



# 2019

Annual Report

## All hands on deck



## Who is Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is a faith-based international development organisation that deploys hospital ships to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free health care to people in desperate need.

Mercy Ships works closely with each host nation to improve the way health care is delivered across the country through medical capacity building programs — training and mentoring local medical staff and renovating hospitals and clinics for use after Mercy Ships complete our field service.

Delivering vital, free health care to people in desperate need.

### Since 1978...

Mercy Ships has worked in more than 56 countries, providing services valued at over **\$1.6 billion** that have directly helped more than 2.7 million people. We have also trained 43,370 local professionals in their areas of expertise to leave a legacy that lasts.

### 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 individuals and serve nations one at a time.

### Values

Following the model of Jesus, we seek to:

- Love God.
- Love and serve others.
- Be people of integrity.
- Be people of excellence in all we say and do.

Globally, **five billion** people have no access to safe and affordable surgery when they need it.

### Impact

In 1990, Mercy Ships turned attention to sub-Saharan Africa where nearly 100% of the population lacks access to safe, affordable and timely surgery. Since then, Mercy Ships has conducted 47 field services in 13 African countries, most of which are ranked by the United Nations Development Index as the least developed in the world.



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## Chairman's Report

In 2019, Mercy Ships served the people of Guinea and Senegal in West Africa. Of the countries measured by the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), Guinea and Senegal rank near the very bottom in providing health care for their populations. In order to address the medical needs of the people in those countries, our teams helped build local capacity-building programs while the ship was in the country.

These capacity building programs provided specific courses for nearly 1,300 health care workers and mentoring for 150 local medical health professionals.

Our dedicated volunteer crew also performed nearly 2,000 life-changing surgeries and over 30,000 dental procedures.

These accomplishments build upon the great work our volunteers have done for over 40 years and set the direction for continued success as we continue to provide free surgical and medical care to countries with very limited health care.

They also pave the way for a successful future which includes the construction of a new "state-of-the-art" hospital ship, the *Global Mercy*, to more than double the impact that Mercy Ships can make.

The new ship has been designed to serve a 50-year lifespan, and we anticipate that hundreds of thousands of lives will be changed through surgeries alone. We expect to have the new ship in service during the first quarter of 2021 and we look forward to the positive impact this ship will have throughout those countries that are in great need of medical assistance.

On behalf of our board and our inspiring staff and volunteer crew, I thank you for your trust and on-going support. With your help, we will work toward transforming the health care outcomes in those countries that need it the most.



Richard Wankmuller  
Chairman

IMAGE: Below: Burn contracture patient, Drissa, before his surgery



## Managing Director's Report

2019 was a year of many developments in the continent of Africa. In particular, two developments are worth noting: the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement and the rise of popular protests across the continent.

The ratification of the AfCFTA in 2019 was a major milestone, resonating in Africa and across the globe. The commitment with which African countries embrace and implement the AfCFTA could shape the continent's future for years.

On the governance front, 2019 was the year of "people power" as citizens in various African countries came out in their masses to protest bad governance and "presidents for life." Clearly, Africans are no longer willing to accept political and economic systems which fail to address their needs and aspirations.

As the year ended, 93% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa remained without access to essential surgery. Our solution is a two-pronged approach of providing direct medical services to reduce the backlog of surgeries and undertake medical capacity building to strengthen each nation's health care systems.

Additionally, Mercy Ships has continued to work on expanding our fleet to have a greater impact than ever before. Our aim is to see the diseases of poverty eradicated and local services and local health workers empowered to care for their communities without our support.

My deep gratitude to the Australian public for your support and our volunteers from Australia who served on board the Africa Mercy hospital ship. You have all helped to save lives and transform lives, and I hope this report gives you a sense of joy and pride for all that we are achieving together.



Alan Burrell  
Managing Director

# Adama's Story

## From Darkness To Light

Adama was five months pregnant when the world around her started to flicker and fade. Soon, all she could see were shadows and shapes as clouded, disc-like cataracts developed in her eyes. "Maybe it will clear up after I give birth," she told herself, hoping that the loss of sight was somehow linked to her pregnancy.

But once she'd delivered her twin babies, a boy and a girl, 30-year-old Adama had to face the truth. She was blind. She would never see the faces of her beautiful babies and without access to safe, affordable surgery, she had little hope of restoring her vision.

"I thought this would last forever; that I would never know what they look like. I was very desperate," Adama said. "I didn't have any hope." The twins were six months old, their faces still a mystery to their mother, when Mercy Ships arrived.

Adama's surgery took about 20 minutes, 20 minutes is all it took to restore her future. When it was time for Adama's patch to come off, she kept her eyes closed for a few moments. Would her sight be fully restored? Had the surgery worked?

Gradually, she opened her eyes. A smile spread across her face as she realised she was seeing the world again for the first time in almost a year! Her family members, gathered nearby, were some of the first people to



welcome Adama back into the world of the seeing.

"When I die and will go to paradise and meet my own people there... that's what the moment was like."

Immediately, she reached for her twins, drinking in the details of their faces for the first time. Tiny noses, long eyelashes, round cheeks; Adama cradled them both in her arms at the same time, eyes dancing between the two.

"I never expected that my babies would be so beautiful," she murmured.

"I never expected that my babies would be so beautiful"

The cataract surgery Adama received with Mercy Ships took less than half an hour, but the impact of her restored sight will reverberate throughout the rest of her life. There will likely be countless moments where Adama rejoices because of the ability to see again — but it's hard to imagine a moment more meaningful than a mother's patient love being rewarded with the sight of her children for the first time.

IMAGES: Left: Adama with her children after her surgery. Right: Don Stephens on board the *Africa Mercy*.

