeals to us because they're not a 'sticking plaster' charity offering support for street sleepers. They do what they can in practical and political ways to get people off the streets, to get them into accommodation and back on

track in their often chaotic lives."

The size of the charity makes it highly approachable. Mr Powell adds: "Our team is really creative when it comes to fundraising ideas and not just collections at gigs. We use our own skillset to give Huggard what they need. Our studio team is currently building a new website saturated with images we've created for the charity – strong, positive messages of hope that get away from the dark, sombre appeals for money. We also lobby and canvass our extensive network of business organisations and institutions to spread the word and get them involved."

Part of the onus is on smaller charities to make themselves visible and attractive to corporate donors. Wessex Heartbeat, a cardiac charity in Southampton, is outstanding at offering clear benefits. "Charities need to give corporates real value if they want to build long-lasting relationships that result in years and years of sponsorship and fundraising," says John Munro, chief executive of Wessex Heartbeat. "A few

**LEFT** Deutsche Bank hackathon where employees, Autistica staff and researchers helped to develop a prototype app for anxiety

years ago we launched our 'healthy heart' initiative, where we sent our Wessex Heartbeat nurses into businesses to give staff health checks. They measured aspects such as cholesterol, glucose and weight which helped people see if they needed to make lifestyle changes.

"It gave businesses something very tangible to add to their corporate social responsibility credentials and offer staff. For us though, it meant we could get in front of real people and show them what we do. That face-to-face is priceless in getting people to understand who we are and support us."

**Smaller charities can focus on wonderful causes, which escape the view of the mega-charities. They can be better run and offer closer working relationships with donors**

Adopting a smaller charity can also mean making a visible impact on their work. Each cheque can be transformative. Experiences website Fizzbox selected the Rocking Horse charity supporting sick children partly because of its size. Tom Bourlet of Fizzbox says: "I personally used to handle the marketing for a charity on a voluntary freelance basis and it was clear, as a very small charity, they simply didn't have the funds to offer the service they would like to, which made it so clear how much every little donation makes such a strong impact."

Companies looking to find a small charity can use a variety of tools. The Charity Commission offers audited data. And there are search engines. One of the best is The Big Give, created by Sir Alec Reed, founder of the UK's largest recruitment company Reed. In just over ten years The Big Give has helped raise almost £100 million.

A word of caution, though. Smaller charities can be helped by corporate donations, but they need stability. It can be traumatic when a corporate partner moves on to a new cause. Deutsche Bank insisted Autistica prove it would thrive, not dive, when the partnership ended.

"A lot of focus was placed on sustainable growth," recalls Autistica's Ms Bissell. "They do not want to see their charities' incomes plummet at the end of the partnership." Fortunately, the charity proved it would be able to continue to operate without its big backer and delivered tremendous gains during the relationship. "By the end of the partnership, we were able to show Deutsche Bank how they had moved the dial, not just for Autistica, but for autism research in the UK," Ms Bissell concludes. ♦



# Identifying a niche charity to support

They might not be as visible as large charities, but there are many smaller charities doing exciting and valuable work

CHARLES ORTON-JONES

It's a terrible truth that there are glamorous charities and there are "ugly" ones. On the "beautiful" side of the ledger are causes such as cancer, historic buildings and children. These dominate the best-funded list. They are causes with instant appeal, offering stories that fundraisers are proud to tell. The heroes of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution are fundraising manna from heaven as the charity pulls in nearly £198 million a year and has £271 million in long-term investments to draw on.

Then there are the tougher causes. Some are obscure, like the rare but horrifying genetic condition fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva, which leaves children with a healthy mind locked inside a frozen body.

There are causes with dark connotations. Alcoholism and drug addiction conjure images of troubled individuals with disreputable pasts. The public relations value of such a cause can be a hard sell. Gambling is a curse suspected to blight the lives of 400,000 people in the UK, according to the Gambling Commission. It would take a brave bank to be associated with a gambling charity.

