



# Hamlin Fistula UK

Supporting the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia

Charity  
Number:  
1153053

Company Limited  
by Guarantee  
Registered in  
England  
No: 08457433

## Newsletter January 2020



*(All patients' names are changed to protect their identity.)*

*“To send women home to experience a normal life, after all they have suffered, is the greatest reward we can have.” - Dr Catherine Hamlin.*



Together we will help to finish what Drs Reg and Catherine Hamlin began when the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital was opened in 1974. Your gifts will help us to achieve Dr Hamlin's dream of eradicating fistula in Ethiopia by 2030.

*“This place will go on until we have eradicated fistula altogether - until every woman in Ethiopia is assured of a safe delivery and a live baby”*

**Help us build a fistula-free future.**

*Dear Friends, when you make a bequest to Hamlin Fistula UK in your Will, you assure us of operating funds into the future. Bequests help to ensure that future generations of women who suffer the debilitating effects of obstetric fistula will receive the treatment they need. Plans can also be made for training more midwives so this terrible childbirth injury can be prevented in the future. Women and girls in Ethiopia deserve to reach their full potential. Thank you for your support over the years and for considering our Charity in your Will.*

*Best wishes from the team at HFUK*

In the UK, one week each year is marked “*Remember a Charity Week*”. Legacy gifts to charities are a thoughtful way to leave a lasting tribute to a wonderful cause. By leaving a gift to *Hamlin Fistula UK* in your Will, you can leave a lasting legacy to the future of thousands of women in Ethiopia. It is an enduring contribution to the treatment and prevention of devastating childbirth injuries. Obstetric fistula can mostly be repaired with a single life-changing surgery. To date, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has treated more than 60,000 women and restored their dignity. None of this would have been possible without the commitment of our supporters and there is now a real possibility of achieving the eradication of fistula in Ethiopia - for good. By remembering Hamlin *Fistula UK* in your Will you can help us build a fistula-free future.

If you have already named *Hamlin Fistula UK* in your Will, or would like more information, please contact [info@hamlinfistulauk.org](mailto:info@hamlinfistulauk.org) or call 0121 559 3999. By letting us know we can thank you, record your planned gift and ensure you receive regular updates about the programmes your legacy will support.

**Your donations enable us to help people such as Diribe. This is her story:**

Diribe is 30 years old and her childhood was spent in a small rural town in the Oromo Region.. She was a patient in our Hospital in Addis Ababa in 2019. The town has relatively better social services, such as a clinic, a school and electric power. Diribe lost both her parents early on in her childhood and grew up moving from one relative’s home to another. She spent a very stressful childhood as an orphan and had never had the opportunity to go to school. It was the church community in the town that had been supporting her until she got married at the age of 15. Her marriage turned out to be full of challenges. They had very little money, so she had to go out with her husband looking for work every day. She washed clothes for government employees in the town to try to cover her family’s living costs from the income she received. Her husband worked doing any labouring job he could get and by the time they returned to their small rented home each evening, the happiness or sadness of the house would be based on the income they got from their day’s labours. So for them their main goal in life was survival.

Diribe conceived her first baby at age 19 which was happy news to begin with. During her pregnancy she often visited the government clinic in the town and it was confirmed that everything was alright. When she reached full term, and when she saw the first signs of labour she headed to the clinic. She stayed for almost two days without delivering and finally gave birth to a live baby, feeling so relieved after the long and painful labour. “*When I first noticed that I was incontinent and unable to move my right leg, I thought it was the effect of the difficult labour and that I would soon recover. But this didn’t happen during my two weeks’ stay at the clinic. I was scared and felt ashamed. My husband went away leaving me lonely at the clinic and I never saw him again. My life*

turned into darkness and hopelessness. Finally the church community brought me back home and supported me and my little baby.” Diribe recalls. She continued living, as she says, “in the worst way” trying to manage the incontinence, taking care of her baby and struggling to cope with the nerve damage to her leg due to her prolonged labour. She was so grateful for the total and generous support of the church community.



“Without their endless support my baby and I would not have survived so long, we would have died of starvation. With the help of these people at church I visited some health facilities around Oromo but no one could help my condition, so I gave up looking and I was restricted to living at home, alone, for ten years with the church community continuing to help me.” During those years Diribe had to accept her condition and take care of her child.

The church supplied her with clothing and meals and gave her money for the rent of the small house she lived in. Sometimes she tried to do some labouring work as she was doing before she had her fistula injury, but it was difficult, and she was ashamed of herself.

After ten years of the agony of her life with fistula, Diribe arrived at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in May 2019, accompanied by a man from the church who heard about our free service for women like her. Because of the severe injury to her bladder the doctors recommended a diversion surgery as a final cure and Diribe agreed to have it. Following different procedures and teachings on what the treatment is and how to manage and live with it after her surgery, Diribe was a different woman by the end of July. Now she is at Desta Mender, our Rehabilitation Centre, having training along with other fistula survivors like her. “Now you have pulled me out of the darkness I have been in for many years and transformed my life to a hopeful woman with a bright future. My plan after the rehab training is to start my own successful business from which I would get enough income to improve both mine and my child’s lives. Thank you all for your thoughtfulness and complete support.” Diribe.

