Operation Smile Organizational History

Operation Smile is a children’s medical charity with a presence in more than 60 countries across 6 continents committed to continuing and furthering our efforts to improve child survival and health around the world. By mobilizing more than 5,000 highly-specialized volunteer medical professionals from 76 countries, Operation Smile provides free reconstructive surgery and associated services for children born with facial deformities as well as children in need of surgery due to injury or other maladies.

Operation Smile has nearly 30 years of experience providing surgical and associated medical services for patients, as well as related medical education and training for local health professionals. Operation Smile works collaboratively with local and national governments and ministries of health, local hospitals, teaching institutions, professional associations, private companies and local nongovernmental and civil society organizations to create sustainable programs around the world. Operation Smile is a registered, nonprofit organization in the United States, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia.

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Medical Education & Training

For nearly 30 years, Operation Smile has built a network of over 5,000 medical volunteers from 76 countries who provide technical medical education and training to local healthcare professionals in developing countries across Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Operation Smile has leveraged its expertise in surgery, anesthesia, nursing, critical care, pediatrics and disaster medicine to provide thousands of medical and paramedical professionals in developing countries with practical skills to improve the quality of their local healthcare delivery systems.

By collaborating with local governments, universities, medical associations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, Operation Smile ensures that the medical training and education we deliver contribute to capacity building and strengthening of local health systems.
Delivering Quality Care Around the World

In addition to providing surgery and related medical services around the world, Operation Smile engages local healthcare professionals by offering innovative and continuing medical education and hands-on training and mentoring. Due to our success in training and motivating local medical volunteers, over 60% of all surgeries conducted during our programs are now performed by local healthcare professionals who have received training from Operation Smile.

Clinical-skills training

Operation Smile provides ongoing practical clinical skills training for local healthcare professionals during our surgical programs at local hospitals worldwide as well as in our 12 specialized Comprehensive Care Centers, which offer year-round surgical treatment and related care.

Hands-on clinical training is tailored to the needs of local healthcare professionals and includes education in areas such as:

- **Surgery**: general, plastic, craniofacial, reconstructive, trauma, orthopedic, burn, and microsurgery techniques and best practices;

- **Anesthesia**: difficult airway management, intubation, pain management, pediatric anesthesia, and emergency case management;

- **Nursing**: pre- and post-operative, operating room, recovery room and intensive care nursing;

- **Pediatrics**: identification and treatment of infant and childhood illness, critical care pediatrics, treatment of severe malnutrition, and patient and family education; and

- **Biomedical technology**: training local staff at health facilities to appropriately clean, maintain, repair and store valuable medical equipment, supplies and surgical instruments.

Life Support Programming

- **As a global partner of the American Heart Association**, Operation Smile **conducts life support training programs and training of trainers** around the world in Basic Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support programs. Over the last decade, we have certified more than **11,000 healthcare professionals** from over 34 countries.

- **In a recent survey**, 85% of course participants stated they had saved a life with the critical skills learned in these trainings.

### Innovative and Continuing Medical Education

Operation Smile recognizes that continuing medical education **motivates local healthcare professionals** while also providing them with ongoing opportunities to **improve their skills**. To foster these opportunities, we have:

- Developed an eLearning website and multidisciplinary online training program for local healthcare professionals in developing countries, allowing them to continue to develop their skills from anywhere in the world.

- Invested in hundreds of young medical professionals in developing countries to help cultivate the next generation of humanitarian leaders. Surgery and anesthesia residents from developing countries are offered scholarships to participate in international humanitarian aid programming opportunities with Operation Smile.

- Collaborated with teaching hospitals and universities across the globe to offer short- and long-term educational exchange programs to healthcare professionals from developing countries to give them an opportunity to engage in intensive, skills-based training that may not be available in their own country.

### Jordan

In Jordan, most healthcare professionals have no training in resuscitation and basic life support skills that can save thousands of lives. As a result, Operation Smile Jordan established a facility to train volunteer instructors and provide Basic Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support training programs for healthcare providers across Jordan. This program has significantly raised the capacity of healthcare professionals to provide these services to all people. The volunteer instructors at Operation Smile Jordan have joined Operation Smile’s global efforts and are actively providing training to healthcare professionals around the world.

### Vietnam

Children with clefts face numerous health and survival problems, including a delay in the onset of speech and ongoing problems articulating or speaking intelligibly. In the developing world, these problems often mean that children are hidden away and denied the opportunity to attend school, form relationships or participate meaningfully in their communities. While surgery is necessary for these children to develop normal speech, appropriate speech therapy is also essential to comprehensive treatment. Academic training programs for speech pathologists exist in very few countries in the developing world. Due to the lack of these specialists and the very high incidence of cleft lip and cleft palate in Vietnam, Operation Smile Vietnam developed a certificate program to instruct healthcare workers in speech language support for post-surgical cleft patients. Many children with clefts and other speech problems are now able to learn proper articulation and speech patterns that give them a chance to become contributing members of their communities.

### India

The state of Assam in India has a population of approximately 29 million people and only a few plastic surgeons. Due to the overwhelming need for cleft lip and cleft palate surgery and the tens of thousands of children with untreated facial deformities in this area, Operation Smile and our local affiliate, Operation Smile India, have entered into a public-private partnership with the government of Assam, the National Rural Health Mission, and the Tata Trust to develop a Comprehensive Care Center to provide surgery for children with facial deformities and ongoing medical education and capacity building for local healthcare professionals. The Center is constructed so that training and educational programs can be conducted remotely and also houses a simulation lab for life support training courses and programs aimed at improving anesthesia, nursing, and surgical techniques. Operation Smile’s team at the Center also has developed a comprehensive curriculum for surgery, anesthesia, pediatrics, and nursing care associated with clefts, and is working with the local medical college and nursing school to include this curricula in its coursework. Operation Smile is also working with community health workers in Assam to provide basic interventions for children with clefts, and identify and refer these children for surgery.