

Cover my shame

How one woman was abandoned and ostracized, and how a single operation transformed her life



If you have a teenage daughter (or at least remember how it was to be fourteen), you'll know about the basic need that most young adults have to separate a little from their family; a short-term, voluntary exile. They may not crave a rite of passage, demanding just a little privacy; a little space, perhaps, in which to navigate their way from childhood into adulthood.

It didn't work quite this way for Roshida (above). She was

compelled to live in isolation and spent her teens living in a cattle shed at a distance from her parents' home; she was unable to work, as this would have required her to come into contact with other people, and was left entirely dependent on the goodwill of her family to provide for her.

She had married young (about the age of twelve - not uncommon in rural Bangladesh) and quickly become pregnant, but when she went into labour,

the baby was lying across her womb rather than head down. The baby's arm came out first, and the baby died.

Roshida soon became pregnant again, and this time, the baby was lying in the correct position. She had a prolonged labour at home, and tragically her second child also died, and as a result of the long labour, Roshida had internal injuries—a hole in the birth canal—and found that she was incontinent of urine. Her husband divorced her, and she lived out her teens with this stigmatising condition until a LAMB community health worker told her that there was help—and hope—and took her to LAMB Hospital.

During her stay, Roshida found it painfully difficult to interact with those around her, but she underwent successful surgery, and fourteen days later, with her wound fully healed, she was discharged from LAMB hospital, and dry for the first time in years.

Three months on, she returned to the hospital a changed woman; confident, able to earn some money and to play a part in her family and local community. When LAMB staff asked her if she would be prepared to speak at the opening of the Fistula Unit, she said, "Why not? People need to know." The young woman who had spent her teenage years in isolation, who had been too embarrassed to lift her face, told her story to 100 people.

LAMB's silver jubilee

This November, it's 25 years since LAMB Hospital first opened its doors. During that time, in the hospital,

- **one million out-patients** have been served
- **100,000 in-patients** have been treated
- more than **30,000 babies** have been born.

But the work of LAMB Project has extended far beyond the hospital walls:

- **half a million community clinic patients** have been served through village-empowered and operated clinics
- more than **13,000 people** from Government, from LAMB & from other NGOs have received high quality training
- LAMB's **community health education** and **microfinance** schemes continue to have a positive impact on local communities.

Prayer guide

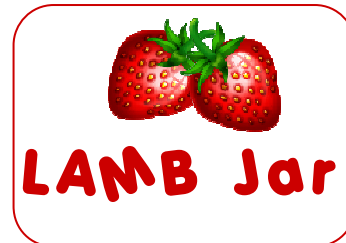
We join with LAMB in giving thanks for all that has been achieved in the last 25 years for the people of north west Bangladesh.

LAMB hospital has an urgent need to find two experienced obstetricians. Please pray that this pressing need will be met.

But most of all, please pray for the people in the communities served by LAMB Project.

How LAMB Project changes lives

Roshida suffered from a preventable condition. Care during her delivery would most likely have prevented the baby's death and the fistula developing. Constantly leaking urine not only makes women social outcasts, but can also lead to kidney damage and ulcerations. It is a wretched condition. LAMB's community workers seek out those affected and bring them to hospital for surgery. Crucially, LAMB is also working to reduce the incidence of obstetric fistula by teaching family planning, by training birth attendants and by providing acute obstetric interventions, such as caesarean section.



We are delighted to tell you that our LAMB Jar labels have proved both popular and wonderfully effective. We have already received significant donations from people who have cashed in the pennies and sent us their pounds. For example,

- One supporter took his Lamb Jar to work and a couple of days later found that it had been filled by his colleagues while he was away from the office.
- Another supporter found her elderly father tipping his own copper collection into her jar.

So please pass on the enclosed label if you can, and email rc@lhcf.org.uk if you want more. Please keep dropping any coins you can spare into your LAMB Jar. Thank you!

Support LHCF with everyclick.com

Do you use the internet? Here's a simple way of raising money to help LAMB Project, at no cost to yourself:

- register at everyclick.com (this is very simple and takes a couple of minutes)
- select "Lamb Health Care Foundation" as your charity
- raise money every time you search the web!

Who we are

For new readers: LAMB Health Care Foundation (LHCF) is a UK charity (registered charity no: 110217) providing financial support to the innovative and exemplary work of LAMB Project in north-west Bangladesh. Through clinical provision in its 150-bed hospital and extensive community-based programmes, LAMB Project provides heavily subsidized and often free healthcare to some of the poorest people in the region. For further information, please write to us (address overleaf) or visit www.lhcf.org.uk for more information.

Give a little love...

introducing the LHCF gift card

Earlier this year we began to send out 'gift cards' to friends who became parents, letting them know that a donation had been made to LAMB Project to mark the safe arrival of their baby. It's worked so well that we've been asked us to develop this into a gift card for Christmas. The box (right) provides examples of what your gift could fund. If you'd like to make a donation and pass on one or more cards as a Christmas gift, please donate online at www.lhcf.org.uk & email jb@lhcf.org.uk, or write, with a cheque, to the address overleaf.

£5 bed & food for a patient for 3 days

£10 a baby's normal delivery

£25 Hepatitis vaccine for one person

£35 an emergency appendectomy

£50 junior nurse's salary for 1 month

£55 a Caesarean section



Talking cure

Just outside Parbatipur station, a community of 35 families lives between the railway tracks in makeshift plastic-covered shacks that become unbearable in the heat and provide limited shelter in the monsoon. They share one water pump and, until recently, had no latrine. These, the poorest people in the town, survive mainly by begging. LAMB staff hold a

monthly meeting here, sharing ways to improve basic health, encouraging women to share their experiences and thus develop ways of helping themselves. Working alongside the municipal committee, LAMB Project is enabling these women to improve their families' health and livelihoods. One tangible result: they've successfully lobbied the Municipality to build a latrine – a basic service that will dramatically improve their wellbeing.