Yet there are powerful reasons for a company to break the mould and find a charity in a less fashionable sector. Neglected causes may offer a greater chance to make an impact. Scottish law firm Burness Paull selected homelessness charity Street Soccer for this reason. The cause is politically

controversial and distinctly unglamorous, but the charity and law firm have proven to be perfect partners.

"The statistics of homelessness in Scotland have barely improved and, at best, remained stable over the last ten years," says Graeme Cleland, head of communications at Burness Paull. "Poverty and hopelessness are at the heart of the problem."

The charity funds soccer events for those affected by poverty and homelessness. Burness Paull has been



or 7% of the population, will be affected by a rare disease at some point in their lives. This equates to approximately 3.5 million people in the UK and 30 million people across Europe



Garfield Weston Foundation

able to provide funding and assistance, and helped to bring in fellow sponsors RBS, Barclays and Loyds Bank. It contributed to a dinner starring former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson, both a client of the law firm and ambassador for Street Soccer, raising £140,000. Burness Paull was sponsor of the Scotland team at the 2016 Homeless World Cup in Glasgow. Today Street Soccer, thanks to the tireless work of founder David Duke and sponsors like Burness Paull, seems like an attractive, energised cause.

A less fashionable charity can offer original stories to impress investors and staff. The Congo region is associated with civil war and conflict diamonds for many. *Ensemble Pour la Difference* is a charity focused on East Congo and "is very much a niche", according to Tom Roche, head of partnerships. Roche is able to recruit corporate partners, such as design agency Fjord and the Open Mobile Alliance, partly because of the freshness and drama of the stories he can provide. They include transforming villages by installing telecommunications and funding micro-businesses.

Mr Roche explains: "Creating an emotional connection to a small or niche issue amplifies your cause, generating the empathy that you need in your target audience to encourage them to act. When we introduce audiences to Janette, the widowed coffee grower on the island of Idjwi, both the video footage and emotional connection are raw and honest. Her life is tough.

Her children are malnourished. Her crop is barely able to sustain them.

"Yet the power of technology, from the mobile phone that captures her story to the social medium that shares it, brings her voice and her struggle to life, giving corporate sponsors exactly the type of return, employee engagement, direct impact and human connection that makes a partnership stand out." The Congo may be a forgotten part of the world for people in the UK, but narratives like this bring it to life.

**Niche charities also offer clarity with where the money ends up. Companies enjoy seeing every penny put to good use**

A less prosperous cause may offer greater chances for staff to contribute in ways other than simple volunteering. Fletchers Solicitors is a big backer of the brain injury charity Headway. Chief executive Ed Fletcher is a paraplegic following a motorcycle accident in 1999, so the cause has resonance with him and the partnership is particularly deep. Adrian Denson, chief legal officer at Fletchers Solicitors, says: "Rather than just do the usual 'cheque-book charity' thing, although again, financial support is vital, we try to

get involved and help in as many ways as possible. One of our solicitors sits as the chair of the charity and we cover her time for attending meetings as well as the drop-in sessions that the charity runs.

"We have also assisted them with several tender applications and recently helped the charity expand its service into the local trauma centre. While we support the golf day financially, we also provide a team of volunteers who organise the day itself, from marketing support and printing, to invites and planning, to attending on the day, to selling raffle tickets. Little things can make a big difference to them in terms of printing newsletters, supplying giveaways for events, helping design flyers."

Niche charities also offer clarity, showing where the money ends up. Companies enjoy seeing every penny put to good use. Dean Harte, managing director at RedRock Consulting, picked Bristol Children's Hospital for this reason. "With a huge charity like Cancer Research UK, the work they do is vital, but any money raised could be lost down the back of a sofa. It's one small part of a gigantic machine," he says. But Bristol Children's Hospital is transparent: "There's a direct impact. We know exactly where every penny goes."

