



# You can continue the legacy

**Together we can ensure that women like Hawwa don't have to suffer without dignity.**

Dr Reg and Dr Catherine Hamlin left a lasting legacy to the world through their life's work pioneering obstetric fistula treatment in Ethiopia.

While the eradication of fistula in Ethiopia once seemed impossible, it is becoming a reality that will be achieved because of generous supporters who are determined to see this dream come true.

The number one way to prevent obstetric fistula is to provide the women of Ethiopia with access to midwifery and emergency obstetric services. We can empower midwives like Etenesh to prevent fistula from destroying lives.

Drs Catherine and Reg Hamlin refused to turn their backs on the women of Ethiopia and their plight and dedicated their lives to these women who are often left incontinent, humiliated and isolated due to injuries suffered through childbirth without maternity care. Your support means the world to these women who recognise the role New Zealanders play in ensuring they can access maternity care that looks at them as women first, patients second.

Dr Catherine planned for her hospitals to continue long after she and Reg were gone and today there are six hospitals and many dedicated staff in place to continue her work. You too can be part of the work transforming the future for thousands of women and their communities through a legacy gift in your Will. By naming Hamlin Fistula New Zealand in your Will, you will be making an enduring contribution to the prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula in Ethiopia.

Help finish what Drs Catherine and Reg started. This pioneering couple changed the world for thousands of Ethiopian women and helped restore their lives to them. Visit our website or contact us today to find out more about how to leave a gift in your Will, and how your involvement can help prevent fistula and other childbirth injuries for generations to come.

Joli Wescombe, Chair, Hamlin Fistula New Zealand

## Donate

online at [www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate](http://www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate)

### I want to know more about leaving a gift in my Will.

You can find out more on our webpage [www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/how-you-can-help/leave-a-legacy](http://www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/how-you-can-help/leave-a-legacy) 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Please contact me about placing Hamlin Fistula New Zealand in my will.

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

**PERSONAL DETAILS:** Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

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JULY 2022



Hawwa's story:  
*"You brought  
me back to  
hopefulness"*



**Not every fistula is caused by obstructed childbirth. For Hawwa, her injury was caused by traumatic sexual intercourse.**

Hawwa was only 13 when her parents arranged her marriage to a much older man. Although she had been lucky enough to attend five years of school in her rural village in Northern Ethiopia, marriage ended her education. Still virtually a child, she struggled to cope with marriage. Most of all, Hawwa found sleeping with her husband a nightmare full of pain. Not realising she had a rectal fistula, Hawwa remembers:

"I tried to adapt myself to my marriage, but I couldn't stand the pain during sexual intercourse," she recalls. After a terrible, long year of suffering she decided. "I told my mother about it and ran away from my husband."

Following her divorce, Hawwa moved back in with her mother before migrating to Saudi Arabia to work and earn an income to support her family. After seven years she returned home, where her parents convinced her to marry again and start a family.

"When I returned home, I was still terrified of men because of the trauma in my childhood marriage. My second marriage had similar problems to my first one and didn't last long."

Her second marriage only made her fistula worse. Now she had urinary incontinence as well.

"The moment I knew I was unable to control urine, I felt ashamed of myself. I was isolated from social gatherings. I spent more than 15,000 birr searching for a cure, but none of the hospitals I visited could help me. Finally, a doctor referred me to the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Bahir Dar."

Arriving at Hamlin's Bahir Dar hospital with a double fistula, Hawwa received her first surgery two days later.

"Hawwa's fistula is called traumatic fistula. It started right after her first underage marriage where she faced Rectovaginal Fistula, even if she didn't notice it well. Her second marriage worsened the case and left her with a Vesicovaginal Fistula and urinary incontinence," explains Hamlin's Dr Bitew, senior fistula surgeon and urogynaecologist.

Hawwa is very happy to be cured of the urinary incontinence that worried her entire family and ruined her life. During her stay at the hospital, waiting for her final surgery, she enjoyed talking and being friendly with the other injured women and making fun for everyone.

