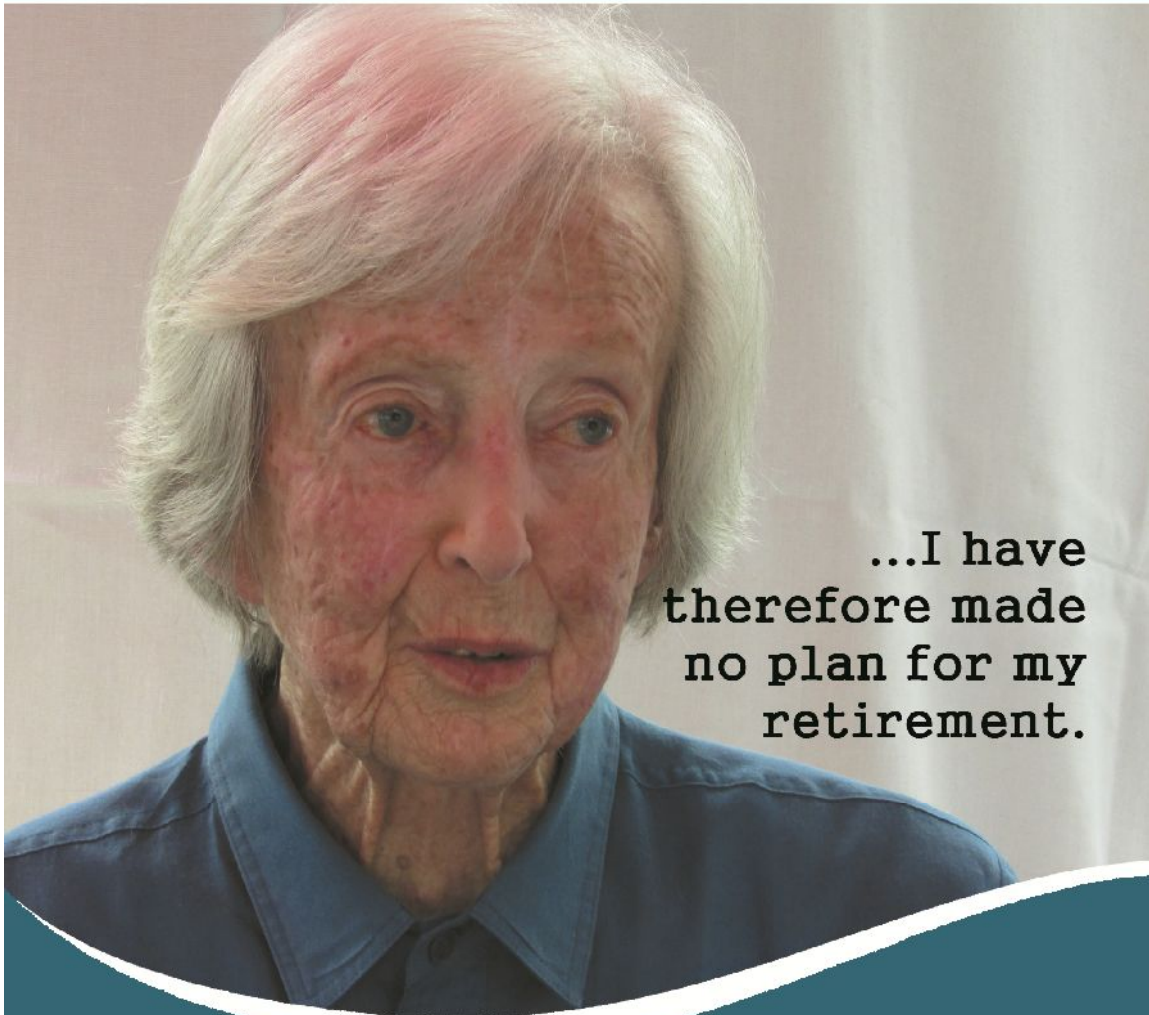


The HAMLIN Newsletter is published quarterly by Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, and distributed to its members.



...I have
 therefore made
 no plan for my
 retirement.

