

Special Report

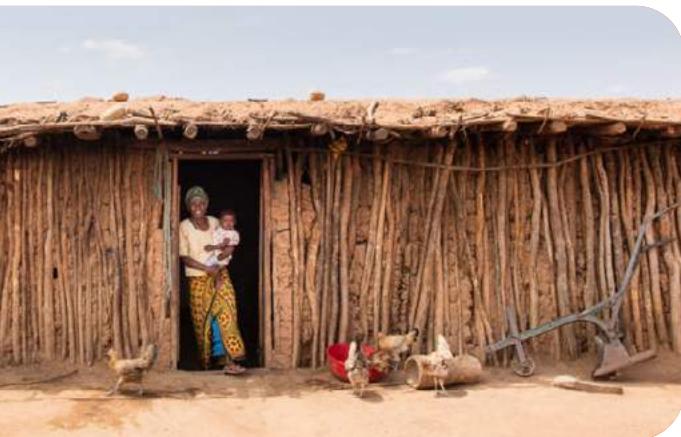
ReSurge International Program in Africa (RIPA)

Sub-Saharan Africa has the most acute shortage of reconstructive surgical care in the world, with approximately one reconstructive surgeon for every 10 million people.

The ReSurge International Program in Africa (RIPA) confronts this deficit by increasing the pipeline of medical professionals to provide reconstructive surgery in the region, while also providing financial support to qualified reconstructive surgeons in the region who provide care for the poor.

The RIPA program provides training, curriculum development, scholarships, regional study exchanges, exam and membership fees, and eLearning centers for places of study. ReSurge is proud to partner with the College of Surgeons of East, Central, and Southern Africa (COSECSA).

“The partnership between ReSurge and COSECSA will be instrumental in changing the way reconstructive surgery is taught and performed throughout the continent. Thanks to ReSurge’s partnership with COSECSA, currently all plastic and reconstructive surgery trainees in COSECSA are supported, and there is no trainee that is left behind.”
—Dean Abebe Bekele, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and Research Affairs, and Dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE).



RIPA 2021 Milestones

This past fiscal year, we were excited to name and launch our ReSurge International Program in Africa (RIPA) in full. While we were not able to facilitate international travel or in-person training due to the pandemic, COVID-19 actually allowed us to expand our reach by getting to know more reconstructive trainees in countries that we had not originally planned for. Our robust virtual training offerings are evidence of ReSurge's commitment to continual evolution in our training practices.



“One thing this pandemic has taught us is the importance of focusing on local capacity building and thinking outside the box in terms of finding unique ways to connect and train surgical teams.”

Natalie Meyers

Director of Africa Programs & Advocacy

Here is a look at some of our achievements this past fiscal year:

Established a new partnership with Mulago Hospital in Kampala, Uganda

Established seven new scholarships to support month-long regional study exchanges and cover the exam fees and five years of COSECSA memberships to promising African reconstructive surgeons

Hosted 36+ virtual trainings for African surgeons

Served more than 350 patients

Added a new Surgical Outreach Partner, Dr. Peter Nthumba at AIC Kijabe in Kenya

Kicked off a monthly series of lectures with the College of Anesthesiologists of East, Central and Southern Africa (CANECSA)

eLearning Center

Our robust program of virtual training and lectures for surgeons, nurses, therapists, and anesthesiologists have allowed us to expand our reach and impact all over the world.

But, like with all new systems, it quickly became apparent that there was a gap in the model. Several of our reconstructive surgical trainees in Uganda were logging into ReSurge's virtual trainings from their personal cell phones and the data charges required to access these free lectures were cost prohibitive. Dr. Rose Alenyo, the Mulago Hospital Program Director, shared this obstacle with ReSurge, and we quickly worked together to figure out how to arrange for the trainees to gain reliable internet access and a dedicated place to learn and study. ReSurge was

able to help sponsor an eLearning Center which was completed in the spring of 2021, giving Mulago Hospital in Uganda a safe place for reliable wi-fi and learning. The impact of this eLearning center at Mulago Hospital has been huge. This training center is available not only to reconstructive surgical trainees, but also to nurses, anesthesiologists and other clinicians. By increasing access to learning resources, there is a significant impact on the number of patients who will be treated each year as well as the quality of patient care.



Meet Dr. Seif Nuru

Dr. Seif Nuru, a general surgeon from Tanzania, studying at Mulago Hospital in Uganda, is our first Annual Reconstructive Surgery Scholarship recipient.

This full scholarship allows one promising young surgeon to spend one year at a ReSurge training hub in Africa to learn reconstructive surgery and then return to his or her home country to treat local patients. Dr. Seif Nuru is from a rural area in Tanzania, a country of 58 million people and only one certified reconstructive surgeon, who graduated as recently as December 2020. With such a scarcity of reconstructive surgeons, Dr. Nuru, a general surgeon, became passionate about reconstructive surgery after working with a number

of ReSurge visiting surgical volunteers during our trips to his country, and because of the large burden of burn cases he receives due to open fire cooking in the rural setting where he works. To further the career of this promising reconstructive surgeon, we provided him with our first annual scholarship award to study for one year with surgical experts at Mulago Hospital in Uganda. This scholarship was made possible by a generous ReSurge volunteer who saw the value of such a program.



“I have no words to express my feelings, but I am so very happy I feel like crying. I know how lucky I am. I never imagined that people thousands of kilometers away would see my potential and look for ways to help me. I come from a poor family, I am the first to get a degree, the first to travel out of our village and first to travel out of Tanzania.”