The list of vital, but off-beat, charities is long and distinguished. From abused spouses and disorderly teenagers, to war-torn regions of Africa and polysyllabic maladies, there's the perfect cause just waiting for a donor with an equally esoteric view of the world. ♦



Staff from *Ensemble Pour la Difference* charity, helping install telecommunications, and funding micro-businesses, in East Congo

# Making fistula history

Thousands of women in Kenya suffering from obstetric fistula, a painful and distressing condition, have had their lives transformed. Now there's an opportunity to help many thousands more

**H**aving a child is one of the most fulfilling and rewarding of all human experiences. And yet for some women, especially those in the developing world, elation and hope can turn to pain and misery as they find themselves suffering from a little discussed, very painful and distressing condition called fistula.

Essentially, an obstetric fistula is a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder that is caused by prolonged obstructed labour when emergency care is unavailable, causing either faecal or urinary incontinence or both.

Fortunately, the condition has been virtually eradicated in developed countries. However, this is not the case in developing countries. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that 3,000 new cases of obstetric fistula occur annually in Kenya alone. The persistent smell of constantly leaking urine and faeces means that obstetric fistula sufferers are often stigmatised.

Their husbands might reject them and send them back to their families who, in many cases, don't want

anything to do with them either. Women with the condition are often ostracised by their villages and their communities. They're also often denied access to education and employment, which means that they live in isolation and poverty.

Action on Fistula™ is a pioneering programme which by May this year, had transformed the lives of 3,666 women in Kenya who were suffering with obstetric fistula. Launched in 2014, thanks to a grant given to the Fistula Foundation by Astellas Pharma Europe Ltd, an affiliate of Astellas Pharma Inc, Action on Fistula wants

## About Astellas Pharma Europe Ltd

Astellas Pharma Europe has committed to give grant-funding of €2.25 million over six years to Action on Fistula. Following a hugely impactful and successful grant investment of nearly €1.5 million during its first phase, Astellas Pharma Europe, has given an additional grant of €750,000 between 2017 and 2020.

## About Fistula Foundation

Founded in 2000, the Fistula Foundation is dedicated to ending the suffering caused by the child-birth injury of obstetric fistula. It has worked across 31 countries at 150 sites on two continents, Africa and Asia.

“After living lives of pain, misery and destitution they can re-join society



Sponsored and funded by Astellas Pharma Europe

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### A new lease of life

In 1971, aged 17, Queen developed an obstetric fistula. During her second pregnancy, she was left in labour for two days before being taken to a healthcare facility. The prolonged labour resulted in an obstetric fistula and she was left unable to walk. When she returned home, she was shunned by her husband and felt deeply isolated. She endured double

incontinence for 40 years, before finally being treated by the Action on Fistula programme. After this long period of abuse, pain and shame, Queen was identified by community members and referred to the Gynocare Fistula Centre to repair her obstetric fistula. She received free surgery and is now enjoying a new lease of life.

to help more than 4,500 women to access fistula treatment by 2020.

The first phase of Action on Fistula ran from 2014 to 2017, with Astellas contributing €1.5 million to the Fistula Foundation via a grant to set up and run the programme. Action on Fistula was highly commended at the PMLiVE Awards 2015 as well as winning 'Excellence in CSR' at the Communiqué Awards.

Action on Fistula is based on an innovative, integrated programme that allows surgeons, outreach workers and hospitals to share resources and information so that they can treat women more effectively and do so with the highest levels of care.

"The way these women's lives has been transformed by this simple but highly effective surgery is almost impossible to imagine unless you've seen and talked to them," says Kate Grant, CEO of the Fistula Foundation. "Fistula is an incredibly cruel condition that doesn't just cause pain and discomfort to millions of women as urine and faeces leak from their bodies, but it means that they often lose their families, their livelihoods and their feelings of self-worth."

Action on Fistula has significantly increased surgical capacity through training six Kenyan surgeons to internationally recognised standards and certification by the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO). It has also established a fistula treatment network that extends access to services and has established six treatment centres to provide fistula surgeries.

In addition, Action on Fistula has also built its first hospital, the Gynocare Women's and Fistula Hospital, which opened in October 2016 in Eldoret, a city in western Kenya. Its opening was welcomed by local people as well as those in need of treatment.

