



Rising to the Challenge



“This place will go on for many, many years until we have eradicated fistula altogether – until every woman in Ethiopia is assured of a safe delivery and a live baby.”

– Dr Catherine Hamlin

It has been an extraordinary year for Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia since Dr Catherine died. Tesfaye Mamo, CEO, and his team have risen to the challenges of Covid and civil war with incredible success. They continue to carry the vision passed to them by Dr Reg and Dr Catherine Hamlin.

Rapidly making up for time lost to national lockdowns in 2020, Hamlin performed a record 835 surgeries in the first 5 months of this year.

In January, Hamlin’s innovative Patient Identification Program recommenced. An estimated 31,000 Ethiopian women still suffer from fistula, and where there are no midwives, new cases continue to occur. Trained Hamlin Patient Identification Officers travel hundreds of kilometres every week to remote communities to educate people and locate women with fistula.

An exciting development in the Hamlin College of Midwives saw the first international student enrolled from South Sudan.

Covid has personally impacted Hamlin staff with the sad loss of nurse aid Kerubish Tadesse in March. Over 20 years ago Kerubish was a fistula patient herself, before becoming a treasured colleague and patient care giver, known for her

humour and friendly smile. Furthermore, more than 20 staff have tested positive for Covid, with core staff illness causing temporary surgical theatre closures. Midwifery students returning from rural communities have also tested positive. Thankfully, with the assistance of the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, the AstraZeneca vaccination has been made available for Hamlin staff. We are grateful for the recovery of the staff and impressed with the surgical performance amidst the challenges.

Civil conflict in the Tigray region temporarily interrupted communication and transport access to Hamlin’s 12 rural midwifery centres in the region. Some midwives have been reassigned to primary hospitals or other centres because their midwifery centres were damaged, without medical supplies or unsafe to work in. Hamlin is making every effort to monitor their situation and working to re-establish the affected midwifery facilities. Measures are being taken to identify women who have been affected by Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in the recent conflict. With reports of rape used as a weapon of war, Hamlin is seeking to reach these women and those who have experienced traumatic fistula.

Thanks to you, our faithful supporters, Hamlin Fistula New Zealand has been able to provide essential medical equipment and drugs to all 56 Hamlin midwifery centres over the last year.

Hamlin is moving from strength to strength this year. We are thrilled with the achievements being made. Your ongoing support and generosity make this work possible. Thank you.

Joli Wescombe, Trustee

On behalf of all the team at Hamlin Fistula New Zealand



JULY 2021

Living Catherine's Legacy

“Dr Catherine made me love my profession and sharpened my professional practice. I learned how to treat my clients with love and affection.”

– Ayantu

Midwife Ayantu Fekadu, age 25, graduated from Hamlin College of Midwives in 2018 and is serving at a remote clinic in Western Ethiopia. Ayantu was born and raised in the historical small town of Gore, located only few kms from Onga government clinic where she is currently serving as the only professional midwife.

“My Hamlin education makes me feel confident professionally. There were practicums right from our first years, and we are well experienced and skilled by the time we graduate. Our colleagues from other colleges don't have such opportunities, and they gain practical skill after they start working. I am very proud of being a Hamlin graduate,” Ayantu explains.

Ayantu estimates that she has helped well over 2000 women to have a safe birth and prevent birth injuries such as obstetric fistula.

“I had the chance to meet Emaye in person during my practical trainings at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. She was an amazing woman with exceptional personality. She dedicated her entire life to treating those poor fistula victims who were abandoned even by their own family and give them life again.”

Your donation will support a midwife like Ayantu to stop the next generation of women from suffering avoidable birth injuries.





THE HAMLIN MODEL OF CARE

The Hamlin Model of Care for treatment of obstetric fistula injuries considers both the physical impact and psychological trauma of fistula. Today, this model has been widely replicated around the world.

Your Support in Action

Medanit's new lease on life, thanks to you!

"My cure was like a miracle. What surprised me most was all your services here are free and continuous. Thanks to you my marriage life has resumed; I won't be a burden on my family anymore. Most of all you, make me a woman again. This is only of God's deed not human's." - Medanit

Medanit's name means 'medicine'. When her parents chose her name, they could not foresee how desperately she would need life-saving medicine of her own. Medanit grew up in a poor, remote farming village in the Oromia region, isolated from health and education services. She spent her childhood looking after family animals and training to become a good wife. Around her 18th year, she started married life with an older but caring husband, who made her marriage life enjoyable despite hardships and burdens.

