



**GREENLAMP**

Learn · Light · Lead

Annual Review 2023



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## A Message from the President - 11 Years of Impact

Thanks to **You**, our members, donors, sponsors and funders, board members and volunteers, GreenLamp has been able to deepen and expand our programs to support more women in rural and remote regions of Ethiopia. We are reaching nearly 6 million people through compassionate, qualified midwives, and solar light and power in rural health centres, serving over 2.5 million women and girls.

Our programs have provided a safe birthing environment for an estimated 523,000 deliveries since 2012, based on site visit data. We have installed 284 solar systems to date with 24 more installations planned for 2024. In 2023, 217 or 77% of all installations are functioning and have been checked and maintained to “keep the lights on” for midwives and mothers in Ethiopia. The only disappointment, unfortunately due to conflict in Tigray, is that 66 installed solar systems have not been maintained for over 3 years.

Sometimes anecdotal feedback is the most powerful. I recently asked some health centre managers the following question - *“what has been the impact on your health centre of having a qualified midwife and a solar system for light and power?”* Responses were heartfelt and motivating; *“maternal deaths have reduced from 5-6 per year to almost zero.”*

This confirms, based on a small sample, that our programs are having the desired impact by filling gaps in health systems in rural areas.

It has been a great privilege to have led GreenLamp this year as President having taken over from Christina Blecher, who served as President for the previous ten years. Her energy and motivation have made GreenLamp what it is today and are a continuous inspiration, I thank her sincerely, for her ongoing support and advice. GreenLamp’s continued success comes from the dedication, commitment and hard work of all our board members and volunteers. Notwithstanding the challenges, we have grown, improved and I am genuinely proud of what we have accomplished as a team - thank you all for your endless motivation, considerable time, sense of humour and boundless energy, all donated pro bono to GreenLamp. I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Our impact is a testament to what can be achieved when like-minded individuals come together with a shared vision and commitment to a clear mission.



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## Changes to the Board

We have a few changes to announce; two of our long standing board members - Linda Elzvik, Vice-President and Henriette Becker, Events and Secretary, will step down after the AGM. Linda and Henriette have been instrumental to GreenLamp's success, influencing our strategic direction with professionalism and managing our fundraising and events so successfully.

I am sure you remember fondly the amazingly successful galas, auctions, as well as the "Lunchkino" film screenings.



Henriette led our ZEW0 certification in 2022, which provides independent confirmation that we are a transparent, efficient and effective non-profit organisation. Linda has worked tirelessly to get our donor database system, Salesforce, configured and running smoothly with our updated website - a huge achievement.

We will miss Linda's smile, energy and passion as well as Henriette's expertise as a nurse, her wisdom and sense of humour. We wish them both well for the future and look forward to connecting regularly at our events and Members' Circle lunches.

We now welcome to our board Dr Anna Roos, a vaccine expert, who has been leading our HMAN Program for nearly two years as a volunteer, and Dr Lindsay Beardsworth, an animal health expert and chartered accountant. Volunteers are also an essential part of GreenLamp helping us manage our numerous commitments, providing diversity of ideas, energy and expertise. These roles also provide a good stepping stone to becoming a board member. We welcome Alexis Margreiter, Marion Struber and Caroline Sernrot as volunteers to our team.

Warmly Joanna Boyd - GreenLamp President



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## Our Approach and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG's)

GreenLamp has maintained its strategic approach to “Empower women and their communities” by focusing on sustainable investments in our three pillars; Learn, Light, and Lead. GreenLamp’s strategy is based on a sustainable, holistic approach, working collaboratively with local partners and targeting long term impact to improve women's future opportunities.

Learn - midwifery education

Light - health centre equipment and solar systems

Lead - post-graduate midwife support and training

Holistic Community Programs - preventative, community-led health programs

Our approach is aligned with five of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which ensures we focus on the most impactful and measurable outcomes.

The UN SDGs were agreed unanimously by member states and published in 2015 after the success of the 2000 - 2015 Millennium Development Goals. They provide an excellent project development and reporting framework against which we can measure progress and focus our activities, as well as demonstrate to funders and donors the impact of our programs.