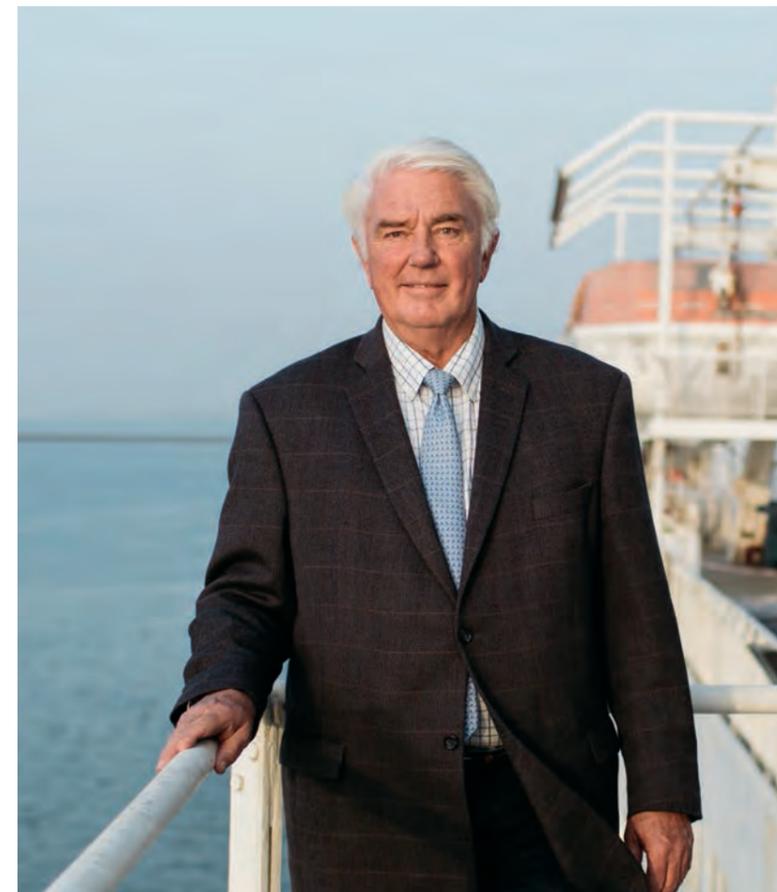


IMAGE: Top left: Cataract patient, Adama before surgery. Top right: Adama after surgery to restore her sight, seeing her child.

## With hope for the future

From the Founder of Mercy Ships

In his 2007 book, economist Paul Collier uses the term "the bottom billion" in reference to the one billion people who live in low- and middle- income economies. The most current data tells us that 93% of people living in "the bottom billion" in terms of health care outcomes live in sub-Saharan Africa; meaning those suffering from painful, disfiguring, and often preventable diseases are unable to find the healing they so desperately need. This statistic keeps me awake at night and gets me up in the morning. There is undeniably a global surgery crisis and it kills more people every year than HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria combined.

The numbers are huge, so set them aside for a minute. Worldwide, our brothers and sisters are experiencing great pain, despair and isolation. This cannot continue. Together we can change this; together we can bring hope and healing.

For over 40 years, we have striven to do more and do better. The launch of the *Global Mercy* is a big step on this journey. The new ship will more than double our capacity, enabling us to reach more people in desperate need, train more local health care professionals and serve two nations at once. Now we need all hands on deck. Will you partner with Mercy Ships and be the difference?

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 launch of our new custom-built hospital ship, the *Global Mercy*, this year, that goal becomes much closer.

We are humbled and thankful for all that has been accomplished and are excited for what the future will hold for us — for our patients, our partners, and our crew. Thank you for partnering with us!

*Don Stephens*

Don Stephens  
Founder of Mercy Ships

# Why Africa?

## The Need

The Lancet Commission on Global Surgery identifies that more than 18 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, ailments and disfigurements that surgery could fix.

Over 70% of the world's disabled live in sub-Saharan Africa and over 93% of the population live without access to safe, affordable surgery. In Africa, we can help greatest number of people living near ports in some of the world's poorest countries.

There is an urgent need for significant growth in surgical capacity and training. Mercy Ships is committed to increasing our own surgical and training capacity and to raising awareness of the need for, and impact of, surgery in developing countries.



IMAGE: Above: African surgeons taking part in mentoring.

Over 93% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa does not have access to safe, affordable surgery.



## The Solution

Mercy Ships takes a two-pronged approach to improve health care systems in the countries we partner with:

1. Direct Medical Services: We reduce the immediate backlog of surgical patients through direct surgical provision on board a hospital ship.
2. Medical Capacity Building: Strengthening our host nation's health care system through training, infrastructure and mentoring.

Mercy Ships is committed to raising awareness of the extraordinary level of unmet need in global surgery, and to encourage an active and informed response to it. We have achieved much in our 40 year history, but are dedicated to doing more. Our focus is firmly on the future and combating diseases of poverty.

## Why Hospital Ships?

More than 40% of the world's population lives within 100 miles of a coast — which is why Mercy Ships uses modern hospital ships to bring world-class volunteer medical professionals directly to the places they're needed most.

Our ships are the most efficient way to bring a state-of-the-art hospital to regions where clean water, electricity, and medical facilities and personnel are limited or non-existent. Instead of trying to build the facilities we need to bring life-changing surgeries to ports around the world, we can provide a safe, stable, fully outfitted hospital ship which provides the best platform for our two-pronged approach.

We stock our ships with a supply of vehicles so we can more easily reach patients in remote areas.

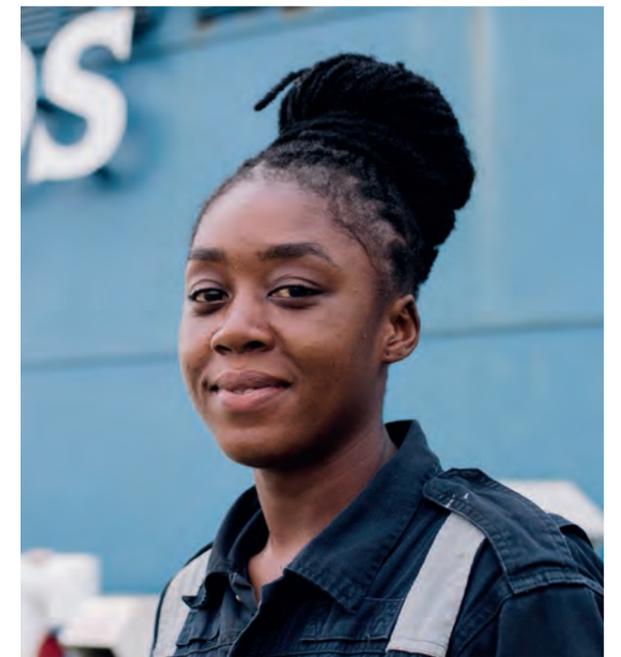
# Our Volunteers

## The Hands on Deck

It takes a dedicated crew with different skills and talents to run a hospital ship. Over 1,000 volunteers, from over 40 nations serve on board the *Africa Mercy* every year. With a new ship on the horizon we need all hands on deck. Together we will do more.

