



# Mercy Ships | Fact Sheet

## About Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is an international faith-based organisation bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor. As many as 5 billion people lack access to safe, affordable surgical and anaesthesia services worldwide, and less than 6% of all operations are delivered to the world's poorest countries. Marginalised populations continue to suffer due to a lack of trained healthcare providers, inadequate infrastructure, and disproportionate out-of-pocket healthcare costs. Mercy Ships programmes offer holistic support to developing countries, striving to make healthcare accessible for all. Since 1978, Mercy Ships has delivered services to more than 2.84 million beneficiaries. The countries served by Mercy Ships are ranked as the poorest in the world by the United Nations Human Development Index.

The organisation has supported its hospital ships through:

- 1. The International Support Centre** in Garden Valley, Texas, USA (home of both the **US national office** and **Mercy Ships Operations**). This location houses executive offices, marine operations, human resources, warehousing, finance, logistics and information services, and oversees the work of the **Mercy Ships Africa Bureau** in Cotonou, Benin.
- 2. Mercy Ships Global Association** headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland (international coordination).
- 3. Mercy Ships national offices** in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, New Zealand, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the USA.

## Founder & History

While living in Lausanne, Switzerland, Don Stephens began a journey that led to the founding of Mercy Ships. Don formed and led a team that surveyed suitable ocean liners for the dream of a hospital ship to serve the world's poor. In 1978, the dream became a reality with the purchase of the first ship, the *Anastasis*. Another milestone was reached in 2007 with the launching of the *Africa Mercy*, the largest of the four hospital ships operated by Mercy Ships in its 42-year history.

Don and his wife Deyon and their four children lived onboard the first Mercy Ship for 10 years. Now based in the USA, Don continues to inspire the staff and crew toward the future. The Stephenses have overseen the growth of Mercy Ships from its humble beginnings to an organisation in which tens of thousands of professional volunteers have served. Don is on the Mercy Ships International Board which has 40 active and 2 emeritus members from 10 nations.

## Ships and Field Programmes

The *Africa Mercy* and the *Global Mercy* are the world's largest non-governmental hospital ships and are dedicated to serving the continent of Africa. Mercy Ships has an average of 1,200 volunteer crew from more than 60 nations, serving onboard its hospital ships each year.

## Programmes & Services

Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen the local healthcare delivery system while serving the surgical needs of the host country. Mercy Ships provides a variety of training opportunities for medical professionals (surgeons, nurses, anaesthesia providers, administrators, medical technicians and engineers). Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, the programmes Mercy Ships provides offer holistic support to developing countries. Mercy Ships has provided services and materials in developing countries valued at over \$1.74 billion, including the following:

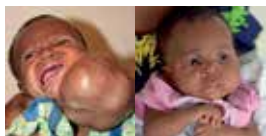
- Performed more than 105,500 life-changing or life-saving surgical procedures such as cleft-lip and palate repair, cataract removal, orthopaedic, facial reconstruction, burn contracture release, pediatric, general, and obstetric fistula repair
- Performed over 488,000 dental procedures for over 186,500 dental patients.
- Trained more than 6,600 local professionals, who have in turn trained many others
- Trained over 49,000 local professionals in their area of expertise (anesthesiology, surgery, nursing, biomedical engineering, instrument sterilisation, trauma, leadership)
- Taught over 252,000 local people in basic healthcare
- Completed over 1,110 infrastructure development projects

## Finances

Funding for Mercy Ships is provided primarily through private donations, foundations and socially responsible corporations. Volunteers serving on the ships and in the field contribute not only their professional skills but also monthly fees to cover their costs. This enables Mercy Ships to deliver medical and development services for a fraction of the usual cost.



Ali, Sierra Leone  
Cleft Lip Repair



Maomai, Benin  
Tumour Removal



Alexis, Nadège, Ricardo,  
Benin, Cataract Removal



The Africa Mercy



The Global Mercy  
(artist's rendering)



Surgeries & Healthcare



Training of local  
professionals



Community Empowerment



# Mercy Ships | Our Values



## Mission

Mercy Ships follows the 2,000-year-old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor.



## Vision

Mercy Ships uses hospital ships to transform lives and serve nations one at a time.



## Values

Desiring to follow the model of Jesus, we seek to:

1. Love God.
2. Love and serve others.
3. Be people of integrity.
4. Be people of excellence in all we say and do.



*Lives transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*



The Africa Mercy



Generators



The Global Mercy  
(artist's rendering)

*Lives transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*

Mercy Ships strives for excellence in all we say and do. This includes efforts to be good stewards of the environment and the resources available to us. As such, Mercy Ships complies with all international standards, which regulate what ships do with waste, oil, sewage, garbage and exhaust emissions and air pollution.

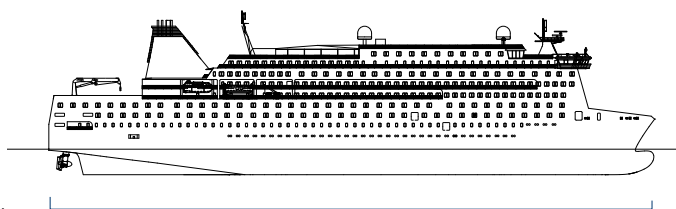
The *Africa Mercy* is in full compliance with international standards including:

- The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships Maritime Pollution (MARPOL 73-78) standards.
- The *Africa Mercy* has a waste converter onboard, which turns medical waste into sanitized dust.
- To ensure our generator engines are in top shape to reduce emissions, Mercy Ships contracts with the generator engine manufacturers to bring their technicians for maintenance and repairs.
- All waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) produced during a field service is properly stored onboard until it can be transported to Europe for recycling.
- In the summer of 2019, Mercy Ships replaced all the accommodation showerheads onboard the *Africa Mercy* with a new type that prevents up to 99.99% bacteria formation and reduces water consumption
- Mercy Ships is in the process of changing all light fixtures to energy-efficient LEDs onboard the *Africa Mercy*.
- Our ships sail at slow speeds between ports to save fuel thereby lowering our CO2 footprint.
- Mercy Ships proactively utilizes marine fuels that meet the International Maritime Organization (IMO) 0.5% Sulphur cap to reduce carbon emissions.
- Our fuels are treated with industry recognized products to further reduce emissions.

In addition to the above, our newest vessel, the *Global Mercy*, is equipped with the following:

- Filtering and treating AC condensate water for technical use, which will reduce potable water consumption by approximately 50%
- High efficiency air conditioning systems which reduce total energy consumption by 15%

The *Global Mercy* is the world's largest custom-built floating hospital ship providing surgical care to those in need.



**New Ship Project · under construction**



**Emmanuel, Ghana**  
Cleft Lip Repair



**Odilon, Benin**  
Tumour Removal



**Veronique, Benin**  
Obstetric Fistula Repair

*Lives transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*



**The Global Mercy**  
(artist's rendering)



**Hospital Floor Plan**



**Operating Theatre**



**ICU/Recovery Ward**



**2-Berth Crew Cabin**

## Facilities and Features

### Overview

Since the launch of the *Africa Mercy* in 2007, Mercy Ships has planned for another ship of equal or greater capacity to be added to the fleet. Drawing upon over 42 years of organisational experience, and over five years of specific study on the outcomes of the *Africa Mercy* in serving the people of West and Central Africa, the Mercy Ships International Board approved entrance into a contract for the construction of a purpose-built hospital ship. This new ship will more than double the ability of Mercy Ships to deliver hope and healing, while significantly increasing capacity-building and training potential.

The new ship represents a global collaboration. The 37,000 GRT hospital ship is under construction at Tianjin Xingang Shipyard, part of the China State Shipbuilding Company (CSSC) with project management by Stena RoRo of Gothenburg, Sweden, and construction design by Deltamarin of Turku, Finland. The French ship brokerage company Barry Rogliano Salles (BRS) was instrumental in helping negotiate the contract. The new ship will be classed by Lloyd's Register of the UK, and it will be flagged by Malta.

The *Global Mercy* will be capable of serving anywhere in the world and will initially expand the activity of Mercy Ships on the African continent.

