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Dr Korpisah, is the medical director of St. Anthony's hospital in Dzodze Ghana. He is also lecturer of the University of Health & Allied Sciences in Ghana. Dr Rompa is an orthopedic surgeon from the Netherlands, working internationally, who is currently supporting the orthopedic program in Ghana.

### **Establishing and sustaining access to trauma and orthopedic services**

#### ***Experience from the catholic health service in Ghana***

A Dutch Orthopaedic shoemaker noticed that orthotic services were virtually nonexistent in Ghana (1960). He decided to establish such services at the most deprived but strategic regions in Ghana. For this he engaged the services of an experienced expatriate orthopaedic surgeon to help with the corrective surgeries.

Together they created local interest in their project. Two local doctors were given scholarships to study orthopaedics and trauma and a third was encouraged to enter the Ghana postgraduate training program. With the acquired necessary skilled personnel they set off to establish basic infrastructure for Orthopaedics and Trauma services in three district hospitals. The necessary equipment was acquired through personnel effort and the help of Donor Agencies.

In 2003 the National Health Insurance Scheme was established in Ghana. This has since helped to further improve access, as ability to pay for services is no more a major barrier to seeking surgical care.

The three orthopaedic centers are now offering a broad spectrum of corrective Orthopaedic surgery, Trauma care, and other conditions that need prompt surgical treatment. Regularly expatriate surgical support is still given to consolidate the skills of the local specialists.

In conclusion to increase access to surgical care: constructing a physical structure is one thing but to create a sustainable system, willing local specialists should be resourced and continuously trained and good health care policy needs to be in place to be able to offer prompt essential and affordable care to local people.

**Dr Korpisah is supported by 'Orthopedie Overzee' (of the Dutch Orthopaedic Society)**