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Catherine Hamlin
Fistula Foundation



Healing Matters



Because of you, Ketinin is finally home, healed, and *free.*



For 17 long years, Ketinin lived in the shadows of obstetric fistula - isolated by grief and shame - until your support brought a Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia outreach team to her door.

Her heartbreak began after a prolonged, three-day labor ended in a stillbirth. For nearly two decades after, untreated incontinence kept her trapped.

"I couldn't even go to the market," Ketinin recalls. "I stayed inside, hiding."

Then, Project Zero reached her community. Through this initiative, Hamlin-trained workers are searching district by district to find women suffering

in silence. "They came all the way to my house," she marvels.

Project Zero is Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's national program to accelerate progress towards an end to obstetric fistula. Hamlin-trained teams actively find women living with untreated childbirth injuries across the country and connect them to care.

It is an ambitious next step in the vision Dr Catherine Hamlin dedicated her life to: a future where no woman in Ethiopia suffers from obstetric fistula.

Ketinin was brought to Hamlin's Metu Fistula Hospital, where she received free, life-changing surgery alongside nourishing meals and emotional care. "The professionals comforted us," she says. "The fear I had faded away."

The surgery was a complete success. Today, Ketinin is back home, living freely, and encouraging other women to seek help. "I am testifying that I was

ill like this, that those who have urinary incontinence can get treated for free, and that I have been completely healed," she shares.

Thank you for making Project Zero possible, and for giving women like Ketinin their lives back: [read her full story.](#)

YOUR impact in numbers



82,000+ women's lives changed with treatment through the Hamlin Model of Care



294 BSc Midwifery graduates since the opening of the Hamlin College of Midwives



4,000+ surgeries to repair childbirth injuries take place at Hamlin hospitals annually



250 former patients complete the Women's Empowerment program each year



To send women home to experience again a normal life after all they have suffered is the greatest reward we can have, and is shared by all who look after fistula patients.

- Dr Catherine Hamlin



Carrying your *kindness* into the future



Berhane grew up in the rural village of Mihle in Ethiopia, balancing school with caring for her family's livestock.

She married when she was 23 and soon became pregnant with her first child. Despite the nearest health centre being over two hours walk away, she attended all her antenatal appointments, determined to give her baby the best start.

But when her labor began, the conflict in Tigray had devastated local health services. With few medical staff and no surgical supplies, Berhane endured three agonizing days of obstructed labor. Her baby survived, but she sustained a devastating double obstetric fistula, leaking both urine and feces.

Berhane's husband left and she withdrew from her community as neighbours mocked her. She returned to live with her elderly parents, convinced there was no cure for her condition.

Everything changed when Berhane's nephew helped her reach Hamlin's Mekele Fistula Hospital, where she learned that obstetric fistula is a treatable childbirth injury.

She recalls: "I thought I was the only person in the world suffering from this. Realizing that I wasn't alone brought me an immense sense of peace."

"I want to express my deepest, most heartfelt gratitude to the memory of our late mother, Emaye and to everyone who has held my hand through this journey." - Berhane

Seeing Berhane thrive shows us that the impact of your kindness doesn't end after treatment – it ripples through every milestone that follows.

Planned giving, or leaving a legacy gift, is a lasting way to walk alongside women in Ethiopia for years to come, ensuring Dr Catherine Hamlin's vision lives on through you.

As Mavis, a legacy supporter explains: "Women with obstetric fistula need all the support they can get to have life transforming surgery. I know the gift in my Will is going to change the world for the women in Ethiopia.

"The gift of life is immeasurable and it is an honour and a privilege to care for them."



Berhane at
Desta Mender

For a confidential conversation about leaving a legacy gift, please visit catherinehamlin.org/planned-giving



A lasting *tribute* that transforms lives

When you leave a legacy gift in your Will, your name will be added to our In Loving Memory monument in the grounds of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

You can also honor someone special with an Etch in Memory – a personalized name plaque placed on the monument. It is a lasting tribute to your loved one, while helping provide life-changing treatment and care for women in Ethiopia.

You can arrange a confidential discussion about our planned giving options by emailing a member of our friendly team at wills@catherinehamlin.org.

