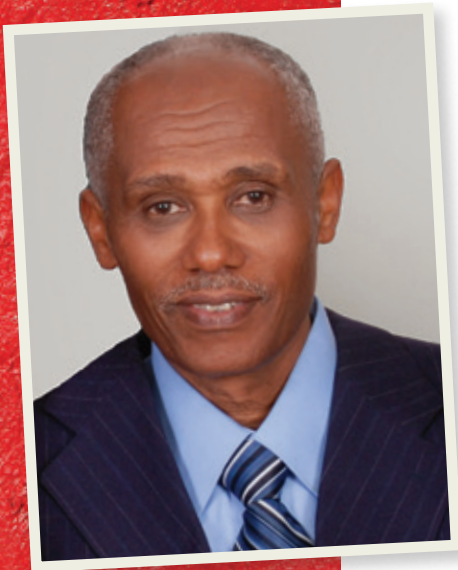


# New CEO at HFE



On 15 April 2016 Dr Tesfaye Yacob took up his appointment as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE). He was welcomed by the staff of the hospital at a function in the Chapel and Dr Hamlin expressed delight that her long held dream to see the hospital run by an Ethiopian has been fulfilled.



PHOTO | GRAEME YOUNG

**T**esfaye is a medical doctor who graduated in 1985 and has worked in various hospitals including a hospital in Eastern Ethiopia. He has also worked as the Medical Director of a government hospital in Addis Ababa.

From late 1996 to 2010 Tesfaye held an elected position as General Secretary of a church denomination which included serving as Executive Director of a large development program. He visited Australia as a member of the board of the Micah Network to attend a workshop on the North South Partnership. From June 2010 Tesfaye was the co-ordinator of a coalition of churches and bible agencies and instructor of leadership courses as part time faculty at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology.

He brings to his role as CEO of HFE over 30 years of experience as a clinician, trainer, researcher and public health manager, both in government and non-government organisations.

Hamlin Fistula Australia Limited welcomes Dr Tesfaye Yacob to his important new position as Chief Executive Officer of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.



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# Talking Art

They say “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” and “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Well I know a place where 7 beautiful pictures exist—telling a story of hope, restoration, and wholeness after heartbreak, loss and brokenness. It is not the Louvre in Paris, or The National Art Gallery in Canberra. No, this special art is on a wall in the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia.

**P**ainted by Dawet Bagegn in 1997, these images tell the story of a fistula patient from young bride, to mourning mother, and then, with healing surgery, to restoration and dignity.

The staff can use these paintings to help the patients understand their predicament and to give them hope. Some women arrive from areas whose languages are not spoken or able to be interpreted by the staff. Through these paintings, they can see that their situation is understood and can be helped.

Tradition and culture favour early betrothal and marriage for Ethiopian girls. This is portrayed in the first painting. Though now the legal minimum age for marriage is 18, it is not policed much in the countryside.

The young brides have to work hard, which includes gathering firewood, grinding grain, and fetching water (painting 2). Kilojoules that should be supporting growth are thus used to do these chores and the young woman’s skeletal growth may be

compromised. Then the time comes to have her first child (Dr Hamlin said the average age is 17 for first baby). She will often return to her mother’s village and perhaps her mother, a relative, or a traditional birth attendant (TBA) will attend to her (painting 3).

Around the world 5% of woman will endure a prolonged labour. It may be from a small or deformed pelvis or a mal-positioned baby. Without intervention, the woman can only suffer her contractions with her baby unable to be delivered. The TBA do not have medical training. Labour may continue for days. The distance between villages and medical clinics with trained staff and the lack of roads and bridges become significant issues here. Most of these prolonged labour cases result in a stillborn infant and internal damage to the mother, resulting in what’s called obstetric fistula (fistula means hole).

Inevitably, the woman is ostracised as she is deemed offensive and embarrassing; her injuries mean she

cannot control her body’s natural waste. Her family may build a little lean to or hut for her to “live in” ashamed, alone, bereft, grieving, divorced (often), and downcast (painting 4).

If someone in her village hears of the life-changing work of one of the 6 fistula hospitals, they will do what they can to enable her to travel to it. Perhaps, if available, a male relative will escort her there as this travel may be daunting and harrowing (painting 5).

The hospitals are all attractive, clean, and welcoming places with many of the Nurse’s Aides former fistula patients themselves. They have real empathy for these brave patients (painting 6). The average stay for a fistula repair is 3 weeks and each girl is given a new dress and the bus fare for their return trip to their village. On her arrival home there is much celebration and gratitude for her healing and restored dignity (painting 7).

These days, each woman is also given a beautiful, new, knitted shawl,





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like the ones used for their hospital stay. Not only are they a gift of love, these are a valuable means of advertising as she is asked to share with everyone about the hospital and her life changing surgery.

Dr Hamlin's vision—that all Ethiopian women have access to a trained midwife—is becoming a reality. Each year more dedicated and enthusiastic midwives (trained at The Hamlin College of Midwives, at Desta Mender) graduate and are placed in clinics around the country. Last

year they attended more than 10,000 births. The clinics also provide ante and post-natal care and offer family planning advice.

Perhaps now we must ask the artist to paint an eighth picture—of a confident, young midwife delivering the precious infant of a fellow citizen, preventing obstetric fistula and lowering the infant and maternal death rate in Ethiopia.

