



SPRING 2016

ALEMTSEHAY ONCE HOPED FOR DEATH THANKS TO YOU, SHE'S NOW A HAPPY MOTHER



We believe every mother should be able to deliver her baby safely and without harm. Sadly, this was not Alemtsehay's reality.

Alemtsehay is from a small village in the remote countryside with no access to a healthcare facility. With her first pregnancy, in 2007, she laboured at home for seven days. On the seventh day she could not push anymore and was unable to move her legs. Exhausted, she blacked out.

Her husband and other men from the village carried her for many hours on a homemade stretcher to a health centre. Her baby did not survive.

The long obstructed labour had caused serious damage. Alemtsehay had suffered severe muscle and nerve damage and a double fistula. She was unable to walk and was completely incontinent of urine and faeces.

“No one came close to me except my husband because of the stench. Death is more preferable than living with such a hated condition.” Alemtsehay

Alemtsehay's husband did his best to look after his wife. He moved her from side to side on

her bed and washed her four times every day.

After eight months of suffering and hopelessness, Alemtsehay heard about Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia on the local radio. She and her husband travelled on the bus for more than two days to the hospital.

Upon her arrival, Alemtsehay was embraced with tender loving care. She was given nutritious food, a handmade blanket and empathy from other patients and staff. After three months of treatment, Alemtsehay could walk again, her fistula had been repaired and she was able to return home.

This year in August we were thrilled to see Alemtsehay return to Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia to have a clean, safe, caesarean. She delivered a beautiful, healthy baby. Mum and bub are both happy and doing well.



“My current existence in life as a normal woman again is all because of this hospital and the motherly care I got here. God bless all of you and the founder of this hospital.”

RENOVATIONS TO RESTORE MORE LIVES

The physical consequences of an obstetric fistula are debilitating. The treatment that patients need often goes beyond the repair of the fistula itself. Sometimes their bladder is completely destroyed and sometimes their rectum and urethra are damaged.

Patients who have lived with their injuries for many years can also have extensive scarring which makes their injuries more difficult to repair. These surgeries are more complex.

Renovations of the Dr Reginald Hamlin Operating Theatre, at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, are underway. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is renowned for its pioneering surgical techniques. These renovations will ensure our team can continue to provide the best possible care for patients with more severe injuries.

The main improvements will be the addition of a new operating room and instalment of a C-arm machine. The C-arm machine will give the team access to high quality, real-time digital imaging. This will increase the surgery success rate for complex cases and restore the health and dignity of many more women.



“The renovation is vital to keep up and maximise the high quality of care by Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.” Dr Tesfaye Yacob, CEO of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.

Dr Catherine Hamlin visits the renovation site every morning and is happy with the progress. The new operating room will be completed in September.



A LETTER FROM CATHERINE

The team in Australia received a vibrant letter from Dr Hamlin last week. Now 92, Catherine still lives on the grounds of the hospital in Addis Ababa. We'd like to share some of her words with you...

We have just welcomed our CEO back from his visit to Australia. He came on Monday morning for coffee and told us all about his visit to Sydney. I am so glad you were able to meet him and I am sure he was glad to meet you all! He is a very good CEO.

We have had some excitement here chopping some large tree branches, which are too near the wards. If there is a storm they may fall on the hospital building, so we are cutting some down. This afternoon we had a huge downpour of heavy rain - I was pleasantly surprised that there were no leaks in my cosy home.

Always in this season I have a fire in the evenings and sit in a comfy chair. I enjoy eating my evening meal on a tray on a small table, as near to the fire as I can get. But I cannot take the place of my lovely dog as she lies on the mat in front of this blazing fire and sleeps until she is put out when I go to bed.

With my love,

Catherine Hamlin



REACHING THE UNREACHABLE

POLIO CAMPAIGN FINDS FISTULA PATIENTS

One of the worst things that can happen to a woman in rural Ethiopia is to have an obstructed labour and suffer an obstetric fistula.

These women become ostracised and are pushed to the edge of their society - socially isolated and often forgotten and invisible.

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has a very clear goal - to eradicate obstetric fistula from Ethiopia. To make this happen, we have been working in partnership with the Ethiopian government to take advantage of the National Polio Campaign and find more sufferers.

As part of the polio campaign, government healthcare workers go door to door to identify those in need of a vaccination to prevent polio. This year, the healthcare workers are also looking for women with an obstetric fistula. The workers use a survey, translated into local languages, to identify potential cases.

