



2020

Mercy Ships Australia
Annual Report



Mission

Bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor.

Mission Vision Focus



Vision

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



Focus

In 1990, Mercy Ships turned our focus to sub-Saharan Africa where nearly 93% of the population lacks access to safe, affordable, and timely surgery. Since then, Mercy Ships has conducted 47 field services in 13 African countries.

Mercy Ships Australia

Mercy Ships Australia is part of an international development organisation that has operated hospital ships in developing nations since 1978. Each year, we send Australian funds and volunteers to deliver vital, free healthcare to people in developing countries.

Dear Friends,

This year was historically unlike any we have ever experienced. The global effects of COVID-19 have touched almost every person and brought to light the importance of healthcare like never before.

Hope and healing through our hospital ships has been the mission of Mercy Ships for over 40 years — with a particular focus on serving those whose need is most prevalent, “the bottom billion.” Economist Paul Collier uses this term regarding the one billion people who live in low- and middle- income economies, with most found in communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

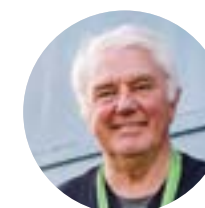
Mercy Ships has focused our attention on individuals needing surgery as well as strengthening the healthcare infrastructure in our partner host African nations. Thanks to the faithful support of friends and partners like you, those suffering from painful, disfiguring, and often-preventable diseases have been able to find the healing they so desperately needed and many more are waiting.

We believe that, together with the nations we serve, we have the potential to make a difference in the lives of thousands, not only in the immediate future, but for decades to come! And with the arrival of our new custom-built hospital ship, the *Global Mercy™*, our capacity to provide free surgery and medical training will more than double.

We hope as you continue to read all that was accomplished during 2020, you are inspired by the people whose lives have been forever changed.

As we embark on this new year, we want to say thank you to our family of partners, supporters, and volunteer professionals, who have dedicated their time and resources to bring hope and healing where it's needed most. We could not do this life-changing work without you.

Don Stephens
Founder
Mercy Ships



Thanks to the support of friends like you, those suffering from painful and preventable diseases have found the healing they desperately needed.

A letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Throughout this landmark year, I am reminded of the heart of our mission — hope. Hope that encourages a family who feels forgotten. Hope that brings a volunteer halfway around the world to serve an individual in need. Hope that drives us all forward, even in difficult times.

This mantra of hope has been a part of Mercy Ships since its inception in 1978 when our founders Don and Deyon Stephens were able to put pen to paper and fulfil their dream of bringing medical aid to those in remote areas. Since that time, millions have been impacted through surgical interventions, medical training and mentorship, and education and renovation projects.

And in spite of the challenges the world faced this year, lives have continued to be changed. As you read through the 2020 Annual Report, I hope you might be inspired by all that has been accomplished. From our patients who were able to find life-changing healing on board our hospital ship early this year, to the many medical professionals who received training through our new eLearning programs, hope has not stopped.

The need is great, but hope and mercy are greater! On behalf of myself and the Mercy Ships Australia Board of Directors, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this year's mission a success.

Thank you.



Richard Wankmuller
Chair of the Board
Mercy Ships Australia



Mercy Ships Australia 2020 Annual Report

- 2**
Mission, Vision, Focus
- 6**
Why we do what we do
- 8**
Senegal Field Service
- 10**
Smiling into the future
- 12**
COVID-19 response
- 14**
Electronic Medical Capacity Building
- 16**
Professor Oumar Raphiou Diallo
- 18**
30 years in Africa
- 20**
Dr Abram Wodomé
- 22**
Day Crew Spotlight
- 24**
Country Engagement Plan
- 26**
Governance



A word from the Managing Director

The COVID-19 pandemic was confirmed to have spread to Africa in early February 2020. It quickly spread from not only a health crisis, but to an economic crisis in a matter of months.

The resilience of the African region depends not only on the support it receives, but on the strategies and policies its countries adopt. It is important that Africa comes through this crisis and builds back stronger and more prepared.

One positive of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it has made people aware of the importance of strengthening and supporting healthcare systems. During 2020 Mercy Ships provided essential surgery to Senegal, and as the *Africa Mercy* went in for annual maintenance, Mercy Ships increased its work to strengthen and support African healthcare systems through education, training, mentoring, infrastructure, equipment, and supplies.

Mercy Ships Australia was proud to support each of these programs and our Australian volunteers were proud to be a part of this lifesaving and life transforming work. Today, our world is different than it was yesterday, but one thing will never change: the people we help still need us – and they will need us tomorrow, even more than they do today. Thank you for standing alongside us.



Alan Burrell
Managing Director
Mery Ships Australia



Why we do what we do

The Lancet Commission on Global Surgery identifies that 16.9 million people die each year from a lack of safe surgery. That is more than three times the annual number of people who die from HIV, Malaria, and TB combined.

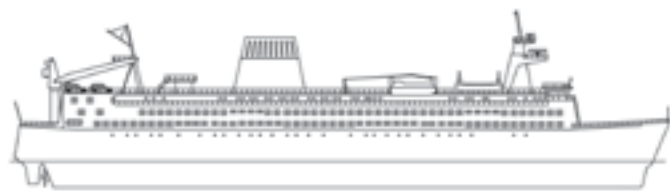
In addition, billions of people experience chronic pain, financial catastrophe, and social stigma because of injuries and disfigurements that surgery could fix. There is an urgent need for significant growth in surgical capacity and training. This is the surgery crisis.