There is still much to be done for thousands of women who every year suffer the agony of obstructed labour and its horrific consequences. I could never imagine just living here and not working, it would be unthinkable. Unthinkable, too, to walk away when I know the problems would be even worse. I have therefore made no plan for my retirement.

Dr. Catherine Hamline
 The Hospital By the River

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Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has undergone many exciting changes this time around. New staff members are aboard, including:

- The First Ethiopian CEO, Dr. Tesfaye Yacob
- Planning and Program Manager, Dr. Demissew Beyene
- Senior Fistula Surgeon, Dr. Mengistu Tefera, and
- Information and Communication Manager, Dr. Teshome Tafesse

HFE Welcomes First Ethiopian CEO

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE) has welcomed its first Ethiopian Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dr. Tesfaye Yacob. He took up the position in April 2016, and since then he has been fully engaged in providing overall direction to the Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.



"We're thrilled and honored to have Dr. Tesfaye as the first Ethiopian CEO at this very critical time. I'm optimistic that he'll bring some remarkable changes in the organization," said Dr. Catherin Hamlin, co-founder of HFE. Medical Director at HFE, Dr. Fekade Ayenachew, also expressed his optimism about the organization's future. "Dr. Tesfaye has broad experience that makes him uniquely capable of strengthening our organization and the quality and quantity of fistula care, treatment, prevention and rehabilitation we will continue to offer."

With over 30 years of experience as a clinician, trainer,

instructor, researcher, director and public health manager, both in government and non-government organizations, Dr. Tesfaye is the right person for the appointment.

A medical doctor by training, Dr. Tesfaye has worked in leadership roles in various organizations and succeeded in transforming many of them. Prior to joining Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, Dr. Tesfaye served as Medical Director at Ras Desta Hospital, Addis Ababa. During his brief tenure at the hospital, he oversaw a number of projects and achieved unprecedented organizational growth.

Between 1996 and 2010, he served, among others, as General Secretary of a church denomination and Executive Director of a large development program. Further to his experience, he worked as Coordinator of a Coalition of

Churches and Bible Agencies, Instructor of leadership courses at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, and a Board Member of the Consortium of Christian Relief Association (CCRDA).

As part of his academic contribution, Dr. Tesfaye has produced a number of researches and published them in reputable journals. Some of his research findings show how CSOs in Ethiopia better serve their target communities. He has also made a number of national and international presentations.

"I am glad to be here and contribute my share," Dr. Tesfaye stated, as he noted that the contribution of each and every member of the Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia and its partners is vital in the care, treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of the fistula injuries. Asked what he has felt since he took up the position, he said, "Things have been going well. Everybody has been very accommodating and helpful. Our team genuinely cares for our patients that are experiencing the agony of childbirth injuries. Our goal is to focus on the individual needs of each patient in a caring and compassionate manner."

New Fistula Surgeon Joins Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital

As its effort to provide a well-rounded care and treatment for its fistula patients, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia welcomes Dr. Mengistu Tefera, Obstetrician and Gynecologist, as its new medical staff.

“We are delighted to welcome Dr. Mengistu to our medical staff,” said Dr. Tesfaye Yach, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia CEO. “Trained fistula surgeons are in short supply, and Dr. Mengistu is a great addition to our medical team as we continue our efforts in the care and treatment of fistula injuries,” he added.

Dr. Mengistu brings to Hamlin more than 13 years of work experience, ranging from general health practitioner to university lecturer.



He has joined Hamlin as a senior fistula surgeon, and offers a full range of services in his medical practice. “I’m excited to continue the excellent fistula care and treatment the organization has already been providing,” said Dr. Mengistu, adding, “I love practicing in the field because it gives me time to listen to and address my patients’ concerns.” My philosophy is to treat the ‘whole’ person by addressing our patients’ psychiatric, physical and emotional needs. Fistula has profound and devastating consequences for the patient’s physical and physiological health, he further noted.

Dr. Mengistu recalls the moment he was impressed by the good deeds of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.

