



# STRONG MIDWIVES THRIVING COMMUNITIES

in RURAL ETHIOPIA

GreenLamp  
Impact Report  
2012-2023



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**Your donation  
in good hands.**

## Inspiration & Motivation

We believe that strong and sustainable communities are built when all members and stakeholders have equal access to the rights and resources they need to flourish. Unfortunately, despite progress in recent years, many women are still only marginally better off in terms of equality in education, health, and employment opportunities.

Access to education is challenging for young rural Ethiopian women. For those who manage to receive midwifery training, the lack of well-equipped rural health centres makes it difficult to put their knowledge and skills to good use.

Midwives are pillars of society and play a leadership role in rural and underserved communities. Midwives are skilled and compassionate. Often the most educated people in their community, their impact is broad and profound. Yet their role is extremely challenging due to cultural traditions and resource constraints.

With generous and consistent support from our donors, partners, and volunteers, we are taking a holistic approach to enable young women in rural Ethiopia to be change-makers in society.

We are deeply thankful for your support. Together we are making a sustainable impact.

Sincerely,

GreenLamp Board 2023

Christina Blecher, Hellen Hipsagh, Henriette Becker, Joanna Boyd, Linda Elzvik, Valéria Akroyd



# Vision & Mission

## Vision

A bright future for women and their communities.

## Mission

We initiate and support projects with local partners to create equal opportunities for women.

We provide midwifery scholarships to young Ethiopian women, sustainable solar systems to rural health centers, leadership training and career opportunities through our holistic program pillars Learn, Light, Lead.



"Many thanks for this solar circuit (system). Before we had to give birth in darkness. But now our problem is solved. God bless your organisation! We are so happy with the solar. I hope it can continue. Not only the solar but also you visiting us, as everyone forgets about us."

Mother in SNNP Region

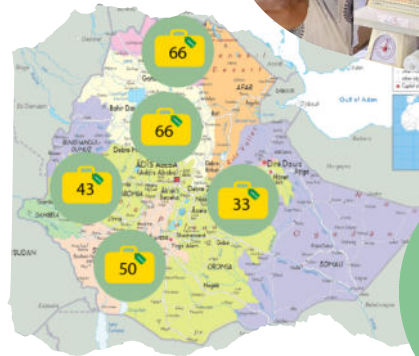
# Impact & Reach

2012-2023

**62**  
Midwifery  
Scholarships



**>523'000\***  
Deliveries  
where qualified  
midwives have  
used solar  
light



Since 2012, over 1.6\*\* million women in rural Ethiopia have access to quality maternal health care with skilled and compassionate midwives and solar lighting through GreenLamp's three connected pillars

LEARN | LIGHT | LEAD

**Network with**  
**260**  
Hamlin  
Midwives



**284**  
Solar Systems  
Installed

## LEARN

### Competent & Compassionate Midwives Maternal Health Care Excellence

62 young women have received GreenLamp sponsored midwifery education at high quality Ethiopian midwifery colleges, graduating with a Diploma or Bachelor of Science in Midwifery. 232 midwifery students have participated in GreenLamp medical skills-building programs.

With an increased number of qualified midwives there is a direct and profound impact on the quality and access to maternal health.

## LIGHT

### Light for Life Solar Program Key enabler for Quality Care

238 Solar Suitcases and 46 enhanced solar systems with light and fridges have been installed. They are maintained annually to ensure "lights stay on" 24/7 across rural Ethiopia. 24 additional enhanced systems will be installed in 2024.

GreenLamp solar systems played a crucial role during >523'000 deliveries and supported midwives in the prevention of birth injuries and deaths. The systems improve working conditions for midwives and create a safer birthing environment for mothers and infants.

## LEAD

### Leadership Skills & Alumni Network Midwives as Community Role Models

217 midwifery students have engaged in GreenLamp's leadership and Nonviolent Communication skills-building programs.

In 2018 GreenLamp initiated the Hamlin Midwives Alumni Network (HMAN). There are currently 260 midwives who are members of HMAN across 6 regions. HMAN is owned and run by midwives and provides a crucial channel for them to connect, learn, share, develop, and find their voice.

As confident leaders, midwives build up the capabilities of their colleagues in rural health centres. As strong role models and professionals, they improve the health of mothers and babies, and foster thriving communities.