How we work

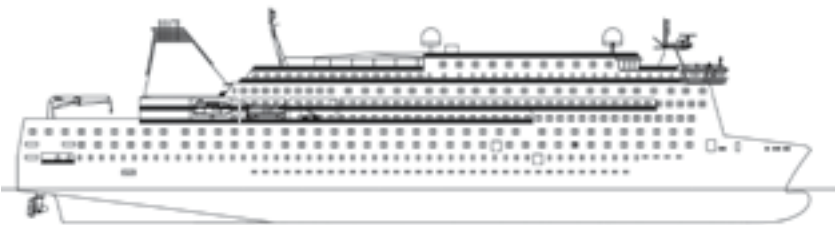
Mercy Ships is an international development organisation that deploys hospital ships to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free medical care to people in desperate need while training local healthcare professionals and strengthening local healthcare systems.

Our ships are the most efficient way to bring a state-of-the-art hospital to regions where clean water, electricity, medical facilities, and personnel are often limited or non-existent. Instead of trying to build the facilities we need, we can provide a safe, stable, fully outfitted teaching hospital to bring lifesaving and changing surgery for thousands of people in need.

Our Ships



The Africa Mercy



The Global Mercy™

Mercy Ships works to empower local healthcare systems and professionals to care for their own people. This is why we place medical capacity building (MCB) at the heart of all we do.



This is the surgery crisis.

The Africa Mercy hospital:

- 5 operating theatres
- 80 patient beds including: recovery, intensive care, and low dependency wards
- Draft 6.0m
- Length 152m
- Breadth 23.7m
- Gross Tonnage 16,572

The Global Mercy hospital:

- 6 operating theatres
- 102 acute care beds
- 7 ICU/isolation beds
- 90 self-care beds
- Draft 6.1m
- Length 174m
- Breadth 28.6m
- Gross Tonnage 37,000



Our Crew

Our ships are crewed by volunteers from over 60 nations, with an average of over 1,300 volunteers joining our mission each year. Every volunteer covers their own travel expenses to the ship as well as paying monthly fees to cover their room, board, and personal expenses which allows our supporters' donations to go even further.

While our ships are in port, local professionals are recruited from African nations to help deliver our projects. Our patients and programs benefit from the experience and skills of these local volunteers, and a few go on to join the crew full time.

Each year, more than 100 volunteers from Australia join our international crew and contribute over 46,000 hours collectively.



Bobby Gane, volunteer electrician

"I love the electrical and engineering team I serve with. I think all services on the ship are invaluable and electrician is no different in that respect. I have no medical skills myself but using my skills to keep the hospital ship functioning so that others can do that work is a tremendous honour."



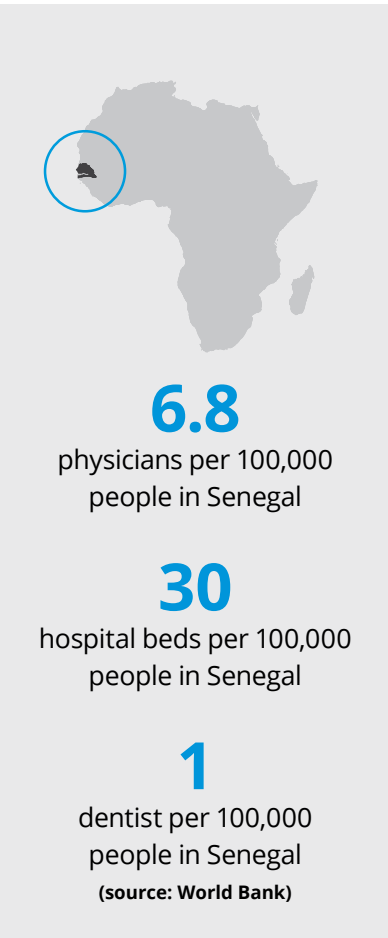
Lorraine Walker, volunteer pharmacist

"The ship is filled with exactly the type of people I imagined; people willing to step out of their own comfortable lives for two weeks, or even years, to give people they've never met a few of the opportunities we take for granted."

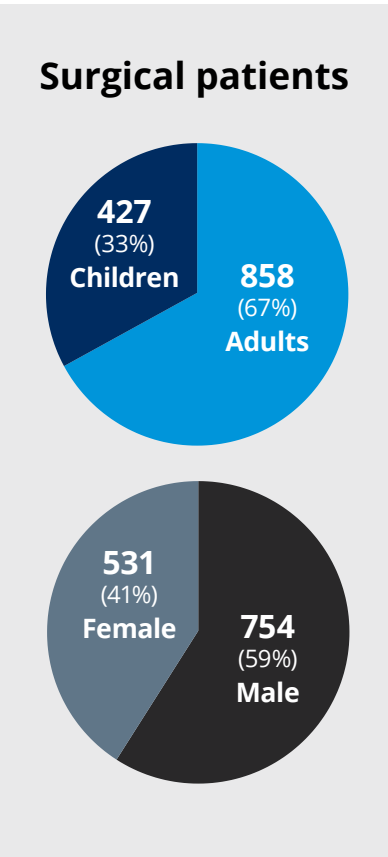
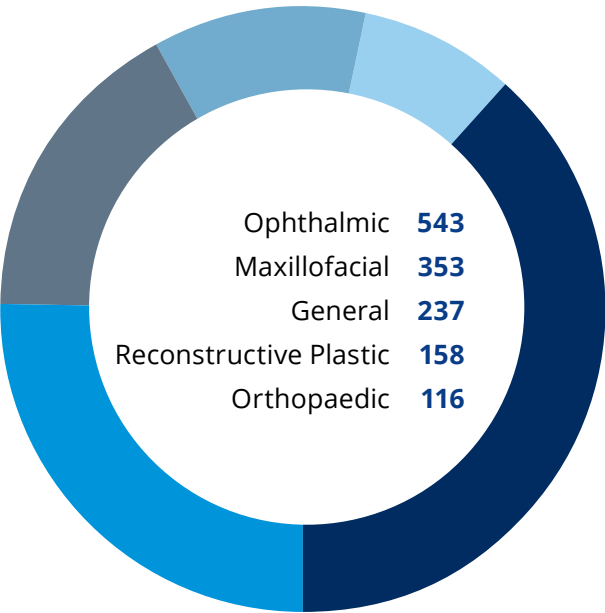
Senegal Field Service 2019–2020

