



2022  
July

## Striding Ahead To End Fistula

It's hard to believe we are in the middle of 2022 already.

Although the year has passed quickly, much progress has been made at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.

During the 21/22 program, your support has ensured:

- **over 2,000 surgeries** took place at Hamlin hospitals to provide women with life-changing treatment
- **over 1,000 women** completed literacy and numeracy training, empowering them with confidence and vital skills

So much more has been achieved, too. All because of your generosity.

It was this generosity that recently saw Canadian supporters of CHFF donate enough funds for a new state-of-the-art digital X-ray machine for the Radiology Unit at Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital which is vital in assessing the injuries of women.

While our generous supporters in the USA have funded 61 fistula surgeries at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's regional hospitals this year along with pre and post operative care to ensure those 61 women return to their families and communities with their health and dignity restored,

Dr Catherine Hamlin once said, "To send women home to experience again a normal life after all they have suffered is the greatest reward we can have, and is shared by all who look after fistula patients."

That reward extends to you, our supporters, who ensure women facing these devastating injuries get the treatment, compassion, and support they need.

Exciting plans are in motion to fast-track our goal of transforming 100,000 women's lives and ensuring prevention measures continue to decrease new cases of fistula. Stay tuned for more news coming soon.



**Carolyn Hardy**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation

# Your Support in Action

## Restoring hope and dignity

Thank you to every one of you who donated to our recent appeal to provide fistula repair surgery for women at Hamlin's Metu regional hospital in Southwestern Ethiopia.

One of the greatest challenges that comes with the mission to eradicate fistula in Ethiopia, is reaching women in the most remote parts of the country. With seven in 10 giving birth without a midwife or doctor, complications often lead to stillbirth and devastating injuries like obstetric fistula.

But the good news is that your donations are ensuring more and more women, including those in some of the most remote and desolate regions, can access critical care and treatment from Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, restoring their lives and their dignity after years of suffering



Asegedech, former fistula patient

## A Hamlin Surgeon and her Patient

Rahmete lived a day's walk from her nearest hospital, so when she experienced an obstructed labor there was no accessible medical team.

She stayed in agony for three days until she made it to the hospital where she discovered her baby had died. Devastated, Rahmete was also left with an obstetric fistula injury, leaving her incontinent.



↑  
*click to watch*  
*Dr Zahra*

At around the same time, Dr Zahra, now one of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's youngest and most promising surgeons and gynecologists, was starting her first shift at Hamlin's Metu Regional Fistula Hospital.

Her goal was to help women, just like Rahmete, who had suffered great trauma due to obstetric fistula injuries.

It would be five years before the two met, after Rahmete heard about Hamlin's Metu Fistula Hospital on the radio and immediately made her way there.



Dr Zahra Sualih, Hamlin surgeon and gynecologist



Rahmete, former fistula patient

"More than half of fistula patients require only one surgery for a cure" says Dr Zahra. Luckily Rahmete was one of those women.

**"Dr Zahra, you not only cured my injury, but showed me that a brighter future was possible. That I could be happy and live as a woman again."**

- Rahmete

"I don't have the words to say how grateful I am to you, the staff and the donors - you all saved my life", says Rahmete.

This work is funded entirely through the generosity and dedication of donors and supporters.

**"Every service we do is supported by donors. It has enabled a lot of women to live again and move forward."**

- Dr Zahra

If you'd like to make a donation, you can click the link below or visit <https://www.catherinehamlin.org/donate/>



Ruth with her husband, Jarryd, and two of their children, Eliza and Ezra.

## Empowering women through safe childbirth

### Why Hamlin Monthly Givers Ruth and Jarryd are supporting a Hamlin midwifery student

“I’m Ruth. When I was six, my family moved to Nigeria where we lived in a small village. I quickly grew to understand the importance of healthcare, particularly when public health provision is limited.

**I first heard of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia as a teenager through one of my ‘aunties’ in Nigeria, who lent me the book, *The Hospital by the River*.**

There was a hospital in the town where my boarding school was that ran a fistula clinic. The girls in my class were able to visit and see first-hand the work needed to restore normality and hope for women who have been through such trauma.

I left Nigeria when I was 17. Jarryd and I have been married for almost seven years and we have three children, Grace (who would be four), Eliza (two) and Ezra (3 months). I was working as a midwife until Grace was born.

Grace died seven hours after she was born due to preventable causes related to our midwifery care. We miss her terribly. As CS Lewis put it, “her absence is always present.”

**Through Hamlin’s Monthly Giving program, we are supporting a Hamlin midwifery student** because we want something good to come out of Grace’s little life. Our hope is that we can prevent another family losing a child, as we have.

In Ethiopia, just 3 in 10 women have access to medical care during their pregnancy. Training and deploying Hamlin Midwives to rural communities prevents fistula injuries and saves the lives of hundreds of mothers and babies every year.

