

FOCUSED CLUBFOOT AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY REACHED MORE PEOPLE

- We spread the message that clubfoot is treatable with 3 campaigns, with a collective audience of more than **111 million**, and an advertising value equivalent (AVE) of **R 2,481,357.43**.
- During March, we featured **World Birth Defects Day** and the participation of orthopaedic surgeons in the **Cape Town Cycle Tour**.
- Our executive director gave a presentation at the GCI **“Early Detection and Referral Knowledge Sharing Forum”** webinar in May.
- For **World Clubfoot Day** in June we launched our **STEPPING UP** campaign. The focus of our campaign was to showcase the village it takes to treat clubfoot – doctors, health professionals, clinic staff, families, donors and Steps.
- **STEPPING UP** is a new monthly giving initiative where supporters can sign up to give R60 or \$5 monthly to support one child through their full four-year journey to full mobility.
- For **World Clubfoot Day** in June we also shared positive stories from clubfoot patients that had graduated from their treatment and from our clinic partners across our social accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn), a total of 34 posts over the month.
- For **Disability Awareness Month** in November, we highlighted the Clubfoot Africa Conference and that clubfoot is a treatable birth condition that should not be a disability.
- Our executive director gave a presentation at the **2022 Rural Health Conference** in September.
- We were interviewed for a **BBC podcast** on clubfoot treatment and the Clubfoot Africa Conference in November that was broadcast globally.
- We were honoured to be a winner in the inaugural **South African Leading Women in CSI awards** in August.

Outcomes

- Clubfoot is a recognised condition.
- More support from the public.
- Communities are sensitised and stigma of clubfoot reduced.
- Clinic staff morale increased.
- More people know that clubfoot is treatable.
- Through early diagnosis more patients are treated soon after birth, reducing the burden of over-crowded clinics.



MEDIA INTEREST

Stigma erased step by step

Children born with clubfoot are not left without hope.

This condition, caused by a shortened Achilles tendon, is a foot deformity that makes walking difficult or impossible.

However, non-surgical treatment has been proven to reverse the condition. This method of treatment, known as the Ponseti method, was highlighted on 3 March in commemoration of World Birth Defects Day.

Because congenital anomalies are still regarded with suspicion around the world, it is hoped that the conditions can be destigmatised through awareness campaigns.

Steps Clubfoot Care, a non-profit organisation, is raising much-needed awareness about clubfoot in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Seychelles.

Karen Mara Moss founded the organisation in 2005 when her son was born with clubfoot.

"The condition results in one or both feet twisting inward and pointing downward," said Moss.

"When my child was born with this condition, I felt very alone. It took a great deal of research to find the Ponseti method, and a great deal of investment to have my son treated in America. It became my passion not only to bring this treatment method back to South Africa, but to prioritise patient support."



A cast being fitted to a baby born with clubfoot.

Photo: Supplied

Moss established the organisation with the goal of introducing and promoting the non-invasive Ponseti method of clubfoot treatment in Southern Africa and supporting families going through treatment.

"The national network of 35 South African partner clinics treated 2 902 patients and undertook 11 161 clubfoot clinic patient appointments."

About 11 000 children in Southern Africa are born with clubfoot every year.

"In the past, many of these children were regarded with superstition and fear, and some were forced to live a life of disability," she said.

"While this still occurs, there is increasing awareness around the world that this condition is not caused by the parents. It can be very effectively treated, and these children can go on to live active, productive lives with full mobility."

■ The Ponseti method is a specific technique of manipulation of the deformity, followed by the application of a plaster cast with the foot in the corrected position.

THE GIVE BACK

CLUBFOOT

THE CONGENITAL DEFECT THAT CAN BE TREATED

Statistics show that Southern and East Africa have the second highest numbers of clubfoot in the world, with an estimated one in every 500 children born with clubfoot. Every year, around 11 000 children are born with clubfoot in Southern Africa. This results in one or both feet (unilateral or bilateral) twisted inward and pointed downward. As a result, the foot is rigid and cannot be pushed back into the correct position. The majority of children born with clubfoot are not missing any bones, muscles, or connective tissue. It is a congenital condition, meaning that it is always present at birth when it occurs.

In the past, children with clubfoot were regarded with superstition and fear and forced to live a life of disability. Whilst this does still occur, there is increasing awareness around the world that parents do not cause this condition, that clubfoot can be effectively treated, and that these children can live active, productive lives with full mobility.