The Senegal 2019-2020 field service held great significance for Mercy Ships — it was our first time back to serve the people of Senegal since 1994. While our field service was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic, good progress was made during the eight-month stay in Dakar. In fact, we were able to meet or exceed the agreed upon goals for the field service. For 30 years, Mercy Ships has been dedicated to Africa. Mercy Ships was there before the pandemic, we're there during and, with your help, we'll certainly be there long after.

The following graphs depict the total numbers from our service in Senegal.



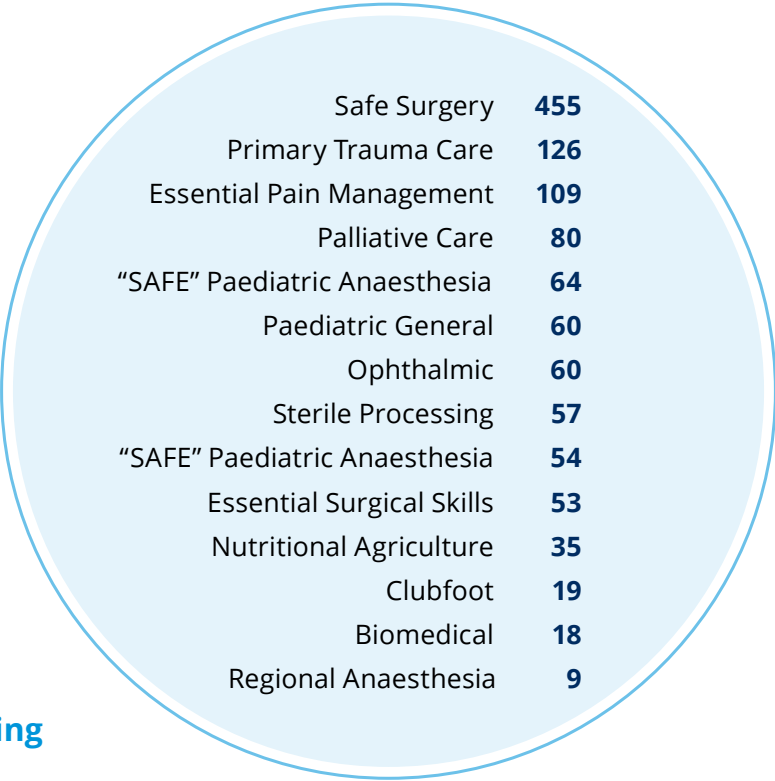
1,407 total surgeries Surgeries by speciality



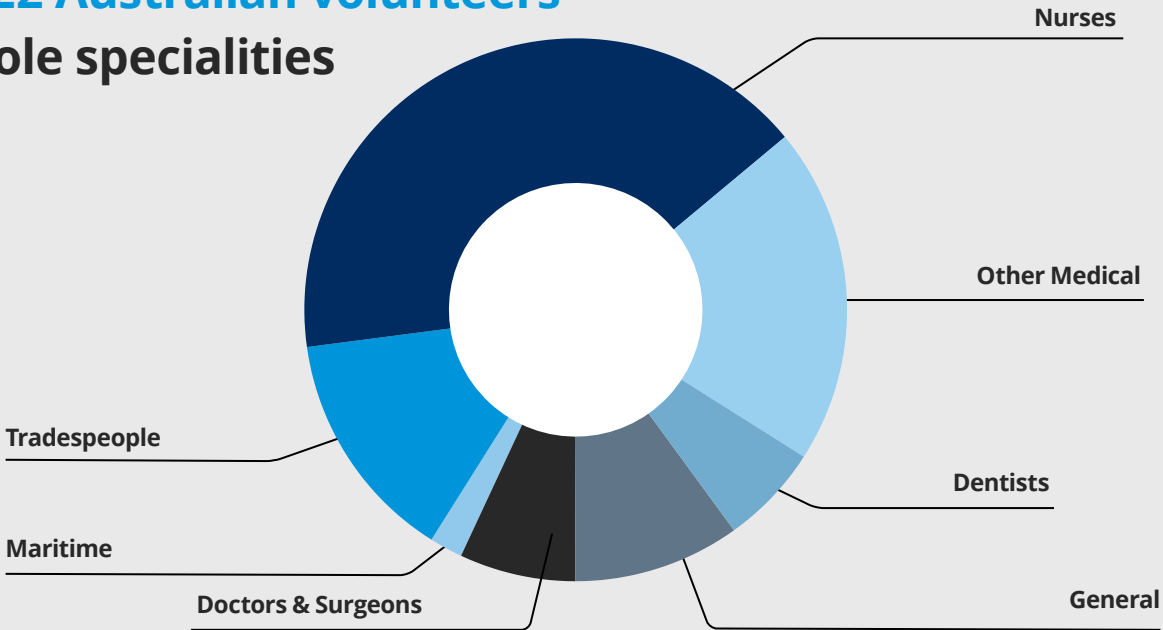
1,199 healthcare professionals trained Courses presented

At Mercy Ships, we believe we have been called to help strengthen the healthcare systems of the countries we serve. In an effort to create sustainable change, we offer multiple training and mentoring courses to local medical professionals providing education and information for safe, effective healthcare. Our many mentoring and education projects are implemented as part of a strategy called the Partner Unit Mentoring Program (PUMP). Many participants in our various programs continue to share their knowledge with their own communities resulting in a forwarding of skills and creating a legacy that can last for generations.

