



WORLDWIDE FISTULA FUND
HEALING WOMEN, RESTORING LIVES

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HEALING & DIGNITY

The monthly newsletter for Worldwide Fistula Fund

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WFF expands OB-GYN Training in Ethiopia

Two Worldwide Fistula Fund programs in Ethiopia leverage partnerships to improve childbirth safety and maternal health through advanced OB-GYN training.



"In just two weeks, we provided expert training to OB-GYN faculty members and healing surgery to 39 women!"

- Dr. Rahel Nardos, WFF board member

WFF works with multiple partners to:

- 1) Enhance Ethiopia's Mekelle University OB-GYN residency training program and
- 2) Develop Ethiopia's first urogynecology fellowship training program in collaboration with Hamlin Fistula Center.

Urogynecology, sometimes called Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, is a specialty focused exclusively on the care of women with pelvic floor dysfunction such as urinary and fecal leakage (incontinence), bulging or falling of the vaginal tissues (prolapse), trouble urinating or passing bowel movements and pelvic pain.

Inaugural Trip

WFF board member Dr. Rahel Nardos recently led a team of 13 Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) health care providers to Ethiopia. It was the inaugural trip for a new collaboration between WFF and OHSU's Footsteps to Healing project to provide expert hands-on pelvic floor reconstructive surgical training to obstetrics-gynecology faculty.

WFF Maximizes Impact of OB-GYN Training

Training the trainers ensures that many more OB-GYNs will learn expert obstetric care and ultimately prevent and treat injuries like obstetric fistula. While providing faculty members intensive surgical training to repair pelvic organ prolapse, Dr. Nardos' team was also able to heal 39 women.

Childbirth Danger Persists Globally

- Nearly 800 women still die every day from causes related to pregnancy or childbirth: about one woman every two minutes.
- For each woman who dies, 20 - 30 more encounter complications with serious or long-lasting consequences.

Most childbirth deaths and injuries are entirely preventable.

Nardos' Commitment to Global Women's Health

Dr. Nardos completed her OB-GYN residency at Washington University in St. Louis under WFF founder Dr. Wall and considers him her mentor. A WFF grant enabled Dr. Nardos to work as a fistula surgeon in Ethiopia during the year following her residency.

"After that experience transforming women's lives through healing surgery, I wanted to continue that work at OHSU, where I completed my fellowship in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive pelvic surgery" explains Dr. Nardos, "I began taking a team to Gimbe, Ethiopia, to perform childbirth injury surgeries. Joining the WFF board is a natural extension of my commitment to global women's health."

Last year, Dr. Nardos became a WFF Board member and also joined Dr. Wall in Ethiopia as he was developing enhanced doctor training programs at Mekelle University. Dr. Nardos and the OHSU team plan to make two annual trips to Ethiopia as part of this new partnership which began when Dr. Wall introduced Dr. Nardos to the Mekelle University team.

WFF's new doctor training programs are off to a great start!

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SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Yibrah's visit to the US

In our commitment to "training the trainers," WFF is sponsoring a professional development trip for Dr. Yibrah, director of the OB-GYN residency program at Mekelle. From March 22 - April 7, Dr. Yibrah is in the US for workshops organized by the Council on Residency Education in Obstetrics and Gynecology (CREOG). He will additionally complete clinical observerships at Washington University in St. Louis where WFF founder Lewis Wall is a professor, at Oregon Health & Science University where WFF board member Rahel Nardos is assistant professor and at Northwestern University. We welcome Dr. Yibrah to the US.



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Worldwide Fistula Fund (WFF) is a nonprofit global health organization that helps heal girls and women in sub-Saharan Africa who suffer from obstetric fistula. Obstetric fistula is a devastating childbirth injury that leaves a woman incontinent: leaking urine or feces through her vagina uncontrollably. WFF provides life-changing surgery, rehabilitation, support and skills training to help women build new lives and rejoin communities that once shunned them. Founded in 1995, we are the oldest organization in the United States focused on obstetric fistula.