



## Soroptimist International President's Appeal December 10, 2008

### FACT FILE

#### 'Restoring Dignity – Securing a Future' *Desta Mender Village*

Desta Mender is committed to:

- Assisting long-term patients in their transition to independent living;
- Assisting the women to becoming self-sufficient;
- Providing educational and economic opportunities for the women;
- Encouraging women to become advocates for fistula education and prevention.



As in 2007, this year's Soroptimist International President's Appeal is in partnership with the Hamlin Fistula Relief and Aid Fund. The Fund supports the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia: the only facility in the world exclusively dedicated to treating (obstetric) fistulae. The Hospital established Desta Mender village outside Addis Ababa following a donation of land by the Ethiopian Government in 2000. It is for the minority of women who need long term support as their fistulae can't be healed. More than 99% of the Fistula Hospital patients are illiterate and desperately in need of the educational and economic opportunities offered in the village.

Your donations will continue to provide vital support for the women who live at Desta Mender.

The World Health Organization has called a fistula 'the single most dramatic aftermath of neglected childbirth'.

#### **The Personal Perspective**

"This young woman's story (*photos above centre and left*) is that she was found in a dark hut in the Metu region (far west) of Ethiopia. She had lain on a goat skin bed for many years suffering from an obstetric fistula. She had bed sores down to the bone.

One of the Fistula Hospital doctors who was on a field trip found her and arranged for her to be transported to the Hospital. The young woman had lain still for so long hoping that she would stop leaking that she lost the use of her legs and could not walk. She was also so psychologically depressed that she did not speak.

After months of rehabilitation and physiotherapy at Desta Mender she began to 'come alive again'. She began to talk and socialise.

So far the doctors have only been able to partially repair her very severe injuries and she will most likely always require medical help and support. However she now walks and has learnt to read and write. She is now the 'official' record keeper for the dairy. She records the milk production from each cow every day." James Grainger, Executive Officer, Hamlin Fistula® Relief and Aid Fund.



**Donations can be sent to your Federation Headquarters  
and marked: December 10 SI President's Appeal 2008**