“I came to know Hamlin for the first time some five years ago. I was taking a three-month-training at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, and was deeply touched by Dr. Catherine’s life-saving mission, and immediately promised to myself to contribute my share. And since then, I’ve been looking for opportunities to join Hamlin. I’m glad I’ve made it.” “Nothing else could be more satisfying than helping the very poor women and young girls of my country who have suffered from the physical, psychological and social effects of fistula for years, and getting them, at the end, totally cured and back home with full dignity,” he added.

New Planning & Program Manager at HFE

On the 1st of October 2016 Dr. Demissew Beyene took up his appointment as the new Planning & Program Manager of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE). “I’m happy to contribute with my expertise, and grateful for the opportunity to work at Hamlin,” Dr. Demissew said.



Demissew obtained B.Sc degree majoring Chemistry with a minor in Biology from Addis Ababa University. He received M.Phil degree in International Health (Biotechnology/Immunology) from the University of Bergen, Norway in June 1993 and a PhD in Epidemiology/Public Health from the same university in June 2010.

He has outstanding experience in building and leading multi-disciplinary teams, and bringing consortium projects to success including managing big grants. He is top performer with high level of technological and technical expertise, alongside with hands-on management experience, on

molecular biology/biotechnology, microbiology, immunology, histopathology, and public health issues. He has a good experience of advising M.Sc and PhD thesis research students and staff. Moreover, he has the experience of developing curriculum in higher learning institutions, and organizing workshops, conferences and seminars. Furthermore, he has an extensive experience of writing up project proposals for grant applications, and publishing original articles in peer review journals as author & coauthor.

Dr. Demissew brings to his new role over 27 years of experience as an instructor, advisor, researcher and curriculum developer at higher learning institutions, and manager of consortium projects, both in government and non-government organizations. "We are delighted to have him join our team as Planning & Program Manager. He has all the skills and experience that Hamlin needs, and I'm optimistic that his contribution will be enormous in realizing HFE's mission and vision," said Dr. Tesfaye Jacob, HFE CEO, adding that the success of any organization depends on the cumulative success of the projects the organization manages.

New Information and Communication Manager at HFE



HFE has also welcomed Dr. Teshome Tafesse as a new Information and Communication Manager. Dr. Teshome brings over 15 years of experience in universities, media institutions, embassies and

non-government organizations both in Ethiopia and abroad.

In his new capacity as Information and Communication Manager at HFE, Dr. Teshome will guide the overall communication efforts, both internal and external, of the organization. "I'm honored to be part of an organization that is dedicated to providing excellent fistula care, treatment and prevention," he said, stating that effective communication stimulates actions on obstetric fistula among decision makers, opinion leaders, medical personnel, and affected communities.

Prior to his current position, Dr. Teshome served as a Communication Manager for Investment Climate Facility for Africa, and Communication, Partnership and Fundraising Manager for Love in Action Ethiopia. His experience also includes an Assistant Professor of Media and Communication Studies at Addis Ababa University, Reporter and Editor at the American Embassy, and Documentary Film Producer at Walta Information Center. His international experience, among others, includes a Community Living Counselor at the Institute of Catholic Charities, and Case Manager at Bread for the City in Washington DC, USA.

Dr. Teshome has also worked as a Communication Advisor and Consultant for a number of local and international NGOs. In a voluntary capacity, he has served as Board Chairperson for Care for Life Ethiopia, a local NGO, and Continental Revivalists' Association. As part of his scholarly contributions, he has produced a number of publications, and made various presentations at national and international seminars and conferences. "Dr. Teshome's extensive experience in national and international settings and proven track record in organizational relationship building will significantly contribute to the realization of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's mission and vision," said Dr. Tesfaye Jacob, HFE CEO.

Hamlin Injects 20 Exceptionally Skilled Midwives to Ethiopia's Maternal Health Care Service

The Hamlin College of Midwives graduated 20 female candidates with BSc Degree in Midwifery on Saturday, the 8th of October, at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital's compound. Families, friends, staff, Board of Trustees, and representatives from partner organizations,



embassies and the government, as well as honored guests from overseas attended the ceremony and celebrated the graduates' accomplishments as they completed a significant step in midwifery education.

