



**WORLDWIDE FISTULA FUND**  
HEALING WOMEN, RESTORING LIVES

FEBRUARY  
2015

# HEALING & DIGNITY

The monthly newsletter for Worldwide Fistula Fund

[Home](#) | [DONATE](#) | [More Newsletters](#) | [Subscribe](#)



## Dr. Spitznagle leads WFF Rehabilitation Advisory Council to Improve and Accelerate post-surgical Fistula Healing



Dr. Tracy Spitznagle

The most obvious physical consequence for a woman with obstetric fistula is continuously leaking urine or feces. She also suffers psychological-social effects such as abandonment by her husband and shunning by her community. Less well-known are the additional physical effects on her body that must be addressed after closing the fistula.

***"The WFF Rehabilitation Advisory Council's goal is to facilitate a woman's complete post-surgical fistula recovery allowing her to return to a life of renewed connection and inclusion with her family and community."*** - Dr. Spitznagle

'Tracy,' as her colleagues call her, leads our Council to develop Danja Fistula Center's (DFC) best practices in physical and occupational therapy following surgery and to promote DFC as a model for similar centers worldwide. A prolonged, obstructed labor leading to a fistula often causes nerve damage that limits a woman's mobility and range of motion plus weakens her abdominal and pelvic floor muscles making daily tasks difficult, if not impossible.

Rural women in Africa do much heavy work such as collecting and transporting water and firewood over long distances for cooking and laundry. Should a woman return home too soon after surgery or without adequate post-surgical therapy, there is a very real risk of re-opening the fistula. Appropriate therapy helps a woman regain her range of motion and strengthen her abdominal and pelvic floor muscles by building up to and then mimicking the daily chores she will need to safely perform once she returns home.

Tracy is one of Worldwide Fistula Fund's newest Board Members. She has impressive credentials both as a Physical Therapist specializing in pelvic floor changes associated with pregnancy and incontinence disorders plus as an Associate Professor in Physical Therapy at Washington University in St. Louis.

[Learn More About Tracy](#)

## SPOTLIGHT: Loran Hollander and Cambey Mikush

This past November WFF Rehabilitation Advisory Council members, Loran Hollander and Dr. Cambey Mikush, spent 2 weeks at Danja Fistula Center. Both women had worked abroad with a commitment to improving global health issues at multiple organizations prior to joining our Council.

The pair conducted interviews and focus groups with some of the women receiving treatment at Danja and developed therapy recommendations going forward based on what they heard: "The women expressed their fear of re-injuring themselves once back home. So fearful, some were reluctant to participate in recommended post-surgical exercises," explained Loran.

[See Loran's Blog](#)



**Worldwide Fistula Fund**  
1100 E. Woodfield Road, Suite 350  
Schaumburg, IL 60173  
[www.WorldwideFistulaFund.org](http://www.WorldwideFistulaFund.org)



Founded in 1995 by Dr. L. Lewis Wall, the Worldwide Fistula Fund (WFF) is a non-profit global health organization, operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, dedicated to providing women & girls obstetric fistula prevention strategies, surgery & rehabilitation, as well as literacy education and vocational training --enabling survivors to feel empowered with self-confidence and income-generating skills to return home and secure valued roles in communities that once shunned them.