

2021 A Year In Review

Catherine Hamlin
Fistula Foundation



A heartfelt thanks

The last 12 months have been challenging and through it all our team at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia continued to work toward Catherine's vision of eradicating obstetric fistula in Ethiopia, providing surgical treatment and care for the world's most vulnerable women.

Thank you for supporting them. You reached deep and showed us once again how much you care about Ethiopia's extraordinary women. It has been over a year since Catherine passed the torch on and there is still much to do as we move forward on the path to eradicate fistula from Ethiopia completely.

Every fistula repair, every baby born, every time a woman returns to her community to start anew is testament to Catherine's belief that every woman matters. 2021 transpired to bring untold challenges. Catherine would have been proud of the way the Hamlin team have pulled together to deliver patient care and move long-term projects forward in very trying circumstances.

There was joy as we celebrated Mamitu returning to work with the surgical team after dedicating herself to Catherine's care for many years. We were thrilled to see another class of midwives graduate from the Hamlin College of Midwives as well as welcoming our first cohort into Hamlin's new Master of Clinical Midwifery degree.

Across the world, we have witnessed the heroic acts of frontline health workers, and the Hamlin Clinical Team is no exception. Thank you for all you did to support our work this year and a special thank you must go to our committed community of Hamlin Regular Givers. We couldn't do it without you.

Catherine never stopped believing in the power of love and community support.

We wish you a safe and happy festive season and a bright and communal 2022.

Carolyn Hardy,
CEO, Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation

Treatment FY21

91%

major fistula
surgery closure

1,567

total surgeries
in 2021

Rehabilitation FY21

58

patients completed
counselling
programs

1,052

patients enrolled
in training and
education courses

Prevention FY21

95

students
undertaking their
BSc Degree in
Midwifery

195

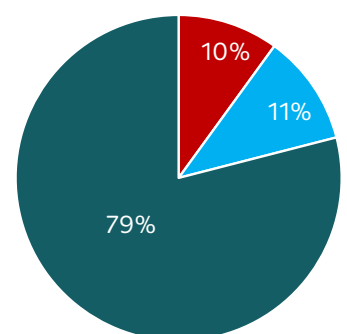
midwifery
graduates to date

How your donations were spent in FY21

Obstetric Fistula
Treatment & Prevention

CHFF Fundraising

CHFF Administration



Treatment

The physical and psychological consequences of obstetric fistula are both debilitating and heartbreaking. Yet, while obstetric fistula requires specialized treatment and care, most fistula injuries can be repaired with a simple two-hour operation. This life-changing surgery is one that can completely restore a woman's life and dignity.

Hamlin is working harder than ever to locate and treat women in remote parts of Ethiopia who have suffered alone for years, perhaps decades, without knowing that help is available. During FY2021,

hundreds of Hamlin-trained health workers went door-to-door, person-to-person, tirelessly searching for the estimated 30,000 women still physically and emotionally isolated by fistula.

These women were brought to Hamlin hospitals for treatment and, over the last 12 months, almost 1,600 surgeries were performed.

Etagegn said: *"I didn't believe that there would be a cure for me until I reached this hospital and saw the amazing care for many women like me."*

"To be able to train dedicated young doctors and midwives is marvellous for me and my loyal staff, especially as they become enthusiastic about helping these poor women. It gives me confidence that the eradication of obstetric fistula can be achieved."

Dr Catherine Hamlin



Physiotherapy services

Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI) and physical rehabilitation form an essential part of Hamlin's physiotherapy services for patients.

SUI services include training and assessment of pelvic floor muscle, overflow incontinence management, measuring residual urine, bladder training, stiff catheter training, follow up including medication or treating infection, linking the patient to social work, finance and arranging transportation for discharge.

During FY2021, 760 patients have accessed these confidence-building services for periods from seven days to six months.

1,567

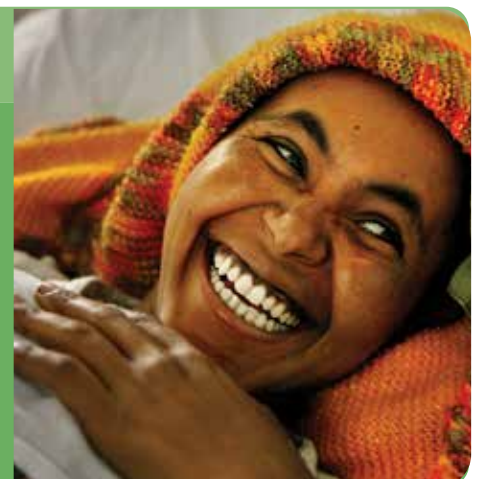
total surgeries in FY21

91%

major fistula surgery closure

Patient Identification Program

Hamlin's Patient Identification Program was launched in 2020 aiming to treat the estimated 30,000 women in Ethiopia still suffering with a fistula injury. We are seeking out every remaining patient, many in isolated rural communities and many who have lived with fistula for many years, so that they too can return to a normal happy healthy life. Initial campaigns took place in Addis Ababa and Yirgalem in January and February 2020 and a national SMS campaign was launched at the end of January 2021. As a result, we are seeing an increase in fistula surgeries on patients who have lived with fistula for many years.