**A minimum donation applies.*

One woman that author John Little will never *forget*



To mark the 25th anniversary of *The Hospital by the River*, we recently brought readers and supporters together for a special webinar with journalist and author John Little, who helped Dr Catherine Hamlin tell her remarkable story, and obstetrician Dr David Knox, Catherine's nephew.

Together, they reflected on Catherine and Reg's remarkable lives and the work continuing their vision today. We received many thoughtful questions, including one asking John whether there was a patient he still remembered vividly. For John, one of those women was Minsera.

When she arrived at the Hamlin Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, Minsera was desperately unwell. After a devastating labor and months confined to bed, she was emaciated, severely anaemic and dehydrated. She had extensive injuries, painful bed

sores and was unable to walk. Catherine later discovered that Minsera also had tuberculosis, which had weakened her bones and contributed to the destruction of her left hip.

After eight months of intensive treatment, the tuberculosis was cured, but Minsera still faced a long road ahead.

When John first met her, she had already been at the hospital for two years. She was walking with a stick and persevering with physiotherapy, while Catherine hoped further treatment would eventually be possible.

John left Ethiopia often wondering what had become of her. Seven years later, while writing *Catherine's Gift*, he returned to the hospital and discovered Minsera was still there, now working as a nurse aide.

He barely recognized her. The frail young woman he remembered had become "a vibrant young woman", smiling and full of life. When John asked how she felt, her answer was simple: "I am very happy." For John, nothing more needed to be said.

"Everything that needed to be said was right there in front of me, in her glowing good health and her bright personality."

The role of nutrition in fistula healing



At Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, good nutrition is recognized as an essential foundation of healing for women with childbirth injuries.

Sister Tigist Debebe, who has a master's degree in public health and nutrition, has undertaken research into the nutritional status of women with obstetric fistula, published in the *Millennium Journal of Health*. The research found that over 33% of women presenting at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia were underweight.

At Hamlin, nutritional care begins from the moment a woman arrives at hospital. Each patient receives a thorough health examination, including an assessment of her nutritional status. A personalized care plan is put in place to build her strength before surgery. Nutritious meals, rest and targeted support help prepare women physically for treatment and can support a stronger recovery after surgery.

Sister Tigist says: "When we improve the nutritional status of women, this has a positive impact on their physical and mental health. It also improves the outcome of obstetric fistula surgery, reduces the likelihood of repeat surgeries, and supports each patient's overall recovery."

Discover more of Catherine's extraordinary legacy



- Read more of John's moving story
- Watch John Little and Dr David Knox in the webinar recording
- Order your own copy of *The Hospital By the River*

www.catherinehamlin.org/john-little-story

Experience the magic of Harar, Ethiopia

When you travel to Ethiopia with Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation on the Hamlin Ethiopian Adventure, you will experience so much more than the colour, sounds and culture of this extraordinary country.

Our small group tours also offer a rare, behind-the-scenes look at how Dr Catherine Hamlin's legacy continues to transform the lives of women in Ethiopia.

**Trips in 2027 are selling fast!
Book now to secure your spot.**



Find out more:
click here!



Start your trip at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and also visit the Hamlin College of Midwives and Desta Mender, our rehabilitation center. Meet our patients and staff, and see firsthand how Catherine's vision continues through the people carrying her work forward today.



Travelling east, you will discover Harar, one of Ethiopia's most vibrant and historic cities. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Harar is a maze of colorful alleyways, bustling markets, and centuries of history. Wander through its ancient streets, taking in the heady scents of the spice market and come face-to-face with some of the town's most famous residents - its hyenas.

Meet Almaz, Patient Identification Officer



For Almaz Teamir, finding women who might otherwise go without treatment is what motivates her every day - and your support helps make her work possible.

Based at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's Mekele Hospital, Patient Identification Officers like Almaz travel from village

to village, speaking with community leaders, families and women, often going door-to-door to find women living with obstetric fistula and connect them with life-changing care.

Almaz also visits patients after they have undergone treatment, to check on their progress and see whether they need any further support.

These journeys can mean travelling long distances along dusty, rural roads - or continuing on foot where there are no roads at all.

By supporting Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, you can help Almaz and her colleagues reach women who may have been waiting years for treatment and offer them a pathway to care. For

Almaz, the reward makes every kilometre worthwhile. **"When you see the smiles, the happiness ... this is what motivates me."**

Almaz and her colleagues are carrying Catherine's vision forward - one woman, one community, and one journey at a time.



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