In total, over 55,300 hours were provided for training and mentoring local healthcare professionals.



122 Australian volunteers Role specialities





Above: Mariama after her surgery.

Smiling into the future

In the developed world, a cleft lip/palate would be identified prenatally on an ultrasound and repaired before the child was 6 months old. In developing nations where healthcare is out of reach for millions of people, this is not the case.

A cleft lip/palate is not only disfiguring, but can also be life-threatening. By preventing an infant from feeding properly, the condition can be fatal, despite a mother's desperate efforts. If an infant survives, they face a lifetime of mockery and ridicule. The good news is that a cleft lip/palate can be fixed with a simple surgery.

The following are stories about some of our wonderful patients who were able to find healing this year thanks to our friends and partners.

"I give thanks to God first, and I am very grateful to Mercy Ships. I'm happy. Thank you!"

Mamadou, Mariama's father

Mariama's story

Mariama is a lively and healthy baby, but a severe facial cleft strained her joyful smile. This facial cleft affected the 7-month-old's lip and nose, making it difficult for her to eat and causing her parents to worry about their child's future.

Since paediatric services capable of treating baby Mariama's condition were not available near the family, local doctors directed her father to Senegal's capital city in hopes of finding help. It was there that he heard about a hospital ship capable of providing healing for his little girl.

Soon after, Mariama received an operation on board the *Africa Mercy* that corrected her cleft lip. After surgery, Mariama and her family stayed at the HOPE Centre, where her mother learned how to make nutritional baby formula and learned about the importance of nutrition for her child. Now, Mariama is home with her family, happy and healthy!

Awa's story

Awa had lived 42 years burdened by a cleft lip, which made eating difficult and smiling almost impossible. Her family loved and cherished her, but others seemed to be unable to see past her disfigured mouth, and would either tease or stare at her. The shame Awa felt began to wear her down, but without access to safe, affordable surgical care, Awa feared that she would never know life without her burden. Then she heard about Mercy Ships.

Thanks to a free surgery on board the *Africa Mercy*, Awa was finally able to smile without pain for the first time in her life. When her husband saw her after the operation, he was unable to recognise her at first! Now, Awa's future is brighter than ever.

"We're very happy to see Awa getting well after her surgery. I did not recognise her when I first saw her!"

Aliou, Awa's husband



Above: Awa before her surgery.



Above: Birane after his surgery.

Birane's story

Young Birane has suffered from a cleft lip since birth. Though the 5-year-old's positive personality made him strong, his family worried that he would never look like the other children his age due to his condition. A simple surgery would solve this problem, but the family lacked access to safe, affordable surgical care. This changed when the *Africa Mercy* arrived in Senegal.

Soon Birane was approved for surgery and his grandmother went with him to the ship, where she was able to see firsthand the impact hope and healing can bring. "I am very happy to see my grandson smile," she said. Thanks to his free surgery, Birane is filled with hope for the future!

"I am very happy to see my grandson smile."

Birane's grandmother and caregiver

COVID-19 Response

Helping Africa rebuild

The world changed significantly last year. Like many, we had to adapt to ensure we could continue our transformative work in Africa. As COVID-19 began to overwhelm many strong healthcare systems in the developed world, we were determined to continue supporting our African partners and help combat the spread of the virus.

By June 2020, Mercy Ships donated more than 80,000 items of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) valued at more than \$210,306 including surgical caps, protective eyewear, face masks, gloves, and infrared thermometers, which were

delivered to Benin, Liberia, Madagascar, Togo, Sierra Leone, Republic of Congo, and Ghana.

Despite a global pandemic, we remain determined to continue supporting our African partners.

In addition to donating funds and supplies to our African partners, Mercy Ships quickly moved many of our training courses online and added new ones specifically designed to help healthcare workers on the ground in Africa tackle COVID-19.

1 Million PPEs Donated to 11 African Nations

- 210,250 gloves
 - 124,100 masks
 - 226,250 caps
 - 223,450 shoe covers
 - 4,950 surgical gowns
 - 4,950 safety glasses
 - 188,000 isolation gowns
 - 80 infrared thermometers
 - 29,600 goggles
- Over \$210,306 worth of PPE was donated to Senegal's COVID-19 relief fund.



2021

The *Africa Mercy* is being serviced and re-stocked and preparing to return to Africa. COVID-19 is having a serious impact on healthcare systems on the continent of Africa. We will be extending our programs and increasing our capacity with a second ship, the *Global Mercy*, as we get ready to go back and help Africa rebuild.

"The pandemic is still slowly but surely spreading through Africa and the measures taken by the nations to mitigate the impact should be strengthened. To adequately respond to this lasting epidemic, Africa needs our support, it is why Mercy Ships is engaged with *Stop COVID-19 Initiative in Africa*."

Dr Pierre M'Pele, Mercy Ships Africa Bureau Director

March

\$167,131 donated to Senegal COVID-19 relief fund to support local healthcare staff in the fight against the virus.



April

Support and mentoring for African colleagues moved online. Special crisis management training was also added to the curriculums.

PPE donations to African nations: Benin, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Madagascar.



May

More online courses begin: the Mental Health Team begins conducting Caregivers courses for colleagues in Liberia, Togo, Benin, DR Congo, Republic of Congo, and Cameroon.

