This Africa Day: A Beacon of Hope - Dr. Fabruce's dedication to Madagascar

He aims to develop a better medical future for his fellow citizens and has already outlined a plan for the construction of a new hospital.

TOAMASINA, Madagascar, May 24, 2024, Dr. Fabruce Ramaherimamonjy epitomizes the African Union's theme of this year's Africa Day: Educate an African fit for the 21st Century. He remains steadfast in his commitment to prioritizing medical education to elevate the standards of healthcare for his fellow Malagasies. But it wasn't always his life plan.

Dr. Fabruce began his medical journey with just a simple kit gifted to him upon his graduation, housing a humble headlamp that would become his steadfast companion. Fast forward 15 years, and he stands as the visionary behind Bethany Hospital Centre in Tamatave. Today, he sets his sights on the horizon, envisioning a future adorned with elevated levels of medical education.

Born and raised in the northern region of Madagascar, Dr. Fabruce harbored a grand ambition of becoming an engineer. He had a knack for fixing things, but when he applied for engineering school, he faced rejection. Never did he consider medicine as an alternative path. It wasn't even on his radar. In fact, he discouraged a friend who nursed dreams of becoming a doctor, warning him, "You'll waste time; the training takes eight years." However, both men submitted their applications and were accepted to medical school.

After seven years, he finished his general medical studies and decided to take a gap year to devote more attention to Bible studies. "Everything changed with a call from my mother," according to Dr. Fabruce. "She informed me of an opening at the medical school in Majunga (Northern Madagascar), urging me to apply within a month." That would mean he had to study for another five years to specialize as a surgeon.

He told himself, "If I can't find a place to stay, I'll continue my sabbatical." Upon arrival, the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) warmly welcomed him on the first day, swiftly arranging accommodation.

Supported by PAACS, which often dispatched its students on missions abroad, including to Mercy Ships, he began on a new chapter. "In 2016, I joined the Mercy Ships mission in Tamatave, devoting three months to serving in the hospital, assisting doctors in plastic surgery and fistula treatments," said Dr. Fabruce. Following these operations, Dr. Gary Parker, a long-term and well-respected volunteer maxillofacial surgeon with Mercy Ships, took his laptop and provided extra lessons to Dr. Fabruce.

During these sessions in the operating room, Dr. Parker said to him: "We thought Madagascar's healthcare system was improving since our last visit, but it appears progress has been limited. I know you are planning to do your practice in another nation, but I would urge you to consider returning to serve in your own country."

Initially planning to dedicate two years to Cameroon after his time with Mercy Ships and then transition to Congo, his trajectory shifted. Following dialogues with Dr. Parker and heartfelt conversations with patients' families, he recognized the urgent needs within his homeland.

Dr. Fabruce recalled: "One poignant memory that remains vivid is the case of a young boy whose head had become fused to his shoulder due to a burn injury. These are preventable medical conditions, not inherently complex. Yet, no one in Madagascar could provide assist."

Inspired by the wise words of Dr. Parker and driven by the daily medical challenges he faced, Dr. Fabruce sought sponsorship to shape his ambitious plans.

"In 2018, we turned a mere warehouse into the Bethany Hospital Center in Tamatave. Today, we offer 35 beds, with a team of 13 dedicated doctors, 8 of whom are full-time, and supported by a staff of 70," he said.

He takes pride in what he has accomplished, even though the maternity ward is housed in containers, as the land is not his own. The equipment he works with is outdated and discarded in the Western world, but it still serves its purpose in his hands.

At the back of the hospital, he has a large shed he jokingly refers to as his personal Amazon, given the number of cardboard boxes. He said: "Inside are obsolete medical supplies that may still prove useful. Some items' purposes remain a mystery to me, as I am yet to acquire that knowledge." And that, according to him, is where the problem lies: lack of knowledge.

He is in harmony with this year's Africa Day theme - Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa.

Dr. Fabruce is determined to continue his own mission: serving his country.

He aims to develop a better medical future for his fellow citizens and has already outlined a plan for the construction of a new hospital. He is adamant about prioritizing education to elevate the medical standards in Madagascar.



Dr. Fabruce Ramaherimamonjy

"Inspired by Dr. Parker's insights, I remain steadfast in my commitment to prioritizing education as the foundation for raising Madagascar's medical standards," Dr. Fabruce added.

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