Volunteers serving with Mercy Ships contribute monthly crew fees and raise their own finances to serve on board. This means that every \$1 that Mercy Ships receives in funding is complemented by more than \$5 in contributed gifts-in-kind and services, enabling Mercy Ships to deliver medical and development services for a fraction of the usual cost.

Mercy Ships is committed to Africa and in 2019, 17% of our volunteers came from African nations.



### CREW SPOTLIGHT

Denise Ngum was 14 years old when she developed an interest in electrical engineering. For Denise, fixing problems was a welcome challenge where she was able to use her eye for detail and creativity.

Denise studied electrical engineering at a government university in Cameroon and graduated in 2014. After graduation, Denise started to apply for jobs, but she quickly realised that there were many obstacles stacked against her.

Rather than being in high demand for her skillset, this highly intelligent and university-educated woman was forced to turn to sewing, which was a hobby, and it became her primary income.

When she was 27 years old, Denise heard that Mercy Ships would soon be coming to visit her country and applied to serve as an electrician. Mercy Ships accepted her.

"They are open to everyone," she said.

Denise has been serving on board the *Africa Mercy* for two years now and has no plans to stop anytime soon. In fact, Denise is currently training with us to become a biomedical engineer. This is a role essential to improving the the health care infrastructure in Africa, as biomedical engineers maintain and repair hospital equipment and many African hospitals do not have trained people in the role. Denise is diligently studying to further her skills to serve her nation even after the *Africa Mercy* sails away.

IMAGE: Above: Denise on board the *Africa Mercy*.



IMAGES: Top: Burn contracture patient, Gamai, plays on Deck 7. Lower: Australian volunteer photographer Lara Arikinstall with patients on the ward.

# Mercy Ships in Guinea

August 2018 - June 2019



Mercy Ships returned to the beautiful country of Guinea in August of 2018, where the ship was docked for the 10-month field service in the port of Conakry.

During our time there, Mercy Ships offered direct medical services and medical capacity building programs with the support of the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene and other local partners. These services not only benefited thousands of individuals directly but also helped to boost national health care development within the entire nation.

Our surgical and medical interventions strive to reduce disability, prevent early death, and restore hope in areas where health care is unattainable.

While serving in Guinea, Mercy Ships was also excited to celebrate the completion of the 100,000th surgical procedure on board our hospital ship the *Africa Mercy*. The surgery, a cleft lip repair, was performed on a 7-month-old child who traveled with her mother nearly 200 miles for healing.

During our time there, Mercy Ships also identified and renovated the Boulbinet Health Center in Conakry as the site for the HOPE (Hospital OutPatient Extension) center. After our departure, this facility was returned to the government for further use. Renovations were also made at the Odonto-Stomato de la Faculté de Médecine de

L'Université Gamal, Guinea's only dental school. The school was utilized as a dental clinic during our field service and was returned fully restored and equipped following our departure.

Over 10,000 individual patients were direct beneficiaries of our projects during the Guinea field service. We are grateful to the many partners who have joined with us to provide hope and healing to those in need in Guinea.

## Food for Life

Several hours northeast of Conakry, Guinea is the Fabik farm — a rare oasis of green amidst a desert of dry and dusty fields. Among the freshly planted rows of corn and lettuce, there's a group hard at work planting, watering, and weeding.

This group of 32 Guinean men and women are the participants of the Mercy Ships Food for Life program, gathered to learn the ins and outs of nutrition, crop production, and packaging and organic agriculture. They're also taught how to train others, with the goal of returning to their communities and continuing the education program long after they graduate.

"Mercy Ships as a surgery ship is investing in farming because we recognize that in order to have good health you need to have good nutrition — and for good nutrition to be effective, you need to have safe food," Agricultural Program Manager Eliphaz Essah said. "To do that, we need to get the best knowledge of how to produce safe food; and that's why [the Food for Life program] is here."

Many conditions on the ship — such as orthopedic cases — are often linked to malnutrition. By educating a group of innovative and socially-minded locals, the goal is to see a ripple effect in each nation as they return to their homes and teach others what they've learned.

Among the 32 graduates from this year's program was Marie-Louise Kantabadouno, a Guinean NGO worker, who came highly recommended by her organization and became a stand-out student.

After graduating, Marie Louise immediately jumped into action. Along with two other course participants, she's now traveling to villages across the region, teaching

Over 10,000 individual patients have been direct beneficiaries of our projects in Guinea.



IMAGE: Above: Women in a rural village sift grain during a course taught by previous participants of the Mercy Ships Food for Life program.

women nutritional basics, food production techniques, and packaging methods so that they can store or sell their food more efficiently. They also stopped in a local classroom to run an interactive workshop — and gave the children nutritious food that the volunteers had grown themselves during the course.

"I learned from this training that children are malnourished because there is a lack of means and a lack of education of their parents in the area of agriculture," Kantabadouno said. "Their parents are all farmers, but they do not have any experience. I'll now have the chance to talk to families and help them evolve in the field of agro-ecology, the association of cultures, the rotation of cultures and mulching and the use of compost to abandon chemical products."

Without the partnership of local NGOs and workers, the Food for Life course wouldn't be possible. It's a medley of different organizations, goals, and methods — and a beautiful symbol of the successful way in which these can all work together to reach a common goal.