### Hospital

The hospital covers most of decks 3 and 4 – approximately 7,000 square metres containing supply services, 6 operating theatres, 102 acute care beds, 7 ICU/isolation beds and an additional 90 self-care beds. The hospital area includes dedicated classroom/conference spaces as well as simulator labs for more effective training. All pre-operative and post-operative work can be done onboard rather than ashore, which minimises the Mercy Ships footprint when operating in busy ports. The new ship will more than double our annual medical capacity and is designed to carry out a wide range of surgeries including, but not limited to, maxillofacial and reconstructive surgery, tumour removal, cleft lip and palate repair, plastics, orthopaedic surgery, cataract removal, and obstetric fistula repair.

### Specifications

Length.....	174m
Breadth.....	28.6m
Gross Tonnage.....	37,000
Registered.....	Malta
Crew Capacity.....	641
Main Engines.....	4 x Wartsila 6L32 w/ 2 x ABB Azipul Pods
Draft.....	6.1 m
Decks.....	12
Building....	Tianjin Xingang Shipyard
Surveyed By.....	Lloyd's Register

### Accommodation

The *Global Mercy* will have meeting and work spaces with numerous design considerations based upon prior operating experience and crew feedback. The ship incorporates the latest comprehensive technology for crew safety and security and will provide accommodation for 641 people including crew and medical staff onboard. The ship services are designed to host up to 950 people when the hospital is working and additional day-crew are serving onboard in various functions such as translators.

### Construction Phases

The sequential steps in the building process include up to 72 months of detailed design work, construction of the hull and installation of machinery systems, outfitting the accommodation decks/hospital, extensive testing and trials prior to delivery from shipyard, installation of additional medical equipment and general supplies and further testing prior to deployment.



**Emmanuel, Ghana**  
Cleft Lip Repair



**Odilon, Benin**  
Tumour Removal



**Veronique, Benin**  
Obstetric Fistula Repair



Recovery Ward



Operating Room



Crew Cabin



Bridge

## History

The £30 million (\$62 million USD) refit of the former Danish rail ferry *Dronning Ingrid* into the *Africa Mercy* was made possible through a matching grant from the Oak Foundation, ongoing support from the Balcraig Foundation, corporate gifts-in-kind, trusts and individual contributors. Acquired in 1999 through an initial Balcraig Foundation donation, the ship was re-named the *Africa Mercy* by Dame Norma Major in April 2000. The conversion was completed at A & P Shipyard, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in March 2007. The refit was deemed the largest conversion project of its kind in the UK.

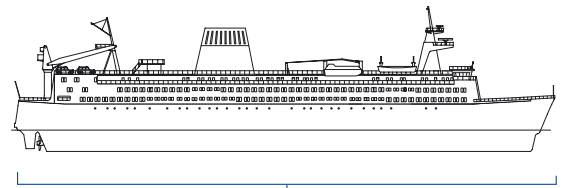
## Facilities and Features

### Hospital

The hospital covers most of the original rail deck – approximately 1,200 square metres. It is divided into quadrants containing supply/services, five operating theatres, a four-bed recovery area, intensive care for up to five individuals and seventy-five ward beds. The volunteer crew provides free surgical procedures onboard including cataract removal/lens implants, tumour removal, cleft-lip and palate repair, orthopaedics (clubfoot and bowed legs), women's health (including obstetric fistula repair), reconstructive plastic and general surgeries as well as some ambulatory day surgery procedures. The hospital contains a CT Scanner, X-ray and laboratory services which support the surgical services.

### Medical Capacity (Training and Infrastructure Development)

The *Africa Mercy* also serves as a platform to deliver high-quality training to local healthcare providers as a sustainable means of bolstering a country's healthcare system. Training interventions ensure that healthcare providers use proper practices to reduce the risk of lengthy hospital stays, mishaps and hospital-acquired infections. These training courses are not only focused on surgical care (Safe Anaesthesia Administration and Care, WHO Surgical Safety Checklist, Primary Trauma Care and Essential Surgical Skills) but also various paramedical healthcare services (e.g. Biomed, Sterilisation), and a nutritional agriculture training programme. When appropriate, Mercy Ships may bolster these training efforts with equipment donations and/or facility renovations to ensure the trainees are as effective as possible.



*Africa Mercy* - deployed 2007

### Specifications

Length.....	152m
Breadth.....	23.7m
Gross Tonnage.....	16,572
Built.....	1980 Elsinore, Denmark
Registered.....	Malta
Crew Capacity.....	474
Cargo Capacity.....	1,724 m <sup>3</sup>
Main Engines..4 B&W (3120 kW each)	
Draft.....	6.0m
Surveyed By.....	Lloyd's Register

### Safety & Security

The vessel is fitted with an automatic sprinkler system throughout the accommodation and hospital areas. An addressable smoke detector system pinpoints the exact location of the source of any potential fire. Machinery spaces are covered by a CO<sub>2</sub> gas flooding system as well as a "Hi Fog" system, which can be very effective in controlling localised fires in the machinery space. Gurkha security guards man the gangway 24 hours a day with metal detectors and other screening devices. They are backed up by CCTV around the vessel, while critical spaces such as the bridge and engine room remain locked at all times.

### Crew and Accommodation

The *Africa Mercy* has meeting and work spaces as well as berths for an average crew of 400 from up to 60 nations serving onboard at any given time. The 16,572-ton vessel has had over 13,000 crew from over 90 countries serve onboard since its deployment in 2007. The 481 berths include 24 family cabins, 29 cabins for couples, and shared and single cabins for individual occupants.



# Anastasis (Retired) | Fact Sheet



Edoh, Togo  
Tumour Removal



Patrick, Sierra Leone  
Tumour Removal



George, Liberia  
Cleft Lip Repair

*Lives transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*



Anastasis



Operating Theatre



Recovery Ward



Reception



Bridge

## History

Formerly the *Victoria*, the *Anastasis* was built in 1953 as an Italian passenger liner and served as the flagship of the Mercy Ships fleet from 1978 to 2007. During that time, the *Anastasis* contributed more than half of Mercy Ships' total output in terms of number of services, value and beneficiaries. An average of 350 crew from more than 30 nations lived and worked onboard.

## Facilities & Features

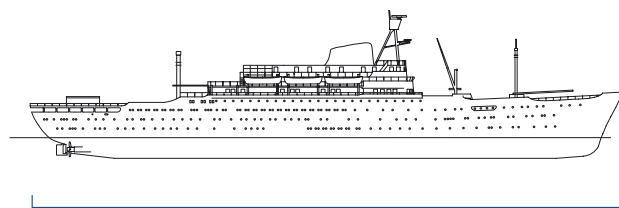
The former passenger liner was modified to contain three fully-equipped operating rooms, a hospital ward, a dental clinic, a laboratory, an X-ray unit, three cargo holds and accommodation for 420 crew. She carried a fleet of over 20 vehicles for onshore work.

## Lifetime Legacy

### Services Delivered

Since 1978, the *Anastasis* performed more than 1 million services in her lifetime, at a total value today of over \$278 million, with an estimated 1.2 million people as direct beneficiaries.

- Performed more than 18,800 surgeries such as cleft lip and palate repair, cataract removal, straightening of crossed-eyes, orthopaedic surgeries and facial reconstruction.
- Treated more than 88,600 people in village medical clinics.
- Performed more than 137,000 dental treatments.
- Coached over 4,000 local healthcare professionals who have in turn trained many others, ensuring that medical expertise is retained after the ship's departure.
- Taught more than 59,700 local people in basic healthcare.
- Completed more than 540 construction and agriculture projects including schools, clinics, orphanages and water wells.



**Anastasis**  
deployed 1978 - retired 2007

## Specifications

Length.....	159m
Breadth.....	20.73m
Gross Tonnage.....	11,701
Built.....	1953 Trieste, Italy
Registered.....	Malta
Crew Capacity.....	420
Cargo Capacity.....	3 holds 3,060 m <sup>3</sup> total
Main Engines.....	2 Fiat 7,510 (8,050 BHP each)
Draft.....	7.2m
Surveyed By.....	Lloyds

## Ports Visited

The *Anastasis* visited 275 total ports and conducted 66 field assignments in 23 nations: Guatemala, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Mexico, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Poland, Togo, Ghana, Estonia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Lithuania, Senegal, Latvia, South Africa, Madagascar, Benin, Gambia and Liberia.

