

2022 A Year In Review

Warmest thanks!

This year, with your help, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's clinical team performed the highest number of surgeries in the last 15 years at Hamlin - an extraordinary achievement by our world-class surgeons and a testament to Hamlin's ongoing patient identification campaign.

We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the opening of Desta Mender, Hamlin's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center, and saw more women complete Hamlin's new three-month Women's Empowerment Program for former fistula patients.

The Hamlin College of Midwives launched the new MSc in Midwifery, and our first intake of 31 postgraduate students commenced in January. Twenty-three students from the Class of 2021 graduated with a BSc in Midwifery and now work in new Hamlin-supported midwifery clinics helping mothers in rural parts of Ethiopia.

In other good news, we saw the impact of COVID-19 gradually reduce, and the security situation in Northern Ethiopia improved to the extent that Hamlin could deliver medical supplies and funds to our team in Mekele.

Ethiopia still faces considerable challenges with consistently high inflation (which is outpacing exchange rate changes), a restricted supply chain and increasingly severe drought in the South East. Despite this, the exceptional team at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia remain focused on working to deliver Dr Catherine Hamlin's vision for a fistula-free Ethiopia.

It is a privilege to be CEO of Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation and to work alongside these exceptional people in support of the women of Ethiopia. We are looking forward to exciting plans in 2023 to change more women's lives and get closer to eradicating obstetric fistula from Ethiopia forever. We hope you will continue on this journey with us until every woman in Ethiopia can give birth safely, and no woman lives with a debilitating childbirth injury.

Thank you for all you do to support the work of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. We wish you and your family a safe and happy Christmas.

Carolyn Hardy, CEO, Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation



Treatment FY22

94% fistula closure rate

2,584 total surgeries in FY22



Prevention FY22

26,634 women received anti natal care

18,606 babies delivered

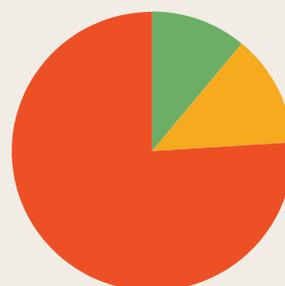


Rehabilitation FY22

1,253 patients completed numeracy and literacy education

215 women graduated from the Women's Empowerment program

How your donations were spent in FY22



76% Program: Ethiopia

13% Fundraising

11% Accountability & Administration



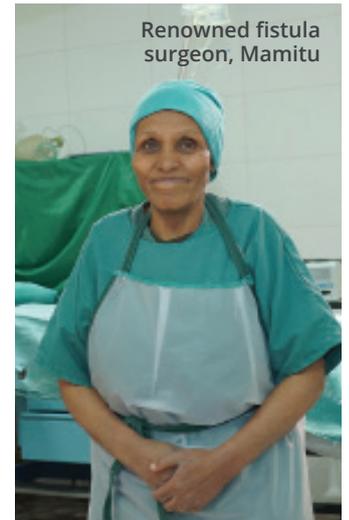
Treatment

In the United States, obstetric fistula is virtually a thing of the past. But in rural Ethiopia, where approximately 5 out of 10 women give birth without medical assistance, an obstructed labor can last for days and result in an obstetric fistula.

The physical and psychological impacts of fistula are tragic, however most injuries can be repaired with a single surgery. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is globally renowned for its treatment technique, which is focused on repairing the fistula and restoring a woman's dignity.

In FY22, there was a 65% increase in surgical procedures compared to the previous year, with a total of 2584 surgeries. The number of operations performed was the highest in the last 15 years at Hamlin, with most regional fistula hospitals surpassing 50 procedures per month.

This staggering increase is due to Hamlin's committed and determined clinical team and has impacted the lives of many women like Almaz. After being cured, Almaz beamed, "My being cured is still a surprise. Thank you for making this happen and for letting me be a woman again."



Renowned fistula surgeon, Mamitu

"To see a girl from abject poverty and sadness and sorrow suddenly become a new person, that's the joy that fistula surgeons get when they cure them."

Dr Catherine Hamlin

Advanced-Stage Pelvic Organ Prolapse

In addition to obstetric fistula surgeries, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia provides surgery for advanced-stage pelvic organ prolapse (POP). POP happens when one or more of the pelvic organs (bladder, uterus and bowel) slip down from their normal position into the vagina, causing a bulge. Left untreated, organs continue to slip outside of the body.

Patients usually arrive at Hamlin hospitals with already advanced-stage III or IV POP and subsequent complications including bleeding, infection, recurring UTIs, decubitus ulcers, urinary obstruction and renal failure. Like obstetric fistula, POP is related to childbirth and has a devastating impact on a woman.

Thankfully, all six Hamlin fistula hospitals have a specialist surgeon with urogynaecology skills to undertake surgical repair of advanced-stage POP. In FY22, Hamlin's clinical team performed 1477 surgeries, dramatically improving health and quality of life for these women.