"Women will stay at Gynocare for many days, sometimes months, because of the damage they have suffered," says Dr Hillary Mabeya, an experienced surgeon who opened

the Gynocare Fistula Centre in 2011 with the aim of treating some of the poorest sufferers in Kenya. "We've developed a close-knit family that helps these women feel at home."

In the second phase of the programme, which runs from 2017 to 2020, Action on Fistula will continue to reach more women and increase specialist treatment capacity by extending its treatment network to up to eight treatment centres and by training an additional six surgeons and ten fistula nurses to support women through their treatment journey. In addition, it wants to establish 20 support groups to help recovering fistula patients with psychosocial assistance, economic empowerment and income-generating activities to enable them to return to their communities.

"The joy and the gratitude that women who have this surgery express to the surgeons and support teams are quite humbling," says Kate Grant. "After living lives of pain, misery and destitution, they can rejoin society. No woman should have to suffer this horrible condition. It's been largely eradicated in the developed world - now we need to ensure that every woman suffering from fistula gets the treatment that they deserve regardless of where they live."

**3,666**

women in Kenya whose lives have been transformed by Action on Fistula's pioneering programme

**295**

community health workers trained and empowered

**10,600**

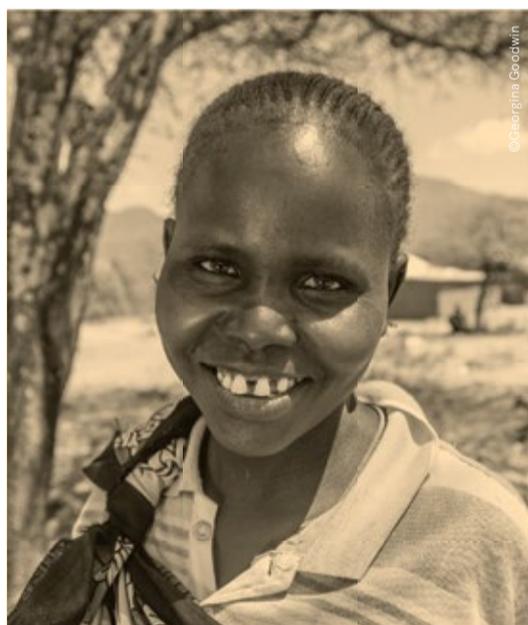
outreach activities conducted across Kenya to identify and bring women in for treatment

**862 k+**

community members who have received messages about fistula and treatment availability

Action on Fistula aims to help more than 4,500 women in Kenya to get access to fistula treatment by 2020. Astellas is contributing €750,000 of the €3.9 million needed to run the second phase of the programme. In order for Action on Fistula to continue this life-changing work, it needs vital additional financial support. If you're interested in helping more women to escape the effects of this distressing condition and to transform their lives, contact Fistula Foundation via [www.fistulafoundation.org](http://www.fistulafoundation.org).

**Action on Fistula**



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### Help is available

When Helen gave birth alone at home, her baby was stillborn. During her traumatic labour, she also developed a fistula and began leaking urine. She discovered through her pastor that her condition could be treated. Pastor Raphael had been trained through the Action on

Fistula programme to sensitise his community to the symptoms of fistula and reassure women living with the devastating condition that help was available. Thanks to Action on Fistula and Pastor Raphael, Helen has now been treated and is living a happy life.



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# Q&A

## ‘Everyone deserves proper legal representation’



It’s hard to think of two places less alike than a Jamaican jail and the City of London. So why does **Graham Huntley**, a specialist in commercial and banking litigation, and chairman of the Capital Cases Charitable Trust, defend prisoners in the Caribbean?

**SIMON BROOKE**

**Q How did you first become involved in this work?**

**A** When I qualified in 1986 many people didn’t even know what *pro bono* meant. The work of the Capital Cases Charitable Trust started when a tremendous lawyer called Bernard Simons, who was committed to helping people on death row in the Caribbean, said to the big City law firms: “You’ve got huge resources. You ought to be able to help with this.” One of the firms he approached was the one I was working for. Mine was the only hand that went up, but I’m not surprised really. It was like asking who’d like to fix the vending machine.