## Trivia

An estimated 25,000 volunteer crew members served on the *Anastasis*. Over 250 couples met as crew, and several weddings were held onboard, including one at sea.



Christopher, Honduras  
Nutrition Programme



Isabel, Honduras  
Clubfoot Correction



Benigno, Guatemala  
Cataract Removal

*Lives transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*



Caribbean Mercy



Eye Unit



Crew Cabin



Bridge

## History

Formerly a Norwegian ferry (*Polarlys*), the *Caribbean Mercy* was acquired by Mercy Ships in 1994. In her 12-year history, the *Caribbean Mercy* contributed more than 20% of Mercy Ships total output in terms of number of services, value and beneficiaries, serving primarily in Central America and the Caribbean basin. While in port, she hosted an average crew of 120 volunteers from more than 20 nations.

## Facilities & Features

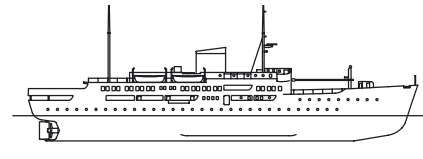
The *Caribbean Mercy* was outfitted with an eye surgery unit, cargo capacity and accommodation for up to 150 people while in port, as well as conference and seminar facilities used for a variety of programmes. Her fuel and water tanks provided a cruising range of 12 days, or 3,600 miles.

## Lifetime Legacy

### Services Delivered

Crew onboard the *Caribbean Mercy* offered more than 288,000 services, at a value of over \$88 million and with 348,800 people as direct beneficiaries.

- Performed more than 7,000 surgeries such as cataract removal, strabismus, dental and orthopaedic procedures.
- Treated more than 54,300 people in village medical clinics.
- Performed 18,200 dental treatments.
- Taught more than 1,500 local healthcare workers, who have in turn trained many others in basic healthcare.
- Trained local medical professionals in modern healthcare techniques to carry on after the ship's departure.
- Delivered more than \$1.7 million of medical equipment, hospital supplies and medicines.
- Completed more than 140 construction and agriculture projects including schools, clinics, orphanages and water wells.



**Caribbean Mercy**  
deployed 1994 – retired 2006

## Specifications

Length.....	80m
Breadth.....	12.2m
Gross Tonnage.....	2,125
Built.....	1952 Aalborg, Denmark
Registered.....	Panama
Crew Capacity.....	87
Cargo Capacity.....	688 m <sup>3</sup>
Main Engine.....	1 MAK diesel (3,670 BHP)
Draft.....	5.18m
Surveyed By....	Det Norske Veritas

## Ports Visited

The *Caribbean Mercy* visited a total of 137 ports in her 12-year history and conducted 56 field assignments in 13 nations: Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Russia, Korea, China, Philippines, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Honduras and Belize.

## Trivia

During her first 42 years, the ship only travelled within Norway. During her 12 years of service as a Mercy Ship, she visited 18 countries. In 2006 she was sold to a family foundation to be renovated.



# Island Mercy (Retired) | Fact Sheet



Haiti  
Village Medical Clinic



Dominican Republic  
Cataract Removal



Amazon, Brazil  
Dental Treatment



Island Mercy



Village Medical Clinic



Eye Examination



Crew Cabin

*Lives transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*

## History

The former Newfoundland coastal ferry *Petite Forte* was donated to Mercy Ships in 1983. She sailed for 11 years as the *Good Samaritan* serving the Caribbean, Central and South America until 1994 when she was renamed the *Island Mercy* and redeployed to the South Pacific where she served until 2001. The vessel went through extensive renovations including the building of operating theatres onboard. The ship was sold in 2001 to a Philippine interest.

## Facilities & Features

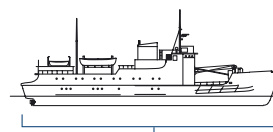
The *Island Mercy* focused on eye and dental services and carried cargo and a permanent crew of 60 people. Her shallow draft allowed her access where larger Mercy Ships could not reach.

## Lifetime Legacy

### Services Delivered

Crew onboard the *Island Mercy* offered more than 145,000 services at a value of over \$59 million and with 113,000 people as direct beneficiaries.

- Performed more than 1,150 surgeries such as cataract removal, strabismus correction, dental and orthopaedic procedures.
- Treated more than 12,750 people in village medical clinics.
- Performed 29,370 dental treatments.
- Trained local medical professionals in modern healthcare techniques to carry on after the ship's departure.
- Taught local healthcare workers to train others in basic healthcare.
- Delivered more than \$316,000 of medical equipment, hospital supplies and medicines.



**Island Mercy "Good Samaritan"**  
deployed 1983 - retired 2001

## Specifications

Length.....	52.7m
Breadth.....	11.6m
Gross Tonnage.....	998
Built.....	1961, Canada
Registered.....	Panama
Crew Capacity.....	80
Cargo Capacity.....	359 m <sup>3</sup>
Main Engine.....	2 Crossley diesel (1,100 BHP each)
Draft.....	3.8m
Surveyed By.....	Lloyds

## Ports Visited

Over 19 years, the *Good Samaritan / Island Mercy* sailed to over 109 ports and conducted medical missions in 88 port visits to 24 developing countries from South America to the South Pacific.

## Trivia

As the *Good Samaritan*, she carried cargo and personnel to the Pan-American games for the U.S. Olympic committee in 1991, and became the first ship to legally sail from the United States to Cuba in 30 years. To her crew, she was affectionately known as the "Little Giant."





# Endorsements | Fact Sheet



"I applaud Mercy Ships in their efforts of transformational development as they make a lasting difference in a world of need. Mercy Ships has committed themselves to the vision of an African renaissance in their vision of bringing hope and healing to the continent of Africa. ... I salute the vision and mission of Mercy Ships and ask that you join me in supporting their noble work and contribute to make this world a better place."  
Nelson Mandela, Former President, South Africa



"Mercy Ships exemplifies for me a spirit of compassion for those in need. I personally am proud that in a world in which selfishness and greed are so often presented as prime motivators, Mercy Ships stands as a living antidote to self-interest."  
Sir John Major, Former Prime Minister, UK



"Their work goes beyond healing and comforting the sick. It provides a sense of hope that is badly needed in the places where they work. I am delighted to give my support to Mercy Ships."  
Tony Blair, Former Prime Minister, UK



"For all the things that we have done to ourselves as a people, your response is one of love; one that helps us to see a different way, to look at ourselves with a different value. You enable many of our people to live again, to become part of society in a normal way – no longer an object of pity, no longer silenced by their handicap, no longer ashamed of their condition. We thank you."  
Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President, Liberia



"I address all my thanks and gratitude on behalf of all of Benin to the Mercy Ships team for so many sufferings relieved, so many diseases healed and so many patients whose conditions are improving. I express my encouragement to your team for the extraordinary work that is done to give joy of living to our fellow citizens. Long life to Mercy Ships."  
Patrice Talon, President de la Republic of Benin



"We would like to express our appreciation to Mercy Ships for accepting to come and offer free medical care to the Guinean population. We congratulate the crew of the *Africa Mercy* and wish them a pleasant stay in our country."  
Doctor Edouard Ngnankoye LAMA, Minister of State/Minister of Health, Guinea



"I know I speak on the behalf of many, many millions of people when I say thank you very much to all of you for your dedication, for your caring, for the gifting of yourself in the way in which you do. You are wonderful, thank you."  
Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus, South Africa



"I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the efforts of your team. The surgical and dental services provided, as well as your assistance in improving the facilities, are continuing evidence of your commitment to humanitarian service."  
Jerry Rawlings, Former President, Ghana



"Rarely are human works so generous in favoring the needy and sick who have no hope. May God bless the Mercy Ships team, and all those who have contributed to this work."  
Macky Sall, President of Senegal



"Whether providing vital medical assistance and education or offering your construction and agricultural expertise, the dedicated workers of Mercy Ships have brought new hope to countless people around the world."  
Bill Clinton, Former President, USA



"For many years now, Mercy Ships has provided medical services for the poor throughout the world. You're reaching out to people in need – feeding the hungry, caring for the lonely, and giving urgent medical help to those who need it. I have every hope you will continue to reach more and more patients in the years beyond. I know you will continue your mission of bringing hope and healing to those who need it most. May God continue to bless you in your important work."  
George W. Bush, Former President, USA



Benessa, age 5, Guinea, Maxillofacial Surgery



## Benessa Finding Joy

When she was just a baby, her parents noticed a small lump growing above her left eye. By the time she was 5 years old, Benessa's tumor was drooping over her forehead and was beginning to dislocate her eye. "She was so scared... she said everybody would laugh at her," said Benessa's mother. When they heard about Mercy Ships, her family traveled for hours to get to the *Africa Mercy*. Soon, a volunteer plastic surgeon removed the tumor Benessa had carried for years. Freed from worry, the sweet 5-year-old slowly emerged from her shell and was no longer afraid to start school.