Each SDG has a list of Targets and Indicators:

For example, SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being

SDG 3.1 Target - Maternal Mortality Ratio: 70 deaths in every 100,000 births

SDG 3.1.2 Indicator -- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

GreenLamp Programs map to the UN SDGs as follows:

UN SDG 3 Learn, Light, Lead & Holistic Community Program

UN SDG 4 Learn, Lead & Holistic Community Program

UN SDG 5 Lead - HMAN, Leadership training and Holistic Community Program

UN SDG 7 Light 4 Life and the Sustainability Program

UN SDG 17 Collaborations with local partners



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## Recognition Awards and Field Trips - 2023

It has been a busy year for GreenLamp, meeting weekly in our teams, (which include projects, fundraising, proposal and grant writing, events and inducting new volunteers), as well as regular zoom calls with our Ethiopian partner organisations. Project team members travel to Ethiopia to meet partners and visit projects on a regular basis, developing personal relationships and trust; an essential part of our collaborative approach.



We are immensely proud and honoured to have been awarded with a “Certificate of Appreciation” from Dr Lia Tadesse, the Ethiopian Federal Minister of Health for our technical and financial support to improve maternal health outcomes in Ethiopia. Christina Blecher and Catherine Knight were also honoured by the Hamlin Board and presented with a beautiful award for their individual contributions.

We encourage board members to visit our projects in Ethiopia at least once to gain insights into our project work and to meet our partners. In February, Valéria Akroyd and Joanna Boyd spent two weeks travelling to Addis Ababa to meet partners and stakeholders. They spent time interviewing midwife students, faculty and filming at LeDeG, a midwifery college in Addis. Then onto Tembaro Special Woreda in Central Ethiopia, a roadtrip of over 240 km, to visit the Ferring Holistic Community Program.

In June, Anna Roos and Catherine Knight travelled to Addis to run a two day Organisation, Proposal Writing and Leadership Workshop for 20 HMAN (Hamlin Midwives Alumni Network) regional representatives at the Hamlin Fistula Hospital.

In July, Joanna Boyd and Hellen Hipsagah attended the UN Women Deliver Conference in Rwanda, where there were over 6,000 dignitaries and delegates, covering presentations and workshops specifically on maternal and reproductive health



projects and gender identity. It was a hectic week, meeting many potential funders and partners, and they left full of admiration, inspiration and motivation. This was followed by the Hamlin Partners Meeting (PIM) in Addis, and a visit south to the Sidama Region to visit health centres. The trip gave Hellen, our new Treasurer, an opportunity to see our projects in action, meet midwives and partners as well as gaining an in-depth understanding of our work (see Hellen’s testimonial below).

In October, Kathleen Hedman and Joanna Boyd attended AIDEX in Geneva, an exhibition of NGO suppliers and funders. They were accompanied by our Ethiopian solar partner Samson Tsegaye and one of our advisors Dr Tigiest Grieves, a professor of international development at Bristol University who runs her own NGO in Ethiopia. Finally, in November, Christina visited Hamlin College of Midwives to deliver communication and leadership training, and a body awareness course (BBAT), to graduating midwives.

## Projects Review

### LEARN - UN SDG 3 & 4

Valeria Akroyd, Maria Gardemyr and Christina Blecher

In 2023 Greenlamp continued to support three colleges in Ethiopia, and funded 29 scholarships costing 73k CHF. In early 2024, we contracted four extra scholarships for Hamlin students and three additional scholars as part of the Ferring Holistic Community Program from the Tembaro Special Woreda, will start their studies at LeDeG. Therefore eight additional scholars started their studies in January 2024.

Midwifery College	Scholars	2023 CHF	2022 CHF
Hamlin College of Midwives	19	52,488	69,830
St. Luke’s Midwifery College	5	6,986	15,873
LeDeG College of Midwives	3	8324	2,780
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>67,798</b>	<b>88,483</b>
Ferring Holistic Community Program at LeDeG	2	5,550	5,550
<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>73,348</b>	<b>94,033</b>



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## Hamlin College of Midwives (HCM)

In 2023 there were two new intakes of students at HCM; in April and November. They have now all started their four years of studies and supervised practice. We want to congratulate our six new graduate midwives Seran, Sosina, Muferihat, Elelta, Belen and Meron. All graduates receive a rechargeable solar headlamp as part of the ceremony and are invited to attend regional meetings and training organised through the Hamlin Midwives Alumni Network.

Sosina (photo) earned an award for being top of her class, she also assisted with the highest number of deliveries during her four years of studies. Sosina “Top of the class” with HFE CEO Tesfaye Mamo. Scholarships cost 4,000 CHF annually.