## LOCAL CREW SPOTLIGHT

Penda is a 23-year-old qualified lab technician from Senegal working on board the *Africa Mercy* while it's docked in Dakar. Penda has worked hard to receive her degree and complete a series of internships. Since her graduation, she has taken time to get work experience and plans to continue her learning at a university, all while on board.

Penda is currently working on board in the radiology department. During her time with Mercy Ships, she has had the opportunity to learn more about imaging, radiology and the equipment, knowledge that will help her further her career plans. One of the benefits Penda has shared about her time on board is the value of working in such a diverse environment with medical professionals from all over the globe.

"It feels like traveling while being in the same spot."

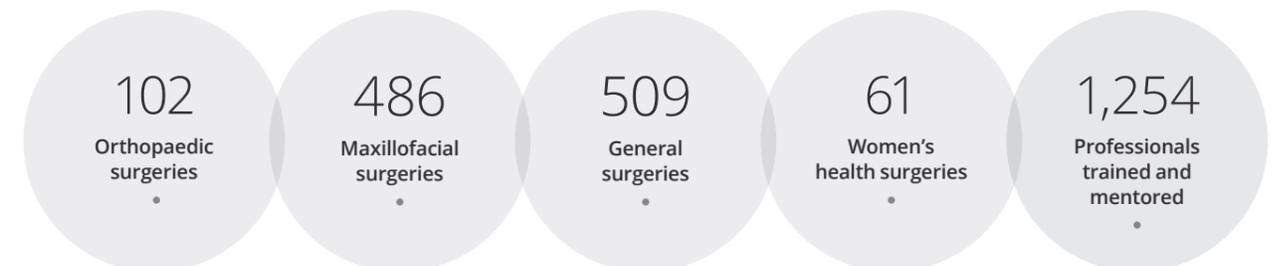
Penda says she finds value in having the opportunity to visit the *Africa Mercy*'s lab and compare it to the labs she's seen in Senegal. She also enjoys learning about cases she never knew existed and witnessing the impact that Mercy Ships has on patients and their caregivers. "It feels so good to see how happy and thankful they are," she said. "You're going to stay in their mind forever because you are in the process of something that changed their life."

Penda wants to be a doctor and says that Mercy Ships may see her back on board one day.



IMAGE: Penda at the Radiology lab on board the *Africa Mercy*.

## GUINEA | THE FINAL FIGURES



# Sky-High Dreams for Sema

## Sema's Story

A life transformed

For as long as he can remember, 9-year-old Sema watched the planes fly in and out of the airport near his home in Guinea. He'd hear the familiar rumble overhead and see the aircraft flying through the sky — and he'd dream about his future.

"I want to be a plane driver when I grow up because I love discovering new places. I want to go everywhere," Sema said. "I will go to school first to learn how to be a plane driver, and then I'll be able to travel everywhere."

For most of Sema's childhood, however, his dreams have felt compromised by the sharp curves of his legs.

This orthopedic condition, commonly called "bowed legs", often begins at a young age as the result of malnutrition. In Sema's case, it began when he was just a toddler, and his legs continued to grow more severely bent the older he got.

Sema is being raised by his grandmother, Aminata, who took him and his three older siblings in when his mother died just days after he was born. When they first noticed Sema's legs bending, Aminata tried to tell herself he'd



Now it's easier for Sema to walk straight and tall — especially with the added eight centimeters of height his surgery has given him.

grow out of it on his own.

"Some kids start walking with their legs far apart... we thought it would get better over time," she said. But once Sema turned four, the family had to accept that this was their reality.

Aminata, who sells spices and peppers at the local market, has had difficulty providing for the 10 people living in her home, so the thought of paying for medical care for Sema was out of the question.

"I didn't even want to take him to the doctor to get

**IMAGES:** Right: Sema, before and after his orthopaedic surgery on board the *Africa Mercy* to straighten his bowed legs.



looked at — I knew they would only tell me a price that was too big," she said. "There was no way we could pay for anything. It made me so sad. When you have children and grandchildren, you would do anything for them... but I couldn't do a thing for him; I had to put my heart to God."

God answered Aminata's patient prayers in the form of a hospital ship visiting with volunteer crew from around the world. Sema came on board the *Africa Mercy* for a pediatric orthopedic surgery, which would straighten his legs and help them to heal through regular post-op care and physiotherapy sessions.

Before surgery, Sema was subdued and quiet.

"My legs were bowed; my friends' legs were straight," Sema said. "Everywhere I went, people used to laugh. They'd say 'Open legs, open legs.'"

But during his months in the hospital wards and in the rehab tent, Sema became the life of the party. He was particularly beloved by the team of volunteer

**IMAGE:** Above: Smiling Sema, on Deck 7 after his surgery.

physiotherapists who would play and dance with the young boy.

"When we went on the ship, there was only happiness — we were treated like a queen and king," Aminata said. "People were playing with him like they'd known him for a long time."

After several months, Sema was able to return home to his community. Due to the severity of his condition, his legs aren't perfectly straight, but they hint that there's a story to be told. With continued proper nutrition and adherence to Sema's rehab exercises, there's hope that his legs will continue to grow straighter as he grows up. Now, it's easier for Sema to walk straight and tall — especially with the added eight centimeters of height that his surgery has given him!

Sema's grandmother believes his future looks brighter than ever, saying, "Now, if he goes to school, anything is possible."

Sema's future has been restored and now he can chase his dream of becoming a pilot. A world of discovery is now open to him.



# Committed to Africa

## Mercy Ships Interview



Dr M'Pele is the director of our Africa Bureau in Benin. Before joining Mercy Ships he worked with the World Health Organisation and led the UNAIDS Inter-country Technical Support Team for West and Central Africa.

Recognising that change is best affected through building deep partnerships, our Africa Bureau's central goal is to develop and strengthen relationships in the African nations with whom we partner.