FIGO Fistula Surgery Training Initiative

Since 2014, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has been working with the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) to increase the number of fistula surgeons around the world.

Selected surgeons train at Hamlin for six weeks to acquire knowledge of the Hamlin Model of Care and best-practice fistula surgery techniques. During FY22, five surgeons from Afghanistan, Somalia and Nepal trained at Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

Hamlin's clinical team is proud to share knowledge and skills with surgeons beyond Ethiopia in the fight to end fistula.





Rehabilitation

Repairing a woman's obstetric fistula injury is not the end of her story. Having lived in social isolation for months or even years, re-entering the community can be daunting, and few women have an income that allows them to live independently.

At Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center, Desta Mender, women are offered counseling, literacy and numeracy classes, as well as vocational and life skills training. Each woman is given a tailored program to suit her needs and interests.

The Hamlin team continues to support women to find sustainable employment upon reintegration back into their communities. In some cases, this also includes facilitating start-up grants to establish their own business, enabling these women to generate an income and live independently.

During FY22, 1253 patients completed numeracy and literacy educational modules at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.



“We don't just treat a hole in the bladder, we treat the whole patient with love and tender care, literacy and numeracy classes, a brand new dress and money to travel home.” *Dr Catherine Hamlin*

Women's Empowerment Program

Over the past year, Hamlin's new Women's Empowerment Program has gained momentum, providing more former fistula patients with the chance to learn at Desta Mender. With the support of Women's Hope International, this groundbreaking initiative empowers women, welcoming them to a three-month residential program to learn vital vocational skills, small business guidance and leadership training.

In FY22, the Women's Empowerment Program trained 215 women. So far, 425 women have benefitted through this program, with another 240 expected in 2023.

The quality and extent of vocational training has improved over FY22, with enhanced patient profiling, new training manuals and support from training institutes.

The feedback from former patients has been overwhelmingly positive. The program is truly life-changing for many women like Mulu. “I used to live in much suffering. When we were invited for this training after being cured, I was so happy and did not have words to express... I hope to open a small inn in my village and sell food.”



20 years of Desta Mender

This year marks 20 years since Dr Catherine Hamlin, with the help of her brother Jock and sister-in-law Louise, established Hamlin's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center, Desta Mender - a place where recovering obstetric fistula patients can heal physically and emotionally.

In FY22, exciting vocational programs were undertaken in the Women's Empowerment Program including catering, vegetable and poultry farming, pottery and beekeeping.

By obtaining practical skills, women are empowered to create a brighter future. “The seed money I received has now grown to big capital for my farming business and the training has equipped me with confidence.” - Leyat





Prevention

The Hamlin College of Midwives continues as a center of excellence for the training of midwives in Ethiopia.

Since 2007, 234 Hamlin midwives have graduated from the college and been deployed back to their local areas to provide quality maternal health care. Hamlin midwives support, nurture and empower women to be informed about their reproductive health and the available care services.

In FY22, Hamlin midwives at the Hamlin-supported midwifery clinics across rural Ethiopia vastly improved health outcomes for expectant mothers and families - they delivered 18,606 babies and prevented countless fistula injuries and neonatal deaths. In FY22 there was not one maternal death in a clinic where a Hamlin midwife was placed.

This year, we also welcomed Konjit Kassahun as the incoming Dean of the College and Head of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's nationwide Prevention Program encompassing the clinics and midwives. Konjit was formerly the Matron and Head of Nursing at Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, and worked alongside Catherine for many years.



“We are delighted to be graduating well clinically trained midwives who work in their own home areas preventing fistula... My dream is to have a midwife in every village of Ethiopia.” *Dr Catherine Hamlin*

Hamlin's Postgraduate Masters in Midwifery

Hamlin is proud to have launched a MSc in Clinical Midwifery degree at the Hamlin College of Midwives.

The first intake of 31 students began in January 2022 and another intake of 30 students will commence in January 2023, with approximately 50% of these being former Hamlin BSc graduates.

The goals of Hamlin's Masters in Midwifery include; reducing new incidences of obstetric fistula and maternal/neonatal deaths, increasing the number of safe deliveries and providing quality neonatal care post childbirth.

Graduates from Hamlin's Masters in Midwifery will be able to perform cesarean deliveries in health clinics - a game changer for maternal health in rural Ethiopia. They will also form the next generation of midwifery educators.



Victoria Birth Simulator ...

Over the past year, post-graduate students at the Hamlin College of Midwives have been using an interactive state-of-the-art 'Victoria S22- Labor and Delivery Simulator', acquired to complement their clinical training.

The Victoria model features fully programmable physiological parameters. Students learn to perform emergency cesarean deliveries, manage intraoperative and postoperative complications and practice neonatal care.

Victoria's symptoms and reactions are controlled through a laptop, allowing students to engage with dynamic scenarios that imitate those they will face working in the field.