## LeDeG College of Midwives

In 2022 GreenLamp started supporting LeDeG Midwifery College, established in Addis Ababa nine years ago which now has a very good academic record. We visited last year to interview some of our midwifery scholars, as well as Dr Teguest Guerma (ex WHO), the founder and director. These amazing young women (see interviews below) gave us an insight into their motivation, challenges and personal aims. All from underserved rural areas, they expressed their concern about lack of maternal health services. They want to return to their communities to promote change through education and community leadership as professional midwives. Here are some in-depth interviews (10-13 mins) with Bereket Alemayhu, Meskerem Melse, Ruhame Nega.

[Bereket Alemayehu](#)

[Meskerem Melse](#)

[Ruhama Nega](#)

Scholarships cost 3,000 CHF per year.

## St Luke's College of Midwifery and Nursing

GreenLamp's strategy is to diversify our support for quality midwifery education into rural regions of Ethiopia. St Luke's College in Wolisso, West Oromia about 90km south west of Addis, is an important element as it enables midwives to stay in their local area and culture. Currently we fund the upgrading of their diploma course to a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree, as well as improving the teaching equipment by supplying teaching dolls and academic books worth over 20kCHF. It is our aim to support several degree course students in the new academic year, and sponsor a number of diploma midwives to complete their courses, as inflation has left many families unable to fund their children to train as midwives, and feed their families. Valeria with Sr Selamawit the Dean (photo). Sponsorships cost 2,000 CHF per year.



## LIGHT - UN SDG 3, 7 & 17

Kathleen Hedman and Joanna Boyd

### Light 4 Life - Solar Installations with solar fridges and sensors

Light 4 Life 4.2 has a two year installation plan (2023-24) which was due to start in early 2023. However, new Ethiopian customs regulations require pre-certification of all technical equipment which has caused a delay of nearly four months.



The solar systems, fridges and new fridge temperature sensors kindly donated by Berlinger AG, Switzerland, (see photos), took three months to ship and import, arriving in May at the Hamlin warehouse. They were transferred immediately to Solar Energy Foundation (SEF) for distribution to the regions to be ready for installation.



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In the meantime, GreenLamp, SEF and the Hamlin prevention team carried out a rigorous health centre selection process. We screened out any health centres with existing and repairable solar systems and/or those connected to the grid which were receiving reliable electricity. We select the most needy, remote and rural health centres. For the first time we included a number of partner NGOs who are also implementing GreenLamp projects; *Midwives for Ethiopia* and *Weema International* for the Ferring Holistic Community Program both in Central Ethiopia, and *Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service (SMMMS)* in Amhara.

By the end of 2023, 26 of the 50 systems had been installed in Central Ethiopia and Southwest Ethiopia (ex SNNPR), West Oromia and Sidama. (Photo of sensor and Oxytocin in a solar fridge). The continued political unrest and conflicts in Amhara and neighbouring Tigray has meant it is very dangerous for the teams to travel in these regions. Plans for system installation and maintenance have to be continuously adapted.



## The Sustainability Program (SP)

GreenLamp applies direct implementation as a methodology, we work collaboratively with our local implementing partners, developing relationships based on trust reflecting our values of local capacity building and sustainability.

### Sustainability Program - Supervision

Our GreenLamp Project Coordinator Tefera Tesfamichael (photo) based at Hamlin, independently supervises projects and keeps in regular contact with all partners and the GreenLamp project team. He is also responsible for the “Regional Rollout Strategy” which is designed to deepen relationships and develop a commitment to a “Maintenance Mindset” at regional health bureau level. The objective is to ensure long term maintenance systems are established and funded.



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Tefera also performed 43 “deep dive” site visits to randomly selected health centres to provide user training, gather feedback and independently assess the condition and use of solar systems and equipment. These site visits give us important quantitative and qualitative feedback which help us develop and adapt our programs. KPI data is collected (functionality of equipment, population, mortality, and birth data) and entered into our bespoke SP database. Tefera is equipped with a mobile internet box and subscription ensuring he can keep in contact at all times.

### Sustainability Program - Maintenance

Based on feedback from SEF maintenance teams and our Project Coordinator, we discovered that solar suitcases fitted with lead acid batteries needed to be upgraded and replaced with lithium-ion batteries. We want to ensure that lights stay on for over eight hours at night, as most mothers in rural areas deliver their babies during the hours of darkness. GreenLamp and SEF decided to purchase and import 300 lithium-ion batteries and upgrade kits at a cost of 37k CHF. The original solar suitcases can be fitted with these longer lasting, more durable and robust lithium batteries.