Rehabilitation

The team at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Centre, Desta Mender, continues to restore the health and dignity of women who have sustained severe or complex fistula injuries. Desta Mender embodies the Hamlin Model of Care, which is grounded in a fundamental respect for women with fistula injuries and a deep commitment to the provision of complete and compassionate care.

Patients receive both physical and emotional rehabilitation during their stay, while accessing ongoing medical care for their injuries. In addition, Desta Mender gives women the opportunity to take part in literacy and numeracy classes, life skills and vocational training, empowering them to be productive members of their communities when they return home.



1,052

patients enrolled in training and education courses at Desta Mender and regional Hamlin hospitals

58

patients completed counselling programs in FY21

While COVID-19 forced Desta Mender to suspend programs during June-August last year, it reopened in September 2020.

It continues to provide Rehabilitation and Reintegration activities with appropriate protective measures taken to ensure the safety of both staff and patients.

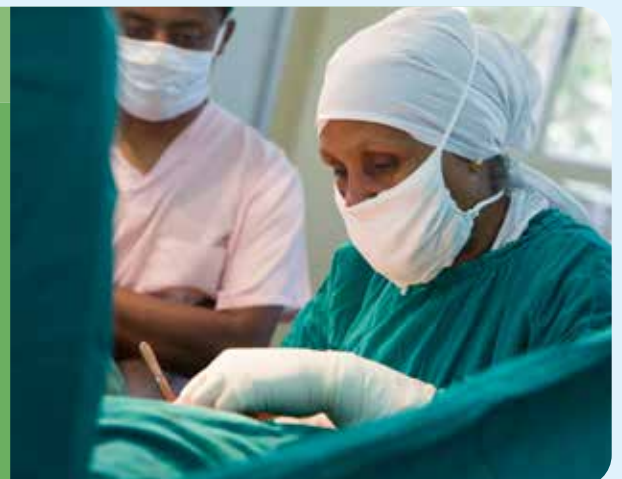
From October-December 2020, the team prepared to launch the Women's Empowerment Program through vocational and life skills training, with the first group of 44 women joining in January 2021.

“They are all precious to me. For every patient that comes to us we try to give them all the love, care and expertise that we have to help them to get better and back to a normal life.”

Dr Catherine Hamlin

Mamitu returns

After spending more than five years away from patient care and surgeries, caring for Catherine in her final years, Mamitu Gashe has come back to practice fistula repair surgery. This has been one of the most exciting moments for everyone at Hamlin this year and is a sign of the continuing legacy of Catherine and Reg.



Prevention

Hamlin Midwives play an essential role in preventing obstetric fistulas and saving the lives of hundreds of mothers and babies every year. Based in more than 50 Hamlin-supported midwifery clinics across rural Ethiopia, these trained professionals also support, nurture and empower women while sharing invaluable

22,344

babies delivered by Hamlin Midwives in FY21

32,938

pregnant women seen for their first antenatal check in FY21



“Midwifery I believe is the answer – to put a well trained midwife in every village would soon eradicate obstetric fistula.”

Dr Catherine Hamlin

knowledge, building trusting networks and transforming entire communities in rural Ethiopia. This year, our midwives have been on the frontline in the fight against COVID-19, helping to prevent infection in the communities they work in.



The Hamlin College of Midwives continues to be a centre of excellence for the training of midwives:

23

Hamlin midwifery graduates in the class of 2021

95

students undertaking their BSc Degree in Midwifery

195

Hamlin Midwives have graduated since 2010 and been deployed to rural areas

Catherine’s vision lives on...

“I would like to send my sincere appreciation to our donors for their loving support of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia and for the Hamlin College of Midwives. The Hamlins dedicated their entire lives to women’s health care and now it’s our turn to keep their legacy moving forward as much as possible.”

- Ato Zelalem Belete, Dean of the Hamlin College of Midwives and Prevention Manager at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia





From heartbreak to hope

Zemzem thinks she's 28, but she doesn't know for sure. What she does know is that years of her life were stolen by an obstetric fistula injury that she suffered during childbirth.

She was able to socialize with other women and regain her independence. "My mom traveled a long distance to express her gratitude for every staff member. She cried in happiness when she saw me totally cured and with a smiling face," she beams.

Zemzem is hopeful again

Zemzem now looks forward to her future. The treatment she received and the skills she gained at Hamlin have given her a new lease on life.

"The only way I could repay you is by becoming a strong, confident and successful woman who is a role model for others, and I promise to realize this in the near future!" she exclaims.