\*32 births per health centre /month facilitated by solar light 2014-10/2023 (data collection 60 site visits)

\*\*Number of solar systems installed and estimated number of women of reproductive age per district

# Context

## IMPACT WHERE IT MATTERS

Rural Ethiopia has high unmet needs in maternal health, education, and economic opportunities. With a population greater than 120 million, there are less than 650 obstetricians/gynecologists and 25'000 trained midwives in the country. Since GreenLamp started its work in 2012, the Maternal Mortality (MMR) declined from 543/100'000 live births to 267 in 2020\* - compared with 7.9 to 7.4 in Switzerland. Infant mortality (IMR) declined from 49/1'000 live births to 35 in 2021\* - compared with 3.8 to 3.4 in Switzerland. Midwives are crucial in preventing maternal and infant morbidity and deaths, harmful traditional practices, e.g. female genital mutilation (FGM), and early marriage. They provide birth control, enabling rural mothers to make informed decisions about their families.

\*<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/eth#goal-3>

## OVERCOMING RESISTANCE WITH COMPASSIONATE CARE

Many rural women lack trust in health institutions and do not feel cared for. They still prefer to deliver at home despite the higher risk for mother and child. GreenLamp regularly engages with women and midwives in the field to better understand their needs. GreenLamp collaborates with local partners to find or develop working solutions and support systems. Our emphasis on educating more midwives and enabling their compassionate care in an equipped working environment encourages mothers to use available professional maternal health care.



*"... I like family planning as it enables the family to limit their children and care better for the babies that are delivered. "*

**Midwife at Lote Health Center, SNNPR**



# Approach

GreenLamp's strategy is based on a sustainable, holistic approach targeting long term impact for women's futures. Our approach is aligned with five of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the mission to create opportunities for women and their rural communities to thrive, GreenLamp operates across three pillars:



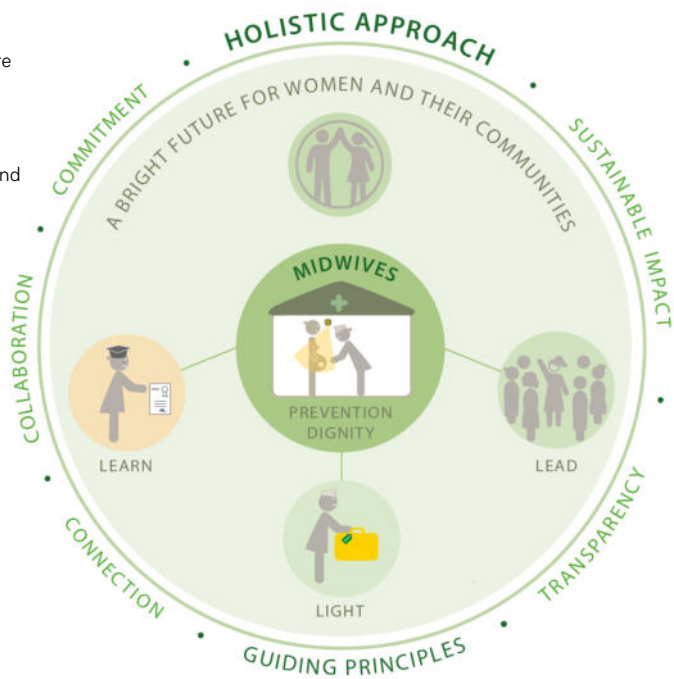
Skilled and compassionate midwives who prevent maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, provide family planning and other health services



**LEARN**  
We believe in the African saying "...if you educate a woman, you educate a community!"



GreenLamp's Guiding Principles are Commitment, Connection, Collaboration, Transparency, & Sustainable Impact



Our VISION  
A bright future for women and their communities aligns with SDG 5 "Achieve Gender Equality & empower all women and girls"



Solar systems providing LIGHT that secures SUSTAINABLE IMPACT at rural health centers



**LEARN** | Bachelor of Science in Midwifery & extracurricular skills training such as upright birthing positions.



**LIGHT** | Suitable working environment through life-saving solar lighting, fridges, and power for delivery rooms as well as medical equipment.



**LEAD** | Professional and personal development opportunities for midwifery students and deployed midwives, from communication and leadership training to alumni networks and career opportunities.



# Learn

We are passionate about making an impact on a personal and a community level. By investing in a young rural woman's education, we invest in her as a human being. As a Midwifery BSc graduate, she develops as a knowledgeable, compassionate caregiver, and brings much-needed essential skills to encourage mothers and local communities to embrace change.



## Further Skills Development, a direct impact on quality and personal growth

Ongoing competence-building and skills transfer are essential for sustainable change. GreenLamp has trained 232 midwifery students at HCM in various birthing techniques, including pelvic floor breathing with Basic Body Awareness Training (BBAT) and upright birthing positions in collaboration with the University of Lund & Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW). Both techniques are aimed at facilitating an easier, more natural birthing process for mother and baby.

