Tremendous Commitment

It is almost one year since *Healing Lives* was published telling the untold story of the inspiring friendship between Mamitu Gashe and Dr 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 Centre for an intensive three-month vocational training program which aims to support them into employment.

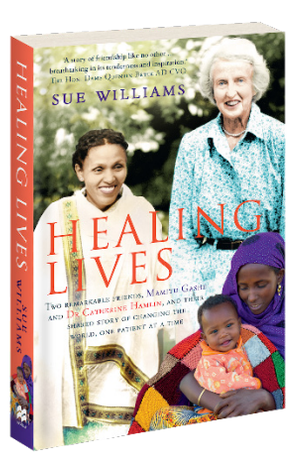
Last month, a new class of midwifery students commenced their four-year BSc in Midwifery at the Hamlin College of Midwives. Next month, Hamlin will welcome the first class of midwives returning to commence Hamlin's new ground-breaking MSc in Midwifery made possible by Australian support.

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



P.S. With Christmas just around the corner, the Hamlin Shop is a beautiful way to lend your support – twice – purchases benefit the artisans from across Africa who make most of our products and proceeds from our sales support Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. *Healing Lives* is also sold at the Hamlin Shop and is a wonderful and inspiring gift. **Visit store.hamlin.org.au**

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 Centre, 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 initaitve 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.

Ensuring future generations of women live free from fistula

Dr Catherine Hamlin's legacy will last forever. She dedicated her life to the women of Ethiopia, working tirelessly to give women living with obstetric fistula love, hope and the opportunity to regain their lives.

An up-to-date Will is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family. Not only does it protect your loved ones and safeguard your assets, but it will save money and considerable stress for your family.

When you leave a gift in your Will (or bequest) to Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation, you join a committed community of special people who are determined to eradicate fistula. Forever.

Leave a lasting legacy like Jane...

When it came to leaving a gift in her Will, Jane saw it as a way to ensure her contribution towards ending fistula continues for generations to come.

"I suffered from a painful gynaecological condition myself years ago. When I read about how these women in Ethiopia suffered with obstetric fistula, I could identify with their plight and wanted to assist them. I have spoken to my family about what I am doing and they are very supportive," says Jane.

"Gifts in Wills help ensure that future generations of Ethiopian women will receive the care and treatment they need."
- Dr Catherine Hamlin

Here's what your kind gift could do...

$70,000 could restore the lives and dignity of **100 women** through standard fistula surgery

$30,000 could provide **250 recovering fistula patients** with literacy and numeracy training

$90,000 could fund **5 midwifery scholarships** for students at the Hamlin College of Midwives

We've partnered with Gathered Here, Australia's top-rated online Wills platform, to help you write your Will online, for free! **To get started, scan the QR code or visit wills.gatheredhere.com.au/c/hamlin**

For more information about leaving a gift in your Will, visit hamlin.org.au/bequests or speak to a Team Hamlin staff member by calling 02 9440 7001.

A gift in your Will to Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation is a thoughtful way to leave a lasting legacy that reflects your values. Thank you.

Your love can make a difference

Giving in memory of a loved one can be a powerful way to celebrate their life and help women in Ethiopia living with obstetric fistula. There are a number of ways you can create a lasting tribute to those you have lost.

- You can set up an automated regular monthly gift or annual contribution in their memory to mark a special event or birthday
- You can create a tribute page where friends and family can leave messages of love and support, share photos and leave donations in memory of someone special
- You can ask family and friends to make a donation to help women living with obstetric fistula in Ethiopia in lieu of flowers.

To find out more, visit hamlin.org.au/in-memory or call 02 9440 7001

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 emphasised. 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 in Australia."
- 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 travelled to Hamlin-supported midwifery clinics across Ethiopia to conduct over 2,200 ultrasound scans. Scan results were analysed 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 Australian 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 specialises 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.

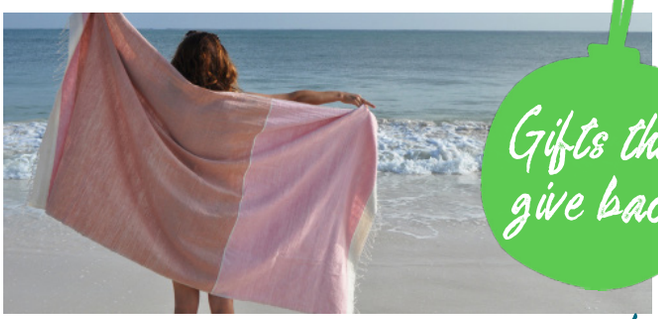
Dr Wondwossen’s pioneering urinary diversion surgeries offer permanent solutions to women with complex fistula injuries. After their respective diversion surgeries, Zigiju, Tarekech and Mulu have had their severe bladder damage healed and are free from incontinence for the first time in years.

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*

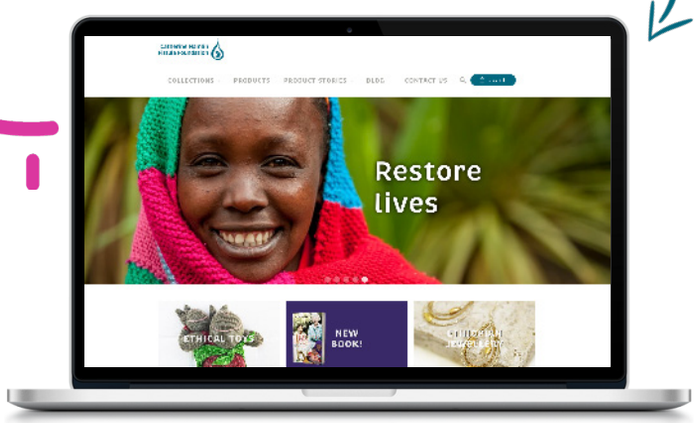
Start your Christmas shopping early!
Visit store.hamlin.org.au or call 02 9440 7001

Visit the Hamlin Shop this Christmas for beautiful gifts that give back! Your order is packed with love by our volunteers and supports Ethiopian women with fistula and artisans across Africa.



Gifts that give back

Order online from the comfort of your home.
Fast, world-wide shipping direct to your door!



Will you walk for Ethiopian Mothers?

After Wubanchi suffered a traumatic three-day obstructed labour, the women in her village feared for her life. They carried her on a homemade stretcher, **walking over 25kms to reach help**. Every year, thousands of women like Wubanchi are carried or walk long distances to reach desperately-needed health facilities.

Will you sign up and walk in solidarity with them? The women in Wubanchi's village saved her life. You can do the same. Choose a goal, set a fundraising target and get walking! **Walk for Ethiopian Mothers - sign up now at hamlin.org.au/challenge**

There are many ways you can get involved to help end fistula.
Join our amazing community today! Visit hamlin.org.au/getinvolved

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Photos: Mary F. Calvert, Kate Geraghty, Amber Hooper, Joni Kabana and Sabahar

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