As obstetric fistula cases are identified, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia will follow up to provide treatment.

This support by the government has streamlined the logistics of finding patients who are socially isolated and previously unreachable. 2420 women who may have an obstetric fistula have already been identified including 22 in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa.

This innovative campaign has brought hope to many women who have been living with this horrendous childbirth injury in isolation.



MEET OUR BOARD

FERGUS HANSON

Fergus Hanson joined our Board in May 2014. Fergus is the Executive Vice President at the Global Fund to End Slavery. Previously, he has worked as Program Director at the Lowy Institute, and as a diplomat serving at the Australian Embassy in The Hague. We caught up with Fergus and asked him what Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia means to him...



“Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia and its dedicated team is a source of inspiration. I love its focus on concrete ways to transform the lives of women and commitment to achieving Catherine Hamlin’s vision: eradicating the most horrific childbirth injury, obstetric fistula. It’s infectious to see the passion her vision inspires in Australians who so generously contribute their own money to help these women once again live full lives.

The change that Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is delivering on the ground is extraordinary: both through surgeries and world-class midwifery that prevents fistulas occurring. It’s incredible how far it has already gone in eradicating fistulas in Ethiopia. I’m looking forward to seeing Catherine’s vision realised in full.”



THANK YOU

A special thank you to all of you who are hosting a High Tea for Hamlin this month. We are thrilled to have over 300 events across Australia and are so grateful for your support.

More than 45,000 women have been treated by Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. Their life-changing treatment was provided free of charge because of generous donors like you.

We believe in a world where all women are able to deliver their babies safely and where childbirth injuries are a thing of the past. Thank you for your kind and generous support to bring us closer to this vision.

Together we can end obstetric fistula.

Carolyn Hardy, CEO
Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (Australia)

EXPLORE OUR NEW WEBSITE

hamlin.org.au



At our new online home you can browse our latest stories, read about the history of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia and find out how to get involved!



SHOP FOR A CAUSE THIS CHRISTMAS

store.hamlin.org.au



Calendar - **\$15**



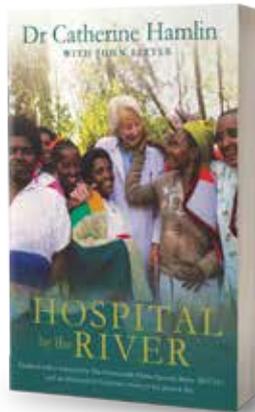
Christmas candles set of 6 - **\$25**



Hamlin spice and recipe booklet 50g - **\$15**



Handmade medallions and stars - **\$9**
Handmade bauble - **\$10**



Autobiography by Dr Catherine Hamlin - **\$28**



Kibrit earrings - **\$16**



Shea butter - **\$15**

Handknitted African animals
Mums + bubs - **\$40**
Single friend - **\$34**



Handwoven Ethiopian scarves - **\$39**



Handwoven towel - **\$55**



Christmas cards 10 pack - **\$10**



PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PATIENTS

North Shore Private Hospital in Sydney has joined forces with Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia to give maternity patients some very special gifts.

New mums in the VIP suites receive a handcarved soapstone heart from the Hamlin store in their gift hamper. These beautiful Fairtrade stones are made in Kenya, with proceeds supporting our work in Ethiopia.

Much more than just a gorgeous gift; this partnership helps to raise vital awareness about our work in Ethiopia, and proceeds could fund eight obstetric fistula operations each year.

We are delighted to partner with North Shore Private, as we work together to restore the lives of the brave fistula patients and provide quality maternal healthcare in Ethiopia.

Pictured above with the new addition to VIP hampers, Stephanie Virgona, Clinical Manager Maternity and Michelle Daniels, Nurse Unit Manager.

We'd love to hear from **you**. Contact our office to find out how your workplace can partner with us to save lives in Ethiopia. We have a huge range of ethically made gifts from across Africa to choose from. Visit store.hamlin.org.au for a preview.

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE A WOMAN'S LIFE

Continue Catherine's dream of eradicating obstetric fistula from Ethiopia.

Here's how:

- **Online at hamlin.org.au/donate**
- **Return the enclosed form**
- **Phone 02 9440 7001**

Please consider becoming a monthly donor. By making a regular gift of just \$50 a month, in a year you will have fully funded a fistula repair operation that will completely restore a woman's life.