**Q Why did you put your hand up?**

**A** Because it sounded like extremely important and interesting work. We formed the London Panel, a group of solicitors who would engage barristers to take appeals of those on death row in Jamaica, Trinidad and other countries to the Privy Council, which is the final Court of Appeal for these territories. The panel needed someone to organise its work and so I became its first secretary. The Capital Cases Charitable Trust, which I now chair, was formed out of that panel.

**Q Whatever their culpability, you’re dealing with what many people might regard as some pretty unpleasant characters, aren’t you?**

**A** Everyone deserves proper legal representation. There’s a lot of concern about the alleged institutional failures in the legal system in this country, but the level of funding for legal aid even for those facing a murder charge in the Caribbean is very limited. This means that defence work is often skimpy and the impact on the quality of justice is palpable.

In this work, you see enough of these cases to begin to know when somebody clearly didn’t do what they’re being accused of. The system needs to be seen to work and when it doesn’t work that needs to be shown up, otherwise you’re left with a criminal justice process that no one can rely on.

**Q How does it work in practice? Do you visit your clients in prison in the Caribbean?**

**A** We have systems in place to streamline the production of documents by working with local lawyers. There’s no actual need for a British lawyer to go out there but, in some cases, you just want to get the facts straight and hear them first hand. One advantage I have is that I understand the local dialect and so I can talk to these guys and understand what they really want to say.

**Q I can imagine that young lawyers would be happy to support well-known charities focused on groups in society that it’s easy to sympathise with, but is it difficult to persuade them to do this kind of work?**

**A** Don’t underestimate the willingness of young lawyers to assist here. The challenge is allowing them to do so in an increasingly heavily managed corporate process around *pro bono* work. If your project doesn’t fit those criteria then it can be very difficult to get permission to commit your own time to it, let alone the firm’s other resources.

**There’s a lot of concern about the alleged institutional failures in the legal system in this country but the level of funding for legal aid, even for those facing a murder charge in the Caribbean, is very limited**

I remember a senior partner of a firm where I was a junior associate becoming somewhat frustrated that his own associate was still involved in some urgent work on a death row case. He asked: “Haven’t the Jamaicans hung the fellow yet?” I replied thankfully no. And the whole point was that we were trying to keep him alive until we could resolve his legal issues which, as it happens, we did.

We’re now increasing the amount of work we do to deal with the volume of life sentence cases. Our plan is to send one of our PAs out to Trinidad so that she can introduce herself to people on the ground there and speed up the casework.

**Q What reaction do you get when you talk about your *pro bono* work?**

**A** Oddly enough, sometimes in Jamaica or other Caribbean islands, a lot of people will say to foreign lawyers like me, “Why are you doing this kind of work? You should hang them from the highest tree around.” I say, “But what if you were charged with murder?” to which they reply, “I’d want the best representation possible to put my case to the Privy Council.”

Here, in the UK, people generally say, “How interesting, we can do that sort of work, can we?” They might be familiar with raising money for big, well-known charities, but they’re genuinely intrigued by what the Capital Cases Charitable Trust does. ♦



## STAFF BUY-IN



# Getting staff buy-in for niche charities

How can business leaders encourage staff buy-in for a charity that is focused on a less well-known or initially unappealing cause?

SIMON BROOKE

**Y**ou're the chief executive of the company or the leader of the organisation and you've decided that it should support a charity. If that charity is big and has a high profile, and if it's focused on a cause or group in society that is immediately well known and appealing, you should have little difficulty in gaining buy-in from your staff.

But what if your staff have never heard of the charity or it supports a cause that is not immediately attractive?

"It's incredibly difficult for most charities to secure support from the corporate sector, but for small charities, with turnover under

£1 million, supporting a health condition which only affects one in 5,000 people in the UK, the challenge is even greater," says Sue Farrington, chief executive of Scleroderma & Raynaud's UK. Scleroderma is a rare, chronic disease of the immune system, blood vessels and connective tissue, while with Raynaud's disease the small blood vessels in the extremities, such as hands and feet, fingers or toes, are over-sensitive to stress and even the slightest changes in temperature.