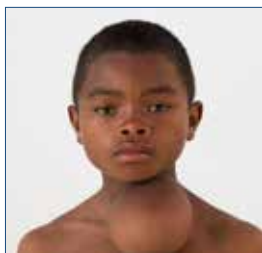


Thersia, 6 months, Liberia, Cleft Lip Repair



## Thersia Precious smile restored

Thersia was born with a cleft lip, a common congenital defect that significantly impairs hearing, chewing and breathing. When she was 6 months old, her mother brought her to the *Africa Mercy* seeking hope and healing. Over 10,000 infants per year are born in Africa with this condition. Thankfully, Thersia received a free cleft lip surgery – a simple, fast and effective solution that gave her a much brighter life. She left the ship with her mother and a new smile.



Zakaël, age 10, Madagascar, General Surgery



## Zakaël What a difference a week makes

Soon after Zakaël's birth, his father, Zahael, noticed a bump at the base of his son's neck. Zahael was desperate to have the bump removed, but he could not afford the costly surgery his son needed. Then Zahael heard that Mercy Ships was sending one of its hospital ships to Madagascar! Armed with state-of-the-art medical equipment and healthcare professionals, including specialised surgeons – the *Africa Mercy* offered Zakaël his last hope for healing. After the successful surgery, Zahael watched his son – grinning, no longer ashamed, ready to step into his new life.



Gnilane, age 25, Senegal, Maxillofacial Surgery



## Gnilane Her Dreams Interrupted

When she was 25 years old, a small lump appeared on Gnilane's face and soon felt forced to give up her studies. One day, Gnilane heard that the *Africa Mercy* would be arriving in Dakar. Once onboard, our volunteer staff were able to finally give Gnilane the healing she was waiting for. Her free surgery was a success! With the painful tumor she'd lived with for 10 years finally gone, Gnilane's passion for her future returned. "I am looking forward to returning to school and restarting my studies — it's the only thing I want," she told us.



Ulrich, age 12, Cameroon, Orthopaedic Surgery



## Ulrich What a transformation!

Even nurses onboard the *Africa Mercy* had never seen a case quite like twelve-year-old Ulrich's. He was born with muscles in his legs that didn't develop at the same rate as his bones, leaving his legs bent drastically backward. The cost of surgery and the severity of Ulrich's condition meant it was difficult for him to get the help he needed. Despite constant stares and ridicule, Ulrich learned to walk painfully with the help of sticks made from sturdy branches. Thankfully, after several complex surgeries, provided free of charge, he awoke to two newly straightened legs. When his time on the *Africa Mercy* came to a close, Ulrich offered his doctor a gift — his old walking sticks.



## Surgeries, Healthcare and Capacity-Building

Through the deployment of the world's largest, non-governmental hospital ships, Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen local healthcare systems and serve the most vulnerable in Africa. Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure. Mercy Ships partners with local healthcare workers and nurses to provide training and educational opportunities in appropriate techniques. Mercy Ships programmes offer holistic support to developing countries, striving to make healthcare accessible for all.



### Maxillofacial Surgeries

Through corrective and reconstructive maxillofacial surgeries, Mercy Ships surgeons relieve deformities caused by physical conditions such as tumours, cleft-lip, cleft palate and noma.



### Reconstructive Plastic Surgeries

Birth defects, burns and illness often cause deformities Mercy Ships corrects through surgeries including burn-scar contractures, benign tumours, chronic ulcers, combined fingers and many others.



### General Surgeries

Mercy Ships surgeons reduce the effects of neglected trauma, disease and congenital conditions by providing general surgeries for conditions such as hernias and goiters.



### Obstetric Fistula (childbirth injury) & Women's Health

Support and medical care is provided for women who have suffered childbirth injuries. Mercy Ships provides specialised surgery, continuing the recovery process through education and social activities.



### Ophthalmic Care

Mercy Ships ophthalmic surgeons perform free cataract operations, restoring sight to the blind. Additionally, doctors correct pterygium, strabismus and eyelid deformities. Mercy Ships also trains local surgeons and healthcare professionals, building the capacity of the national eye care system.



### Orthopaedic Corrections

Mercy Ships trains local surgeons in Ponseti casting, the "universal standard" in non-invasive clubfoot correction, and provides free surgical intervention for musculoskeletal conditions, neglected orthopaedic trauma and joint diseases. To help maintain correction, Mercy Ships provides physical therapy onboard and also trains local partners in how to manufacture braces.



### Dental

Dental Treatment for painful, visually displeasing and possibly lethal dental conditions can dramatically restore the health and self-esteem of Mercy Ships patients - and perhaps save their lives. We provide education to help people avoid the onset of dental disease.

### Palliative Care

The impact on the families of terminally ill patients can be overwhelming. Mercy Ships palliative care provides emotional support and training for patients, family members and caregivers. Mercy Ships helps each person to cope with the imminent pain and passing of a loved one and, most important, equips them to provide the patient with the most dignified and comfortable experience possible.

### Nutritional Agriculture Training

Mercy Ships works with local NGOs and governments to increase capacity to address food insecurity and improve farming outcomes in developing countries. Mercy Ships' agricultural specialists work with local organisations to teach holistic agricultural concepts and organic farming methods. They mentor new trainers as they implement and replicate training sessions back into their local agricultural organisations and communities.

### Infrastructure Development Projects

Mercy Ships works with local partners to renovate medical facilities to help improve the local healthcare infrastructure.

### Training and Capacity-Building

The Mercy Ships medical capacity-building programmes strengthen the local healthcare system by offering training to local medical professionals. Mercy Ships offers team training aimed at improving the skills and capacity of surgical teams and support services in local hospitals. Projects include one-on-one mentoring and classroom instruction for large groups. Training of trainers is also an important aspect for many of these projects. Investing in existing practitioners and local instructors is key for lasting and sustainable change in the health systems.



Jatu, Sierra Leone



Kumba, Sierra Leone



Yamah, Liberia

*Lives transformed through hope and healing...*



Patient Screening



Onboard Surgeries



Fistula Operation



Dress Celebration

## About Obstetric Fistula

### What is Obstetric Fistula?

Obstetric fistula is a preventable and mostly treatable condition that primarily affects young women in developing countries. Fistula is one of the most devastating of all pregnancy-related disabilities. Usually the result of obstructed labour coupled with a lack of access to skilled medical care, obstetric fistula most often leads to permanent incontinence – a continuous leakage of urine and, in severe cases, loss of control over bowel movements.

### How does it happen?

A vaginal fistula, which usually affects pregnant women, results from prolonged labour, usually lasting two to five days, with delivery occurring only after the baby dies or a caesarean section is performed. During labour, the baby's head and the woman's pubic bone form a vice, cutting off blood flow to the tissue trapped in this area. Following delivery, the dead tissue sloughs away, leaving an abnormal opening between the birth canal and the bladder (less frequently, the rectum). Unable to control the flow of urine (and/or faeces), the woman is often left outcast, living in a perpetual state of shame. Affected women are often abandoned by their husbands and ostracised by their families and communities.