Infrared thermometers donated to Togo. These were delivered with supplies of PPE.



June

PPE donated to the Republic of the Congo. Mercy Ships is a long-term partner of the country, having renovated a number of facilities there during a previous field service.

Dr Agbessi (right) delivers front line training in Benin, on infection control measures, as well as giving out face masks and hygiene kits.

Donation of over 9,000 items of PPE to Ghana. These were presented to the Ministry of Health by Mercy Ships President Rosa Whitaker.

July

PPE and supplies donated to the Benin Teaching Hospital. This hospital in Cotonou is where Dr Agbessi works as the country's first reconstructive surgeon.



The future

We are committed to helping rebuild struggling and weakened healthcare systems in Africa.

With ongoing mentoring, online training and support we continue to strengthen and support the African nations we serve.

A new way of doing things: E-MCB

Sharing our skills and knowledge with local medical experts enables them to contribute directly to the improvement of healthcare delivery in their country long after we have left. COVID-19, social distancing, and lockdowns meant that the *Africa Mercy* had to leave Africa early for its annual maintenance, but that did not mean we stopped supporting and training African healthcare professionals. We quickly moved many of our mentoring and training courses online, even adding new ones, to our new eLearning medical capacity building programs (E-MCB).

In April 2020, Mercy Ships launched a preliminary six-week course for nurses and doctors managing the COVID-19 crisis. Participants in each facilitated learning group improved their skills in identifying and managing critically ill patients (specifically for COVID-19 related illness) and applying personal mental health strategies to reduce the risk of burnout during the crisis.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, Mercy Ships launched the first of several online training courses in basic safety and well-being. These courses, taught in both French and English, highlight our commitment to our West African colleagues and partners who are facing COVID-19.

Medical Capacity Building (MCB)

Medical capacity building is the foundation upon which real, sustainable change is built. It provides African healthcare professionals with the skills and tools they need and empowers them to care for their own people.

New eLearning Takes the Stage

2,100+ eLearning participant hours

196 eLearning participants



Professionals involved in these courses included key workers from several nations Mercy Ships has worked with during our 30 years in Africa. Countries including Liberia, Togo, Benin, DR Congo, and Cameroon were represented by participants working in areas ranging from mental health, community health training, psychiatric care, and hospital services.

“This is a critical time to support the mental, emotional, and physical health of our West African colleagues as they are on the frontline of preparation within their national healthcare situations. It is important that they know they are not alone during this time when news of the virus in other parts of the world has created so much fear,” said Dr. Westman, Mental Health Consultant.

At the Gamal Dental school in Conakry, Guinea, in partnership with World Telehealth Initiative, we are using a telehealth device and three different

Technology has allowed us to quickly pivot and ensure that we can continue to support our partners.

intra-oral camera attachments to bring top quality mentoring from international experts to Guinean dental students. Through the specialty peripheral cameras connected to the telehealth device, the dental expert beaming in can see right into the mouth of the patient that the dental student is treating. Dentist Dr. Westerduin was all set to move to Guinea to volunteer with Mercy Ships, but that all changed in March 2020. Currently residing in the Netherlands, she now observes the Guinean dental students during the week using a telehealth device, and on Fridays she holds a class for the students to address any gaps in knowledge that she observed throughout the week.

Dental experts from across the world can safely mentor the dental students through the telehealth device. Mercy Ships directors and the telehealth device will stay in Guinea long after the ship comes and goes so that the new dentists are supported by international experts as they continue to learn and progress. The program will build local capacity and create a lasting impact on the community, ensuring their long-term needs are met despite COVID-19.

Gamal Abdel Nasser University Dental Clinic 2020 Overview

9,300+ Student mentoring hours

2,742 Dental procedures

743 Dental encounters

107 Student mentoring participants





Professor Oumar Raphiou Diallo

In 1998, maxillofacial surgeon, Dr. Oumar Raphiou Diallo, took part in the Mercy Ships MCB program and was mentored by the Chief Medical Officer on board the *Africa Mercy*, Dr. Gary Parker. Quickly, Dr. Parker recognised Dr. Diallo's determination and heart to serve those in need and knew that the mentoring he received would be used for the betterment of the Guinean people.

Dr. Diallo specialised in cleft lip/palate repair and continued to learn and train with Mercy Ships medical volunteers during our numerous visits back to Conakry, Guinea.

The fruit of Dr Diallo's labours and dedication to the people of his home country was evident during the *Africa Mercy's* most recent visit to Guinea in 2018-2019.

Dr Diallo's efforts have had a massive impact on the number of cleft lip patients in Guinea.

Normally, Mercy Ships would find hundreds of cleft lip/palate patients seeking help; however, out of 6,000 screened patients, only six needed cleft lip/palate repairs! Through Dr. Diallo's tremendous efforts and the Mercy Ships professional mentoring program, the number of cleft lip/palate cases have dropped dramatically in Guinea.

Just as he had received training from Mercy Ships, Dr. Diallo sought a way to provide training for Guinean healthcare professionals. In 2018, he asked Mercy Ships to partner with him in strengthening the training of dental surgeons in Guinea. More qualified surgeons would allow for the correct management of complicated dental procedures. With more trained dental surgeons, earlier diagnosis of tumours, facial cellulitis, noma, and other life-threatening conditions could be made, saving many more lives.

In partnership with Dr. Diallo and the Gamal Abdel Nasser University in Conakry, Mercy Ships renovated a site and created a highly operational dental school. Former Mercy Ships Lead Dentist,



Before the renovation, dental students graduated without practical experience.

Dr. David Ugai, remained in Guinea and, along with the dental program team has been providing high-quality dental training.

