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The improvement of care for paediatric and congenital cardiac disease across the World: a challenge for the World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery.

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The diagnosis and treatment for paediatric and congenital cardiac disease has undergone remarkable progress over the last 60 years. Unfortunately, this progress has been largely limited to the developed world. Yet every year approximately 90% of the more than 1,000,000 children who are born with congenital cardiac disease across the world receive either suboptimal care or are totally denied care. While in the developed world the focus has changed from an effort to decrease post-operative mortality to now improving quality of life and decreasing morbidity, which is the focus of this Supplement, the rest of the world still needs to develop basic access to congenital cardiac care. The World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery [<http://www.wspchs.org/>] was established in 2006. The Vision of the World Society is that every child born anywhere in the world with a congenital heart defect should have access to appropriate medical and surgical care. The Mission of the World Society is to promote the highest quality comprehensive care to all patients with pediatric and/or congenital heart disease, from the fetus to the adult, regardless of the patient's economic means, with emphasis on excellence in education, research and community service. We present in this article an overview of the epidemiology of congenital cardiac disease, the current and future challenges to improve care in the developed and developing world, the impact of the globalization of cardiac surgery, and the role that the World Society should play. The World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery is in a unique position to influence and truly improve the global care of children and adults with congenital cardiac disease throughout the world [<http://www.wspchs.org/>].

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