



# Mercy Vision – South Africa

## Reducing Blindness among the poor

### Introduction

Blindness and vision impairment in South Africa, a country of forty six million, creates a detrimental impact on human and socioeconomic conditions. WHO (World Health Organisation) estimates nearly 80% of blindness is preventable or treatable with medical and surgical interventions. Cataracts are responsible for 48.7% of blindness. In addition, a growing number of children with treatable vision impairment do not have access to the necessary treatment.

### The Need

An estimated 400,000 South Africans are already blind – with approximately 240,000 of these blind from cataracts (official estimations). The cataract surgery rate for South Africa is higher than most other African nations, but still far below the Vision 2020 goal of 2,500 per million of population. The number of cataract cases is increasing each year and there are those who unofficially estimate the number of blind people from cataracts to be approaching 500,000. ***In addition, it is often children who are asked to care for the blind person in the family, thus disempowering them as far as formal education is concerned.***

### Goal

To reduce the prevalence of blindness/low vision due to cataracts by building sustainable capacity of the local eye care system particularly in the Eastern Cape.

### Objectives

#### 1. Cataract Surgical Training

- To train 2 cataract surgeons per year on board our Hospital Ship *AFRICA MERCY* (docked in Sierra Leone, West Africa)
- To provide a minimum surgical experience as Observing Surgeon in 20 cases, and Primary Surgeon in 100 cases.
- To train surgeons in techniques and technology that is replicable in most developing nations (Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery - MSICS)
- To qualify surgical trainees to a surgical standard of care that is defined by inadvertent vitreous loss of less than 10% and post op visual acuities of 6/12 or better in 95% of cases.
- To raise adequate funds to allow the project to be sustained for 3 years.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the training by tracking surgical activities of trainees for the 3 years following the training.
- Trained Surgeons will return to the Eastern Cape Province (the poorest and most underdeveloped Province in South Africa), to perform cataract surgeries for a combined 12 months per year, at the minimum rate of 20 per day.

## 2. Optometrist Training

- To Train 2 Optometrists per year on board our Hospital Ship *AFRICA MERCY* (docked in Sierra Leone, West Africa)
- To provide minimum screening experience to observe and screen a minimum of 100 patients per day, while in West Africa.
- To observe and be competent in an acceptable work flow/procedure to ensure an accurate and steady flow of cataract patients for surgery.

## Results/Outcomes



- Once back in the Eastern Cape, a flow of 20 accurately diagnosed Cataract Patients per day from screening sites where the optometrists are deployed
- 20 Cataract Operations per day per surgeon (against a current average of 5 per day per surgeon)
- 4,400 Blind people to regain their sight and be re-empowered. A 4 fold increase over the current average. **An additional 3300 blind people regaining sight per annum!**

Dr Gcobani Tuswa - 1st South African Trained Doctor

## Partners

The Eastern Cape Blindness Prevention Programme has as its main partners ***The Fred Hollows Foundation***, and the ***Eastern Cape Department of Health***. While Mercy Ships has developed deep and significant relationships with the Eastern Cape Department of Health, our primary working relationship has been through the Fred Hollows Foundation, and will continue to be so during 2011.

The Department of Health will provide the facilities within which the trained personnel returning from the *AFRICA MERCY* will function. These are modern surgical facilities and are reasonably well equipped to allow maximum productivity.

The Fred Hollows Foundation assists the department in developing programmes, Training of Nurses, supply of consumables as well as other logistical input.

Mercy Ships supplies the specialised Training expertise and an environment on board our Hospital Ship to maximise learning of skills and processes, due to the high volume and rapid throughput of eye care patients. What is learned on the ship can be replicated into the Eastern Cape Hospitals to ensure greater productivity and enable more unnecessary blind people to see.

Dr Glenn Strauss - Mercy Ships Trainer





## Funding Need for 2011

### Detailed Budget

Description	Need	Months	Cost/ Unit	Total Cost
<b>Operational</b>				
<b>Ship-Based Team (West Africa)</b>				
Ophthalmic Specialist Trainer	1	3	R 50,000	R 150,000
Optometrist Specialist Trainer	1	3	R 50,000	R 150,000
Training co-ordinator	1	6	R 15,000	R 90,000
SA Ophthalmic Trainees	2	6 weeks	R 60,000	R 120,000
SA Optometry Trainees	2	6 weeks	R 60,000	R 120,000
<b>Land-Based Team (South Africa)</b>				
Field Team Project Manager	1	12	R 24,000	R 288,000
Specialist to monitor progress	2	1	R 50,000	R 100,000
<b>Subtotal Operational</b>				<b>R1,018,000</b>
<b>Travel Costs</b>				
Trainees to Ship	4		R 18,000	R 72,000
Specialists to South Africa	2		R 18,000	R 36,000
<b>Subtotal Travel</b>				<b>R 108,000</b>
<b>Subtotal Project</b>				<b>R1,126,000</b>
General & Admin. @ 5%				R 56,300
<b>Total Project Cost</b>				<b>R1,182,300</b>

## Our Details



**Mercy Ships Southern Africa** (Association incorporated under Section 21)

**Registration No.** 98/18381/08

NPO Reg. No: 006-142 NPO

PBO Number : 930 027 945 (including Section 18(a) of the Income Tax Act)

**Account Details:** Standard Bank, Blue Route,  
Branch Code 025609,  
Account No. 072051604

**Address:** 3 Kendal Mews, 134 Main Road, Diepriver, 7800  
Cape Town, South Africa

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 290, Plumstead 7801

**Telephone:** +27 21 715 4944

**Fax:** +27 21 715 4945

**E-mail:** [mssa@mercyships.org](mailto:mssa@mercyships.org)

**Website:** [www.mercyships.org.za](http://www.mercyships.org.za)

**Directors:** B F Dudley (RSA), L. Dudley (RSA), R.J. Sangster

**National Director :** J.H. Rae (RSA)