Dr. Diallo has a passion for his nation of Guinea and believes in the potential of its people. By providing specialised surgical care and finding ways for Guinean healthcare professionals to receive further education, he is working towards strengthening Guinea's overall healthcare system.

Every year Mercy Ships trains and mentors hundreds of healthcare professionals. Through our medical capacity building programs and partnerships with African healthcare professionals and nations, we are working together to tackle the surgery crisis.

Laying the foundations for change

Through empowering local healthcare professionals and local healthcare systems to care for their own populations, Mercy Ships and our partners are laying the foundations for sustainable change.

While our ships are in a host nation's port, our volunteer crew perform thousands of free lifesaving and life-changing surgical procedures for people in desperate need. While there, we also train and mentor local healthcare professionals to give them the skills they need to succeed, including how to pass on their new knowledge to others. Mercy Ships also renovates local facilities, donating brand new medical equipment and the premises to the nation's healthcare system.

In Guinea, the dental school leadership expressed their need for a dedicated space for student training. Previous dental students graduated without proper clinical experience — a vital aspect for practical education and training, decreasing their ability to successfully enter the workforce. University leadership had plans to renovate the dental school but were unable to procure funding. After a proposal from the dental school, Mercy Ships agreed to renovate and equip the first floor of the dental school.






Dr. Pierre M'Pelé has worked in various African countries as a representative of the WHO, and is an expert on epidemics in Africa. Since 2017, the Congolese physician has headed the Mercy Ships Africa Bureau.



Learning to walk — Sai'douba's story

There is such strength and need in sub-Saharan Africa — a reality epitomised by friends Sai'douba and Alason.

Sai'douba was horribly burned in an explosion at the garage where he worked. He couldn't get the medical care that he needed and as his skin healed, it pulled his legs into a permanently bent position, disabling him. Sai'douba's injuries made him depend entirely on Alason to get around.

For eight months, Alason was Sai'douba's support and legs, caring for his friend and carrying him wherever they went.

"When I carry him, he's a little bit heavy, but no one will help him if I don't help him," Alason said. "Whenever I look at what happened to him, I cry inside my heart."

Sai'douba's injuries kept him in constant pain and he was wracked with worry for his family.

"Before this accident," Sai'douba said. "I worked a lot and made a little money. I would take that money home for my mum to buy food. I know my parents don't have enough money so I'm very scared about it."

One day, Sai'douba heard about a hospital ship providing free surgeries to those in need. Alason carried Sai'douba to the ship — a journey which took two days — knowing that it was his one chance at finding healing.

"When I saw him coming out of surgery, I could see his legs were straight," Alason said. "I now have hope he can walk again. He'll be able to do everything for himself."

The two-day walk carrying his friend was worth every step. After a four-hour surgery from Mercy Ships, Sai'douba was on his way to recovery.

Sai'douba began his rehabilitation, and with much practice and determination, he was soon walking on his own for the first time since the accident.

"I'm so happy! After such a long time I'm walking again!" Sai'douba exclaimed. "I feel confident now. After a few months, I'll be able to do everything I used to do. I can work, earn money, and provide for my parents!"



Above: Sai'douba (right) with Alason, before and after his surgery.

For the last 30 years of our 42-year history, Mercy Ships has been committed to Africa.

30 years in Africa

The amazing nations and people that make up the continent of Africa currently carry the bulk of the world's poverty and disability burden. In fact, 93% of Paul Collier's "bottom billion" in terms of healthcare outcomes live in sub-Saharan Africa.

We believe change is best affected through deep partnerships and collaboration. Our Africa Bureau in Benin, established in 2016 and led by Dr. Pierre M'Pelé, develops and strengthens relationships in the African nations with whom we partner and seeks to build new ones.

During the pandemic, our tireless team in the Africa Bureau was on the ground supporting our partners and African healthcare professionals. In this very tough context, the Africa Bureau has been the heartbeat of Africa for Mercy Ships.

In Africa, Mercy Ships can work towards the most effective change where the need is greatest. Together with our partners and supporters, we are striving to work ourselves out of a job by helping to strengthen and rebuild weak healthcare systems, train and mentor local healthcare professionals, and provide life-changing and lifesaving surgeries.



Dr. Abram Wodomé

Dr. Abram Wodomé is an ophthalmologist from Togo. There is an epidemic burden of blindness in the nation. Over 30,000 people are completely blinded by cataracts and an additional 200,000 eyes are in need of cataract surgery to prevent blindness. In partnership with Mercy Ships, Dr. Wodomé and his team at the Clinique Ophtalmologique Lumière Divine (COLD) are working to change this.

Together with Dr. Wodomé, we are working towards a day when nations can care for their own people and there is no longer a need for Mercy Ships.

“When I was entering practice in 2010, I felt like I was barely scratching the surface of the need. About 14,000 cataract surgeries were needed

per year, but only about 2,000 were being carried out in the whole nation. I was one of just a very few eye surgeons in the country.

“It’s very difficult to practice medicine in a developing nation like Togo. There is a lack of facilities, a lack of good equipment, and lots of very poor patients in great need. It’s hard to make a living wage. So, at first, my plan was to do the same as many other Togolese doctors: save some money, then take my wife and kids and move somewhere in the western world.”

“In 2010, I was looking for a residency in France when I heard about Mercy Ships and their plans to train an ophthalmologist to fight against cataract blindness in Togo. That’s how I met Mercy Ships ophthalmologist, Dr. Glenn Strauss, who became my mentor. I didn’t realise it then,



Above: Dr Wodomé on board the Africa Mercy.

but that was the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration with Mercy Ships — a collaboration that would change my career and the lives of thousands of people.”