### Fistula Statistics (Source: WHO, 2018)

- The United Nations Population Fund estimates that every year between 50,000 and 100,000 women sustain an obstetric fistula during childbirth.
- The World Health Organisation estimates that between 2-3 million women in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are currently living with obstetric fistulas.
- 91% of vaginal fistula can be remedied surgically.
- Obstetric fistula is both preventable and treatable, a condition that no woman should have to endure.
- Poverty and lack of access to surgery are the primary indirect causes of obstetric fistula around the world.
- Obstructed labour and obstetric fistula account for 6% of maternal deaths worldwide.

## Transformational Healthcare through Fistula Programmes

### Bringing Hope and Healing

Mercy Ships aims to reduce the effects of fistula in women in Africa by providing specialised medical treatment and training. In collaboration with local partners, Mercy Ships uses hospital ships to deliver transformational healthcare to the forgotten poor.

### Fistula Repair Operations

Onboard our hospital ships, Mercy Ships performs free fistula repair operations for affected women.

### Training & Prevention

To help build the capacity of healthcare systems in developing countries to address the condition of fistula, Mercy Ships networks with and provides training for local and international healthcare professionals, including surgeons, nurses and traditional birth attendants.

### Dress Ceremonies

Restoring dignity goes beyond surgery. Women afflicted by obstetric fistula are often outcasts from their own homes – their clothes soiled, their relationships lost. Patients who were healed participate in a celebration and receive new dresses and other gifts, symbolizing their restoration.

### Obstetric Treatment Centres Established

In 2005, Mercy Ships opened the Aberdeen Women's Centre in Freetown, Sierra Leone, which has since become a self-sustaining project apart from the organisation. The Aberdeen Women's Centre provides the only comprehensive fistula repair service in Sierra Leone, with the capacity to treat up to 300 fistula patients per year. Today, this site also provides labour and delivery services, plus midwife training. In Madagascar, Mercy Ships helped establish a similar clinic in partnership with the Freedom from Fistula Foundation. That clinic opened in November of 2015.

Through all of the surgical programmes, Mercy Ships has performed more than 105,500 life-changing or life-saving surgical procedures, including obstetric fistula repair.



Edouard, Togo  
Hernia



Claire, Congo  
Goiter



Patient Screening



Onboard Surgeries



Recovery Ward

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through hope  
and healing...*

## The Surgical Need in Developing Countries

### Why is the need so extreme?

For the poor in developing countries, accessing necessary medical and surgical care is extremely difficult due to their remote location, lack of medical facilities and financial constraints. Often, conditions that are treated in earlier stages in wealthier countries, are treated very late in developing countries, resulting in increased severity and debilitation, preventing people from working or attending school.

In the African nations where Mercy Ships serves, healthcare systems struggle to meet the needs of the population, including surgery. For many people, if surgery is available, it is often located in urban areas and cost-prohibitive. According to the World Health Organisation, there is a critical shortage of all types of medical providers in developing countries. Because of these limitations, general surgical needs such as hernias and goiters plague this region's adult and paediatric populations.

### General Surgery Statistics

- 5 billion people do not have access to safe, affordable surgical and anaesthesia care when needed. Access is worst in low and lower middle income countries, where nine of ten people cannot access basic surgical care.  
(Source: Lancet Commission)
- 143 million additional surgical procedures in low and lower middle income countries are needed each year to save lives and prevent disability. This need is greatest in the poorest regions of the world, including Western, Eastern, and Central sub-Saharan Africa, and South and Southeast Asia.  
(Source: Lancet Commission)
- An estimated 1.5 million deaths per year could be prevented by providing essential surgical procedures in low and lower middle income countries.  
(Source: Essential Surgery: Disease Control Priorities, Third Edition (Volume 1))
- In the absence of surgical care, case-fatality rates are high for common, easily treatable conditions including appendicitis, hernia, fractures, obstructed labour, and congenital anomalies.  
(Source: Lancet Commission)

## Transformational Healthcare through Onboard Surgical Programmes

### Bringing Hope and Healing

Through the deployment of the world's largest, non-governmental hospital ships, Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen local healthcare systems and serve the most vulnerable in Africa. Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure.

Mercy Ships partners with local healthcare workers and nurses to provide training and educational opportunities in appropriate techniques. Mercy Ships programmes offer holistic support to developing countries, striving to make healthcare accessible for all.

Mercy Ships seeks to deliver medical care and training excellence with integrity and compassion to countries with medical systems that are striving to build their capacity.

### Surgery

Mercy Ships seeks to relieve the burden of disease and affliction amongst the poor and outcast by providing specialised, corrective surgical interventions for conditions such as hernias and goiters through the General Surgery programme. Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure. Mercy Ships partners with local surgeons and nurses to provide training and educational opportunities in appropriate techniques. In addition, Mercy Ships contributes to the long-term eradication of preventable diseases and resulting extreme conditions by conducting community health education programmes.

### Recovery & Counselling

Patients recuperate under world-class care in the ship's hospital ward and outpatient care in the HOPE Centre, where they are also provided with opportunity for moral and spiritual support. Mercy Ships aims to provide a caring, holistic environment to facilitate patient recovery.

### Accomplishment

Through all of the surgical programmes, Mercy Ships has performed more than 105,500 life-changing or life-saving surgical procedures, including hernia repairs and tumour removals.



# Maxillofacial Surgery

## Programme Fact Sheet



Clerette, Madagascar  
Noma



Romeo, Togo  
Cleft Lip and Palate



Umu, Sierra Leone  
Facial Tumour

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and healing...*



Patient Screening



Onboard Surgeries



Recovery Ward

### The Surgical Need in Developing Countries

#### Why is the need so extreme?

For the poor in developing countries, accessing necessary medical and surgical care is extremely difficult. The poor often live in remote locations where there are few medical facilities. Any care that is available is often cost-prohibitive. Conditions usually successfully treated in the early stages in developed countries are often treated very late in developing countries, thus becoming life threatening.

#### Tumours

Disfiguring tumours often begin as small growths but can develop into lethal maladies as a person struggles to breathe or eat. Often, these individuals become social outcasts because of their disfigurement.

#### Cleft-Lip and Palate

Cleft-lip and/or palate is a condition easily repaired in developed countries, but cleft-lip babies born in developing countries are often malnourished because they cannot feed properly. Children who do survive are often rejected because of their deformity.

#### Noma

Not seen in the western world since concentration camps, noma, or cancrum oris, is an infectious disease destroying oro-facial tissues. Predominantly affecting children, the disease advances quickly, spreading to the nose, lips and cheeks. Though both preventable and treatable, thousands die from the condition each year. Those who survive are left with horrendous disfigurement.

#### Statistics

- Cleft-lip and palate is the most common facial birth defect, affecting around one in 500-700 of all live births. (Source: Source: Semin Orthod. 2008 Jun; 14(2): 103-114.)
- Noma is a disease of poverty. Ninety percent of all noma cases are fatal without treatment. Africa remains the hardest-hit continent where this preventable disease mainly strikes children under six years old. (Source: WHO)

### Transformational Healthcare through Onboard Surgical Programmes

#### Bringing Hope and Healing

Through the deployment of the world's largest, non-governmental hospital ships, Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen local healthcare systems and serve the most vulnerable in Africa. Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure.

Mercy Ships provides training opportunities for medical professionals, along with curative surgical interventions. Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programmes offer holistic support to developing countries, striving to make healthcare accessible for all.

#### Surgery

Mercy Ships partners with the local medical community in each country to identify surgical candidates. In onboard operating theatres, highly skilled surgeons perform thousands of free maxillofacial, general and reconstructive operations, transforming and saving lives.

#### Recovery & Counselling

Patients recuperate under world-class care in the ship's hospital ward, where they are also provided with opportunity for emotional and spiritual support. Mercy Ships aims to provide a caring, holistic environment to facilitate patient recovery.

#### Training, Capacity-Building & Prevention

Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure. Mercy Ships partners with local surgeons and nurses to provide training and educational opportunities in appropriate techniques. In addition, Mercy Ships contributes to the long-term eradication of preventable diseases and resulting extreme conditions by conducting community health education programmes.

