

Catherine Hamlin
Fistula Foundation



2021
September

Tremendous Commitment

It is almost one year since *Healing Lives* was published telling the untold story of the inspiring friendship between Mamitu Gashe and Catherine Hamlin. Mamitu was by Catherine's side for 50 years. These two formidable women, together with the dedicated Ethiopian clinical team at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, made great progress in the fight to eradicate obstetric fistula from Ethiopia.

Over the past very difficult 12 months, Mamitu and the Hamlin clinical team continued that fight with tremendous commitment. Hamlin's new Patient Identification Program is systematically finding women with untreated fistula injuries and connecting them to Hamlin hospitals for treatment. We have already seen a large increase in the number of surgeries at Hamlin. The 2022 program year forecasts yet another increase.

Hamlin's new Women's Empowerment Program also launched this year, providing the opportunity for former fistula patients who need help to return to Desta Mender, Hamlin's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center for an intensive three-month vocational training program which aims to support them into employment.

Last month, a new class of midwifery students commenced their four-year BSc in Midwifery at the Hamlin College of Midwives. Next month, Hamlin will welcome the first class of midwives returning to commence Hamlin's new ground-breaking MSc in Midwifery made possible by your support.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter about the progress your support has enabled.

Thank you for all you do to help Hamlin.

We hope you are keeping well and staying safe.

Carolyn Hardy
Chief Executive Officer
Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation

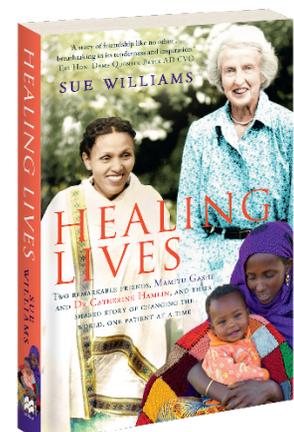
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Hamlin's exciting NEW Women's Empowerment Program!

Empower women, empower communities

Dr Catherine Hamlin believed that treating a fistula patient isn't just treating a hole in the bladder, but rather the whole woman with love and care.

In 2002, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia opened Desta Mender, Hamlin's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center, where long-term fistula patients undergo education classes and learn income-generating skills to support reintegration back into their communities and independent living.

This year, Desta Mender has launched a new Women's Empowerment Program to provide more former fistula patients with the chance to learn at Desta Mender. Training is provided by Holleta College and those women who are in need of income support are selected and invited to return for the three-month residency program to learn vital vocational skills.

With the support of Women's Hope International, this new initiative empowers women to live with choices and independence - in turn empowering their community and those around them!

Under the guidance of skilled instructors, these women acquire life-changing skills that enable them to thrive.

The Women's Empowerment Program provides a range of opportunities, including leadership and communications training, as well as small-business guidance and vocational training.

The first two cohorts of women have completed this groundbreaking program. They have returned home with new skills to positively impact their lives and communities. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is currently preparing for a third group of former patients to participate in the program.

This exciting new initiative is only possible thanks to the support of generous donors around the world. Thank you for helping to make the launch of this program possible.

"The team at Hamlin has not only brought me out of darkness, but has provided me with skills and support to make life easier. How can I express my gratitude?"
- Medina



Meet Aselefech, the pottery master!

Your support has empowered Aselefech to live a life she never thought possible. After receiving successful treatment at Hamlin for her fistula injury a few years ago, Aselefech returned to her community to be reunited with her two children. This year, Hamlin's rehabilitation and reintegration team contacted Aselefech about participating in the new Women's Empowerment Program.

During the program, Aselefech was able to develop her pottery skills using more modern techniques taught in the program's vocational training. She also received business skills training. Armed with this new knowledge and experience, Aselefech returned to her community empowered with a new way of supporting herself and her family - selling pottery goods.

Your continued support will allow us to empower even more women across Ethiopia, just like Aselefech. Every woman deserves to feel empowered and live with independence.





The Hamlin College of Midwives welcomes new students!

We are thrilled to announce that the new class of passionate midwifery students have arrived at the Hamlin College of Midwives.

The Hamlin College of Midwives welcomed 20 students who are very excited about pursuing their four-year Bachelor of Science in Midwifery degree. The students had their induction and have started classes.

Meanwhile, second and third year students are continuing their first semester studies and fourth year students have started their clinical practice placements to conduct first-hand field training in health clinics.

Every student studying at the College is on a full Hamlin scholarship, funded by generous donors like you. Thank you for making this possible.