In 2023, over 144 solar suitcase installations were upgraded during the installation program to minimise travel costs. (Photos of SEF installation team - Samson Tsegaye, CEO below)



### Sustainability Program - Database

Our bespoke Sustainability Program (SP) Database has been thoroughly tested this year to ensure data is recorded accurately for our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and to report to donors. It serves as a valuable resource for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) which means programs can be adapted based on evidence and experience.

GreenLamp also realised the need for ongoing and repeated user training, as well as persuading the local authorities to support and allocate funding to solar installation maintenance. This is a major long



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term challenge. Therefore developing a “Maintenance Mindset” at Regional Health Bureau level is an essential objective for a sustainable, long term, solar future.

We Care Solar, the supplier of Solar Suitcases globally, were curious to find out more about our approach to maintenance issues and how we keep track of installations. They are very impressed with our Sustainability Program and database, observing that we are always “two steps ahead”, and have adopted many of our ideas.

We are also amazed at the number of (non-GreenLamp) defunctional solar systems our teams come across in health centres. Solar power is installed then abandoned for local health bureaus to maintain with no budgets, systems or user training in place. If possible, our team repairs them, and adds them to our SP database to be supervised and maintained on an ongoing basis.

## LEAD - SDGs 4 & 5

Anna Roos & Christina Blecher

### Leadership and Communication Training

Christina has delivered a communication and leadership course to graduating midwives every year since 2016, this year two Hamlin lecturers are being trained on



a monthly basis to co-lead the course next year, capacity building locally. In collaboration with specialists Inger Wulf and Amanda Gyllensten, Christina also facilitated a pelvic floor and breathing training course with Basic Body Awareness (BBAT) for the final year students. Sr Selam Aregawe, whose Clinical Master in physiotherapy and BBAT in Spain was financed by GreenLamp, co-presented the course. These skills enable midwives to facilitate a less painful birthing process.

Photo: final year GreenLamp student Sosina with her colleague Batiren in a role play.

This year's training with the final year midwifery students was delivered in October at the Hamlin College of Midwives. The training focuses on empathetic communication and is a highlight for the graduating students, as it is both interactive and practical, and provides a good foundation before the midwives take on the realities of rural Ethiopia. The training covers how midwives can build a trusting relationship with the mothers and families they support. Through role plays the students were able to understand the importance of feelings and needs, and how connection through compassionate care and honesty enables the mothers to feel safe.

## Hamlin Midwife Alumni Network (HMAN) 2023



After helping develop and implement the novel concept of an alumni network for midwives in Ethiopia, Catherine Knight decided to step down this year as the HMAN Project Leader. During a joint trip to Ethiopia and co-hosting a HMAN workshop Catherine managed an excellent hand over to Anna Roos in June. In only a few years, Catherine, with her passion and dedication, has led HMAN to where it is today; a network run mainly by the midwives themselves facilitated and funded by GreenLamp. When visiting Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE) in Addis Ababa Catherine received a beautiful thank you award from HFE Dean, Tesfaye Mamo and the HFE board, a sign

of their immense appreciation for Catherine and her work.

Workshop below with Anna and Catherine

This year there have been four regional HMAN meetings with over 80 attendees; in Mekele for Tigray, Desse for Amhara, Harage for East Oromia, and Hawassa



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for SNNPR and Sidama regions. The regional representatives have demonstrated incredible growth in organisational skills, leadership, and ownership of the network, as well as expanding the meetings to include training, psychological coaching and university specialist speakers. In Amhara, the Bahir Dar HMAN team were not able to host a regional meeting this year due to the conflicts in their region. Personal safety is of great importance and our project coordinator based in Ethiopia regularly checks in with all the representatives to understand their situation and needs.

The Tigray HMAN team (photo) reached an incredible milestone this year when they hosted their first regional HMAN meeting, after years apart due to the civil war and federal blockade of the Tigray region. Our project coordinator Tefera Tesfamichael travelled from Addis Ababa to join the meeting and support the team in the arrangements and discussions. The meeting was a great success and the response from the midwives was beyond heartwarming. They expressed the profound and positive impact it had on them as individuals to reconnect, and in their professional capacity to receive medical skills training and updates, as well as psychological coaching and support as many had faced extreme danger and hardships.