Dr. Seif Nuru



Meet Dr. Tinga Nyoni

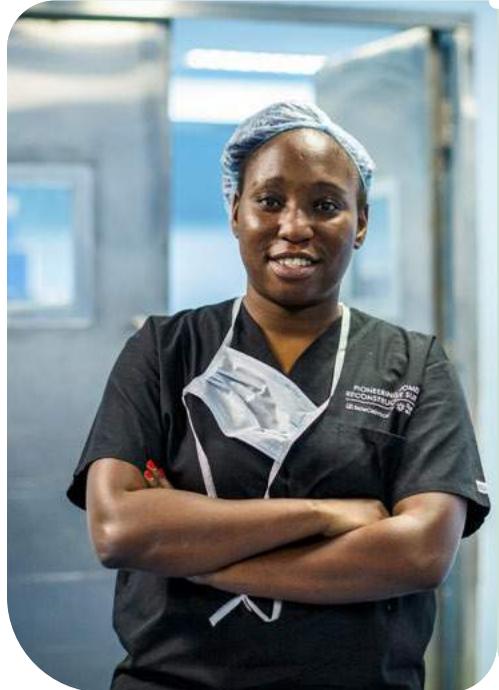
A Pioneering Woman in Reconstructive Surgery with the Highest Board Scores in the Region

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the global surgery sector hard. All international travel was canceled and non-essential surgeries were put on hold, contributing to what would become one of the largest surgical backlogs of our time. At ReSurge, we turned the challenges of a global pandemic into an opportunity to inspire, train, fund, and scale more reconstructive surgical teams around the world than ever before. How were we able to do this? There is no one better to tell that story than Dr. Tinga Nyoni, a ReSurge partner and scholar from Zimbabwe who not only passed her boards, but also received the highest score across the 14 countries comprising the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA) — all during a pandemic.

Dr. Nyoni is part of our ReSurge International Program in Africa (RIPA), a program we started to address the severe shortage of reconstructive surgeons in the region. She is also a COSECSA fellow and a member of the second cohort of Pioneering Women in Reconstructive Surgery (PWRS), a program created by ReSurge and SkinCeuticals to support and empower women in the field of reconstructive surgery.

“When the pandemic started, most of the reconstructive surgery cases weren’t being done because most of the big hospitals went into emergency mode,” Dr. Nyoni explained. “This not only created a backlog of surgeries, but stopped trainees from getting time in operating rooms, which meant we were unable to learn how to perform surgeries, and be properly prepared for our board exams.”

When COVID-19 restricted travel, ReSurge quickly pivoted to a robust virtual training program. Over



the course of the year, we delivered 98 virtual lectures to more than 2,800 overseas trainees across 31 countries. This dramatic shift was critical in ensuring emerging medical professionals like Dr. Nyoni could still benefit from the teachings of our world-renowned surgeons even while they couldn’t get all of the normal hands-on training they typically would receive. Dr. James Chang, ReSurge’s Consulting Medical Officer and the Chief of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Stanford University, led small group board prep sessions for Zimbabwe’s COSECSA trainees. Dr. Chang personally mentored Dr. Nyoni, helping her prepare for her boards when getting operating time was impossible. In fact, Dr. Nyoni credits her one-on-one mentoring with Dr. Chang as a large part of how she received the highest score in the region. She says the changes ReSurge made were an important pivot, “instead of having everything go to a standstill, ReSurge has had a great impact.”



"I do hope this continues because there are other surgeons that are coming down the pipeline that would benefit from ReSurge just as much as I have benefited from them, so I urge them not to stop, not to give up."

Dr. Tinga Nyoni

Dr. Nyoni originally got involved in ReSurge by attending workshops when a visiting educator team would work in the operating room at her hospital in Harare, performing surgeries while also training local surgeons in special cases. Her supervisor was a member of the first PWRS cohort and suggested she would make an excellent member. As a woman in the surgical field, Dr. Nyoni appreciates having a community of women who are there to support each other, "Through the PWRS program, I've gotten to meet a lot of female surgeons who are in a similar situation as I am. It's nice to get to know people and to know that you're not the only one on the continent suffering from the same issues." She says that ReSurge is helping her see what's possible for her, and for the future of women surgeons. "I have a mentor, Dr. Paige Fox of Stanford University, who is a hand surgeon that ReSurge connected me with. What's nice is that she's also a woman and it's very encouraging to see that a woman can be so big in her field. It gives me inspiration."

While Dr. Nyoni is now one of only three reconstructive surgeons in the country of Zimbabwe,

she continues to look for ways she can further help meet her community's needs, and she plans to train in hand surgery, stating, "It's a field that doesn't have any specialists in Zimbabwe. It's an area that is lacking and a lot of people may not get to use their hands because people get unnecessary amputations or they end up with a stiff hand that might have been treated better and therefore usable."

Dr. Nyoni looks forward to a time when current trainees can become trainers as well, when they can create outreach programs and go to rural communities, to do workshops where there are smaller hospitals, so patients don't need to be referred to big cities like Harare for surgery.

"What I'd like people to know is, ReSurge's training model is making quite a big impact. And it's something that I hope not only continues but becomes a lot more ingrained into our programs. I do hope this continues because there are other surgeons that are coming down the pipeline that would benefit from ReSurge just as much as I have benefited from them, so I urge them not to stop, not to give up."



Our patients always come first

We are committed to providing our patients with care that doesn't just start, or stop, in the operating room.

We sincerely thank you on behalf of the all the individuals, families and communities that have been helped by your support and generosity. There is much work to be done. And we are certain that, together, we will transform even more lives in 2022 and beyond.