Dean of the College and Prevention Manager, Ato Zelalem Belete, along with Hamlin's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Tesfaye Yacob, presided over the College's sixth -graduation ceremony. "This is a tremendous milestone that you have reached," Ato Zelalem said, while congratulating the graduates for their successful achievements. "One thing that

you have gotten here at Hamlin College of Midwives –in addition to your subject matter-is serving your community to the best you can. That requires compassion, dedication, commitment and belongingness. I'm glad that you've all this," he noted. "These 20 graduates will raise the total number of skilled female midwives to 105, trained and deployed by the College since 2007," he further noted.

Chief Executive Officer of the Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, Dr. Tesfaye Yacob, also spoke at the ceremony. "We are extremely proud of what our

students have accomplished as a result of study at our College. Congratulations for you've officially joined today the oldest profession in human history. Through your respected practices, you are contributing to the final task of eliminating Obstetric Fistula and transforming the services of HFE towards Comprehensive Maternal Health Service Unit."

"I'm here to celebrate success and new beginnings of my 6th batch graduates. Congratulations my children! Through your hard work and determination, you find yourself here today at your

College graduation surrounded by friends, family members and staff. When making your way through life, never forget your College and your instructors, who bestowed this knowledge upon you," Dr. Catherine Hamlin, co-founder of the Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, addressed the graduates.

Honorable guest of the day and member of HFE Board of Trustees, W/ro Mulu Solomon awarded the graduates with degrees and congratulated them for their achievements. "On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to congratulate Hamlin's 6th graduating class. We are right to be proud of you, and of such a College. You've learned to live uprightly, to think more rationally and effectively,

and to find solutions. This has been part of your four-year- education at the College. Be loyal to yourself, your profession and your community, and do it from your heart. Our poor mothers and young girls in remote areas are very much in need of you," she said.

and practical skills during her four-year- learning at the College. "The sky's is the limit! I'm here after four years of hard work, commitment and determination. I thank you all, and am ready for the next step, serving my community."

Student Representative, Hanna Tesfaye, also made a speech during the ceremony. "What an incredible honor and privilege it is for me to stand here before you all today representing the graduating class of 2016. Congratulations to everyone of you! You should be very proud of yourselves accomplishing this goal. This is a time to reflect upon the 4-year journey that we have just finished, which has been the most rewarding experience of our lives as we now start our journeys as the custodians of our nation's young girls and women."



Graduate Malefiya Mamo, winner of the 2016 Outstanding Academic Achievement Award, said that she had received all the theoretical knowledge

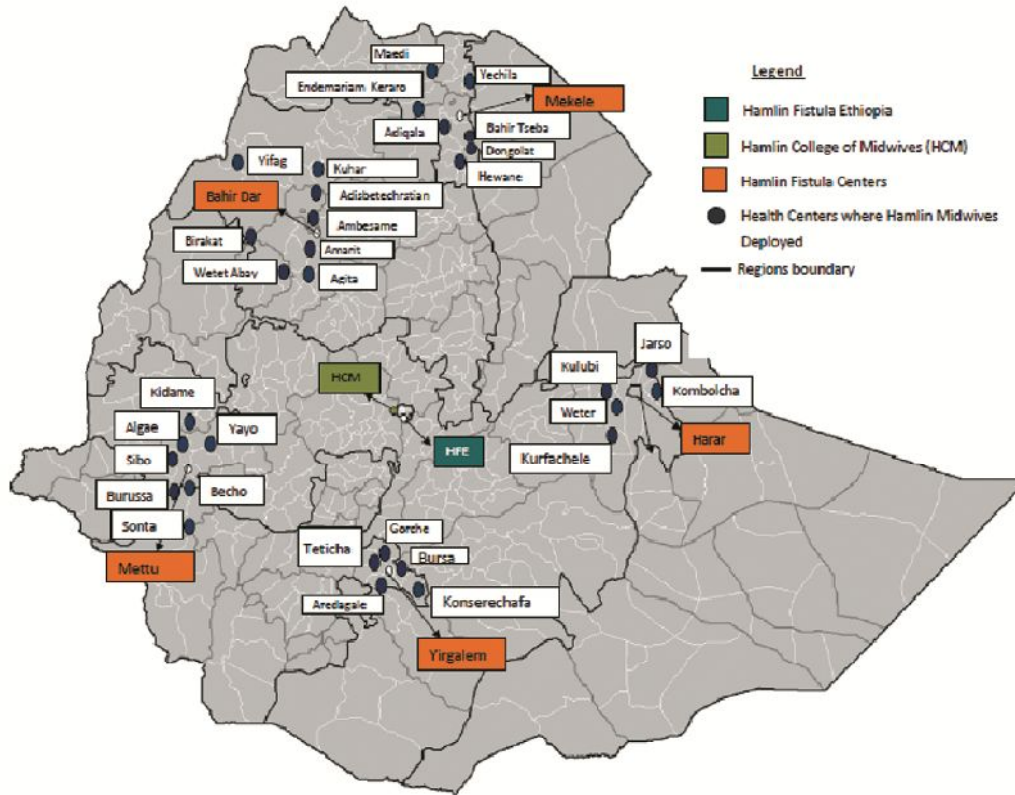
"I'm here to celebrate success and new beginnings of my 6th batch graduates. Congratulations my children!"