This year we have focused a great deal on identifying training needs and skills to further improve maternal care. Taking the next step and writing a funding proposal for an identified training is new and challenging to many of the midwives. In June we organised a workshop for all the regional representatives and the midwife



mentors on how to write a training proposal and how to apply for funding. The midwives did an incredible job, submitting three good training proposals with budgets. As an example, the East Oromia HMAN team identified a lack of knowledge and understanding for skills and processes set up to prevent postpartum infections at many of the health centres in their region. Taking action, the team, lead by regional representative Chaltu Abdurahman,



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submitted a training proposal to GreenLamp for Infection Prevention Training (IPT) for their five local health centres. It is a fantastic initiative which promotes teamwork and emphasises the strength of HMAN and the development of the midwives «Voice». The IPT course took place in September 2023 at the Jarso health centre for the 14 Hamlin midwives and 10 local health workers (five of whom were health centre cleaners who had never received IP training or were familiar with the infection prevention concept).

Every year, Tefera Tesfamichael gives the HCM graduating midwives an introduction to HMAN and its purpose. Each midwife is provided with the contact details of their own regional representative. Samson Tsegaye from the Solar Energy Foundation also organises a tutorial on using the solar systems.

## Ferring Holistic Community Project - SDGs 3,4,5,7 & 17

### Joanna Boyd and Valeria Akroyd

The Ferring AG funded “Holistic Community Program”, worth 250k CHF over five years, was initiated in late 2022 in the Tembaro Special Woreda, Central Ethiopia, with our local partner WEEMA International responsible for it’s implementation.

We are immensely proud of this holistic program, which is a collaborative effort of the whole GreenLamp team and many stakeholders. We gathered ideas, knowledge and experience to inform and develop this project reflecting our Holistic Circle and values.



In February, Joanna Boyd and Valeria Akroyd travelled to Ethiopia to visit the WEEMA field office and the health centres. We also visited the regional hospital in Durame with Liz McGovern, Weema CEO (photo left), where we met local surgeons and health officials. Hiwot Admasu, a film producer and her team made a movie about the challenges mothers face in rural Ethiopia and how the Holistic Community Program is addressing those issues.

Link: [Ferring Holistic Community Program - Challenges](#)



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The first stage of this community-led program was a “Needs Assessment” in 2022 involving all stakeholders, including community groups and health officials, during which many challenges were identified. This was followed by a detailed “Baseline Assessment” of all local health centres carried out by the midwife mentor Selam Petros, photographed with Valeria and project coordinator, Kurabatchew Abiyu.



The plan was adapted to local needs and meant we could repair any existing solar installations, install new systems into five health centres and the local hospital’s maternity ward. The deployment of two midwife mentors addressed the maternal health related needs for a catchment population of 253,773 and 6,277 deliveries in 2023. In addition, the project has paid for renovations to the delivery wards and pregnant mother waiting rooms which enable expectant mothers to stay at health centres before going into labour. This has been a game changer for mothers attending health centres to give birth. The midwife mentors also support local diploma midwives with training and coaching in compassionate care, antenatal and postnatal checkups, outreach services, family planning and education.

Medical equipment, including two mobile ultrasound machines and ultrasound scanning services (Selam and Sinidu performed 396 scans in four months), have been a huge success, attracting many additional expectant mothers to attend their antenatal checks and effectively identifying many high risk pregnancies for referral. This helps develop trust between the mothers, their extended families and the midwives, which in turn encourages mothers to deliver in health centres. On the first day of scanning in July 2023, over 80 patients turned up at one health centre alone. A scheduling service has now been established.

An added benefit, which was not included in the original project plan, is the Pelvic Organ Prolapse (POP) program with Hamlin Hospital in Yirgalem (Central Ethiopia). Over 240 older women were identified as suffering from the debilitating and painful effects of POP in the Tembaro community. Over 140 have now been successfully treated, allowing them to return to normal life. We have received so much positive feedback about the transformative benefit of this treatment, which



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was an overlooked problem, and we are humbled by its success. This treatment program came about as a direct result of the GreenLamp/Hamlin/Weema collaboration.



