

# Hamlin Fistula NZ



DECEMBER 2020



*A Hamlin  
Legacy of  
Dignity and  
Compassion*

**Saving mothers and babies' lives, while preventing devastating obstetric injuries like fistula, is the core focus of Hamlin midwives.**

These young midwives lead the way professionally in a country that has invested immense effort in the last 17 years in reducing maternal mortality rates by over half, to 353 per 100,000 (compared to 9 per 100,000 for NZ). The twenty-one developing countries most successful in decreasing maternal death rates have done so by building and strengthening their midwifery workforce. Creating access to midwives saves lives.

But midwifery is about so much more than medical care. The quality of personal care a midwife provides can determine whether women choose to birth at a midwifery centre or whether they stay home and give birth without medical help. The respectful and kind manner of Hamlin midwives, their encouragement and support of a labouring mother, the inclusion of her companion, facilitating baby to the breast after birth – each of these exemplify small but critical elements of dignified, woman-centred care.

In the context of a global health problem of disrespect and abuse in childbirth, Hamlin midwives role-model the ethos of dignity and compassion that was at the heart of Dr Reg and Dr Catherine Hamlin's lives.

Humiliating and degrading physical, verbal and emotional abuse in childbirth is so profound in some nations that in 2014, the Mexican Senate included protection from obstetric violence in its law modifications to "Women's Right to a Life Free of Violence."

When Hamlin midwives arrive at a midwifery centre, the numbers of women seeking care there have been known to increase from 6 a year to 600. Women experience the difference in care that a Hamlin midwife brings.

Thank you for helping our amazing Hamlin midwives care for over 25,000 birthing women each year with dignity, compassion and respect - the Hamlin Model of Care.



*“When I found out that I was incontinent, I completely gave up on life. I wished I would die rather than living with the shame of my condition. After my husband found out, he never returned. I was so alone.” - Bayise*

## From Loss to Life

For mothers like Bayise, a Hamlin midwife can be the difference between life and death. The life-saving work of Hamlin’s professional midwives in Ethiopia’s rural regions prevent countless maternal and newborn deaths each year.

Growing up in a village so remote that midwives and even schooling weren’t available, Bayise accepted her arranged marriage at 17 as her fate. Even when she gave birth to stillborn babies three times, she and her husband accepted their fate. Fortunately, they had one baby daughter survive. But when her fifth

baby was also stillborn, her husband abandoned her to the lonely life of caring for their daughter on her own.

After a few months, Bayise remarried and was soon pregnant for the sixth time. The sixth birth was even worse. After labouring for two days at home, she was taken to a government hospital where her stillborn baby was born by caesarean. Recovering from surgery, she discovered she had a fistula injury as well.

For five months, Bayise lived untreated, until a relative from Addis Ababa told her about Hamlin. Leaving her 5-year old

daughter with her mother, she arrived at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in July, and in September she had her first and only surgery to make her totally dry.

***“From the moment I entered the hospital, I received the utmost care and love from everyone here at the hospital – a kind of care that I didn’t get even from my own mother. If it were not for you, I might be dead by now. You gave my life back, and I have not words to express my gratitude.” - Bayise***



# The Incredible Story of Mamitu From illiterate fistula victim to teacher of surgeons



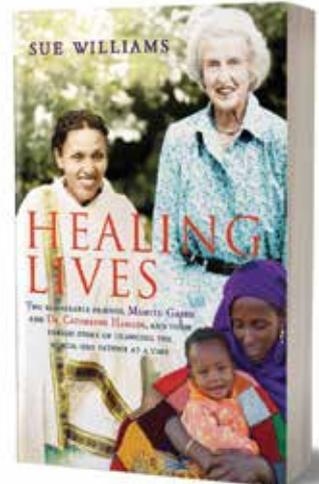
**On July 16, 2020, Mamitu Gashe officially retired from the 61 years of service with Hamlin Fistula, beginning with the arrival of Reg and Catherine Hamlin in Ethiopia in 1959.**

Mamitu was first a tiny, frail fistula victim herself, following a horrific labour and stillbirth. After her fistula repair, she began serving as a nursing aid and although illiterate, eventually became a certified fistula surgeon, responsible for training doctors from across the globe. Following Dr Catherine's retirement seven years ago, she became her fulltime companion and caregiver, spending all her days with her precious Emaye - mentor, mother, and dearest friend, until Catherine's death last March.

At her small, Covid restricted retirement ceremony in July, Tesfaye Mamo, CEO of Hamlin Fistula, honoured Mamitu:

*You have spent your entire life demonstrating a unique and exemplary way of patient care that you have inherited from our founders. Now it is our turn to keep on what you have started, until we see the Hamlin's dream realised. It is very hard to think of the lifelong astonishing work of Emaye without Mamit. You have been there by the side of our founders in all the 61 years path of challenges and successes.*

You can read the extraordinary story of Mamitu and Catherine's friendship and life's work in *Healing Lives*, by Sue Williams.



Out now **\$35** Email to order:  
[info@hamlinfistula.org.nz](mailto:info@hamlinfistula.org.nz)



## Ngā mihi nui, New Zealand Embassy!

Five midwifery centres in the Amhara and Oromia regions were equipped with essential medical drugs and equipment, thanks to a generous grant of **NZ\$25,000** from the New Zealand Embassy in Addis Ababa. The ongoing support and recognition of the critical work of Hamlin Fistula by NZ Foreign Affairs and Trade is making an impact for the mothers of Ethiopia. **Amaseganelo!**

# Your ONE donation this Christmas can transform communities

A Hamlin midwife supports, nurtures and empowers women. She also shares invaluable knowledge and builds trusting networks, single-handedly transforming entire communities.

The best solution to eradicate fistula is prevention. And the best way to achieve prevention is through ensuring every community has access to highly trained, dedicated midwives.

One donation can be the difference between life and death.



\$100

Your gift of \$100 could provide specialised postgraduate training on emergency obstetrics for one Hamlin midwife



\$200

Your gift of \$200 could be used to recruit a new student from a remote area to become a Hamlin midwife



\$820

Your gift of \$820 could stock a Hamlin-supported midwifery clinic with medical supplies for 200 mums and babies



\$3,200

Your gift of \$3200 equips a midwifery clinic for a year



## HELP OUR MIDWIVES ERADICATE FISTULA

Register online [www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate](http://www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate) or complete the form and post it back to us:

### I WOULD LIKE TO:

**Donate a Hamlin General Donation: A/C 06 0817 0264043 00**

Fistula free pregnancy/labour care for one woman = \$25 | Dignity-restoring fistula surgery = \$700 . . . . . My amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Donate to Administration Expenses of Hamlin Fistula NZ: A/C 06 0817 0264043 02** . . . . . My amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSONAL DETAILS:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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Charity  
CC26896



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