Soon after her marriage, Medanit was thrilled to be pregnant. Like all women in her community, Medanit laboured at home with village women helping. Unexpectedly, the labour went for five long, painful days.

"I still feel the unbearable pain that I was in during the labour. We tried all the traditional medicines, but nothing helped. My family were hopeless and carried me to the clinic one hour walk away. When I woke up, I found myself lying still on the bed, my baby was dead, and I had a feeling a strange wetness down my thighs. When the nurses told me that I was incontinent because of the hard labour I felt ashamed and hopeless. That was probably the hardest time of my life."

For three difficult years Medanit lived with her family again, not knowing what to do. "Fistula took away everything from me. My marriage life was suspended, and I was so lonely. If it was not for my father and my husband, I might be dead now. I was almost gave up hope of a cure and just waited for the end of my life."

In 2016 Medanit and her father heard information in the market one day about Hamlin's free service at Yirgalem Hamlin Fistula Center. Her father didn't waste time. He sold one of the cattle to pay for a person to accompany and direct them, arriving at the centre after a full day by bus. Within a month of treatment, Medanit was discharged - happy and dry.

Last December, Medanit arrive back at Yirgalem, 8 months pregnant. She was safely delivered of a baby girl by caesarean section. "I can't thank you enough for what you are doing for women like myself. I forward my gratitude for all individuals involved on my cure and pray for the continuing of this lifechanging work."



SURGICAL REPAIR

An obstetric fistula injury can often be repaired with a single life-changing surgery.



REHABILITATION

Hamlin provides nutrition plans and physiotherapy to help women regain their strength



REINTEGRATION

Education and vocational training are provided to empower women as they leave Hamlin



COUNSELLING

A counselling program is developed for each woman to support her and help her rebuild confidence



Barefoot Success

Seven amazing women took on the Barefoot Challenge this year and raised \$5,534 to support vulnerable women in Ethiopia to access essential maternity care. Whether walking 5km barefoot by the river or up Mt Grey through the snow, this challenge can be whatever you make it to be!

Meet Hamilton Hihi – one of our amazing barefoot challenge teams!

The team was spearheaded by Katherine, who was introduced to Hamlin many years ago by her grandmother, and who has continued to support Hamlin in her grandmothers memory.

After watching 'A Walk to Beautiful' - the moving documentary that follows the arduous journey of fistula sufferers, as they make their way to the Hamlin Fistula Hospital, the team were inspired to undertake their own trek, fundraising for Hamlin along the way.

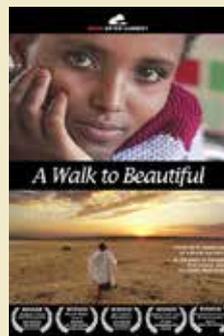
Katherine summed up the team's motivation beautifully, "As mums of 14-year-old daughters, (we know) it could have been our daughters in this situation if they had been born in Ethiopia."

On Sunday 23rd May
- The International Day to End
Obstetric Fistula, the team walked
barefoot for 5km along the Waikato
River path in Hamilton.

Thank you to everyone who
generously supported these women
with such enthusiasm. We can't wait
for Barefoot Challenge 2022!
Will you join us?



A Walk to Beautiful – Mark the Date!



Rangiora Town Hall

Saturday, August 28, 3pm & 7pm

Suggested donation \$15

Tickets available at the event or register your interest at info@hmalinfistula.org.nz

Nelson

Hosted by Soroptimist

International Waimea

Saturday, August 21, 7pm

Bookings essential siwaimea@siswp.org

Would you like to view A Walk to Beautiful in your home town?
Contact info@hamlinfistula.org.nz to arrange to borrow a DVD
or to organize a public screening.



“My hope for the future is generations of empowered women, who can make Ethiopia fistula-free.” – Dr Zahara Sualih

Dr Zahara Sualih is a fistula surgeon at Hamlin's Mettu Fistula Hospital. She joined Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia in 2015 as a specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology. Dr Zahara's motivation to work for Hamlin was clear: "It is the best centre in Ethiopia to take care of women in need," she says.

Since joining Hamlin, Dr Zahara has performed approximately 700 fistula repair surgeries. "I am living a meaningful life!" exclaims Dr Zahara.