**"May this hospital grow over and over forever. The doctors and nurses as well as everybody here are really life givers. I was about to become hopeless, and you brought me back to hopefulness. You are giving us heavenly love and care for free. May God bless you and your hospital."**

# Meet our Barefoot Champions: Hamlin 2022 Barefoot Challenge



In May, this year's Barefoot Challengers hit the trails to raise funds and awareness for Hamlin Fistula NZ. From beach to mountain, New Zealand's nature provided stunning backdrops and punishment for the soles. **Our challenger's efforts raised over \$13,000!**

When a woman suffering with a fistula hears about the work of Hamlin Fistula, they are usually located in some of the most remote parts of Ethiopia and must endure a laborious trek to get to the nearest hospital.

For most, this will mean many kilometres of walking, usually barefoot.

Every step taken and every dollar raised, means creating access to fistula-free and safe childbirth for every woman.

A huge **THANK YOU** and **CONGRATULATIONS** to our teams who walked the kilometres so that remote rural Ethiopian mothers don't have to. Let's meet a few of our Barefoot challengers.

## Sean & Tash

### - the North Shore Coastal Walk

"Six or seven hours" the trail notes say. That's the expected time it takes to walk the approximately 30km coastal trail from Long Bay to Devonport on Auckland's North Shore.

Of course, this assumes you walk the trail and not the rocky coastline - and most importantly, that you wear shoes.

Jumping into adventure with both feet, Sean and Tash opted for the shoreline route. At times wading through chest-deep incoming tides, with plenty of laughs and M&Ms, their six-hour adventure turned into a twelve-hour epic! At last, with darkness upon them, two sodden, madly grinning humans climbed onto the Devonport shore after 50,000 barefoot steps.

Reflecting on their brave endeavour, they reckoned they'd had a blast. They'd laughed all day, revelled in each other's company, enjoyed the gorgeous scenery, and got loads of exercise - all while raising \$2,000 for a good cause too!



## Emma

### - Barefoot up Mt Grey

Not to be left behind, this spirited 11-year-old hiked barefoot four hours up and down Mt Grey with her mum and dad. Knowing that many girls who suffer fistula are not much older than she is, Emma was inspired to raise money so they can have surgery. And she did! \$2,590 is enough for three surgeries!

Emma had been hoping for snow, and she wasn't disappointed, with the first snowfall of the year the day before her trek!

Emma says she wants to encourage other people to try it next time and that she found it a very fun and unique way to fundraise!

## Anna - Brooklands to Southshore Spit

Anna, a women's health physiotherapist, was inspired by a visit to Ethiopia to take up the challenge. She is passionate about raising awareness and much needed funds to give Ethiopian women and girls a brighter, healthier future.

Joined by friends (with hot coffee!), the team started out in the chilly dark for their 3.5-hour trek, meeting friends along the way who joined in for support and camaraderie. Next year she is hoping that more women will join in on the way.

Exceeding her goal of \$5,000 was a thrilling result for Anna, finishing with over \$6,000!





## Meet Hamlin Midwife Etenesh Askenaw – Transforming Maternity Care



**For twenty-seven-year-old Etenesh, studying health was her life-long dream. When Hamlin approached her about a midwifery scholarship she didn't hesitate to apply.**

Born and raised in the small town of Gorgora, located on the shore of Lake Tana where the Blue Nile River starts its long journey, Etenesh studied at the Hamlin College of Midwives for four years, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in midwifery in 2018. After graduation, Etenesh was deployed to Hamlin's Robit midwifery centre her hometown. Robit serves an area with over 42 thousand people but had poor maternal healthcare services. Working alongside her Hamlin midwifery colleague and a government midwife, Etenesh is committed to improving the maternal healthcare service. In her three and half years of service at Robit, she has attended an average of twenty safe deliveries each month.

