

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL  
PRESIDENT'S APPEAL 2007  
RESTORING DIGNITY

a global voice  
for women

Soroptimist  International

**Project Aims and Objectives:**

To help those women with fistulas who cannot be completely cured and need ongoing medical care.

To encourage independence and improve the morale and self-esteem of the permanent residents of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital through the self-help rural village "Desta Mender".

**Methods:**

Certain girls and women cannot be completely cured and need ongoing medical care. Instead of keeping them as permanent residents of the Hospital they are encouraged to live in a special village, "Desta Mender", where they can receive medical care at rural clinics, as well as training in various skills such as dressmaking, catering, animal husbandry and agriculture to help them to earn an income and become self-sufficient. Soroptimist International will provide vital support for the continuation and expansion of this work through its donations to 'Restoring Dignity'.

**Obstetric Fistula:**

A fistula is an unnatural tear or hole between two organs. Obstructed labour can cause a fistula to the birth passage, bladder and sometimes, the rectum. As a result a woman leaks urine constantly. Fistula injuries are worse than death as the women experience rejection, separation, loneliness and shame.

"The Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital is the only facility in the world exclusively dedicated to treating (obstetric) fistula. It serves as a centre of excellence, offering training and pioneering surgical techniques and methods of physical and psychological rehabilitation for women"

*United Nations Population Fund*



**Village Desta Mender**

The village was opened in a rural area outside Addis Ababa for patients who could not be completely cured. Ongoing medical care is available and the women and girls are taught various skills such as crafts and knitting, and receive training to become nursing aids and carers to help in the nearby orphanage.

It has developed into a much needed and appreciated 'home from home' for these women who can never return to their villages. The need for the village is ever increasing and the Hospital relies on donations for this vital work. With your support, Soroptimist International can help provide a secure future and restore dignity for these young women who have lost so much.

## History of the Hamlin Fistula Hospital

In 1958 Doctors Reg and Catherine Hamlin went to Ethiopia to train midwives. Seeing the plight of the poor "fistula" women they became determined to help them. They developed a delicate surgical technique that, in most cases results in a complete cure.

They then built the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and have been totally involved ever since. After Dr Reg Hamlin OBE died in 1993, Dr Catherine carried on with the aims and objects of this wonderful hospital and associated projects, one of which is the Desta Mender village.

Since the hospital was built, over 24,000 women have been treated and cured. The hospital also trains doctors from other developing countries. The effect of their work is spreading worldwide, restoring new life and dignity to thousands of women who may have otherwise perished.

The Hamlin Fistula® Relief and Aid Fund is a registered charity CFN 16100. 100% of the money raised goes to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. [www.fistulatrust.org](http://www.fistulatrust.org)



The project 'Restoring Dignity' is a project in partnership with the Hamlin Fistula® Relief and Aid Fund to support the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.



Thank you for your wonderful support

All donations should be sent to your Federation Headquarters for transmission to Soroptimist International.

Please mark donations:  
December 10 President's Appeal 2007

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Soroptimist  International

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HAMLIN FISTULA RELIEF AND AID FUND  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



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Imagine never being able to return home  
after having a baby

then

Imagine finding a home in Village Desta Mender,  
being cared for, trained for a new life,  
and having your dignity restored.