#### Accomplishment

Since the beginning of the charity's surgical programme, Mercy Ships has performed more than 105,500 life-changing or life-saving surgical procedures such as cleft-lip and palate repair and maxillofacial surgery.



# Reconstructive Plastic Surgery

## Programme Fact Sheet



Abraham, Sierra Leone  
Burn Contracture Release



Afeignindou, Togo  
Burn Contracture Release



Margaret, Sierra Leone  
Webbed Fingers and Toes

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through hope  
and healing...*



Patient Screening



Onboard Surgeries



Recovery Ward

### The Surgical Need in Developing Countries

#### Why is the need so extreme?

For the poor in developing countries, accessing necessary medical and surgical care is extremely difficult. The poor often live in remote locations where there are few medical facilities. Any care that is available is often cost-prohibitive. Conditions treated during the early stages in developed countries can become life threatening in developing countries. The consequence for many is a lifetime of disability and rejection, and sometimes even death.

#### Tumours

Benign skin growths such as cysts and lipomas begin as small growths but, without treatment, can become disfiguring and debilitating. Those suffering from these tumours often become social outcasts.

#### Burn Scar Contractures

Many people in sub-Saharan Africa cook with open fires, boiling water and oil in the open air. People, very often children, can be severely burned in accidents, resulting in scarring that can reduce or severely limit mobility in the patient's arms and legs. Many cases of severe burns require skin transplants to release burn contractures and restore range of motion.

#### Conjoined Fingers/Toes

Webbing of the digits, or syndactyly, is not caused by the fingers sticking together in the womb; rather, it is caused by failure, during the sixth to eighth weeks of intrauterine life, of the usual longitudinal interdigital necrosis that normally separates the fingers. This "webbing" is the most common abnormality of the newborn hand. (PMC)

#### Statistics (Source: WHO)

- An estimated 180,000 deaths every year are caused by burns – the vast majority occur in developing countries.
- Burns are the fifth most common cause of non-fatal childhood injuries. Children under 5 years of age in the WHO African Region have over two times the incidence of burn deaths than children under five years of age worldwide.

### Transformational Healthcare through Onboard Surgical Programmes

#### Bringing Hope and Healing

Through the deployment of the world's largest, non-governmental hospital ships, Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen local healthcare systems and serve the most vulnerable in Africa. Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure.

Mercy Ships provides training opportunities for medical professionals, along with curative surgical interventions. Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programmes offer holistic support to developing countries, striving to make healthcare accessible for all.

#### Surgery

Mercy Ships partners with the local medical community in each country to identify surgical candidates. In onboard operating theatres, highly skilled surgeons perform thousands of free maxillofacial, general and reconstructive operations, transforming and saving lives.

#### Recovery & Counselling

Patients recuperate under world-class care in the ship's hospital ward, where they are also provided with opportunity for emotional and spiritual support. Mercy Ships aims to provide a caring, holistic environment to facilitate patient recovery.

#### Training, Capacity-Building & Prevention

Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure. Mercy Ships partners with local surgeons and nurses to provide training and educational opportunities in appropriate techniques.

#### Accomplishment

Since the beginning of the charity's surgical programme, Mercy Ships has performed more than 105,500 life-changing or life-saving surgical procedures such as facial reconstruction and correction of deformities caused by severe burns and congenital abnormalities.



Assan & Alusan, Liberia  
Cataract Removal



Desire, Benin  
Conjunctivitis



Alexis, Nadège, Ricardo,  
Benin, Cataract Removal

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and healing...*



Surgery Ward



Cataract Operation



Patch Removal



Post-Operative Exam



Training

## Blindness and Visual Impairment in Developing Countries

Eye conditions, treatable in their early stages in developed countries, are frequently left untreated in the poorest parts of the world and often lead to impairment or blindness. The majority of blindness is curable and could be avoided by prevention and early treatment. Blind persons in developing countries are often ostracised, considered outcasts in their communities. Even worse, most blind children do not survive past the age of five.

### Cataract

Outside developed countries, cataracts remain the leading cause of avoidable visual impairment. A cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens which impedes the passage of light. Although most cases of cataract are related to the ageing process, occasionally children can be born with the condition, or cataracts can develop after eye injuries, inflammation, or as a result of ocular diseases. Cataract surgery is one of the most cost-effective treatments that can be offered in developing countries.

### Statistics

- 36 million people are blind worldwide. (Source: Lancet Global Health 2017)
- At present at least 2.2 billion people around the world have a vision impairment, of whom at least 1 billion have a vision impairment that could have been prevented or is yet to be addressed. (Source: WHO)
- Rates of unaddressed near vision impairment are estimated to be greater than 80% in Western, Eastern and Central sub-Saharan Africa. (Source: World report on vision. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019)
- 51% of the world's blind suffer from cataracts. (Source: WHO)

## Transformational Healthcare through Eye Care Programmes

Mercy Ships aims to prevent blindness among the most vulnerable by offering free education on nutrition, eye safety, and good hygiene at all its eye screening sites. School screening programmes have been successfully implemented with government partnerships to provide early detection, prevention, and treatment of childhood blindness including severe refractive error correctable with glasses.

Mercy Ships volunteer ophthalmic surgeons perform free, vital eye operations to restore patients' sight and improve their quality of life.

### Ophthalmic Surgery

Cataracts are the most common cause of avoidable blindness worldwide. However, most incidents of cataract blindness are curable, and sight can be restored with a low-cost, sutureless technique. Mercy Ships cataract operations are performed using the latest methods and technology. Mercy Ships eye surgeons perform procedures to correct pterygium (growths on the cornea of the eye), strabismus (crossed eyes), and eyelid deformities, and to replace painful or disfiguring blind eyes with prostheses.

### Training & Capacity-Building

In addition to the surgical focus, Mercy Ships provides training opportunities for local surgeons and eye care professionals. This training will help build the in-country capacity to provide eye care services.

### Accomplishments

Since 1978, Mercy Ships has provided over 53,300 ophthalmic life-changing surgical procedures and performed more than 380,000 eye consultations.





# Orthopaedic Surgery

## Programme Fact Sheet



N'Nandy, Guinea  
Orthopaedic Surgeries



Abel, age 11, Togo,  
Orthopaedic Surgeries



Salamatou, age 6, and  
Mariama, age 8, (sisters)  
Cameroon, Orthopaedic Surgeries

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and healing...*



Patient Screening



Onboard Surgeries



Recovery Ward

### The Surgical Need in Developing Countries

#### Why is the need so extreme?

For the poor in developing countries, accessing necessary medical and surgical care is extremely difficult. Any care that is available is often cost-prohibitive. Often, conditions that are treated in earlier stages in wealthier countries, are treated very late in developing countries, resulting in increased severity and debilitation.

Mercy Ships Orthopaedic Surgery focuses on pediatrics because the bone malleability in children makes recovery quicker than in adult patients. Although the primary focus of the Orthopaedic Surgery Programme remains pediatric orthopaedics, Mercy Ships does perform a limited range of procedures on young adults up to around 30 years of age.

#### Congenital Deformities

Clubfoot, bowed legs, "knocked" knees, quadriceps contractures, and other conditions are easily treatable through surgery. Children suffering from these conditions are limited in their ability to walk, run, play sports, and sometimes, even attend school. Children quickly become social outcasts because of their disfigurement.

#### Physical Therapy

Most patients require rehabilitation to facilitate recovery after surgery. For these patients, Mercy Ships offers physical therapy to improve range of motion, flexibility and general mobility. These services are offered to orthopaedic and all other surgical patients requiring these services.

#### Ponseti

In addition to surgery, Mercy Ships offers treatment and training programmes in a non-surgical method to correct clubfoot in children under the age of two. Through a series of cast changes, a minor procedure to lengthen the Achilles tendon, and braces, clubfoot is corrected. Mercy Ships is committed not only to providing the treatment, but also to training local healthcare providers in this technique.

#### Statistics

- Every year, around 100,000 babies worldwide are born with a clubfoot. 80% of untreated clubfoot are found in developing countries. (Source: WHO.)
- The Ponseti method is a low cost, non-invasive procedure that has a 98% success rate in correcting clubfoot. (Source: WHO.)