**You can help change one woman’s life today and give her back her dignity tomorrow.**

Two years ago the Ethiopian Ministry of Health estimated that there are more than 36,000 women living in rural Ethiopia with obstetric fistula and that over 3,000 new cases occur each year. Now, midwifery care is continually improving this situation.

## **Our Graduate midwives from 2012, Mawrdi and Chaltu, where are they now?**

Mawrdi and Chaltu, both 28 and mothers of a little daughter each, are originally from Eastern Ethiopia, around Harar City where our Hamlin centre in the east is located. They both graduated from HMC in 2012 and after graduation Mawrdi was assigned at Jarso government health centre, which is approximately 40Kms away from Harar town, with another Hamlin trained colleague. Chaltu was placed at Kulubi government clinic, which is about 50Kms from our Hamlin Outreach hospital in Harar.

With a Hamlin prevention programme support package these brilliant midwives have transformed the maternal healthcare service of their respective rural government clinics. They easily gained the trust of the local community through providing quality midwifery services and won awards from the regional government for their best performance.



*“The very fact that I am a Hamlin graduate who has passed through world-class training in my four years stay at the college, I have faced no challenge in adapting to my working environment and within a short time my colleague and I took the leading role in the midwifery services of the clinic. I believe that in my four years service at the clinic I have accomplished what my generous sponsors wanted me to accomplish.”* Mawrdi explained.

Mawrdi and Chaltu served for 4 and 5 years respectively at the clinics they were first assigned to before they left for the new and higher responsibilities they are currently undertaking. During their professional service with HFE, they were exemplary and transformed the government clinics where they worked into models recognized across the region.

*“During my four years’ stay at Hamlin I trained to be not just a highly skilled and confident professional midwife, I have also learned how to provide satisfactory help and loving care to the poor. This is from my lifelong dedication to Emaye (Dr Catherine - mother) and the services I received at the fistula hospitals. Emaye will always remain the inspiration behind my future success in my personal and professional life.”* Chaltu.

Mawrdi and Chaltu, after leaving Hamlin, became Midwifery instructors at Dire Dawa University, one of the government



universities in their area. Currently they are MSc. candidates at the same university and have both successfully completed their first year courses. They both confirmed that their being trained by Hamlin played the 'lion's share' behind their professional success. *"Given we are highly trained by Hamlin and have proved it, we scored outstanding marks in the entrance examination to join the university. I can say Hamlin has shaped our professionalism and thank you all for this."* Maurdi.



This photo is of one of our most recently qualified Hamlin Midwives. Hosaena Worku graduated in 2019 and was the highest scoring graduate of the year.

Hosaena is from a small rural community in the Amhara region of Ethiopia and her lifelong dream has been to be a health professional. Excited about returning home to start work Hosaena told us she feels confident and ready to start providing quality services for mothers in her community,

and to raise awareness of services to the many women living in the most remote rural areas who may not be currently accessing health care. She told us; *"Such life-changing work pioneered by Emaye (Dr. Catherine Hamlin) will always be the inspiration behind the commitment I will exert to prevent fistula and any other birth injuries."*

Hosaena wanted to share this special message with all Hamlin Fistula UK donors: *"I thank all Hamlin supporters.....your generosity is making a difference here in Ethiopia through producing highly skilled midwives like myself who are committed to serve rural women who don't have access for professional assistance. I would say keep up supporting Hamlin so that it could reach to many more rural mothers. I promise to realise your objective of preventing obstetric fistula through providing quality maternal healthcare service to rural mothers"*.

Through the success of the work of Hamlin Midwives many maternal deaths have been prevented. We are proud to be playing a part in reducing maternal mortality rates in Ethiopia and hope to see these rates continue to decline, so that childbirth is safe for every woman.

### **Meet Dr Melaku from our Hamlin Fistula Outreach Hospital in Mekele.**

Our Surgeon Dr Melaku Abriha is the Medical Director in Mekele. By profession he is a Medical Doctor, Senior Obstetrician/ Gynaecologist and Urogynaecologist, and has served for 29 years, almost half of his professional experience, at Mekele Hamlin Fistula Centre.

When we asked him why he chose Hamlin, Dr Melaku said, *"It has professional freedom, you serve your patients who are worried and apply every available solution to cure them. But most of all I like to*

work at Hamlin because the organisation has been doing an excellent job in helping the poorest of the poor on our planet.”

Dr Melaku also remembers the first time he met Dr Catherine Hamlin. “She became my role model for my career since I met her in 2001 while doing my internship at Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. With her late husband Reg, they are champions to the fistula holistic treatment, not only to Ethiopia but for the rest of the world as well.” Dr Melaku is a father in his own lovable family.



### **Hamlin’s Reintegration Programme.**

*“To send women home to experience a normal life, after all they have suffered, is the greatest reward we can have.” Dr Catherine Hamlin.*

Women can so easily lose hope after suffering an obstetric fistula. They have lived alone, been ostracised from their communities, almost forgotten and invisible. These women have spent so long living in isolation, ashamed and humiliated, that it can be very difficult to reintegrate back into their community when they return home. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia makes this transition easier by providing counselling, numeracy and literacy classes, handicrafts classes and business skills training. Hamlin's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme empowers women to return to their communities with confidence and independence.