“It was the first time I had access to advanced equipment. The quality of the surgical microscope, the teaching materials, and the other working equipment was phenomenal. The quality and safety requirements were set at such a high level. Dr. Strauss and the staff were incredibly motivated, even more than I was! My new schedule involved treating at least a hundred cataract cases a week. In our regular residency program in Togo, the maximum you’d serve in a week was three to five patients. Here we were talking about 100 patients a week for three months! My surgical skills were very quickly improved.”

“My surgical skills had been incredibly boosted, and I had skills to share with others, but that didn’t change the environment I was working in. We still had inadequate equipment for teaching and we still had poor patients who couldn’t afford treatment.”

“Together with Dr. Strauss and Mercy Ships we worked on finding solutions to the two major problems — the lack of a proper area and equipment for surgeries and training, and the cost of surgery which was not affordable to the majority of patients.”

Mercy Ships donated equipment to help set up COLD and we continue to support the clinic since it’s creation.

COLD offers treatment to paying and non-paying patients. The proceeds from one help fund the other as well as support from partners like HelpMeSee who provide surgical kits.

With Dr. Wodomé and the nations we partner with, we are working towards a day when nations can care for their people and there is no need for Mercy Ships.



The Impact of our Partnership

- 1. Increased cataract surgeries** in Togo from 300 to over 1,500 every year.
- 2. Clinique Ophtalmologique Lumière Divine (COLD) set up.** Over 750 cataract operations are performed at this modern clinic every year.
- 3. Over 30 ophthalmologists** from Togo and Benin have been trained by Dr Wodomé.



In Guinea, 10% of our volunteer crew came from African nations



Above: Emmanuel Essah on board the *Africa Mercy*.

Day Crew Spotlight

Emmanuel Essah

Emmanuel Essah originally joined the crew of the *Africa Mercy* in Benin in 2009 assisting our dental team as a translator.

In 2013, Mercy Ships sponsored him to train as a biomedical technician. Now, Emmanuel ensures that our medical equipment is well-maintained, properly configured, and safely functional.

By maintaining our medical equipment, biomed technicians help us deliver safe surgical care and belong to our community of heroes — making the Mercy Ships mission possible every day. In this vital role, they ensure we deliver the highest level of care to those we serve.

Biomedical technicians form an important part of our work in Africa. In addition to donating hospital equipment to local healthcare facilities, we train and equip technicians in the nations we visit so that now, they can maintain the equipment in their facilities.

Emmanuel is making a real difference in the lives of his fellow Africans by bringing his skill set to the benefit of those who desperately need medical intervention.

“It is an amazing experience to be part of such a unique organisation where you can serve and be part of the transformation that is happening every day in the lives of the people we serve.”

Emmanuel Essah

Double the pain, twice the joy — Assane and Ousseynou’s story

Twin brothers Assane and Ousseynou share more than just their good looks — both boys developed an identical condition that made their legs curve outward at the knee, making walking or playing difficult and painful. Their parents worried that there was nothing that they could do to help heal their sons or ease the taunts from other children.

“We could not hide Assane and Ousseynou,” their mother, Awa, said. “So we all had to live with people treating them as inferior.”

Then the family heard about Mercy Ships coming to Senegal. The family travelled over 200 miles to the *Africa Mercy*. It was the farthest away from home the twins had ever been, but also the closest they had been to being healed.

Awa was a bit nervous about all of these new experiences, but after Ousseynou and Assane received their surgeries, she was thrilled. “I was so happy,” she said.

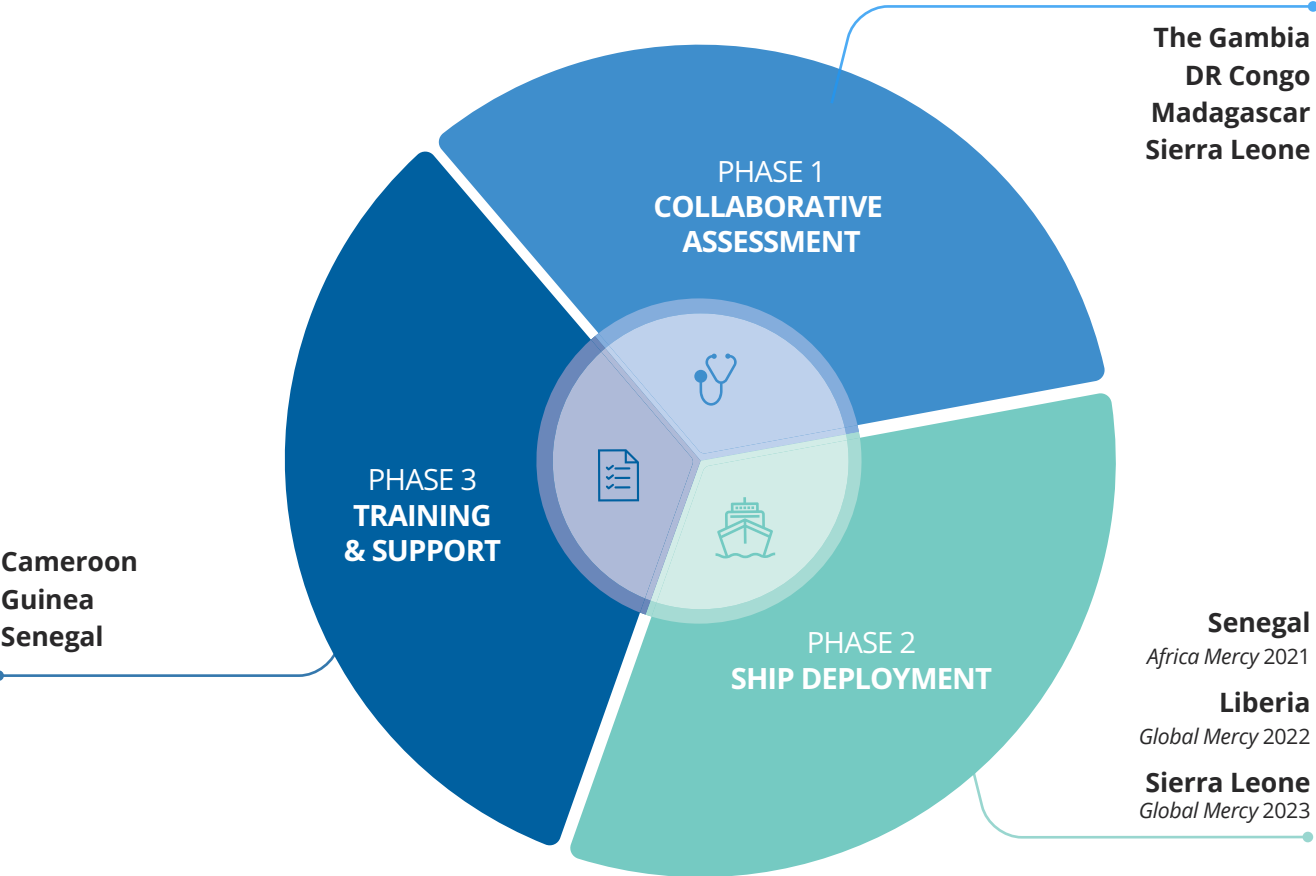
A journey of over 300 kilometres brought Assane and Ousseynou face-to-face with a ship and hope for a better future.

