



# Mercy Ships | Fact Sheet



Ali, Sierra Leone  
Cleft Lip Repair



Maomai, Benin  
Tumor Removal



Alexis, Nadège, Ricardo,  
Benin, Cataract Removal



Floating Hospitals



Surgeries & Healthcare



Training of local  
professionals



Community Empowerment

## About Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is an international faith-based organization bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor. As many as 5 billion people lack access to safe, affordable surgical and anesthesia 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 programs offer holistic support to developing countries striving to make healthcare accessible for all. Since 1978, Mercy Ships has delivered services to more than 2.71 million direct beneficiaries. The countries served by Mercy Ships are ranked as the poorest in the world by the United Nations Human Development Index.

The organization has supported its hospital ships through:

- 1. The International Support Center** 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** headquarters 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 40-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 organization in which tens of thousands of professional volunteers have served. Don is on the 38-member Mercy Ships International Board with members from 14 nations.

## Ships and Field Programs

The *Africa Mercy* is the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship and is dedicated to serving the continent of Africa. Mercy Ships has an average of 1000 volunteer crew, from up to 40 nations, serving onboard the *Africa Mercy* each year.

## Programs & 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, anesthesia providers, administrators and community health workers). Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programs offer holistic support to developing countries. Mercy Ships has provided services and materials in developing countries valued at over \$1.53 billion, including the following:

- Performed more than 95,000 life-changing or life-saving operations such as cleft lip and palate repair, cataract removal, orthopedic procedures, facial reconstruction and obstetric fistula repair
- Performed 445,000 dental procedures for over 175,000 dental patients.
- Trained more than 6,315 local professionals (including surgeons), who have in turn trained many others
- Trained over 42,250 local professionals in their area of expertise (anesthesiology, midwifery, sterilization, orthopedic and reconstructive surgery, leadership)
- Taught over 239,000 local people in basic healthcare
- Completed over 1,110 infrastructure development and agriculture 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 cost. Enabling Mercy Ships to deliver medical and development services for a fraction of the usual cost.