**In Grace’s memory, we’re paying for a full 4-year scholarship for a Hamlin Midwife who can make a huge difference in her community.** I know from being on both sides of midwifery that the care given can be empowering to women. It is such a vital role with lifelong impacts.”

**Thank you to all our generous Hamlin Monthly Givers**

By choosing to donate a set amount each month, you have joined a community of compassionate people who are helping to find, heal and empower women every day.

**We couldn’t do what we do without you.**



*Join us!*

There are so many different ways you can support Hamlin. One of the most impactful ways is by joining our wonderful community of Hamlin Monthly Givers and donating monthly.

Go to <https://www.catherinehamlin.org/monthly-giving/>



## Your impact towards eradicating fistula

In Ethiopia there are only 353 hospitals - most located in cities - to provide medical care to just over 120 million people. In contrast, the United States has close to 4000 public and over 1000 private hospitals for a population of 329 million.

**But, with your support, the Clinical team at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia have been striding ahead to treat as many women as possible.**



The 2021/22 program year saw Hamlin surgeons perform over 2,000 life-changing surgeries, ensuring women struggling with fistula injuries and incontinence no longer feel hidden and forgotten.

**We have also seen more than 200 women gain improved vocational skills and the ability to work.** Over 1000 women have also completed training in numeracy and literacy modules at Desta Mender, Hamlin's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Centre.

The Hamlin team strives to ensure that women who endured years of suffering and isolation can rebuild their lives. Women like Mulunesh (right), who is using what she learnt to educate other women in her community.

**“Now, I am telling people in my village about this hospital and fistula.”**

*- Mulunesh*

Mulunesh (below) was referred to Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital after spending three days in an obstructed labor, before giving birth to a stillborn baby. Her fistula injuries rendered her incontinent.

After receiving surgery at the hospital and training at Desta Mender, Mulunesh felt confident and empowered. She is now using everything she has learnt to raise awareness and inform other women.

“Now I am telling people in my village about this hospital, teach the women about fistula and its cause, and send women with fistula to here. I also teach my neighbors about sanitation, family planning and on how to improve their lifestyle. I learned all these here [at Desta Mender].”

**“I was almost hopeless before I joined Hamlin. Thanks to God, my life has changed now.”**



Mulunesh, former fistula patient



# Canadian Donors Are Powering X-ray Imaging at Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital

Thanks to the generosity of our Canadian supporters and KBF Canada, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has a new state-of-the-art digital X-ray machine for the Radiology Unit at Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

The new 'Carestream Focus Detector' X-ray machine is wireless, portable and provides immediate, high quality digital images, supporting precise and timely diagnoses for women in need of help.

For Asegedech, the importance of the high-quality care provided by the Hamlin Clinical Team cannot be understated.

**"I pray for His blessings to everyone who supported my cure including those who fund the work of this hospital. You have changed my life."**  
- Asegedech



Asegedech lived hidden with devastating fistula injuries for 20 years, before she found a cure at Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

The new x-ray machine will be vital in assessing women's injuries through:

- emergency imaging for inpatients and outpatients in need of critical support
- urinary tract imaging - to understand how much damage a fistula has caused
- imaging in preparation of stoma therapy for patients who have complex fistulas, unable to be cured via surgery.

The digital X-ray machine eliminates the need for dark room work, reducing costs for film and processing chemicals. It also reduces Hamlin's environmental impact through the absence of polluting by-products.



Thank you to all of the Canadian supporters who are helping us to ensure women in Ethiopia can access the high-quality medical assistance they need, in order to rebuild their lives.

Your support is helping to transform these women's futures.

Asegedech, former fistula patient

# Thank you to everyone who is 'Walking for Ethiopian Mothers'



**Danielle Cheuk** (left) has smashed her initial target by raising a huge USD \$4,300+ after walking 12 miles to raise funds for the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation.

“Over the years I’ve required a lot of medical treatment, and every time I’ve needed it I’ve felt very grateful I live in a country where I could easily access the quality care I need. That’s why I did this walk. I wanted to do my bit to contribute towards Ethiopian women accessing the quality care they deserve.”

**Jamie Thomson** (right) added an extra challenge to his walk - he did it barefoot! Jamie spent 5 days walking an incredible 28 miles on the Mary Jones Walk, part of the Snowdonia National Park in Wales, UK, raising over USD \$3,000.

“I think I am the first recorded person to complete the Mary Jones Walk barefoot, apart from Mary herself! More importantly, I have been able to raise thousands of dollars for the very important work carried out by the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation.”



If you would like to Walk for Ethiopian Mothers, you can sign up here:  
<https://bit.ly/3xcuiFi>

## Thank You!

Sending a huge thank you to our generous supporters and donors.

Because of you, women in Ethiopia continue to receive compassionate treatment for devastating childbirth injuries.

Because of you women are able to rebuild their lives, healed and empowered.

**Together, we will eradicate fistula. Forever.**



### Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation

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