### What attracted you to Mercy Ships?

I met Mercy Ships for the first time in Lomé, in Togo in 2011. I was the World Health Organisation representative to the Republic of Togo and I had the opportunity to go on board Mercy Ships floating hospital, the *Africa Mercy*.

As a doctor and public health specialist working to make Africa healthier, I was impressed by the work of Mercy Ships and I established a solid collaboration with Mercy Ships based on my experience and advice; I was able to support to the charity's operations in Africa.

Then in 2016, the Mercy Ships International Board appointed me as Africa Ambassador for Mercy Ships, with the responsibility of cultivating relationships across the African continent. Once retired from the United Nations I became the Director of the Mercy Ships Africa Bureau.

I have learnt so many things from Africa and the African people while fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the continent. In Africa, we are still so fragile. I believe in Africa and I'm totally engaged in making my contribution to the betterment of the African people. Mercy Ships share my belief in and commitment to this incredible continent and their appearance was an opportunity with faith, humility and humanity to serve my fellow African people.

### How did setting up a base in West Africa impact the work of Mercy Ships?

By setting up a base in Cotonou in the Republic of Benin, Mercy Ships has fulfilled the missing face of the organisation on the continent, proving its ongoing commitment to Africa and its peoples. Mercy Ships belongs to the African countries we serve and their peoples.

The Africa Bureau was established in October 2016. We conduct and facilitate negotiations, sign and follow up protocol collaboration agreements with African governments, support Mercy Ships programs and improve the communication,



## Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the UN's blueprint to achieve a better, more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including health. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages is important for building prosperous societies. The work of Mercy Ships contributes towards SDG 3, Good health and Well -Being. Together, we can end the global surgery crisis.

"I believe in Africa and I'm totally engaged in making my contribution to the betterment of the African people."

Dr Pierre M'Pele



networking and advocacy to better involve African nations and the people of Africa.

### How do you see the work of Mercy Ships contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa?

The UN's SDG N°3, endorsed by the international community aims to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all people at all ages. To achieve this goal in Africa we need to build strong and resilient health care systems to be able to provide universal health coverage. This is what Mercy Ships is working towards.

Mercy Ships programmes provide free surgeries, training of local health care professionals and medical capacity building. These programmes make a solid contribution to two of the UN's six building blocks of health systems (health workforce and health care service delivery).

Going forward, Mercy Ships efforts should continue to be sustained in a holistic manner with the full participation of the African communities, African health professionals and health sector partners in a coordinated manner because we can only achieve the SDG N°3 if we work together with the local governments in the driving seat.

I also believe that by strategically focusing on countries with both need and opportunity, we can a big make contribution towards achieving the SDG N°3. These strategic countries should host hospital ships three times in the next ten years to make a real impact.

IMAGE: Dr M'Pele meeting with patients and their families during National Geographic filming.

### How does Mercy Ships continue to develop our relationships with African partners?

We have two major partners in African nations: the government and the people. Our relationships with our partners are strong.

We align our support to the strategic development of African governments and their vision, as in Liberia with the "Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development" and in Senegal, with the "Plan for an Emerging Senegal". We are always invited by the host nation and we work under the leadership of the national government in a win-win collaboration for the benefit of the people: a true partnership with the African people to achieve more together.

### What is the perception of Mercy Ships and its impact from your base in Africa?

We are working in a challenging and changing Africa. To ensure we are as effective as possible we adapt our strategy with the country we are serving as we work to transform the lives of the people and strengthen health care systems.

Mercy Ships keeps building its partnership with African countries in line with our values: integrity, excellence, love God as we love and serve others. We are viewed as a committed and long-term partner by our brothers and sisters on the continent of Africa.

To conclude, I would say: in Africa we are all part of Mercy Ships because we are working towards the same goals, together.

# Mercy Ships in Senegal

August 2019 - March 2020



Mercy Ships arrived for the second time in the nation of Senegal in August of 2019, where the ship was docked for a 7-month field service in the port of Dakar.

Although Senegal has a solid health care system in place, there is still a need for capacity building and surgeries especially in the rural areas where approximately half of Senegal's population (around 8.8 million people) lives and access to health care is limited.

As such, the President of Senegal and the Minister of Health and Social Action requested that Mercy Ships focus on the needs of patients both in the capital and interior regions of Senegal. This meant that 75% of our patients came from the thirteen interior regions of Senegal.

But, before the *Africa Mercy* was nudged gently into position by several Port of Dakar tugboats to take up her moorings, several years of work had already been done.

Work in each nation starts with signing a Protocol Agreement approximately two years before a Mercy Ship arrives and will only come to an end approximately two years after a ship has left.

Mercy Ships partners with nations for around five years at a time. So, in any one year we are actually working with up to five nations.

At the moment we are working with our partners in Cameroon, Guinea, Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Mercy Ships is always invited by our host nation's government and we work closely with the Ministry of Health and other local government departments of our host nation to ensure that we are providing the most effective aid possible.

Mercy Ships provides assistance in four ways:

1. We deliver free surgical and dental services to the poor in the countries that we serve.
2. We strengthen our host nation's surgical health care - system through training, infrastructure and mentoring.
3. We conduct research and evaluation to improve the impact of our activities and to share knowledge with the wider health care community.
4. We advocate for safe, timely and affordable surgery for the underserved in the nations of Africa.

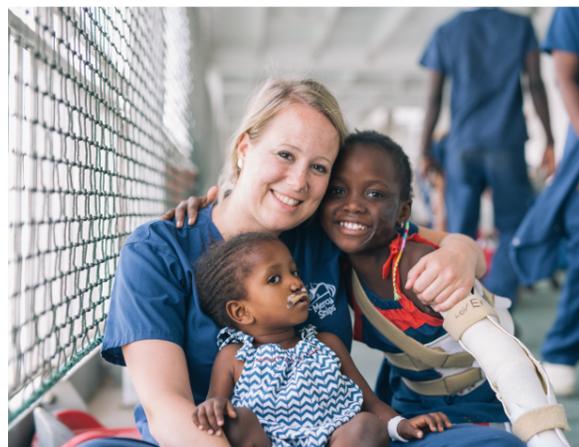


IMAGE: Above: Volunteer Alyssa Vanderploeg with patients on Deck 7



## SENEGAL | THE FINAL FIGURES



# Mercy Ships in Senegal

August 2019 - March 2020



Our current field service in Senegal is still ongoing. The *Africa Mercy* arrived in Senegal in August, 2019, in the culmination of two years of collaborative planning in support of the nation's "Plan for an Emerging Senegal" goals. Senegal has made great strides in providing the necessary medical care for its people, and Mercy Ships is honoured to be a part of their plan.