One of the mothers, Tsehaynesh Semayat Gintamo, who was featured in the film, had no idea she was expecting twins until she had a scan. The healthy babies were delivered in March and the Weema team keep a close eye on the family, delivering supplies of food and baby items, as the cost burden of two infants has been hard on them as subsistence farmers. (left)

Three more midwifery students, Selamnesh, Sisay and Sayda, (from the local area) have been selected for the last three scholarship places to study at LeDeG Midwives College in Addis, starting in January 2024 with an intensive three month English course. This completes the scholarship allocation with five students in total.

## Membership and

### Members' Circle Luncheons

Valéria Akroyd and Henriette Becker



We are delighted that we now have over 140 members in our Member's Circle community. We gathered for lunch after the AGM in the beautiful Zunfthaus zur Saffran, for a presentation of the results and activities from the year. It was wonderful opportunity to meet other members and a chance to hear exclusive insights about selected GreenLamp projects and activities.



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## Fundraising and Events 2023

Linda Elzvik, Henriette Becker, Valéria Akroyd, Christina Blecher,  
Joanna Boyd and Anna Roos

The fundraising team exceeded the targets for 2023, thanks to hard work and our generous donors. We are expanding our donor base and project funding by preparing proposals for long term grants. We have received funding from local Gemeindes, and in 2024 we will apply at Cantonal level for which we must register on the Swiss Federal Commercial Register.

The fundraising team partnered with the ZHAW School of International Business and Law to support a research project for students. The students produced a very professional report which made recommendations and suggestions for GreenLamp to establish a fundraising branch in the UK.

The events team has been busy in 2023, the March AGM & Members Circle lunch in February was followed by a "Lunchkino" in June, with a film screening of "Among Us Women" followed by a panel discussion with Kathrin Werner, Tigist Bekele Beahabtu, a midwifery lecturer from Hamlin College of Midwives, and Emily Hopf, one of the film makers. This was a great success with over 40 attendees enjoying a drink and sandwich lunch, and a lively discussion after the film.

In July the Swedish branch organised a Summer Aperó, kindly hosted by Christina Blecher at her beautiful home in Falsterbo, led by Maria Gårdemyr and assisted by Anna Roos. The aim was to promote GreenLamp to our Swedish friends and family. It was attended by over 70 people and was a great success.

## Recognising Our Valued Volunteers

**Kathleen Hedman** ex board member, Project Team and Sustainability Program.

**Catherine Knight** ex board member and HMAN project lead until June 2023.

**Anna Roos** fundraising team, project leader for Hamlin Midwives Alumni Network, events team Swedish summer event, and Holiday Appeal. Anna will now join the GreenLamp Board.

**Camilla Tregonning** ex board member, website and communications, outreach events, proof reading.

**Gina Bota** played an active role in our business development project with students of the ZHAW School of International Business and Law.



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Neha Soni Marathon Team and social media.

Veronica Blecher photos and social media.

Anna Blecher supporting our reporting and publishing

Alexis Margreiter, Marion Struber and Caroline Sernrot have joined as volunteers to support our projects grant-writing and events teams, during the year we welcomed Naod Ab our Sustainability Program Database software developer based in Ethiopia Iona Hinder part of the Ferring Holistic Project team specialising in maternal health data, monitoring and evaluation.

Tanya Murphy advisor on impact and specialist in monitoring and evaluation.

Verena Bergmann - ex board member and Sara Bendel our auditors.

Lennart Blecher, Michael Treis and Lars Haussmann for legal and operational support.

We encourage all board members to visit Ethiopia to understand the challenges and issues faced by women in remote and rural areas. This improves our decision making and board members can develop better project ideas. Hellen, originally from Uganda, travelled for over two weeks with Joanna Boyd in July meeting partners and visiting projects, the following is her story.

### A New Board Member's Reflections - Hellen Hipsagh Treasurer



Going to Africa for GreenLamp was an amazing experience for me. We first went to Rwanda for the UN Women Deliver conference where we met so many impressive African women, that are doing amazing work to change the lives of others.

We had an opportunity to attend workshops, connect with many NGO and funding organisation. It was so encouraging to see how impressed they were with GreenLamp's programs and how we work in Ethiopia - from our



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local collaborations and partnerships to the online technology we have to monitor the solar systems.

I felt very proud to be part of GreenLamp and promote our work. It was very nice to have the affirmation that we are doing things the right way. We then proceeded to Central Ethiopia and Sidama, Yirga 'Alem near Hawassa, where we visited some health centres in the rural area. We saw midwives at work, and how the solar systems and fridges are making such a huge difference to the mothers who use these centres, like a "beacon of light at night" one health worker put it. It was very humbling to see what an impact such a device is making for the whole community.