### Transformational Healthcare through Onboard Surgery Programmes

#### Bringing Hope and Healing

Through the deployment of the world's largest, non-governmental hospital ships, Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen local healthcare systems and serve the most vulnerable in Africa. Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure.

Mercy Ships provides training opportunities for medical professionals along with curative surgical interventions. Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programmes offer holistic support to developing nations, striving to make healthcare accessible for all.

#### Recovery & Counselling

Patients recuperate under world-class care in the ship's hospital ward and outpatient care in the HOPE Centre, where they are also provided with opportunity for moral and spiritual support. Mercy Ships aims to provide a caring, holistic environment to facilitate patient recovery.

#### Training, Capacity-Building & Prevention

Mercy Ships collaborates with local governments and ministries of health to improve national healthcare infrastructure. Mercy Ships partners with local surgeons and nurses to provide training and educational opportunities in appropriate techniques.

#### Accomplishment

Through all of the surgical programmes, Mercy Ships has performed more than 105,500 life-changing or life-saving surgical procedures such as repairing windswept deformities, bowed legs, and neglected clubfeet.



Dental Training, Guinea



Tsiky, Madagascar  
Dental Surgery



Elijah, Ghana  
Dental Surgery

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through hope  
and healing...*



Dental Screening



Dental Clinic



Instrument Sterilisation



Dental Education Movie

## Dental and Oral Diseases in Developing Countries

Many people in developing countries have little or no access to proper oral healthcare. In sub-Saharan Africa, dental care is often centralised in large, urban regions. In places where oral health services exist, the majority of the population face barriers to care including transportation, literacy, finances and poor oral health. Poor oral hygiene is a risk factor for diseases and can even lead to death.

### Oral diseases

The most common oral diseases are dental cavities and periodontal (gum) disease, affecting all people regardless of socioeconomic status. In developing countries, changing living conditions due to urbanisation and the adoption of western lifestyles, such as sugar-rich diets, are leading to a higher incidence of dental cavities. This situation is further exacerbated by limited access to dental care in low-resource settings. As a result, thousands of people suffer from dental pain for weeks or months.

Without proper and timely treatment, some oral infections can even be lethal. Poor oral health can contribute to other diseases such as noma or osteonecrosis (rotten decay) of the jaw. Without treatment, noma results in death in 70-90% of cases.

Those most affected by dental disease and lack of care are the most vulnerable groups: young children, elderly, and the poorest individuals. For children, tooth decay is a particular concern as it impacts childhood nutrition, growth and weight gain.

### Statistics

- Oral diseases are the most common noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and affect people throughout their lifetime, causing pain, discomfort, disfigurement and even death. (Source: WHO)
- Severe periodontal (gum) disease, which may result in tooth loss, was estimated to be the 11th most prevalent disease globally. The main causes of periodontal disease are poor oral hygiene and tobacco use. (Source: Lancet 2017)
- Oral diseases affected half of the world's population (3.47 billion people) with dental caries (tooth decay) in permanent teeth being the most prevalent condition assessed. (Source: Lancet 2018)

## Transformational Healthcare through Oral Care Programmes

### Bringing Hope and Healing

Mercy Ships aims to prevent and reduce the effects of a lack of oral healthcare by providing dental treatment and dental hygiene education and training. Mercy Ships uses hospital ships complemented by dental clinics to deliver free specialised healthcare to the world's forgotten poor.

### Extractions & Procedures

Mercy Ships conducts free dental clinics, providing relief from infected or rotting teeth, performing extractions and inserting fillings.

### Oral Hygiene Education

Poor oral hygiene and untreated tooth decay can lead to much more serious conditions such as noma. Mercy Ships dental teams work to improve oral health in developing countries through dental hygiene education and the training of local personnel.

### Training & Capacity-Building

All day-crew, local men and women who serve as Mercy Ships crew members, learn skills and technical competencies, like dental assisting and instrument sterilisation, helping to increase the in-country knowledge base of oral healthcare. Where possible, Mercy Ships works alongside local dentists. In doing so, Mercy Ships facilitates an exchange of understanding and expertise between dentists of different cultures who are working within the same discipline.

### Accomplishments

Since 1978, Mercy Ships has provided over 488,000 dental treatments/procedures to more than 187,000 patients.



# Infrastructure Development

## Programme Fact Sheet



**Aberdeen Women's Centre**  
Freetown, Sierra Leone



**Hospital Out-Patient Extension (HOPE) Center**  
Hospital Ward Refurbishment,  
Antananarivo, Madagascar



**Gamal Dental School Renovation**  
Conakry, Guinea



**Dental Clinic**  
Conakry, Guinea

### Renovation of Healthcare Facilities in Developing Countries

Hospitals, clinic and primary healthcare facilities in developing countries often cannot meet the healthcare needs of the local population. Ageing and poorly maintained infrastructure hampers the work of healthcare providers; poor work environment is one of the main causes listed for health worker emigration from developing countries.

### Improved Access to Healthcare

Healthcare is often difficult to access for those living in developing countries. In addition to cost of services and limited healthcare staff, the failing infrastructure in many hospitals and clinics further hampers access to quality care. Facilities often lack the requisite access to water, electrical services, and equipment needed to provide basic hygienic care in hospitals. By refurbishing and redeveloping healthcare facilities alongside Mercy Ships training projects, Mercy Ships can improve healthcare in Africa.

### Statistics

- The risk of a child dying before reaching five years of age is still highest in the WHO African Region (76 per 1000 live births), around 8 times higher than that in the WHO European Region (9 per 1000 live births). (Source: WHO)
- Less than 3% of pediatric populations living in low-income countries have access to surgical care when needed. (Source: WHO)
- 33 million individuals face catastrophic health expenditure due to payment for surgical and anaesthesia care each year. (Source: Lancet Commission)
- Estimated cost of inaction to address surgical need from 2015 to 2030 is \$12.3 trillion dollars, reducing annual GDP by as much as 2% in developing countries. (Source: Lancet Commission)
- In low and lower middle income countries an additional 143 million surgical procedures are needed each year to save lives and prevent disability. (Lancet Commission)



### Transformational Healthcare through Renovation Projects

#### Bringing Hope and Healing

In health systems lacking resources, Mercy Ships helps turn vision into reality. Development teams work with local leaders, governments and the national ministries of health to assess healthcare infrastructure needs and design projects that support the surgical ecosystem in a partner hospital. Current and future projects focus on supporting and strengthening the local healthcare system in the countries Mercy Ships serves.

#### Medical Projects

The main goal of the Mercy Ships infrastructure projects is to improve local healthcare infrastructure and increase access to healthcare. Mercy Ships has supported various medical projects such as the construction or renovation of:

- hospital surgical wards
- clinic facilities and equipment for service
- new maternity units to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health
- operating theatres

The renovation of operating theatres alongside equipment donations and training for the surgical team enhances the effectiveness of our development projects for local medical professionals.

#### Water and Sanitation Projects

Mercy Ships focuses on ensuring healthcare facilities have appropriate water and sanitation services sufficient to ensure the delivery of proper healthcare. In support of that aim, Mercy Ships incorporates water and sanitation service upgrades within projects at partner hospitals.



# Training and Capacity-Building

## Programme Fact Sheet



Dr Wodome, Togo  
Surgical Fellowship Training  
Programme

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through hope  
and healing...*



Onboard Surgical Training



Infrastructure Development



WHO Partnership



Nurse Training

### Improving the Quality of Medical Care in Africa

Mercy Ships, an international faith-based organisation, seeks to increase access to healthcare through the deployment of the world's largest, private hospital ships, the *Africa Mercy* and the *Global Mercy*. Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen the local healthcare system, while serving the dire and immediate needs of the host country.

Mercy Ships provides a variety of training opportunities for medical professionals (surgeons, nurses, anaesthesia providers, administrators and other healthcare workers), along with curative surgical interventions. Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programmes offer holistic support to developing countries, striving to make healthcare accessible for all.