Once their casts came off, the physical therapy sessions began. Eventually, the twins were moving faster and more confidently than they had been able to before. “Since I gave birth to Ousseynou and Assane, I have never seen them run,” Awa said. “The surgeries created this opportunity. It is something that comes only once in a lifetime.”

Below: Assane and Ousseynou before and after surgery to straighten their legs.



The Country Engagement Plan



Phase 1. Collaborative Assessment

Mercy Ships listens, builds relationships, and collaborates with the Presidential Office, Ministry of Health, other departments of the government, and non-governmental organisations in the nations we serve. A collaborative effort has an increased impact. A protocol of commitment is signed, taking into account World Health Organisation (WHO) targets.

An analysis of capacity needs within the local healthcare system is undertaken, establishing where assistance will be most effective. The Assessment Team examines surgical and ancillary service capacity, the port, security, and builds rapport with key stakeholders. An Advance Team enhances the effectiveness of the ship deployment by preparing for the ship's arrival.

Phase 2. Ship Deployment

For 10 months, a Mercy Ship is docked in the host nation's port, providing free surgical and dental care for thousands of people, training and mentoring for local healthcare workers, renovations for local facilities, and more.

Phase 3. Training & Support

Project implementers return to understand any challenges faced by local healthcare professionals in implementing learned materials and skills, provide further instruction, as well as offer encouragement and additional input.

On subsequent visits, teams ascertain how the work of Mercy Ships changed the lives of patients and trained healthcare professionals and evaluate the sustained hospital and clinic improvement. Lessons learned are used to inform future work.



Above: The brand new Global Mercy.

Looking Forward

Mercy Ships has been operating for over 42 years, but we have been focusing our work in Africa for the last 30 years. We have been serving the continent long before the current pandemic. We were on the ground in Africa during the outbreak of coronavirus and we will be here long after it is a distant memory.

As this report goes to print, both our ships, the refitted *Africa Mercy*, and the brand-new *Global Mercy* are preparing to sail for Africa. The addition of the *Global Mercy*, the world's first purpose-built non-governmental hospital ship, to our fleet enables us to more than double our impact on the continent and have a ship in two nations at a time.

Mercy Ships knows a collaborative approach is vital to building sustainable, lasting change. With this in mind, Mercy Ships has worked to strengthen and expand our medical training and mentoring programs for the people we serve.

We see a future where African healthcare professionals are empowered with the necessary tools and training to care for their own people. The foundations for change are being laid and together we can provide the necessary support and expertise to strengthen African healthcare systems and end the surgery crisis.

Together, working with you and our partner nations, we will help rebuild, strengthen, heal, and restore hope to thousands of people in need living in Africa.

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How You Can Help

The work of Mercy Ships is only made possible by the generosity of our volunteers and supporters. You can provide life-changing surgeries and change the face of healthcare in the nations our ships visit. Here's how you can get involved:

Donate

Make a regular monthly donation to Mercy Ships. Visit www.mercyships.org.au/donate or call us on 07 5437 2992.

Remember us

Remember Mercy Ships in your will. Visit www.mercyships.org.au or call us on 07 5437 2992.

Come along

Our speakers can present to your local community group, church, club or workplace. Visit www.mercyships.org.au or call us on 07 5437 2992.

Volunteer

Volunteer on board the *Africa Mercy* or *Global Mercy*. Visit us at www.mercyships.org.au/volunteer or call us on 07 5437 2992.

Get involved

Attend or hold your own fundraising event and run, jog, walk, cycle or swim for Mercy Ships. Visit www.mercyships.org.au or call us on 07 5437 2992.

Follow us

Stay in touch and find out how to help by following Mercy Ships Australia on social media.

Nominate us

Nominate Mercy Ships as Charity of the Year partner in your workplace, school, church or organisation. Visit www.mercyships.org.au or call us on 07 5437 2992.

To request a financial report for the year 2020, please contact msaust@mercyships.org.au



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