



## SERVICE PROJECT SHEET Mercy Ships



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### Project name:

Mercy Ships (UK Registered Charity no.1053055) (including *Africa Mercy* Appeal Registered Charity SC020037)

### Project goals:

Mercy Ships' governing principle is that of serving the poor. Mercy Ships aims to bring health care to those who have no access to medical treatment, and to assist disadvantaged communities through development projects. The completion of the latest ship, the *Africa Mercy*, will effectively double the medical capacity of her predecessors.

### Rotary service type:

Fund-raising, volunteering and donation of equipment

### Unique selling point:

The ships are staffed by volunteers from over 40 nations, who raise their own finances to become a crew member, paying towards the cost of living on board by way of monthly crew fees. The average cost per month for a single person on board is £375, which includes mandatory insurance cover. It is because of these charges that Mercy Ships is able to provide medical care and development aid at an economic cost to the organisation and free of charge to recipients.

### Description:

In the world's poorest nations the need for health education, development and medical aid has never been more urgent. Water-borne diseases kill an estimated 30,000 children every day, while common and easily correctible birth defects such as cleft lips and palates cause children to become outcasts, rejected by their parents and communities and denied even basic schooling. Almost 90% of the world's blind live in the most deprived communities, and more than half of them would be able to see following a one-hour operation. Mercy Ships is an international charity which uses hospital ships to promote health and well-being by serving the urgent surgical needs of the forgotten poor and empowering developing communities.

The most recent addition to the fleet is a former Danish rail ferry, renamed the *Africa Mercy*, which has undergone conversion in Newcastle to become the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship, containing six operating theatres, a 78-bed ward and over 470 volunteers.

The charity aims to make a lasting difference in people's lives in every way possible, and since 1978 has completed more than 800 community development projects including construction of schools, health clinics, orphanages, water wells and agriculture programmes. Thousands of local health workers have been trained, and in turn have trained thousands more in basic health education, while more than £18 million worth of medical equipment, hospital supplies and medicines have been provided for community use. In addition to more than 200,000 people treated in village medical clinics, over 162,000 dental treatments and over 26,000 operations such as cleft lip and palate, cataract, crossed eyes, orthopaedic and facial reconstruction have been performed.

The 'New Steps' programme has fitted thousands of custom-made prosthetic limbs and splints, and the Aberdeen Clinic and Fistula Centre is helping the many thousands of women for whom incontinence, pain and expulsion from their communities is the sad reality of their childbearing experience. While the global figure for maternal deaths per 100,000 live births is 430, the comparable figure for Africa is 6,350, highlighting the urgent need for the medical care and health education services, which Mercy Ships can provide.

Benefits to club:

An easily identifiable way of providing the most cost-effective hands-on help where it is needed most. An opportunity to provide items of equipment for the *Africa Mercy*, or to join short-term Rotary Mission Challenge teams in Africa. Clubs in RIBI have been funding an ophthalmic operating theatre by donations big and small over the last year, and this project is nearing completion. Once this current project is completed Clubs will be able to raise funds for the "ROTARY INTERNATIONAL LOUNGE" on the *Africa Mercy*. A plaque will bear an inscription marking the Rotary support. Donations, payable to Mercy Ships Africa Mercy appeal, should be sent to one of the addresses below. The project for Rotary Mission Challenge will be an Adult multi-purpose Medical Centre as an extension to the Aberdeen Clinic and Fistula Centre in Sierra Leone – which has already seen much Rotary support. The new area will provide accommodation for specialist medical clinics and care.

Contacts for further information and to arrange speaker:

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or any member of the RIBI International Service Committee.

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