Thanks to Hamlin's status as a centre of excellence in maternal health care, Dr Zahara has been involved in both the Hamlin Urogynaecology Fellowship and the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) training program, making her an even better surgeon.

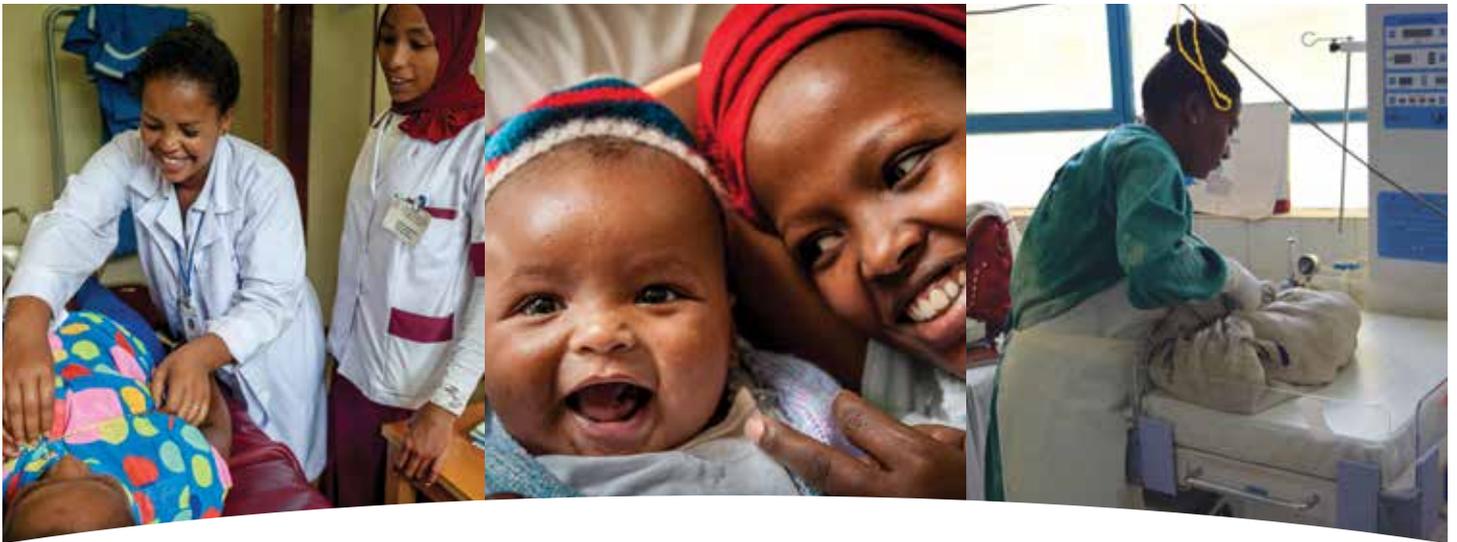
"It makes me a better physician to holistically manage women's birth injuries. My priority is to serve women with up to date, high quality care."



High Tea for Hamlin @ the Cathedral 2022

** Watch this space! **

**We hope to bring the High Tea back next year.
We look forward to seeing you there!**



Help us stop the next generation of women suffering from avoidable birth injuries.

The best solution to eradicating fistula is prevention.

You can help Hamlin Fistula ensure that every woman receives proper midwifery care. Under a midwife's care, problems can be identified early and a fistula avoided. Hamlin midwives safely deliver over 20,000 babies a year and save many mothers from suffering an obstetric fistula.

Ayantu trained as a midwife | Medanit suffered without one.

Together, we can ensure women don't suffer like Medanit did. Help us support and equip more Hamlin midwives and eradicate fistula.

Your gift of \$3,200 equips a midwifery clinic for a year

Your gift of \$200 could provide emergency treatment and transfer of one mother

Your gift of \$25 provides antenatal, labour and birth and postnatal care for one mother and baby

Donate online at www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate or complete the form and post it back to us:



HELP HAMLIN ERADICATE FISTULA

Give online at www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate or complete the form and post it back to us:

I WOULD LIKE TO: Set up automatic payments: fortnightly monthly Amount \$ _____
 I would like to donate a one-off amount through direct internet banking: Amount \$ _____

Hamlin General Donation: **A/C 06 0817 0264043 00** | Administration Expenses of Hamlin Fistula NZ: **A/C 06 0817 0264043 02**

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