



# Cleft lip and palate operations

Changing minds, changing lives

We continue to extend our impact through new partnerships to help vulnerable communities in India, develop their capacity to meet basic needs and create solutions to poverty and injustice. Our latest collaboration is born out of a mutual ideal that good healthcare should be available to all, regardless of wealth.

## The Medlife Foundation

The Medlife Foundation is an inspirational charity based in the State of Gujarat, North West India. In poor communities of India many thousands of people are born or live with disfiguring clefts.

The medical team performs reconstructive surgery for FREE for children and adults who are drawn from some of the poorest sections of rural Gujarat. Often families travel days from their homes in order to have their loved ones treated. We are of the view that these life-changing operations are the best options to liberate the lives of these vulnerable people, giving them not just a new smile, but a second chance at life.

## The Issue

A cleft is a birth defect that occurs when the tissues of the lip and/or palate of the fetus do not fuse very early in pregnancy. A cleft lip, sometimes referred to as a 'harelip', is an opening in the upper lip that can extend into the base of the nostril. A cleft palate is an opening in the roof of the mouth.

## The Stigma

In conservative rural societies, where looks can seem to be of paramount importance, 'looking different' can cause a severe sense of insecurity and inadequacy. Cleft children are often bullied which can lead to a lack of confidence. If the child or adult has a speech impediment caused by their cleft, this can lead to difficulty with communication and associated feelings of inadequacy and isolation through shyness or inhibition.

## As a result of this deformity, most:

- cannot eat or speak properly
- aren't allowed to attend school
- shunned and ostracised by their communities
- will never get married or hold a job
- succumb to a solitary life lived in the protection of their homes



Before



After

*Help us to transform more lives*

**£170 pays for a cleft lip operation**

**£190 pays for a cleft palate operation**

We believe that everyone deserves to live their lives with dignity and for those born with a cleft lip, cleft palate deformity...**dignity begins with a smile.**