To secure future training and skill transfer, we have funded the clinical master's in BBAT at the University of Almeria for Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital physiotherapist, Selam. Today she is responsible for the training of BBAT Pelvic floor breathing at HCM.



## Top-notch midwifery education in Ethiopia

Since the start of GreenLamp, we have partnered with the Hamlin College of Midwives (HCM) in Addis Ababa; a college with an excellent academic reputation, and high-quality resources, that recruits students from rural areas where there is the greatest need. Students graduate with a BSc in Midwifery and are trained in the game-changing compassionate care model created by HCM founder Dr. Catherine Hamlin.

Hamlin midwives are taught in small classes by highly qualified academic staff. They acquire a robust skill set and modern delivery techniques, a dignified, patient-centered approach, and display confidence, especially in tackling difficult births. Each year they practice at hospitals and health centres, and during their four years of study, they assist in at least 40 deliveries.

In 2022 we started a collaboration with two additional midwifery colleges, St Luke in Wolisso and LeDeG in Addis Ababa.

Since 2012 GreenLamp has sponsored 62 students.

Every midwife graduate at HCM is gifted with a rechargeable surgical headlamp - to always have light at night.



We are proud of Etsegenet, GreenLamp supported midwife graduate 2022, who won the prize for assisting 108 births - the highest in her class - during her studies at the Hamlin College of Midwives. ❤️



## Quotes from Graduates of the Hamlin College of Midwives

"Becoming a midwife at Hamlin was the best choice of my life because you receive such a quality education, with highly qualified teachers and it includes seven weeks of practical training after each semester. We have to attend at least 50 deliveries."

"We have more confidence to work and to manage complications. My competence is higher than the government-trained midwives. For example, PPH, cord prolapse, and eclampsia (blood pressure)."





# Light



The lack of reliable electricity in health centres creates situations where health workers are forced to choose between unreliable and often dangerous sources of light. Pitch darkness can result in late diagnosis, and compromise critical treatment. Working in the dark increases the risk of infections, errors, and demoralises health workers and their patients.

## Light for Life 284 solar systems installed across rural Ethiopia

In collaboration with Ethiopian partners and health bureaus, we have installed and maintained 284 solar systems bringing light, fetal dopplers, headlamps, and refrigeration to rural health centres. Our solar light solution is sustainable and an essential element in reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

In 2020, GreenLamp decided to increase the impact already provided by the solar suitcase by adding refrigeration units. These units improve midwives' ability to facilitate safer births, specifically preventing postpartum hemorrhage - the leading cause of maternal death worldwide - with the drug oxytocin, which needs to be kept in a cold chain. In addition, refrigeration allows access to life-saving vaccines for babies.

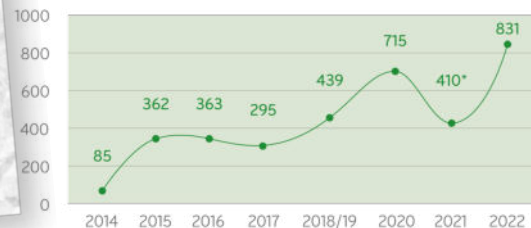
As part of our Light for Life initiative, we developed the Sustainability Program to ensure uninterrupted light and electricity access. The program includes supervision, maintenance, replacement of batteries, and refresher training courses for existing and new staff.



## Safer birthing conditions at rural health centres with solar light, refrigeration and electricity

- Mothers are encouraged to give birth in a safe environment at the hands of a compassionate midwife with access to reliable light.
- Midwives have a greatly improved capacity to manage deliveries in the daily 12 hours of darkness.
- Obstetric emergencies, referrals, and communications are better managed thanks to phone charging capabilities.
- As part of a more extensive set of interventions, the presence of a solar system can help reduce maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

Health Centre Staff Trained in the use of Solar Systems



\*The dip in trained health workers in 2021 is due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the conflict in certain regions of Ethiopia.

"When a mother gives birth in the dark, it brings difficulties for her. Darkness by itself makes me feel less good. If the woman is in labour, with darkness plus the pain of labour, she feels discomfort. So having light is very important to make the mother comfortable."

Mother in Sidama region

"Before, we had to use torches, often we had to hold them in our mouths. Doing an episiotomy is particularly difficult by torch-light! Now, since the solar was installed, this big problem is solved and whenever there is no electric power, we have solar."