Abebech finds love and healing thanks to supporters like YOU

Abebech is from Roge Shakiso, 9 hours south of the capital Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

Like many other women in Ethiopia, she planned to give birth at home without a trained midwife.

When she went into labor, she realized something was wrong, but the health center was far away.

The heartache of fistula

Abebech’s painful, obstructed labor went on for five days without medical assistance. Sadly she gave birth to a stillborn baby and was left with a devastating obstetric fistula, leaking urine.



Behailu, a Hamlin patient identification officer.

She stayed home rather than risk public humiliation and spent 27 years living in pain and shame until Behailu, a Hamlin patient identification officer, found her.

“I was afraid to go outside. My neighbors covered their noses when I went out.”

A new beginning

After all these years of feeling unclean, unwanted and unaware that obstetric fistula could be treated, Behailu gave her hope and took her to the Hamlin Yirgalem fistula hospital for treatment.

When Abebech arrived at Yirgalem, she received a comfort package and treatment for her birth injury. The comfort package was the start of her healing journey at Yirgalem, and she received hygiene items, a new nightgown, slippers and a homecoming dress.

Abebech’s surgery was a success, and as part of her rehabilitation, she attended numeracy and literacy classes and learned income-generating skills to integrate back into her community at Roge Shakiso.

Abebech is hopeful again

Abebech’s plan for the future is to sell merchandise and raise chickens and animals. Abebech wants to show the people that abandoned her that she can turn her life around.

“I used to be depressed, but now I am so happy and free.”

Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, she received a comfort package, treatment for her birth injuries and skills that allow her to look forward to her future. If you want to help more women like Abebech click [here](#).

GIVINGTUESDAY

Thank you for helping provide 71 Comfort Packages for new patients on Giving Tuesday.

If you didn’t get a chance to donate and would like to fund a Comfort Package, please click [here](#) to find out how you can help women in Ethiopia. The women you are supporting say it best and wanted to say thank you. Watch the video - [here](#)



Hamlin comfort package.

Thank you message from our Board of Directors

Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation and Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia have once again faced many challenges during 2022, but as we have seen in the past difficult years, the tireless life-saving work of our surgeons, nurses and midwives has continued unabated.

The support that so many of you have given to our fundraising efforts has been constant and extraordinary in its generosity. This has ensured that the important work started so many years ago by Drs Reg and Catherine Hamlin can continue.

There have been many challenges in Ethiopia with COVID-19, the war in Ukraine affecting supply chains and a tough and tumultuous security situation, particularly in northern Ethiopia.

All these events continue to have an impact on the health and well-being of a significant number of Ethiopian citizens and, sadly, our patients.

However, this has not deterred our work at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, which has been focused and unwavering. It is pleasing to report that the surgical team has performed the highest number of surgeries in at least 15 years. Supported by clinical staff and all who work at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, this is a remarkable achievement and we are proud of each member of the team. They truly embody the values and commitment that Drs Reg and Catherine Hamlin established.

The support we provide ensures that the hospitals, clinics and the Hamlin College of Midwives continue to meet the needs of the women who present with childbirth injuries or need assistance giving birth. This is only possible because of the incredible support of our many donors.

Your continued belief and trust in our work and your willingness to contribute to us financially is something that we are eternally grateful for. The stories you see in our regular newsletters and blog posts about our patients, midwives and staff - of resilience, hope and new beginnings - can only be told because of you and your support.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation, I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful festive season and a happy, safe and healthy 2023. We look forward to another year of the amazing work of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia knowing, each year, we are moving closer to eradicating fistula and birth injuries for all women in Ethiopia.

We could not embark on this journey without you.

Thank you again for your support.

Julie White, Chair, Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation



Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation

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KBF Foundation Canada, 1 Place Ville Marie, Suite 1670 Montreal QC H3B 2B6 Canada

Photos by Mary F. Calvert, Joni Kabana, Abigail Murcott and Martha Tadesse

Gifts from the Heart Cards



For something extra special this Christmas, discover our 'Gift from the Heart' range.

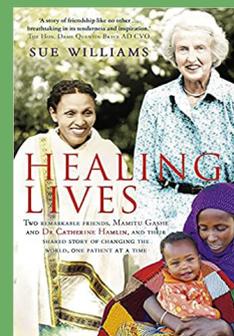
Each gift represents one way your generosity can change the lives of women suffering with fistula.

There are ten beautiful e-cards and it is one of the most meaningful ways you can empower women.

Gifts From The Heart are sold from our Australian site, purchase a printable card and you will receive a link via email to download and print your card. You can then write a message and give it to someone special.

Order with this [link](#).

Christmas Gift



Healing Lives is a must-read book this holiday season. It tells the story of Mamitu Gashe, the protegee of Dr Catherine Hamlin, and the inspiring decades-long friendship between these two formidable women.

Written by award-winning journalist Sue Williams, Healing Lives can be purchased [here](#)