### **Here is Seran Wondimu, a first year student at Hamlin College of Midwives.**

Seran is 18 years old and is from Gore, a small rural town near to Metu Hamlin Fistula Centre. She is one of the 24 new midwifery students who joined the College in September 2019. She is the fifth eldest in her family of 6 children. She explains why she decided to study midwifery. *“Most mothers around my home town have a trying time while they are in labour. When I saw my elder sister giving birth I realised how having a baby is not actually a joyous time. Since then I knew I wanted to study midwifery to help to resolve this problem and when I heard about the scholarship at Hamlin, I joined without hesitation. The college is more outstanding than I could have imagined. I love it here.”*



### **A Nobel Prize Winner**

The last time we reported news of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, he was visiting the hospital for the celebration of Dr Hamlin’s 60 years in Ethiopia. Now we announce that he is the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner. He made peace last year with Eritrea. He was awarded the prize for



his efforts “to achieve peace and international co-operation”. Following the announcement, Mr Abiy said, *“I am humbled and thrilled. Thank you very much. It is a prize given to Africa, given to Ethiopia, and I can imagine the rest of Africa's leaders will take it positively to work on the peace-building process on our continent.”* Soon after he came to power, he appointed the country's first female president and gave half the seats in his cabinet to women. Within a few months he had signed a peace deal with Eritrea.

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We would like to send you news about our work, fundraising activities and ways to get involved. Please let us know (by email) if you are happy to hear from us by email. (If you change your mind about hearing from us you can stop receiving our updates at any time by emailing [info@hamlinfistulauk.org](mailto:info@hamlinfistulauk.org) or calling 0121 5593999

Hamlin Fistula UK hopes that you find our reports on the hospital very encouraging, and we thank you for your continuing support.

For anyone wishing to donate, please see pages 8 & 9 below. Thank you.

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is one of Africa's success stories. Please help us to continue to keep the candle burning which Drs Reginald and Catherine Hamlin lit more than 50 years ago.

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Our Office is manned by our Company Secretary and volunteers and it is not open every day. If you need to contact us your message and telephone number can be left on our answer-phone and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

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The Hamlins first came to Birmingham in 1967 on a fundraising tour. Dr Reginald Hamlin lectured at the University of Birmingham, which has a Medical School with an outstanding record as a teaching hospital. The Charity was formed immediately after this visit to support them in their wonderful healing work.

**There are many ways you can support us.**

A direct gift of cash

A regular gift by 'standing order'

A gift by CAF cheque

Payroll giving

Online donation through our secure website - just click on DONATE

There are special arrangements to give relief from Inheritance Tax on bequests, and from Capital Gains Tax on gifts of shares.

If you wish your contribution to be a Gift Aid donation, please complete and sign the form below and return it to the Company Secretary

Mr Laurence Parkes,  
Hamlin Fistula UK,  
4 Nimmings Road,  
Halesowen,  
West Midlands, B62 9JJ

Please accept the enclosed donation for the work of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital through the Charity **Hamlin Fistula UK**.

Cheque attached £.....

Title..... Forename(s).....

Surname.....

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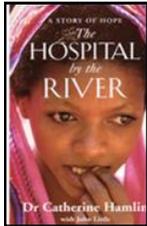
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## Merchandise for Sale

Please phone office to arrange time for personal

Collections: 0121 559 3999

Orders by post will be despatched on receipt of payment



Dr Hamlin's first Book "The Hospital by the River"  
**£5 each (if collected from office) or by post £8 each**

Qty: .....Book(s) @ £8.00 (within UK) £ .....



Dr Hamlin's second Book "Catherine's Gift"  
**£5 each (if collected from office) or by post £8 each**

Qty: .....Book(s) @ £8.00 (within UK) £ .....



Logo Lapel Pin

**£1 each (if collected from office) or by post in multiples of 4 pins at £5**

Qty: .....packs of 4 pins @ £5 (within UK) £.....



Hamlin Fistula Key Ring 2 cm diameter.

**£1 each (if collected from office) or by post in multiples of 4 rings at £5**

Qty: .....packs of 4 rings @ £5 (within UK) £.....



Notelets **£2.50 per pack of 6 (if collected from office)**

or **by post in multiples of 4 packs of 6 at £12**

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**“Two for One”**

This 16 page soft cover A5 book tells the story of the life of a fistula patient. **£1 each or by post -4 copies for £5**

Qty: ..... X 4copies @ £5



**Bookmarks**

50p each or **by post – up to 15 bookmarks please add £1**

Qty: .....@ 50p each plus £1 p&p - for up to 15 bookmarks  
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May we suggest that you Register at: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> and then put it in your Favourites. (Bookmark).

Instead of going directly to eBay, etc. find the retailer through [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

Click on it and shop.

Remember to say you are supporting **“Hamlin Fistula UK”** - every purchase makes a contribution to the Charity with no additional cost to yourselves. Do investigate it.