



Changing Lives One Smile at a Time

BACKGROUND

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(Photos available upon request)

Operation Smile Offers Extensive Education Programs Abroad and in U.S. to Build Self-Sufficiency

Operation Smile invests in sustainable development by providing our 26 partner countries with medical training and credentialing, quality assurance, and state-of-the-art equipment and supplies, enabling them to provide advanced treatment for their own children. In addition to working side-by-side with in-country doctors and nurses during international medical missions, Operation Smile volunteers also offer hands-on training and lectures during each international medical mission. As a result, in more than half of our mission countries, doctors and other health care professionals use the Operation Smile mission model as a basis to conduct medical missions or year-round programs on their own. Through our customized initiatives such as mission-based education, local mission workshops and education exchanges, our partner countries are given the skills to treat children with their own resources, their own volunteers, their own supplies and their own medical professionals.

Physicians' Training Program

Operation Smile's annual Physicians' Training Program (PTP) gives physicians from our mission countries the opportunity learn new surgical techniques and to expand their knowledge through lectures, lab rotations, and operating room observation. The goal of PTP, which is held in Norfolk, Va., is to train medical professionals to care for children in their own countries, furthering our mission of helping its partner countries attain self-sufficiency. PTP includes plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pediatricians, dentists and nurses. Part of PTP includes specialty training at Operation Smile partner institutions. Nurses receive specialty training at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va.; dental participants trained at the University of Maryland Dental School in Baltimore; anesthesia participants traveled to George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; pediatric participants were trained at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and plastic surgery participants trained at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. In addition, anesthesiologists and pediatricians train at Tidewater Center for Life Support in Norfolk to receive Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) certifications, required to participate in Operation Smile medical missions. Nursing participants also receive training in PALS at Tidewater Center for Life Support.

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Basic Life Support (BLS) training is conducted at Old Dominion University for nursing and dental participants. Since 1987, more than 700 medical professionals have participated in PTP.

Mission-Based Education

As well as providing treatment opportunities for patients, Operation Smile international medical missions also present educational opportunities to in-country healthcare professionals. Ranging from a formal medical conference, to an informal workshop on a specific skill or technique, the programs are designed to meet the needs of the facility and the healthcare workers from within the partner country. This can include donations of education resources including textbooks, medical mannequins, CD-ROMS or videos so that education can continue year-round. Team members from the mission are selected to fulfill this educational role along with their clinical responsibilities. At times, the team includes ‘Guest Educators’ who are internationally recognized in their fields.

University Partnerships

Operation Smile is integrating its partnerships with leading medical teaching institutions into its in-country medical education programs. Operation Smile’s partners in education will be aligned with specific Operation Smile treatment centers within its partner countries. Programs and curriculum are developed to support the treatment of Operation Smile patients within the country’s medical infrastructure. Operation Smile’s partners include the American Heart Association, Chang Gung Hospital and University (Taiwan), Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Duke University, George Washington University, Harvard University, The Hospital for Sick Children/University of Toronto, Old Dominion University, Southern Illinois University, University of Maryland, University of Rom, University of Southern California and Yale University.

Research Program

Through Operation Smile’s Research Council, doctors and researchers are collaborating globally to improve the future for children born with facial deformities. The Operation Smile Institutional Review Board (IRB), following stipulations of the federal government, reviews and funds selected research projects. The Board works in conjunction with the Research Council that is focused on the prevention and treatment of birth defects through education, nutrition, pre-natal care, new medicines and equipment. In 2007, Operation Smile conducted a research project during *World Journey of Smiles*, in partnership with Yale University, to study the genetic causes of cleft lip and cleft palate. Research data and DNA samples were collected in more than half of the 25 participating countries to be analyzed and screened with the hope of identifying the genetic markers that differentiate the population of people with cleft lip and cleft palate with the hope of finding a causal link.