Dr. Catherine Hamlin,
HFE co-founder

"Be loyal to yourself, your profession and your community, and do it from your heart. Our poor mothers and young girls in remote areas are very much in need of you."

W/ro Mulu Solomon,
Honorable guest &
member of HFE Board of Trustees,

Hamlin Midwives Deployment Map



Hamlin College of Midwives has so far trained and deployed 105 highly skilled female midwives with BSc Degree in Midwifery.

Dr. Reginald's Operation Theater under Renovation

The Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital's Operation Room named Dr. Reginald Operation Theater has been under renovation for the past two months and will be wrapped up this month. This approximately 4 million birr renovation project has been carried out against the backdrop of Hamlin's long-term strategic plan of providing 'Quality Maternal Health Care Services', and of adding a new intervention on Urogynecology Fellowship Program that Hamlin is handling in collaboration with Mekele University College of Health Sciences, St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College and The Worldwide Fistula Fund.



The renovation has incorporated installing a new machine, along with operation table, called C-arm/ fluoroscopy, which would maximize the accuracy and quality of surgeries undergoing in the Operation Room(OR). "In the OR, the machine is used for a variety of diagnostic imaging including urology procedures and pain management," said Dr. Fekade Ayenachew, Medical Director and Senior Fistula Surgeon at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. On his part, Dr. Yeshineh Demrew, a Senior Fistula Surgeon at the hospital, indicated that the new C-arm machine would simplify the medical care to a very accurate digital service and increase the current surgery success

rate. He added that the renovation provides medical staff with greater ease in delivering care in a timely fashion for a growing number of fistula patients.

The project has also included new flooring, wall colors, lighting and furniture as well as new finishes on the walls, handrails, flooring and ceilings. Small details to increase patient comfort are also given consideration. "We're very excited about this renovation project, not only because it will provide a more comfortable, convenient environment for our patients, but because it will allow our staff and surgeons to offer better patient care day in and day out," said CEO Dr. Tesfaye Yacob. Operations

Manager, Ato Tilahun Mola, also indicated that all of the planned improvements for the hospital-current and future-will help solidify Hamlin Fistula Addis Ababa Hospital as a leading fistula care and treatment provider in the area.

"The renovation will provide a more comfortable, convenient environment for our patients, and also allow our staff to offer better patient care and treatment."

Dr. Tesfaye Yacob,
HFE CEO

HFE Distributes Solar Suitcases to Regional Clinics

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE) has distributed more than 162 solar suitcases, a project funded by Greenlamp, to remote health centers in four regions to enhance safe and prompt delivery services at nights. Out of these suitcases, Oromiya received 57, Amhara 51, Tigray 24, and SNNP 30.



A reliable light source is one of the things often lacking in these clinics, forcing midwives to resort to the use of flashlights and kerosene lamps. The inconveniences and health risks associated with these lighting sources in general are compounded when assisting mothers to deliver babies.