Graduate from Hamlin College of Midwives



# Lead

We believe in the power of young, well-educated, and compassionate women to be the inspiring leaders of tomorrow. We support midwives to become agents of change in their communities by giving them tools to use their voice and providing opportunities for them to continue their personal and professional development.



## Interpersonal and leadership skills - essential tools for midwives in their work and as role models for rural women and girls

Midwives carry out active outreach work to engage local communities to learn about maternity services. This outreach has a significant effect on the take-up of ante- and postnatal care, prevention of harmful traditional practices, hygiene, and nutrition for mother and baby. To be successful in their outreach work, midwives need skills in communication and leadership.

Eight batches of final-year midwifery students have participated in our Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and Leadership training program. This training is focused on self-awareness, interpersonal skills, and confident & empathic communication - all necessary skills for midwives working in rural communities.

## Hamlin Alumni Network - a tool created to spark peer-to-peer exchange, motivation and growth

Stationed in rural, mostly ill-equipped health centres, midwives often feel disconnected from fellow midwives, and left alone to handle difficult situations. In 2018, GreenLamp initiated the Hamlin Midwives Alumni Network (HMAN) with the goal to provide a channel where Hamlin midwives can:

- Share success stories, learn from each other, and support each other
- Enhance, refresh, and sharpen professional skills
- Discuss each midwife's longer-term career plans
- Explore how to develop and use the midwife's voice

The vital first step for HMAN was to establish networks on social media. Now Hamlin midwives can communicate easily. Furthermore, GreenLamp has provided support and guidance in building a process for a sustainable and motivational meeting structure. Regular meetings have provided a forum to share best practices, and discuss needed improvements at the health centre level. The meetings also facilitate skills transfer, including cervical cancer screening, the use of maternal health applications, introduction to portable ultrasound, and refresher courses in the use of solar systems.

Despite long travel hours or even days, midwives are eager to participate in the meetings to get inspiration and motivation to continue their work in underserved communities. In just a few years, the midwives have taken ownership of HMAN and the regions are proud to organise their own meetings, monthly, quarterly, or annually.

## Enabling and supporting career development opportunities

GreenLamp supports midwives in actively discussing and progressing their careers. Some examples: Sister Selam is a Midwife Mentor in SNNPR\*, Sister Eden is a Women's Health Care Coordinator in Amhara\*\*, Sister Belen became Head of a health centre in Sidama, and Sister Ester is continuing her higher education with an MSc in Midwifery at HCM.

The Midwife Mentor's role is to lead and support midwives in rural health centres to provide their services with excellence, keeping a safe, clean, and compassionate environment for deliveries, ante- and postnatal care, family planning, outreach services, and prevention of harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

\*in partnership with WEEMA

\*\*in partnership with Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Services



"We had a great time. We were able to share our successes and experiences – the best part of the meeting. We also set our goals in future and how we will work on it."

Sister Wongel, Hamlin Midwife in West Oromia, at HMAN meeting in Metu



# Holistic Community Program

We are immensely proud of this program, a combination of Learn, Light & Lead. It is a collaborative effort of the whole GreenLamp team and stakeholders, integrating all our knowledge and experience into the concept and developing a program reflecting our Holistic Circle and values. By concentrating on one community, or Woreda, it is possible to adapt specifically to local needs, record data and assess impact with qualitative and quantitative feedback.

## Ferring Holistic Community Program

Ferring AG funds the five year "Ferring Holistic Community Program" worth 250k CHF for health centres, solar systems, five midwifery scholarships and two midwife mentor. Implemented since 2022, it has provided significant impact on maternal health outcomes for the local community, with a population of 150,000. The chosen community, Tembaro Special Woreda in Central Ethiopia, is also receiving educational, micro finance, water and agricultural programs from our local partner WEEMA International which has a large field office in the main town Mudula.

### Six health centres with two midwife mentors

The program supports six health centres with two midwife mentors, solar systems, birthing equipment and fridges in delivery wards for quick access to essential drugs. Newly renovated and equipped, the pregnant mothers waiting rooms enable expectant mothers to stay at health centres before going into labour. This has been a huge success encouraging mothers to attend health centres to give birth. The midwife mentors support local diploma midwives with training and coaching in compassionate care, antenatal and postnatal services. The education and outreach services include preventing harmful traditional practices (FGM) and family planning at pregnant mothers conferences in villages.



Pregnant women waiting to undergo ultrasound scans at a health center

Our first Holistic Community Program launched in 2022, generously funded by Ferring

### Mobile ultrasound machines and free scanning services

Two mobile ultrasound machines and free scanning services are included in the program - a gamechanger which attracts many more expectant mothers to attend antenatal checks. This helps to identify high risk pregnancies for referral, and develops confidence and trust between the midwives, mothers, and their extended families, which encourages them to deliver in health centres.