"What has worked for us in the past is where an individual with the condition, in our case scleroderma, works within the organisation and can tell their own story," she explains. "In the same way that individual giving is driven by a connection with family and friends, here the personal connection with colleagues is a powerful way for employees to engage first hand with the issue and the real-time challenges of a co-worker."

Having decided to support a niche charity, online sock retailer SockShop chose one that has a connection with its business sector. Even if they've heard of trench foot, many people might associate the condition with soldiers in the First World War. However, the condition, which is caused by prolonged exposure to damp and cold, can cause pain and long-term

damage to feet, affects many homeless people.

Working with Barnabus, a Manchester-based homeless charity, SockShop has helped to alleviate the problem by donating socks, giving 20,000 in readiness for last winter. "Although there is a lot of general support and media interest in homelessness, there's not enough support offered in direct response to the issues and suffering homeless people face on a daily basis," says David Rigby, campaign co-ordinator at SockShop.

The company launched an information campaign to convince staff of the merits of combating this often neglected condition. "After sharing the stark reality of why rough sleepers are so vulnerable to developing trench foot, our staff didn't need much persuading to offer their support," says Mr Rigby.

Digital marketing agency twentysix is supporting a small local charity called Max Appeal that helps families affected by a condition called DiGeorge syndrome. This can cause a number of problems including heart defects and learning difficulties. Currently there is no cure.

"It's naturally easier to support a cause that is already in the front of the country's consciousness. Everyone runs the marathon for NSPCC or buys a red nose for Comic Relief because it's become a part of

Bigger charities often get widespread national support at large-scale events such as the London Marathon, while smaller organisations lose out

the national calendar," says Gail Dudleston, global chief executive of twentysix.

"While all forms of charity support are of course fantastic, the big dogs are already getting national, if not international, support so we wanted to work with a charity that really spoke to us as a Yorkshire-based business and where our efforts are able to contribute to a really significant change on a local scale."

The fact that a member of staff's daughter suffers from the condition has helped develop buy-in from other employees. However, Ms Dudleston adds: "I also believe a lot of influence comes from the attitude at the top. If the leadership team truly rallies to the cause, and communicates it continuously to staff and clients, they're much more likely to get on board with the efforts being made to support it."

**It's incredibly difficult for most charities to secure support from the corporate sector, but for small charities supporting a health condition that only affects one in 5,000 people in the UK, the challenge is even greater**

Andy Payne, director of consultancy at Scarlett Abbott, an internal communications agency says: "You need to tell a compelling story of why the charity exists, what the charity does that is so compelling, why this is important to the company, why this is important for employees and what you need people to do."

He also advises company bosses to take the lead to encourage staff engagement. "Employees are more sensitive to the overall employment package, and the company's stance on charity and corporate social responsibility activities can play a huge part in their desire to join and stay with a business."

Daniel Fluskey, head of policy and external affairs at the Institute of Fundraising, says: "A one-to-one relationship is the most powerful and engaging one, it's hard to have a relationship with a 'company', but smaller charities can have a relationship with individual people."

He advises boards and business leaders to encourage buy-in from their staff in ways that are similar to those used by fundraisers to generate support for good causes. These include making the topic relevant to the individual or company goals, confidently stating how their time and/or their money can make a real difference to the cause, and to explain how helping the charity will benefit the company and its staff. ♦

# Smaller charities ready to work more closely with business

In an increasingly uncertain world, what does the future hold for smaller charities focusing on often unmet needs?

SIMON BROOKE

Whether it's Brexit or artificial intelligence, big data or constantly evolving regulation, the future looks increasingly uncertain for all sectors.

For smaller charities focusing on unmet needs that are looking to increase or simply maintain income, as well as retaining talent and promoting awareness to audiences that are bombarded with information, the future can appear particularly daunting. Corporate sponsorships and connections are therefore becoming increasingly sought after.

