



WORLDWIDE FISTULA FUND

HEALING WOMEN, RESTORING LIVES

Opportunity: A Basic Human Right

Obstetric fistula is, at heart, a human rights issue. The women (and girls) who develop this condition do so because of lack of health care, lack of education and lack of opportunities in their communities to do much else than serve as wives and mothers. While the Worldwide Fistula Fund is dedicated to eradicating fistula (both by treating existing cases and preventing new ones), we are also addressing the larger issue: that women in developing countries simply do not have the same rights as their male counterparts.

When our new hospital, the [*Danja Fistula Center*](#), opens in February, we will offer the following social reintegration services to our patients to help bridge this divide:

- **Education** - WFF staff will provide instruction in literacy, basic math and other forms of basic education. The current illiteracy rate for women in Niger is more than 90-percent.
- **Micro-Lending** - Interested patients will be eligible for low interest loans to start their own business. They also will be coached in business planning and development.
- **Grain Banking** - The WFF will enable patients to buy grain in bulk during the harvest season, store their product in a secure "grain bank" until non-harvest season and then sell their grain to earn a tidy profit and support their families.
- **Vocational Training** - Women in our program will be eligible for full scholarships to attend nearby vocational schools that match their particular interests and skill sets.



HAWA'S STORY

Hawa's story is a familiar one: married at 15 to a much older man, she was pregnant within the year. Her labor lasted three days, and when it was finally over, the baby was stillborn and she had developed a fistula. Leaking urine and filled with despair over her lost child, Hawa was abandoned by her husband and forced to return to her parents' home.

In desperation, she sold all of her cows and goats to pay for traditional treatments. When they didn't work, she traveled hundreds of miles to a fistula hospital in Nigeria. She waited for surgery for four months before

- **Food and Lodging** - The *Danja Fistula Center* will offer food and housing to all of patients who want to take part in our reintegration programs.



If you would like to support our social reintegration programming, and help our patients gain the skills and confidence to pursue a better future and enjoy the rights they so deserve, [please give today](#).

finally giving up and going home.

When we met Hawa in August, she had been suffering from her fistula for six years. Bereft and broken, she spoke infrequently and smiled even less. WFF doctors performed her surgery in our new facility. As the days passed and it was clear that the sutures had held and the hole was fixed, Hawa began to emerge from her shell. She laughed and chatted with the nurses, sat in the sun and shared her story of survival with her new friends.

Just a child when she started down the horrific path of obstetric fistula, Hawa has suffered enough misery for a lifetime. Cured because of your support of the WFF, she is now looking forward to returning home and starting her life anew.

Read more [Stories of Hope](#) on our website.

Connect with the WFF