Zemzem's village is nestled in the mountains of northern Ethiopia. To access basic services, like transport and a medical clinic, Zemzem had to walk across difficult terrain for over two hours.

This inaccessibility would have catastrophic consequences when Zemzem became pregnant.

The agony of fistula

Like other women in her village, Zemzem planned to give birth at home without a trained midwife. For four excruciating days, Zemzem was in obstructed labor.

"After the third day in labor, I was completely unconscious. When I woke up, I asked my mom about the baby and she told me the sad news that the baby was stillborn," says Zemzem.

In addition to the trauma of losing her precious baby, Zemzem suffered an obstetric fistula injury and was incontinent.

Divorced by her husband and relying on her parents, Zemzem felt her life was worthless. Because of her fistula injury, her mental health also suffered.

Support and care for Zemzem

After initially going to Hamlin's Bahir Dar Fistula Hospital, Zemzem was referred to Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital for more complex treatment. She successfully underwent diversion

My mom cried in happiness when she saw me totally cured and with a smiling face.

surgery; treatment provided free of charge thanks to Hamlin donors.

Zemzem also underwent preoperative physiotherapy and a customized counseling program.

She took literacy and numeracy classes, was given nourishing meals, as well as a new dress and money for the journey home.

Zemzem spent time with family before returning for holistic care at Desta Mender, Hamlin's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center. There she took vocational skills classes and received further rehabilitation and counseling.

A fistula injury nearly cost Zemzem her life. Today, thanks to the generosity of Hamlin supporters, she is dry, standing proudly and hopeful for her future.

Help us eradicate fistula

A standard surgery to repair a fistula injury costs just \$550 and restores a woman's health and dignity.

You can give women like Zemzem the gift of a new life at catherinehamlin.org/donate

Thank you message from our Board of Directors

2021 has been a year of great contrasts. COVID-19 has continued to present many challenges both nationally and internationally, and we are very mindful that the pandemic has greatly affected both Hamlin staff and patients in Ethiopia, as well as our valued supporters across the world.

It is very pleasing to see that Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has so far navigated the pandemic through the extraordinary efforts of clinicians and staff, the commitment of the senior management team, and the unwavering support of our donors.

In March 2021, we marked the one-year anniversary of Dr Catherine Hamlin's passing: a time of great sadness was also an opportunity to celebrate an extraordinary life, well lived. The work of both Catherine and her husband, Dr Reg Hamlin, continues to live on through The Hamlin Model of Care and the best practice midwifery courses taught at the Hamlin College of Midwives.

We are proud to see that the Board, management, and medical team of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia are continuing to ensure that Catherine's vision of the eradication of obstetric fistula across Ethiopia is pursued with determination and vigour.

Despite the many challenges faced over the past 12 months, your support never wavered for the work in Ethiopia, and we are so grateful for your ongoing care.

The staff at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia continue to prioritise and support the many women who have presented at the hospitals and clinics with fistula through this time. We know they wouldn't be able to continue with their efforts without the thousands of donors who give their time and funds. Thank you.

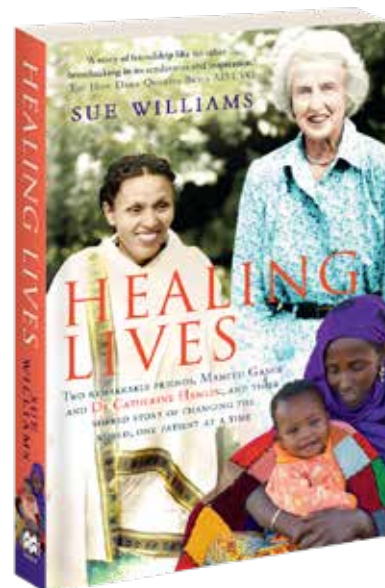
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation, I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful festive season and a safe, healthy, and happy 2022.

We are confident that 2022 will see even greater growth for Hamlin as we continue the important work of tackling fistula and childbirth injuries across Ethiopia. We also look forward to a world that is happier and healthier for all.

Thank you again for your support.

Julie White, Chair, and the Board of Directors at Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation

Holiday reading



Healing Lives is the untold story of Mamitu Gashe, the protégée of Dr Catherine Hamlin, and the inspiring decades-long friendship between these two formidable women.

In 1962, three years after Drs Catherine and Reg Hamlin arrived in Ethiopia, fourteen year-old Mamitu Gashe arrived seeking their aid.

Mamitu was horrifically injured during childbirth in her mountain village in remote Ethiopia.

Under the Hamlins' guidance, Mamitu went from mopping floors and comforting fellow patients, to becoming one of the most acclaimed fistula surgeons in the world.

Mamitu was integral in expanding the Hamlin Model of Care beyond Ethiopia, and has the determination and dedication to carry on the work at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.

Written by award-winning journalist Sue Williams, Healing Lives can be purchased from www.amazon.com/Healing-Lives