



## Children's Orthopedics Education for Developing Nations

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## “Training the Trainers” in Under-Resourced, Low Income Countries

I am Mark Barry, a 8 yr. retired pediatric orthopedic, tumor and scoliosis surgeon originally from Ottawa, Canada. After training there and in Toronto, I practiced in Las Vegas for 19 years and Hawaii for two. I have done many teaching missions in developing countries since 2010. I quickly developed a passion and in 2014 I came up with an efficient, sustainable, high-impact model to train the trainers- Children's Orthopedics Education for Developing Nations (COEDN.org). This is part of my 501(c)3 NGO- Global Help Initiative. Together with my many volunteer pediatric orthopedic surgeon colleagues we use our skills and experience to teach orthopedic surgeons at the fellowship level to become the surgeon-trainers of tomorrow. Starting in Sept. 2016, in conjunction with the Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 11 of us taught 3 orthopedic surgeon fellows over an 18 month period to establish the first pediatric orthopedic training program in a country of 60 million. In the developed world, that numerator is around 150 surgeons... in Tanzania alone! This program was accredited by the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA), as will be most future programs (hopefully many) I will help establish.

I am proud to say our 3 graduates in Tanzania are now training 4 fellows of their own! COSECSA has named it a "Center of Training Excellence".

This formula can work in many other centers, in all other disciplines of graduate medical education everywhere in the developing world. The key component is recently retired, highly experienced trainers (or those younger adventure-seekers on sabbaticals) who can give a meaningful 4-6 weeks each to train these select physicians in-country over a pre-determined period where they would become fully trained sub-specialists by western standards. Our trainers are sent sequentially, back-to-back to provide a full-time academic curriculum and hands-on surgical training. The trainees benefit immensely from being the lead surgeons on every case, and don't have to leave the country to train abroad- a huge workforce benefit, plus it minimizes the chance for “brain-drain” (emigration).

The second key component is to hone an experienced leader(s), a designated in-country program director to administer the future permanent, accredited training center.

Extreme cases of neglected pediatric orthopedic conditions and high case volume will provide both fellows and surgeon- volunteers with the most challenging and interesting experiences.

We seek formal accreditation from the relevant academic entity and enter into necessary agreements with government. After the 1-2 years of training (variable- based on competency of trainees at entry), the trainees and local director set up their own national-international training center to train others, at all levels, not only at the fellowship level.

Our 2nd and current training site is at CoRSU Hospital in Uganda (corsuhospital.org) which started in December 2019 and is running for 18 months. (Recently restarted after a 2.5 year pandemic hold). They are an established, very well run NGO nonprofit pediatric orthopedic and plastic surgery hospital with 7 orthopedic surgeons, 3 of whom are currently in training. Accreditation (FCS) is through the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa.

I am a proud Rotarian (RC Del Mar, Dist. 5340). The Rotary Foundation provided our program with a Vocational Training Team (VTT) Global Grant (GG1988382) utilized to support our visiting trainers with airfare, accommodations, a meal allowance, visa and incidentals. This is approx. \$7300/ trainer (hence we need at least a 4 week commitment). With a total of 17 rotations, the grant is \$120K. We have built on the successful recent similar Tanzania program VTT grant (GG1864829) as a template and have partnered with a willing and committed local host- The Rotary Club of Kajjansi, Uganda.

Our next Fellowship training program is in Rwanda, commencing Jan. 1, 2024, including the potential for training pediatric spine... a first for eastern sub-Saharan Africa. This will also be a 2 year fellowship to train 3 surgeons, with a similar budget.

Mark Barry M.D.

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