We then had a chance to visit the Hamlin College of Midwives, we met some 1<sup>st</sup> year students who were very shy which is understandable considering that they come from remote, rural areas where women do not have much of a voice in a conservative culture. A few blocks away we met another set of students in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of studies and I was extremely impressed with the difference: confident, eloquent, full of motivation and ideas, the quality of the education midwives receive from attending the college was obvious. I could immediately see how they are able to go back to their communities and be very respected leaders, able to assert and express themselves. Having visited Ethiopia, seen the projects on the ground and met

partners, despite being new to GreenLamp, I now have an in-depth understanding and deep passion for our work in Ethiopia.

## Happy 100th Birthday - Dr Catherine Hamlin

The inspirational book "Half the Sky - How to Change the World" prompted Christina Blecher and her Swedish friends, Karin Ranstrand, Maria Gårdemyr, Berit Häsler, Anna Bergman and Henriette Becker to reflect on how they could help underprivileged women and girls to improve their lives. A chapter in the book described the amazing work of Dr Catherine Hamlin and her husband Reg, also a surgeon and their work eradicating traumatic birth injuries and deaths due to fistula in Ethiopia and worldwide by educating midwives. Hence GreenLamp was born.

Here are Ajem, Eden and Liya, three GreenLamp sponsored midwives from Tigray,



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celebrating the 100th birthday of Catherine Hamlin.,.

They were confronted with thousands of Ethiopian women, including many teenage girls who due to early marriage were not yet physically mature enough to bear children, suffering from fistulas and birth injuries. They developed new surgical techniques which are still being taught around the developing world today where fistulas are still unfortunately very common. They founded the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa in 1974 on land donated by the last Ethiopian King, Haile Selassie.



Here are Ajem, Eden and Liya, three GreenLamp sponsored midwives from Tigray, celebrating the 100th birthday of Catherine Hamlin.

## Project Objectives for 2024

### Ultrasound Training

The Basic Obstetric Ultrasound Certificate training, was identified as a top priority for midwives during regional HMAN meetings in 2023 as well as by the maternal health representative from the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health (EMoH) during Catherine's recent 100th Birthday health sector presentations. Greater access to small portable ultrasounds, costing approximately 3,000 CHF each, means a significant number of high risk pregnancies and birth complications can be identified and referred to the local primary hospitals for a safer delivery. The scans reassure the extended families and motivate pregnant mothers to use health centres for checkups as well as to give birth. This will be a collaboration with the Hamlin Fistula International Foundation funding 100 mobile ultrasound devices at a cost of 300,000 CHF to celebrate Catherine Hamlin's 100th Birthday and the Hamlin College of Midwives at a cost of \$1,200 training per midwife.

Our objective is to offer training to 250 midwives at a cost of 300,000 CHF

## Midwife Support and Solar Systems

During recent internal conflicts, women in the northern regions of Ethiopia have suffered terrible personal injuries, trauma, starvation and abuse. They will continue to carry their burdens for many years to come. Nearly all health facilities suffered some damage. Midwives, many of whom were unable to access health facilities and isolated with no support, heroically continued their work preventing fistula, assisting home births, and providing antenatal and postnatal checks with no equipment or medications. The task in 2024, in conjunction with the Tigray Development Association, is to repair 189 community health centres and 600 health posts, and to revitalise maternal health services.

A recent assessment of our 66 solar systems installed during 2016-17, 51 are partially damaged and repairable, 2 are badly damaged, only 3 destroyed, and 10 still to be assessed.

Our objective is to repair and replace the 66 GreenLamp solar installations and install 120 new systems, support midwives by providing therapeutic counselling for trauma, fund refresher training and essential equipment in as many health centres as possible at a cost between 500,000 - 1,000,000 CHF.

One midwife, at a recent HMAN meeting, related an experience at a hospital in Axum. She was assisting a woman mid-delivery when she was forced out at gunpoint by an invading militia army. She begged to be allowed to assist the women who would have died with her baby without intervention. At gunpoint she was allowed back in and delivered the baby, mother and child are alive and well. However, so many women have suffered abuse, starvation and had their livelihoods destroyed. We are humbled by the courage, dedication and commitment these young women demonstrate despite being at risk themselves.



**Your donation  
in good hands.**