According to a survey of smaller charities published in late-2017 by the Garfield Weston Foundation, only 39 per cent of those asked felt that their staff and volunteers had all the skills required to prosper in the next five years, while 77 per cent had no plan for dealing with a surge in demand for services.

Small charities often lack expertise in building capacity and other business challenges, the foundation notes. So, along with its grants programmes, it has launched a strategic initiative to build skill and capability with a number of partners, including Pilotlight, the Cranfield Trust, the Media Trust and others, to connect charities with business

leaders who provide essential support with strategic planning.

"Sustainable funding is the greatest challenge by far and we do not have the reserves of many larger charities," says Ava Easton, chief executive of Encephalitis. "That means we do not have the resources to deliver huge campaigns, so persuading people to support us, using the personalised approach that works best for us, is time consuming. Some 97 per cent of charities are small and we are the ones that do most of the support, yet the 3 per cent of larger charities is where the public focus is and where the decisions are made."

However, being the only charity focusing on a particular medical condition can have its advantages as well as its challenges. "We deal with a unique condition, and we are the only resource of our kind in the world delivering direct support, raising global awareness and participating in research, so we're unique too," says Dr Easton.

Awards such as the *Charity Times* Charity of the Year with an income of under £1 million have raised its profile and helped the charity to position itself as a provider of spokespeople. Consulting on scripts for a recent storyline in the Channel 4 soap *Hollyoaks* will lead to new opportunities, Dr Easton believes.

Aisling Burnand, chief executive of the Association of Medical Research Charities, sees collaboration with other charities and businesses as key to future success. "Smaller charities have the ability to be more agile and make the most of opportunities in areas such as digital health," she says. "They can be really creative in the way they work with businesses and each other."

**Sustainable funding is the greatest challenge by far and we do not have the reserves of many larger charities**

The possibility of treatments entering human clinical trial stage for epidermolysis bullosa (EB), a group of genetic skin conditions which cause the skin to blister and tear at the slightest touch, points to a brighter future for DEBRA, a charity that focuses on the condition.

"Now there are opportunities for us to fund small-scale clinical trials which bridge the gap between laboratory understanding of the condition and investment in large-scale trials from big pharmaceutical companies that have the potential to bring effective therapies to market," says chief executive Ben Merret. "Over the next few years, we also anticipate that our partnership with the NHS will continue to develop

39%

of smaller charities feel their staff and volunteers have all the skills required to prosper in the next five years

77%

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Garfield Weston Foundation

and grow, enhancing the healthcare available to people suffering from EB, and making a real difference to the quality of life here and now."

For NMO SPECTRUM-UK, which supports sufferers of neuromyelitis optica (NMO) and works towards a cure for what is also known as Devic's disease, an autoimmune condition characterised by inflammation of the optic nerves and spinal cord, increased compliance such as the General Data Protection Regulation is a growing challenge. "Large charities have admin staff who can handle this regulation, but the smaller ones simply don't," says chief executive Anthony Hughes-McCann.

However, he views the growth of online charitable donation providers, such as JustGiving and store cards that enable donations, as positive developments for smaller charities. Mr Hughes-McCann also believes that the Charity Commission should consider differentiating between small charities and what he calls "worthy causes", in other words small campaigns and one-off events.

Corporate support is key to the successful future of many smaller charities. "Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is increasingly prominent and important across all sectors – consumers are actively choosing to buy and obtain services from companies with CSR policies and programmes," adds Mr Merret. "DEBRA is actively working with companies to help fulfil their CSR policies."

Partner charities of the Garfield Weston Foundation are reporting an increasing trend for businesses wanting to engage more with the charities they support. Employees might provide skills and advice rather than, for example, a group day out to paint a building or redevelop a garden, something that smaller charities can increasingly benefit from.

Philippa Charles, the foundation's director, concludes: "This is a positive development as it can also lead to individual giving as well as the charity being able to access skills and experience that they wouldn't be able to afford otherwise – charities that embrace this may find some great relationships developing." ♦



Charities often miss out on donations as potential donors carry less cash than they used to; contactless donations, shown here in a trial by Barclaycard last year, present a big opportunity



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