The President of Senegal, Macky Sall, requested that Mercy Ships focus on the needs of patients both in the capital and interior regions of Senegal. 75% of our patients come from the thirteen interior regions of Senegal.

This is the second time that a Mercy Ship has visited Senegal and whilst the country has a reasonably robust health care system in Dakar, many of its rural population lack access to health care. Mercy Ships plan to deliver more than 1,700 free operations while the *Africa Mercy* is docked in Dakar and treat more than 3,500 dental patients. The Mercy Ships capacity building projects will train and mentor over 1,400 local health care professionals, providing skills and knowledge that will ensure improved

health care long after the *Africa Mercy* has left Dakar for the next port.

So far in Senegal, the Mercy Ships volunteer teams have provided more than 575 free surgical procedures. This translates to over 526 lives transformed by free surgery so far this field service. Mercy Ships volunteers have also treated over 3,091 dental patients and more than 830 local health care professionals have taken part in training and mentoring programmes.

Two buildings have been renovated: Sangalkam Dental Clinic, which is being used by our volunteer dental team until the end of the field service and it will then be returned to the local health care system with all its new equipment, and a building in Dakar to serve as the Mercy Ships HOPE (Hospital OutPatient Extension) Centre. Which has also had further renovations to accommodate our Ponsetti project (club foot).

The *Africa Mercy* will remain in the Port of Dakar until June 2020.

IMAGE: Above: Birane after surgery to repair his cleft lip.

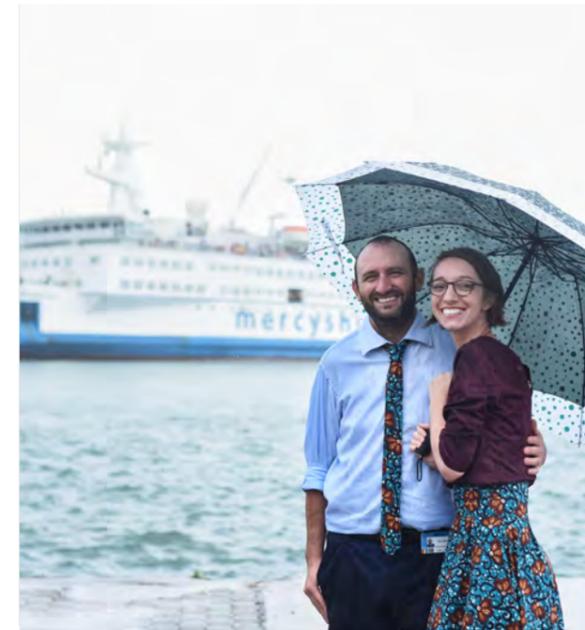


IMAGE: Above: Nick and Suzanne.

## Finding true love on the Mercy Ship

More than 70% of the world's population is unable to access essential surgery. As a result, 17 million people die needlessly each year, and many common, treatable illnesses become life-threatening.

When Australian physio Nick Veltjens heard these statistics he realised it was time he used his skills to have more of an impact in the lives of people who couldn't afford necessary health care.

He joined Mercy Ships in 2010 and has been working alongside our other courageous volunteers ever since. He is now the Clubfoot Program Manager.

"I think I am one of the luckiest people on earth. I love my job."

As well as following his calling in life, Nick also found true love on board.

"I remember when we were getting to know each other, I often used to try and organise group social activities just so that I could invite Suzanne along so I could spend more time with her," said Nick.

Suzanne, an American registered nurse, worked in the operating theatres on board providing cataract surgeries to people who didn't have access to affordable surgery. It wasn't long before Nick and Suzanne started spending more time together and their love blossomed.

Now married, they continue their volunteer work in Africa and love that they can use their job skills in a way that is having a massive positive impact in people's lives.

## CREW SPOTLIGHT

Jane Frisken says it was the blessing of her good education and the opportunity to be part of the recovery process for patients in need that motivated her to join Mercy Ships.

"I worked as a hand therapist with the rehabilitation team and plastic surgeons. This involved providing therapy for children and adults who had plastic surgery. Many of these people have sustained severe burns and have not had access to safe, affordable, and timely care."

"One of the outstanding memories for me is being part of the plastic surgery screening day and watching a father carry his son in, sit down in front of us, then weep with relief and happiness that finally his son was getting some help."

With great support from friends and family at home in Melbourne, including her husband and three adult children, Jane left the ship with an eye on returning in the future.

"It was incredibly hard to leave my patients and the ship community. I don't know the outcome for some of my patients, but I do know that they are all so thankful for the love and compassion they've experienced on board."



IMAGE: Above: Jane on board the *Africa Mercy*.

# An Unshakable Smile

## Saliou's Story

A life transformed

Saliou was too young to realise that he was different. At two years old, the little boy had no idea that his cleft lip set him apart from the other children. Blissfully unaware, the condition had no damper on Saliou's personality, which brought joy to everyone he met.

While some might view Saliou's condition as a reason to feel shame — especially in West Africa where the lack of medical access can cause a person to live with the defect for a lifetime — Saliou's grandmother, Ndiane, refused to let his condition hinder her love.

"He's so handsome," she said while holding his photo.

Despite her admiration for Saliou, Ndiane still hoped that he wouldn't have to grow up with a cleft lip which, she worried would cause him to become an outcast when he was older.

"If he didn't get surgery, he would be different from the other children," she said.

Sadly, it is often the case that people suffering with visible conditions, like cleft-lip, are ostracised from their communities, mocked and shunned.