The solar suitcases facilitate timely and appropriate emergency care, reduce maternal and infant morbidity and mortality, and improve the quality of care in the clinics. Without good lighting, it is extremely difficult to conduct safe deliveries, suture areas of bleeding, and resuscitate babies. "With the solar suitcases, health providers can see at night for routine deliveries, and can promptly diagnose and treat birth complications," said Ato Ababayehu H/Selassie, Solar Suitcase Project Coordinator at HFE, adding that lack of light may lead to the loss of a baby's or a mother's life, or both. "So far we have helped benefit nearly 30 thousand mothers, well over our target for the 2016 fiscal year. Although we have made significant progress toward reaching our goal, there are still many more mothers and newborns who can benefit from the solar suitcases," he added.

"The solar suitcases have significantly addressed the electricity problem in the health centers, and transformed the night time care," said, Dr. Tesfaye, HFE CEO, adding that plans are underway to distribute more solar suitcases in other remote health centers.



"These solar suitcases are transforming livings in the clinics. Before the distribution of the solar suitcases to the clinics, mothers delivered babies under the dim glow of a kerosene lantern or mobile light, leading to higher health risks for mothers and babies."

*Ato Ababayehu H/Selassie,
HFE Solar Suitcase*

From Fixing the Injury to Social Reintegration—Hamlin's Dedication



Fetenech Belay is originally from a small village around Chagni, Northern Ethiopia, some 600 kms away from Addis Ababa, the capital city. She estimates her age to be about 28. Her parents never told her how old exactly she was. So she estimates. She estimates when she was born, when she got married, when she got first pregnant, and above all, when she became the victim of fistula- double fistula to the worst, the term she later came to know.

She remembers when she got married to an older man, likely twice her age. She was much less than 15, too young to get married, but that was the reality she had to face. Because her parents wanted, and she had to comply with. She married, and immediately became pregnant.

There came the challenge—the challenge to safely give birth. She labored for three days at home, but became unsuccessful. The baby was stillborn, and the situation left her with double fistula, incontinent of both urine and defecation. A devastating life crisis, something she had never imagined of.

Six years ago, after living awful life with urinary incontinence for years, she visited Bahir Dar Hamlin Fistula Center, 150 kms far from her village, for any hope. A relative who had heard about her devastating life recommended her to the Center. Considering the severity of her case,

the Center referred her to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. She received colostomy treatment, a surgical operation in which the

colon is shortened to remove the damaged part and the cut end diverted to an opening in the abdominal wall, at the hospital. It was a successful treatment. "I didn't know first that there was a treatment for my case. I thought I could live with it throughout my life, but my God guided me to the Center and then to the Hospital. I received all the treatment at the Hospital, and got dry. I didn't believe that the incontinence had gone. I didn't know what fistula was, but I knew I was living a terrible life," she recalls.

As her injuries were severe, Fetenech started living at Desta Mender (Joy Village), a Rehabilitation Wing of the Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. Here, while receiving ongoing treatment, she was screened for a full rehabilitation-training package. Following the trainings on life and business skills, among others, she was assisted to work at Juniper Café and involve in dairy farming at the Desta Mender.

Two years ago, after working at Desta Mender for three years, she wanted to start a new business of her own. With the seed money she received from Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, she opened a coffee house very close to Desta Mender. Her business has gone as planned, and she is busy every day serving strong and tasty Ethiopian coffee to her customers. She lives with her second husband and says she is very happy now. "I never had thought of living outside my village. Everything is for good. Thanks to 'Emmaye's [Dr. Catherine's] holistic support. I got cured from the dreadful double fistula injuries and have started my own business. There is a bright future ahead of me now," she said.

"I wonder what my life would be if Emmaye has not been around, and of course, to your surprise, I don't want to think about that. It's hard to imagine. Everything makes me cry. The fistula pain I went through makes me cry. The support Emmaye has provided me makes me cry, though tears of joy. I'm born again, and want to focus on my bright future," she added.

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Get Involved

Join Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's effort to END FISTULA. If you want to find out about ways of getting involved, or have any questions about Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, please contact us.

Editor's Note

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