



President's Report 2018-19

Delivered by Dr. Jacques Corcos, September 16th 2019
at the Foundation's Annual General Assembly

Dear friends,

2018-19 proved to be a complicated year. We had some very good news, like the birth of two new Foundation babies: Stephanie's adorable Zach, and Andrea's magnificent baby Felix. These two babies have understandably taken some of their mother's attention away from the Foundation, and evidently we have felt the effect of that.



The workload has fallen on the remaining few. Furthermore, we lost Melissa, our Director of Operations. All this has left quite a void!

We might as well say it, the bulk of the work has been taken on by two very devoted foundation members: Valerie, my favorite daughter, who has done a fantastic management and coordination job for the past year, and without whom the departure of Melissa would've been much more catastrophic. The foundation's other unshakeable pillar is Maria. Maria is incredibly available and keenly vigilant for anything which may be of interest for the foundation. She also possesses quite a talent in graphic design and communications.



Obviously, Valerie and Maria are not the only ones whose work should be highlighted; I'm thinking of the volunteers who participated on missions. We must remember that these professional men and women, who lead busy work and family lives, take close to two weeks off from work, often without pay, to help the destitute populations we care for.

Since our last General Assembly, we have completed three missions. A Franco-Canadian mission led by Dr. Gilles Karsenty followed our last General Assembly in June 2018. In November 2018, we sent a Canadian mission which I led myself. I then also headed the following mission in April 2019 which was in conjunction with our French partners.



Obviously, every one of these missions brought about a lot of work and good times. Our surgeries are always delicate and complex, but in the end are very satisfying for most of the women and for us too of course. Our results are difficult to collect because a good number of the women do not come back to see us, so we then assume that they are healed, but it isn't that simple. Until we can establish a systematic follow-up of these women, we will not know our results with certainty. This is part of our immediate plans.

Two of the missions were in collaboration with our French partners. In fact, after long discussions, we have come to an agreement with the members of the *Enfant Femmes Espoir – Burkina* Foundation, our

French partners in Burkina Faso, who will dissolve their association and create a French branch of MMS. This new entity, which will give us access to a group of motivated professionals, will coordinate its actions with ours from now on. Although its management will be French, it will be supervised by one joint Board of Directors. This way, we hope to complete more missions, to further invest ourselves in prevention and training, and intervene in other countries where our partners already have contacts.

Among the other great news, we must mention the nomination of our new Honorary President, Dr. Denis Mukwege. The Nobel Peace Prize recipient has kindly accepted our nomination for the next two years. We are hopeful that he will accept an invitation to give a symposium, organized by MMS in Spring 2020, on aid to women in the context of humanitarian missions.



Our next mission will have a new aspect, it will take place in Kigali and not in Ruhengeri, and will primarily focus on teaching. In fact, two Rwandan gynecologists have been identified as the future of Rwandan gynecology, and will be following the local activities of the Foundation for two years in order to acquire as many fistula prevention and treatment notions as possible. During this mission in Kigali, we will also be offering classes to local urologists, gynecologists and anesthesiologists.

Finally, we should absolutely mention that none of this would be possible without our supporters who finance our Foundation so generously. Make no mistake, this financing is not easy to obtain and has greatly rested, for many years now, on the shoulders of the same friends and acquaintances. All I can do is thank them and admire their generosity for a cause which is so far removed from their daily concerns. Among these loyal friends, we must highlight the OVE Company, Michele Boisvert for Homeocan, and our new association with Viita, a reusable adult diaper company with whom we have some good upcoming projects. I would also like to mention the ongoing and much appreciated support from the pharmaceutical companies who provide us with equipment, in particular Cardinal Health, Stortz Canada, Johnson & Johnson and many more who allow us to be well-equipped for our missions.

When it comes to government financing, we are once again hitting a wall due to the complexity of the application process. Our application for a \$7M grant, which was very time consuming because of its complex nature, was ultimately rejected even though an initial acceptance after the first reading had raised our hopes.

To improve this financing issue, a few years ago we identified the need to recruit a person who will be employed by the foundation, and whose main objective will be to find recurring financing sources to ensure our foundation's sustainability. After having Melissa with us for a bit over a year, we have now recruited Julie Gagné who comes to us with good management experience and an impressive list of contacts. We welcome her and wish her luck. The objectives that we have entrusted her with are ambitious but attainable. I am convinced that she will achieve them with ease. Welcome Julie!

Before concluding, I would like to warmly thank the members of the Board of Directors who work diligently and quietly month after month to make sure the foundation continues to function without any bumps in the road. We will be introducing a small change to the frequency of the meetings with all the members of the Board. Going forward, those meetings will take place every quarter. An executive committee composed of the President, Director of Development, General Director, Treasurer, Secretary, and one or two additional members will continue to meet monthly and will report to the rest of the Board during those quarterly meetings.

This is my report for this past year, I am very satisfied with the work we accomplished and the relief we have been able to provide to a handful of women for whom healing isn't just another drop in the sea, but rather a sea of joy.

Thank you all for your great work!