**Her work is not without its challenges. During the rainy season, the flood affected area means they have to walk barefoot through mud to help mothers.**

**"During the rainy season the road for ambulance will get damaged, and we are forced to manage complications by ourselves. Because of the quality training we had received at the collage we try to handle complications with confidence, and we are lucky to help those mothers without any bad consequences,"** she explains.

The quality service she is providing makes Etenesh a respected professional midwife among the community, and she became the head of MCH (Maternal and Child Health) department of the clinic.

"I believe that anyone who wants to be a best midwife should study at Hamlin." Etenesh explains, "During the four years study time I learned not just midwifery, but I met with the most selfless woman of the planet - Dr Catherine Hamlin, and learned what humanity really means. I also have learned how to provide quality of care, time management and obeying to professional ethics. All these are still my day-to-day life principles I strictly follow."

Etenesh was involved in Hamlin's recent patient identification, screening for women with fistula and prolapse. She successfully identified and referred a fistula patient to Bahirdar Hamlin Fistula Hospital this year.

**"Since our deployment, Hamlin has been making significant supports to the clinic such as essential drugs and equipment, helping us provide quality services. The solar light installed by Hamlin also has a very important role during night deliveries. We used to use our phone light with our mouth, which hindered us from providing emotional support for the mother under labour,"** recounts Etenesh.

This critical clinical support to midwives like Etenesh is made possible because of supporters like you. Thank you for partnering with us to make a life-saving impact for thousands of vulnerable women and babies.

# Have you considered leaving a gift in your Will?

**Dr Reg and Dr Catherine Hamlin left a legacy to the world through their life's work pioneering obstetric fistula treatment in Ethiopia.**

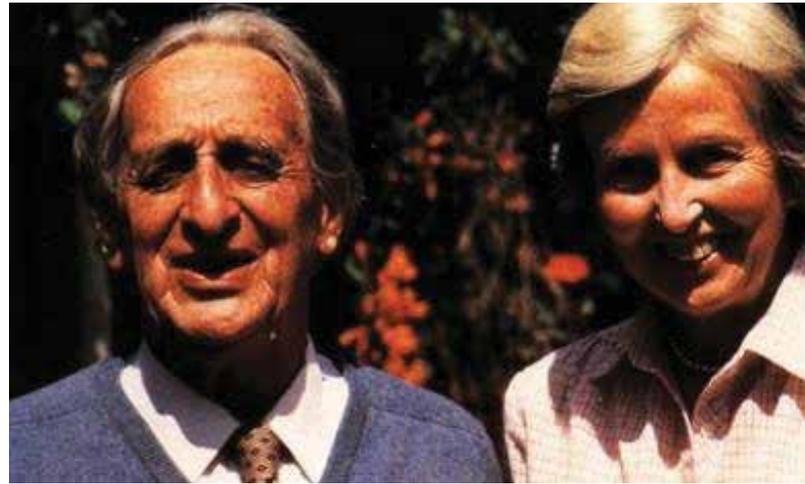
Together they perfected surgical techniques that have been recognised globally and continue to save countless lives of women and babies. Through leaving a gift in your Will, you can join us in working to secure Hamlin Fistula's financial sustainability, to ensure the journey to eradicate fistula from Ethiopia continues forever.

## *Reg and Catherine's Legacy*

Dr Catherine planned for their pioneering work to continue long after they were gone, and their legacy remains as Hamlin Fistula today. Your support doesn't have to end on your passing either. Leaving a legacy gift, just like Reg and Catherine, will help us to succeed in our vision of fistula free and safe childbirth for every woman, now and for generations to come.

Leaving us a gift in your Will is one of the many ways you can prevent and treat fistula and other childbirth injuries, as well as rehabilitate and equip women to lead lives of dignity. By letting us know you have included a gift in your Will, we can thank you for your generous contribution in your lifetime and plan effectively for the future.

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*Dr Reg in 1974, with the first Hamlin Fistula Hospital under construction, thanks to funding from Kiwis.*



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