Not quite a thousand words but a beautiful picture indeed!

This story is indicative only and

of course each mother's experience is unique.

Joanne Millar  
Brisbane

*Mrs Joanne Millar is a Niece of Dr Catherine Hamlin and regularly shows these pictures as she speaks about her Aunt's work and the care provided, free of charge, by the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.*

## Dr Hamlin returns to Ethiopia

After an extended stay in England Dr Catherine Hamlin returned to her home in Ethiopia and the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital on 26 March 2016. Although all the vital work of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia had continued since she left in the first half of 2015, Dr Hamlin's personal loving care of patients was sorely missed while she was away.

Dr Hamlin was met at the airport by Dr Fekade (Medical Director) and other excited staff and taken straight to the Hospital.

Her welcome, from all accounts was enthusiastic and overwhelmingly warm and positive.



PHOTO | GRAEME YOUNG

# New Trustees in Ethiopia

On 1 December 2015, new Trustees for Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia were appointed. They have responsibility for the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, the Hamlin College of Midwives and the regional centres of HFE. Dr Catherine Hamlin remains as the Founder and Honorary Trustee of HFE and the new Trustees are:

Dr Ephrem Tekle  
Dr Mengitsu Asnake  
Mrs Wuleta Betemariam  
Mrs Mulu Solomon  
Dr Yigerem Abebe



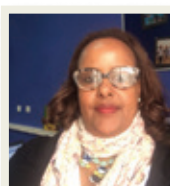
**Ephrem Tekle Lemango** is a Director of Maternal and Child Health/Nutrition Directorate in the Ministry of Health, Ethiopia. He earned his Medical degree from Addis Ababa University followed by a postgraduate degree from

University of Leeds. He has been working as an Assistant Professor of Health Management, Planning and Policy in Mekelle University while serving as a director of Academic Programs and Deputy Dean for Specialised referral teaching hospital. He has also served as an advisor and consultant for national and international NGOs working on human resource development and medical education. He currently leads the Maternal and Child Health programs in Ethiopia and is an honorary assistant professor of health management and policy in St Paul Millennium Medical College.



**Dr Mengistu Asnake Kibret** is a public health physician with 28 years of experience in clinical service, program management, training and operation researches both in government and non-governmental organizations. He is currently

the Country Representative for Pathfinder International in Ethiopia and the Chief of Party for the Integrated Family Health Program a USAID flagship Family Planning Maternal Newborn and Child Health program. In a voluntary capacity, Dr Mengistu served as the president of the Ethiopian Public Health Association from 2006-2009 and serves as the president of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA). He also served as the Executive Board member of the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society Branch offices in Eastern Ethiopia. Dr Mengistu received an MPH from Addis Ababa University in 1991 and his MD from Gondar College of Medical Sciences in 1986.



**Ms Wuleta Betemariam** has 20 years of experience in providing strategic leadership for public health programs globally and is currently the Project Director of the Last Ten Kilometers Project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with additional funding from UNICEF, and USAID and implemented by JSI Research and Training Institute Inc. Prior to her current position, Ms Betemariam served as the Deputy Director of EngenderHealth's Program Division in New York, where she provided strategic direction and oversight of country and global programs. Before joining EngenderHealth in New York, Ms Betemariam established EngenderHealth's presence in Ethiopia as well as a program in Sudan and was the country director for the two countries. Ms. Betemariam also has seven years experience as technical advisor for USAID's Population, Health and Nutrition Office, with focus in Ethiopia. Ms. Betemariam holds a Masters Degree in Public Health and Public Policy from the University of Michigan.



**Mrs Mulu Solomon**, is General Manager of Right Vision Int. Plc. involved in Training, Research, Management, Leadership and Investment consultancy. She has more than three decades of experience in management and leadership.

She is currently Honorary President of Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations, Policy Advisory Group Member of Higher Education – TUNING AFRICA, Member of the National Board of Directors for Ethiopian Red Cross Society, Advisory Group Member of IMF-World Bank group for Sub Sahara Africa (AGSA), Member of Africa TEVT Expert Group, Member of the Ethiopian Public Diplomacy, Chair holder – Entrepreneurship Chair in EiABC – Addis Ababa University (AAU) and Patron for Ethiopian Public Health Association. She has a MA in Environment & Development and a BA in Accounting.



**Dr Yigeremu Abebe Asemere**

is a Vice President and is the Country Director in Ethiopia for the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI). Dr Yigeremu joined CHAI in 2006, and remains committed to leading the large Ethiopia country program in saving the lives of those suffering from HIV/AIDS and other preventable and treatable diseases.

Dr Yigeremu received his undergraduate degree from the Addis Ababa University medical faculty in 1982, and began his career working in the military health services as a general practitioner for two years before receiving his postgraduate diploma in internal medicine in 1988. During his residency program, Dr Yigeremu was the first to present on the potential threat of HIV/AIDS to Ethiopia, and since that time has dedicated his life to fighting the epidemic in his country.

# Reply Slip

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Thank you for supporting of the work of Dr Catherine Hamlin through the Hamlin Fistula Relief and Aid Fund and Hamlin Fistula Australia Limited. Alternatively you may decide to donate to Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (Australia) Limited.





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