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.

Impact

In 1990, Mercy Ships turned our 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.

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 the 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 has been accomplished during 2020, you are inspired by the people whose lives have been forever changed thanks to the power of hope.

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.

For three decades, Mercy Ships has focused our attention on strengthening the healthcare infrastructure found in the African countries we partner with.

Don Stephens
Founder
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 a faith-based international development organization that deploys teaching hospital ships to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free medical 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 life-saving and changing surgery for thousands of people in need.

Our Ships

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.

The Africa Mercy hospital:
- 5 operating theaters
- 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 theaters
- 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.

Also, 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.

In 2020, Mercy Ships rose to the challenging circumstances of the year and adapted our model to support crew, including waiving crew fees and assisting with crew repatriation for those needing to travel home from the ship due to COVID-19.

Feeding 450 volunteers and 65 patients onboard the Africa Mercy every day is hard work. Chef Serge Nzembele (from the Democratic Republic of Congo) and his team ensure that everyone is fed and happy. “My passion and pleasure is to serve food to our lovely and amazing crew onboard.”

“Growing up in Cameroon, I wondered how I could serve the people of Africa. I joined the Africa Mercy in December 2017. My responsibilities include maintaining the air conditioning units, oxygen supply to the hospital, system maintenance, and plumbing. I am happy to be part of the Engineering Team.”

Serge Nzembele, volunteer chef
A letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

Throughout this historic 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 a person 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 fulfill 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 despite the challenges the world faced this year, lives have continued to be changed. As you read through the 2020 Annual Report, I hope you are encouraged by all that has been accomplished. From our patients who were able to find life-changing healing onboard 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 International Board of Directors, I’d like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this year’s mission a success.

Thank you.

Myron E. Ullman, III
Chairman of the Board
Mercy Ships International

A word from the CEO

What an incredible year we have gone through! In 2020, we faced some of the most challenging and rewarding experiences in the history of Mercy Ships. While the spread of COVID-19 caused our hospital ship to leave the Senegal field service earlier than planned, our work did not stop.

God has continued to bless our mission this year. Thankfully, our teams were able to continue our work inland partnering with countries to provide supplies and training to those responding directly to the pandemic. And programs such as our partnership with the dental school at Gamal University in Guinea continued to thrive. We are thankful for all that was accomplished in this time of uncertainty thanks to the generous partnership of so many people like you.

Despite the challenges we faced in 2020, the year also brought two significant reasons to celebrate! We are excited to commemorate over 30 years of serving the people of Africa through our training programs and medical services. And with the imminent deployment of our newest ship the Global Mercy, we have the opportunity to provide even more hope and healing to the people we serve in the years ahead.

We look forward to the future knowing that there is still work to do. We will strive to continue fulfilling our mission with excellence.

Thank you.

Tom Stogner
Chief Executive Officer
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 holistic 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.
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 billions 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 7-month-old Mariama’s lip and nose, making it difficult for her to eat and causing her parents to worry about their child’s future.

Since pediatric 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 onboard the Africa Mercy that corrected her cleft lip. After surgery, Mariama and her family stayed at the HOPE Center, 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 her 42 years burdened by a cleft lip which made eating difficult and smiling almost impossible. Her family loved and cherished her, but, all too often, others seemed to be unable to see past her 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 onboard 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 recognize 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 recognize her when I first saw her!”
Aliou, Awa’s Husband

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 (PPEs) (valued at more than $151,000) including surgical caps, protective eye wear, 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.

March
$120,000 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 curriculum.

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.

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

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 lock-downs 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 Clinic in Conakry, Guinea, in partnership with World Health Initiative, we are using a telehealth device and three different 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. Westerdijn 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 programme will build local capacity and create a lasting impact on the community, ensuring their long-term needs are met despite COVID-19.

Technology has allowed us to quickly pivot and ensure that we can continue to support our partners.
In 1998, maxillofacial surgeon, Dr. Oumar Raphiou Diallo, took part in the Mercy Ships MCB programme and was mentored by the Chief Medical Officer onboard 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 specialized 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. 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 work and the combination of efforts by NGO’s in the country over the years, 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 tumors, 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, Dr. David Ugai, remained in Guinea and, along with the dental program team, has been providing high-quality dental training.

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.
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’Pele, 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.

30 years in Africa

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

Learning to walk — Sai’douba’s story

There is such strength and need in sub-Saharan Africa — a reality epitomized 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 wrecked 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!”

The Congolese physician 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.

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Above: Sai’douba (right) with Alason, before and after his surgery.
**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 realize it then, 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.

“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 its 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.
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.

Standing Straight and Tall — Assane and Ousseynoun’s story

Twin brothers Assane and Ousseynoun 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 Ousseynoun,” 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 traveled on a 213-mile journey 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 Ousseynoun and Assane received their surgeries, she was thrilled. “I was so happy,” she said.

A journey of 213 miles brought Assane and Ousseynoun 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 Ousseynoun 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.”

Awa

Below: Assane and Ousseynoun before and after surgery to straighten their legs.
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 organizations in the nations we serve. A collaborative effort has an increased impact. A protocol of commitment is signed, taking into account World Health Organization 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.

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 corona virus 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 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, holistic 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 rebuild, strengthen, heal, and restore hope to thousands of more people in the years ahead.
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*To request a financial report for the year 2020, please contact: development@mercyships.org

IMAGE: Anesthesia supervisor, Sara Kwok, shares a joyous moment with a craniofacial patient onboard the Africa Mercy.

Mercy Ships has provided:

- 2.84 million Direct beneficiaries
- 105,520+ Life-changing surgical procedures
- 489,000+ Dental procedures
- 49,100+ Training to professionals in their field of expertise
- 6,600+ Training to healthcare professionals to train others

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