The importance of Hamlin Midwives cannot be over emphasized. In Ethiopia, over 70% of births still take place without a doctor or midwife present. Having Hamlin Midwives stationed in rural areas across the country, ensures more Ethiopian women have access to the quality maternal health care they desperately need.

Last year alone, Hamlin Midwives delivered 24,856 babies. Not a single obstetric fistula injury occurred where a Hamlin Midwife was present.

To date, almost 200 students have graduated from the College and are working in remote areas to prevent fistulas occurring. Gradually, Dr Catherine Hamlin's dream for a midwife in every village of Ethiopia is becoming more of a reality.

Wishing all of our Hamlin midwifery students the very best of luck for a successful year of study.

"I am so proud to be a Hamlin Midwife - our work means more babies are safely delivered and far less women suffer fistula injuries. We can only do this thanks to supporters like you."

- Mahlet, Hamlin Midwife

Your support enables the use of life-saving ultrasound machines

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has taken another exciting step in their fistula prevention program, with the introduction of new GE portable VSCAN ultrasound machines.

Hamlin Midwives and College staff have completed their second round of training with the machines, which assesses the condition of pregnant women and detects abnormalities.



Over recent months, Hamlin midwifery mentors have traveled to Hamlin-supported midwifery clinics across Ethiopia to conduct over 2,200 ultrasound scans. Scan results were analyzed by the mentors and passed on for review by senior physicians, enabling more accurate, early detection of any abnormalities during pregnancy.

The ultrasound machines were funded by you, our supporters. Thank you to everyone who helped make this possible.

The use of these machines will ensure more Ethiopian women get the maternal care they need, in an accurate and timely fashion. They will assist Hamlin Midwives in preventing fistula injuries and saving maternal and neonatal lives.





“I want to help women who have suffered while giving birth - decrease their suffering in any way I can... Because these diversion surgeries are the last resort to make a woman dry, I perform them with the utmost care and diligence.”
 - Dr Wondwossen

Lives transformed, thanks to you

An obstetric fistula injury can often be repaired with a single, life-changing surgery. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia’s clinical team has performed more than 60,000 fistula-repair surgeries - more than any other facility in the world. Treatment and holistic care at Hamlin is provided free of charge to all patients, thanks to the generosity of supporters like you. Thank you.

This year, Hamlin’s treatment impact has been extraordinary. In the 12 months from July 2020 to June 2021, a record-breaking 1,567 surgeries were performed across Hamlin’s six fistula hospitals.

That’s 1,567 women whose lives have been restored. However, our work is not over yet: there are still an estimated 31,000 women living with devastating fistula injuries in Ethiopia. Hamlin’s Patient Identification Program is systematically finding women with untreated fistula injuries, living in remote areas, and connecting them to life-saving treatment.

Hamlin’s clinical team are continuing Dr Catherine Hamlin’s vision and are using their expertise to improve the wellbeing of Ethiopian women. Dr Wondwossen Ergete Woldeab is a Senior Urologist at Hamlin’s Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. He works primarily in urinary diversion surgery and ureteric implantation for lower urinary tracts that cannot be reconstructed.

Dr Wondwossen specializes in reconstructive urology, helping women who have more complex fistula cases, sometimes due to living with the condition for years or even decades. Dr Wondwossen is helping to heal the most severe injuries, giving women restored health for a new beginning.



A new beginning for three women...

Three of the women Dr Wondwossen has treated are Zigiju, Tarekech and Mulu.

Dr Wondwossen’s pioneering urinary diversion surgeries offer permanent solutions to women with complex fistula injuries. After their respective diversion surgeries, Zigiju, Tarekech and Mulu have had their severe bladder damage healed and are free from incontinence for the first time in years.

For decades, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has been blazing a trail for best-practice fistula treatment and care. Hamlin’s clinical team are constantly driving to pioneer and further develop their surgical techniques to close fistula injuries. Dr Wondwossen is no exception. His specialised work ensures more Ethiopian women can be cured of incontinence and have their health and dignity restored.

“In those 17 years with fistula I had been leading a horrible and desperate life. I lost my marriage, my home, my social life, my confidence, everything... Look at me now, I am the happiest woman in the world! Because of my diversion surgery, I have become completely dry after 17 years. I now walk around with dignity. I cannot thank you enough, all the staff and those who support this work.” - Mulu



Zigiju

Tarekech

Mulu