#### Location and Need

According to the *Lancet Commission for Global Surgery*, 5 billion people do not have access to safe, timely and affordable surgical and anaesthesia care. In 2015, 18.6 million lives were lost due to surgically treatable conditions. Those living in developing countries, and in particular Africa, disproportionately experience this lack more than wealthier nations. In sub-Saharan Africa, there are far less than the 23 physicians and 100 nurses/midwives for every 100,000 people required as a minimum development goal (Source: WHO). However, simply increasing the number of surgeries is not sufficient; enhancing quality of care is critical as well. Training professionals to administer patient-centred services, using simple techniques and processes that save lives, is essential to meeting the goal of improved surgical care.

#### Mercy Ships Training Programme Strategy

Mercy Ships works with partners and stakeholders to develop capacity-building projects that improve the quality of services across an entire hospital setting, from strengthening technical skills and human capital, to improving working conditions and quality of care.

#### Alignment with Existing Health Development Plans

Many countries and development organisations create their own strategies to improve the healthcare system. Mercy Ships seeks to collaborate and align programmatic activities with these existing efforts. As a result, Mercy Ships becomes part of a broader approach for systemic development.

#### Strategic Hospital Development

On the national level, Mercy Ships focuses this approach on particular medical facilities located in the partner country. As a hospital ship that provides a model example of a Western/African hospital, the organisation is well-suited to help boost the capacity at strategic local facilities. Mercy Ships collaborates with the government and other partners to identify which hospitals have the greatest need and will benefit from development efforts and align with existing strategic plans for health system improvement. By focusing on strategic medical facilities, the organisation is able to concentrate and coordinate capacity-building efforts during the country engagement.

#### Transformational Training

The Mercy Ships healthcare training programmes aim to enhance the standards of care within the surgical ecosystem in partner hospitals or other healthcare institutions. With this objective in mind, the organisation has developed practical and relevant healthcare training projects that demonstrate and impart knowledge, skills, and a compassionate, professional attitude to each participant. These training opportunities include structured observation, courses, and mentoring.

Structured observation sessions allow local healthcare professionals to experience a high-quality, patient-oriented hospital on the *Africa Mercy*, with the hope they will be inspired by the high standards of care observed. Courses teach specific skills and information on improving standards of care and personal medical practice. Mercy Ships courses utilise a combination of lectures, simulations, and workshops, often in partnership with other internationally-renowned organisations. Mentoring projects encourage a personal relationship and trust between the project facilitator and participant, leading to targeted, in-depth clinical teaching for individuals. When possible, Mercy Ships offers a combination of mentoring and courses to various healthcare workers in a particular hospital or specialty unit (for example maxillofacial surgeon, anaesthesia provider, OR and ward nurses), creating a Partnership Unit Mentoring Programme (PUMP). PUMPs encourage an even greater degree of teamwork, communication and attention to process measures, which improve standards of care and patient safety.



Halou, Togo  
Throat Cancer



Adama, Sierra Leone  
Malignant Tumour

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and healing...*



Patient Screening



The Africa Mercy

## Palliative Care in Developing Countries

### The Problem

Often, people who request surgical or medical help from Mercy Ships are unable to receive assistance because of inoperable and terminal conditions. Many of these people who are physically suffering from incurable diseases are also suffering from rejection, misunderstanding and fear by their friends, families and communities. There are few, if any, groups within the community who provide counselling, support and end-of-life care to grieving families.

The Mercy Ships Palliative Care Team desires to compassionately serve those who cannot be helped by the ship's surgical professionals. Physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs are addressed by the team's medical and counselling staff.

### Statistics (source: WHO)

- There are clear gaps in the ability of existing health services to provide even basic care for the terminally ill.
- Each year an estimated 40 million people are in need of palliative care, seventy-eight percent of whom live in developing countries. Ninety-eight percent of children needing palliative care live in developing countries, with almost half of them living in Africa.

## Providing Education, Comfort and Peace

### Why Palliative Care

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the difficulties associated with life-threatening illness. This is accomplished through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, assessment, and treatment of pain and other problems – physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

### We Seek to Empower and Restore

Palliative Care :

- Provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- Affirms life and regards dying as a normal process
- Intends neither to hasten nor to postpone death
- Integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care
- Offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death
- Offers a support system to help the family cope during the patient's illness and in their own bereavement
- Uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and their families, including bereavement counselling, if indicated
- Will enhance quality of life and may also positively influence the course of illness
- Is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy
- Includes the investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications

### Accomplishments

Since 2005, Mercy Ships has provided palliative care for more than 330 patients and provided instruction to their caregivers.



# Nutritional Agriculture

## Programme Fact Sheet



**Bambay, Sierra Leone**  
Agriculture Programme  
Graduate



**Ahepe, Togo**  
Agricultural Training Centre



**Food for Life Guinea**  
Graduation Ceremony

*Lives transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*



Classroom Learning



Training in the Field



Composting



Improved Crops

### Hunger in Developing Countries

Mercy Ships recognises that people need more than just access to healthcare – they need access to food and nutrition. To help address these issues in developing countries, Mercy Ships has been implementing Food for Life programmes since 1997. Food for Life projects have been impacting lives and training people how to produce nutritional food and crops sustainably.

Our projects help others discover significantly improved methods of food production and preparation – working with them to rebuild, restore and renew their lives, land, communities and nations through holistic, organic agricultural development.

#### The Problem

Outdated farming practices often yield less produce with lower quality nutrition. Slash and burn, pesticides, herbicides and other methods lead to the production of poor harvests and deplete the soil's nutrient levels, leaving behind infertile ground.

#### Statistics

- An estimated one in four people remain undernourished in sub-Saharan Africa; 237 million people are hungry (have insufficient access to food). (source: UNFAO)
- Children who are poorly nourished can suffer up to 160 days of illness each year. Globally, nutrition-related factors contributed to 45% of deaths for children under the age of five. (source: WHO, World Hunger)

### Nutritional Agricultural Training Programmes

#### Bringing Hope and Healing

Food for Life projects work alongside the *Africa Mercy's* deployment schedule, providing training and resources in the countries served by Mercy Ships. The Food for Life programme focuses on providing train-the-trainer opportunities, increasing a country's capacity to provide for their own people. Trainees are identified from local NGOs already working to improve agriculture in the host country. The project is offered in a two-phase approach during a ship deployment. The first phase consists of a 22-week course, and the second phase involves follow-up assistance as the trainees return to their respective NGO site to train others. Once trainers successfully complete the programme, they are provided with seeds, tools and other resources so they can provide training to their friends and communities.

#### Perpetuating a Legacy

Through its history and experience, the Food for Life programme has found that the most successful and long-lasting projects are the ones that have received support beyond the life of the project. Because of this, Mercy Ships is providing targeted, concerted follow-up activities developed specifically for each country.

#### Accomplishment

Since 2009, Mercy Ships has trained and updated the methods of over 320 nutritional agricultural trainers serving a number of well-established NGOs in Africa.



# International Board of Directors

## Fact Sheet



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Martin Resource Mngt Corp  
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Mercy Ships  
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#### **Dr. Gary Brandenburg**

Teaching Pastor  
Fellowship Bible Church  
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Geneva, Switzerland

#### **Richard Wankmuller**

Chairman, Mercy Ships Australia

#### **Rev. Jonathan Weaver**

Pastor, Greater Mt. Nebo A.M.E. Church  
Bowie, MD USA

#### **Mary Beth West**

Dallas, TX USA

#### **Dr. Michelle White**

London, UK



# Operating Locations | Fact Sheet



## International Support Centre

PO Box 2020  
Garden Valley, TX 75771-2020  
USA  
Website: [mercyships.org](http://mercyships.org)



## Mercy Ships Africa Bureau

**Mercy Ships Operations support location.**  
11, Rue 12.225  
Les Cocotiers - la Haie Vive  
04 B.P 1398 Cotonou  
BENIN  
Website: [mercyships.africa](http://mercyships.africa)



## Mercy Ships Global Association

Chemin de la Fauvette 98  
1012 Lausanne  
SWITZERLAND  
Website: [mercyshipsglobal.org](http://mercyshipsglobal.org)

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## National Market locations:



## Mercy Ships Australia

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Caloundra, Queensland 4551  
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