Saliou's family didn't have the means to find healing for him. With minimal access to safe, affordable surgery, Ndiane resorted to the only thing she could do — she

"I'm giving thanks to God and the people at Mercy Ships," Ndiane said. "I didn't have anywhere to get surgery for Saliou..."

prayed for a miracle. She held on to the hope that one day, her sweet Saliou would be healed.

After two years of waiting on a miracle, Ndiane was thrilled to hear about a hospital ship that was docked in the capital city of Senegal. This devoted grandmother traveled 12 hours to bring Saliou to the *Africa Mercy* for a surgery that would change his life forever.

"When I heard about the ship's arrival, I was relieved," she said. "Then, I made the decision to stop everything and bring him because this will impact his future!"

Ndiane's heart swelled with joy and gratitude after Saliou's operation — her grandson was finally healed!

A couple of hours was all it took to return Saliou's future to the young boy. Thanks to your support, Saliou will never have to experience the pain and suffering of an outcast. Now the young boy's future looks brighter than ever.

"I'm giving thanks to God and the people at Mercy Ships," Ndiane said. "I didn't have anywhere to get surgery for Saliou, and they did that for me."

**IMAGE:** *Left:* Volunteer anaesthetist, Sarah Kwok, carries Saliou up the gangway. *Right:* Saliou with his grandmother, Ndiane.



# The Journey

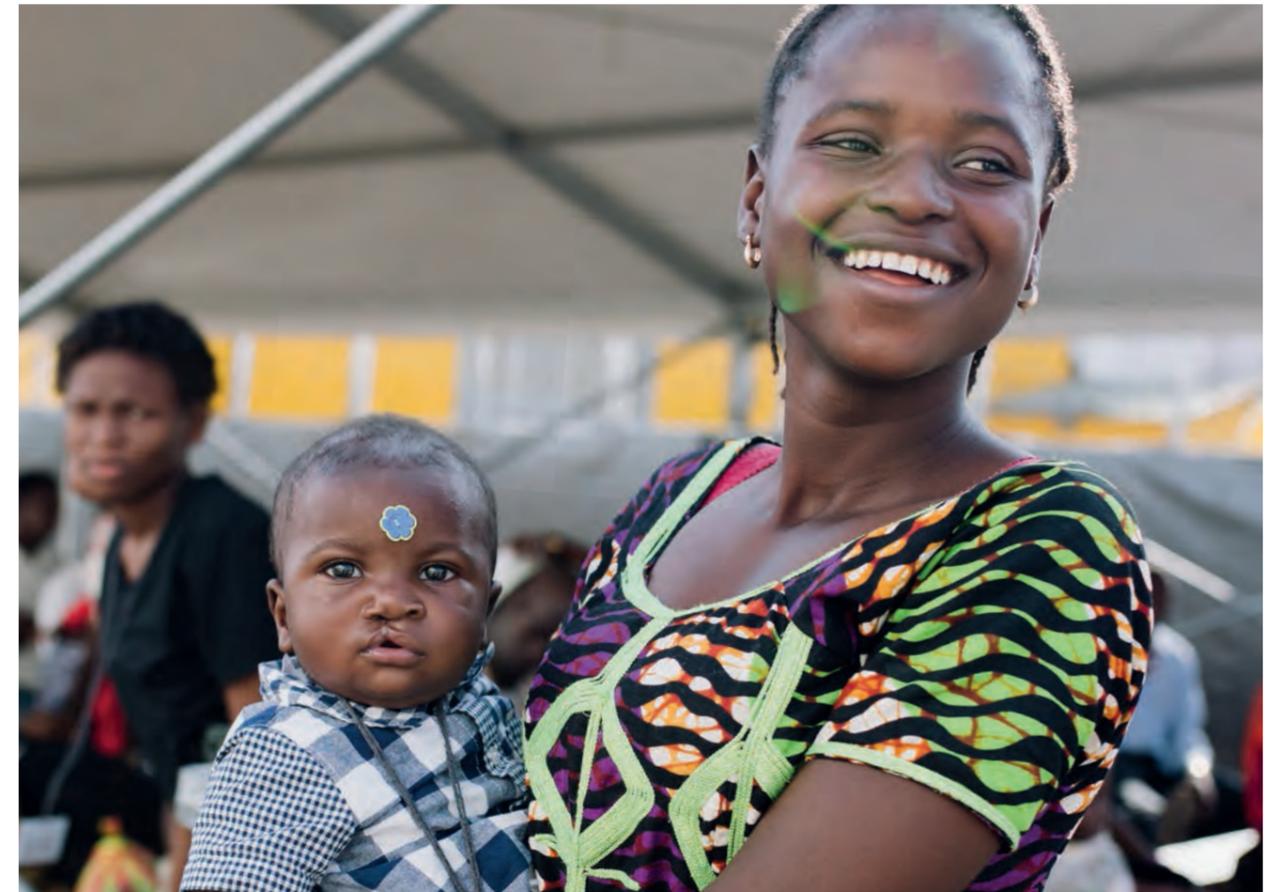
## The Mercy Ships mission

Imagine the pain of a parent who has no choice but to watch as their child suffers from a preventable disease. Or, the distress a woman might face after being rejected by her loved ones and community because of a painful condition. For more than five billion people around the world, this is the life they are forced to endure simply because they lack access to safe, timely medical care.

This staggering statistic has been the driving force for the Mercy Ships mission since 1978. Over the last 40 years, Mercy Ships has worked alongside our supporters and dedicated volunteers to provide life-changing surgical care and medical training through our fully equipped hospital ships.

The Mercy Ships story began with a dream by our

**IMAGES:** Left: Don Stephens, founder of Mercy Ships with a patient on Deck 7 of the *Africa Mercy*. Right: A mother holds her child, who is recovering from a cleft lip repair.



1978-2006 *Anastasis*

founders Don and Deyon Stephens and a 1953-built Italian cruise liner, formerly known as the *Victoria*. Mercy Ships acquired this ship in 1978 and converted it into our very first mobile hospital, housing three state-of-the-art operating rooms, a 40-bed hospital ward, a dental clinic, a laboratory, an X-ray unit, and three cargo holds.