KPI statistics prove the value of the midwife mentors with increased deliveries at health centres, nearly 400 ultrasound scans performed in 6 months and 50% higher uptake of family planning. The reported MMR rate is significantly below the average for the 6'500 deliveries registered in 2023

GREENLAMP.CH ●●●●●

### Pelvic Organ Prolapse (POP) partnership with the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Yirgalem

The Pelvic Organ Prolapse (POP) partnership with the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Yirgalem (Central Ethiopia) has treated over 140 patients from over 200 needing surgery. It is an overlooked condition in older women who suffer long term debilitating and painful physical injuries. The positive feedback about the transformative benefit of this treatment, for these women, which was until now overlooked, is humbling due to its success.



# Future

GreenLamp started with an open mind. This has led to an agile operation that swiftly adapts to changing circumstances and new possibilities. Our holistic approach has proven to be a strategy that creates impact and positive change.

## LEARN

Continue our focus on long-term midwife training, increase funding of rural Ethiopian midwifery scholars, and upscale midwives' training to provide improved maternal and infant healthcare.

## LIGHT

Improve working conditions at rural health centres by installing solar systems with light and refrigeration and expanding our Sustainability Program with more maintenance, training, and supervision. We are exploring smart solutions to improve care through increased hygiene and health.

## LEAD

Expand the Midwives Alumni & Leadership Training Programs, and midwife mentorship opportunities. We will work to enhance the leadership skills of midwives in rural communities and promote career development for midwives. The spotlight will be on encouraging more community outreach work to attract more mothers to come to the health centres.

## LEARN LIGHT LEAD

Broaden our holistic community projects with corporate partners.

"They often said nice things like "ayesoch" (all will be well and we are here to ensure this). They rubbed my back to help with the pain. I really want to call them to my house to say thank you. I heard that those mothers who go to the hospital are sad because the midwives there don't make the mother comfortable and are rough with her. They don't speak politely either."

Mother at Lote Health Center



# Partnerships to Reach our Vision

## OUR IMPACT IS ACHIEVED THROUGH GREAT PARTNERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

"Without the support of each and every donor, we would not have been able to make such a tangible impact. Even the smallest donation matters. A deep heartfelt thank you to all our generous donors and sponsors who have made this amazing impact possible.." - GreenLamp Board



"I am happy to have come across GreenLamp and to have gotten the chance to be involved in a project where a relatively small investment offers the sponsor to become a change maker with a significant impact for so many women!"  
 Dr. Ellen Ringier  
 Sponsor of Sosina, HCM class of 2024

## IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

- Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia - Hamlin College of Midwives, Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Mekele, Hawassa, Hargarge, Metu
- Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaft, Hebammen Institut, Winterthur, Switzerland
- We Care Solar, Berkeley, USA
- Solar Energy Foundation Ethiopia, Addis Ababa
- Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Services, Debarq, Amhara
- Atsede Clinic, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia
- WEEMA, Kembata-Tembaru Zone
- St Luke College of Nursing and Midwifery, Wolisso
- LeDeG Midwifery College, Addis Ababa



Heartfelt thanks to our amazing 100% volunteers\*: board members, project, event and communication teams, speakers and panelists, auditors and to our community of Members.



We are also grateful to the team that supported us with this report:  
 Ana Salac, Anna Blecker, Anna Roos, Chani Ronez, Nia Romanzina & Tanya Murphy

\*all volunteers since 2012 are mentioned in the 2022 Annual Review

"I and my organization are so happy working with GreenLamp. Because their objective is not only to install the solar light and run away as others did. But they work more on its sustainability to run the system for a long time without interruption. We are responsible for the after-sales services and also for training the health workers to keep the system sustainable. My technical teams located in different regions are the ones who deliver the aftersales services and the training. More than 240 Solar Suitcases were installed for Health Centers located in the off-grid areas. ... providing this service financed by GreenLamp saves a lot of lives ..." S.Tsegaye Solar Energy Foundation Ethiopia

"My dream is to eradicate obstetric fistula... I won't do this in my lifetime, but you can in yours."  
 Dr. Catherine Hamlin 1924-2020, founder of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia & Hamlin College of Midwives at her GreenLamp visit in Zürich in 2013, together with her longtime friend Mamitu Gashe, once a patient, who became an acclaimed fistula surgeon.





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Your contribution matters.  
Let's continue our work together.