Steps Clubfoot Care is an NPO that operates in South Africa and supports treatment providers in Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania and Seychelles. Founded in 2005 by Karen Mara Moss, CEO and founder of Steps Clubfoot Care, Steps' purpose is to introduce and promote the non-invasive Ponseti Method of clubfoot treatment in Southern

Africa and support families going through treatment. Their innovative approach and theory of change model have seen them win numerous awards, such as the SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards.

Steps support 35 partner clinics in the South African state health sector by training healthcare workers, focusing on advocacy and supplying clubfoot braces. In addition, Steps train clubfoot clinic coordinators on parent education and clinics are provided with parent education leaflets, posters, training, and medical devices. Steps also mentors and supports clubfoot providers in neighbouring countries with educational resources, training and medical devices.

In 2021, Steps recorded 709 new patients enrolled on the clubfoot treatment programme. Also, the national network of 35 South African partner clinics treated 2,902 patients and undertook 11,161 clubfoot clinic patient appointments.

"Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic created challenges for clubfoot treatment, with some of the clinics closed or only partially operating during lockdown periods. However, the statistics are still excellent," says Karen Mara Moss, CEO and founder of Steps Clubfoot Care. "King Edward VII Hospital also joined the Steps Clubfoot Care programme at the beginning of 2022, and

The screenshot shows a BBC Sounds interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for Home, News, Sport, Reel, Worklife, Travel, Future, Culture, and a search icon. Below this, the 'SOUNDS' logo is prominent, followed by 'Home', 'Music', 'Podcasts', and 'My Sounds'. The main content area features a red 'AFRICA DAILY' header with a tree icon. Below the header, the text reads 'Africa Daily' and 'How can the treatment of clubfoot be improved across Africa?'. A 'WORLD SERVICE' logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

Cyclists raise R66 000 for clubfoot

A team of orthopaedic surgeons and alumni from Tygerberg Hospital's Orthopaedic Clinic recently completed a set and enjoy 2022 Cape Town Cycle Tour race, all in aid of charity.



The tour was held on Sunday 13 March. The R66 000 raised during the tour will help to change the lives of 35 children born with clubfoot, the hospital said.

Clubfoot is the most common non-traumatic limb defect globally. The baby is born with one or both feet twisted downwards and towards, in a rigid position. If left untreated, the child will be unable to wear shoes or walk normally, leading to a life of disability, inclu-

sions and pain. Unlike most other birth defects, clubfoot is treatable.

"When I was a medical student, I learnt about clubfoot early in my career. I think the more people are aware in the rural and underserved communities, the earlier they can get help, and the better the outcome will be for all our patients. Clubfoot treatment is very fulfilling, as we see how children progress from immobility to mobility, so it seemed apt to us to raise funds through something that demands physical mobility like the Cape Town Cycle Tour," said Dr Henrie Kriss, Orthopaedic Surgeon at Tygerberg Hospital.

Steps, a South African based non-profit organisation (NPO), which supports babies born with clubfoot across South Africa and further afield, was founded by Karen Moss in 2005.

The Steps Clubfoot Care's patient-centred support programme works with its partner clinics nationally, including the clubfoot clinic at Tygerberg Hospital – a partnership that has been in place since 2013.

"In South Africa, Steps Charity NPO is the only non-profit focused on clubfoot treatment and, since its establishment in 2006, has enabled more than 15 000 children to access the Ponseti Method of treatment," said Moss.

She added: "We were established in response to the huge need for clubfoot treatment support in Southern Africa. Less than 1% of patients have access to health insurance or the means to pay for treatment. Since clubfoot is a treatable condition, we had to do something to help children avoid a life of disability. The Ponseti Method was successful with my own child and so I have worked to introduce it to South Africa and neighbouring countries to try and assist all parents whose children are born with the same condition."

Kriss concluded: "It was a gratifying race and a huge amount of fun. Raising for a worthy cause like Steps has made it so much more enjoyable."

Henrie and Cain Bosch also took part in the cycle tour in aid of Steps Clubfoot Care.

Tygerberg Hospital orthopaedic surgeons, Johan le Roux, Renier Kriss, Theo-Vito Okani, Henrick van Zijl and Doreen Fourieff enjoying a well-deserved drink after completing the recently held Cape Town Cycle Tour.

Nomsa Afrika and Nazeem Wyk completed the Cape Town Cycle Tour for the first time in support of Steps Clubfoot Care.



SOCIAL MEDIA