Renamed *Anastasis* (meaning "Resurrection" in Greek), the ship sailed the high seas for 29 years, during which time an estimated 25,000 volunteer crew members



1994-2006 *Caribbean Mercy*

served on board.

In 1983, Mercy Ships acquired two additions to the fleet: the Norwegian ferry known as the *Polarlys* became the second hospital ship when she was deployed as the *Caribbean Mercy*, and spent 12 busy years in Central America and the Caribbean Basin, visiting 137 ports in 13 countries before her 2006 retirement.

Also in 1983, the former Newfoundland coastal ferry *Petite Forte* found new life as the *Good Samaritan*,



1984-2001 *Island Mercy*

serving the Caribbean as well as Central and South America.

In 1994 she was renamed the *Island Mercy* and redeployed to the South Pacific where she served 24 developing countries until being retired in 2001.

Then in 2007 our current ship, the *Africa Mercy*, passed sea trials. It took eight years to convert the ship from a Danish rail ferry into a first-class hospital ship and it was the largest conversion project in the UK at the time. The *Africa Mercy* is so large that it is possible to fit all our



2006-Present *Africa Mercy*

previous ships inside it with room to spare. The ship's first field service was in Liberia and it has now been bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor for over a decade. The *Africa Mercy* will join our new flagship as, together, they serve to reach more people in desperate need than ever before.

From the *Anastasis* to our current vessel, the *Africa Mercy*, our hospital ships have helped impact over 2.8 million lives around the world by providing safe, clean environments for surgical care and training.



## The Next Steps

### Transforming lives in Africa

Mercy Ships is committed to increasing our own surgical and training capacity. From the launch of our current vessel, the *Africa Mercy*, in 2007, we had plans to increase our capacity by adding a new, bigger ship capable of bringing even more hope and healing to those in need.

In response to the critical need for safe and accessible medical care, Mercy Ships commissioned the construction of the world's first purpose-built charity hospital ship — the *Global Mercy*. The design of the new ship incorporates more than 40 years of our experience, crew feedback, and learning. Using the latest technology for crew safety and security, the *Global Mercy* will provide accommodation for 641 people, including the crew and patients.

Once the fully funded construction of the *Global Mercy* is completed, the ship will join our fleet and more than double our surgical and training capacity. It is expected that within its 50-year service, more than 150,000 lives will be changed on board through surgery alone.

After construction is completed, this hospital ship

will have the facilities needed to carry out a wide range of surgeries, including repairing cleft-lips and palates, removing cataracts and life-threatening tumours, correcting debilitating burn contractures, and more. The new hospital will cover most of decks 3 and 4 and will house six operating rooms, 102 acute care beds, seven ICU/isolation beds, and an additional 90 self-care beds.

Through direct surgical intervention, Mercy Ships stands in the gap and helps to alleviate pressure on a nation's health care system and at the same time we help to increase and improve the local health care system through training and capacity building. Providing surgery alone is not enough to tackle the global surgery crisis, we must support and strengthen the local surgical health system from grassroots to government in the most impactful way possible.

That is why in addition to the increased capacity for surgical care that we will be able to provide, the new ship will also increase our ability to train local health care professionals with dedicated teaching spaces and simulator labs for more effective surgical training. All pre- and post-operative work will be done on board the *Global Mercy*, which minimises our footprint when operating in busy ports.

With a training platform, observation facilities, and classrooms on board, we can build for the future

by providing vital training and mentoring of medical professionals while working to upgrade the local health care facilities of the nations we serve.

The *Global Mercy* and *Africa Mercy* working together to eradicate diseases of poverty will more than double our surgical capacity and enable us to operate in two countries simultaneously.

Mercy Ships has the potential, within a generation, to transform the health care story in Africa. Thanks to our family of partners, supporters, and volunteers, we have been able to help the next patient in line receive the surgery that will change their life, freeing them to embrace their future.

**IMAGES:** The world's first purpose build hospital ship, the *Global Mercy* under construction. The ship will impact over 150,000 lives over its 50 year service.

Together, we can make a difference to the lives of thousands and change the surgical landscape of whole countries, not only in the immediate future, but for decades to come.

#### A look inside the *Global Mercy*

- Decks – **12**
- Hospital Area – **7,000** square meters
- Operating Rooms – **6**
- Patient Capacity – **199**
- Crew Capacity – **641**
- K-12 School Capacity – **50+**
- Auditorium Seating – **684**
- Simulation Lab



## How you can help

Mercy Ships work is only made possible by the generosity of supporters and volunteers.

You can help provide life-changing medical treatments and surgeries and change the face of health care in the nations that our ships visit, here's how you can get involved:



### Donate

Make a regular monthly donation to Mercy Ships. Visit [www.mercyships.org.au](http://www.mercyships.org.au) or call us on 07 5437 2992



### Nominate us

Nominate Mercy Ships as Charity of the Year partner in your workplace, school, church or organisation



### Come along

Attend or hold your own event or form a fundraising group in your local community, church, club or workplace. Email [mstaust@mercyships.org.au](mailto:mstaust@mercyships.org.au)



### Remember us

Remember Mercy Ships in your will. Contact our Office at [mstaust@mercyships.org.au](mailto:mstaust@mercyships.org.au) or call us on 07 5437 2992



### Get involved

Run, jog, walk, cycle or swim for Mercy Ships by taking part in one of our many Challenge Events. Visit [www.mercyships.org.au](http://www.mercyships.org.au) or call us on 07 5437 2992



### Volunteer

Volunteer on board the *Africa Mercy*. Visit us at [www.mercyships.org.au](http://www.mercyships.org.au) or call us on 07 5437 2992

### Follow us



Stay in touch and find out what you can do to help: [mercyshipsaustralia](https://www.mercyshipsaustralia.org.au)



IMAGE: Above: Denise O'Connell for the Africa Mercy

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