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Primary School Children's Vision Screening Project, Mozambique

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students learning with communities

Primary School Children's Vision Screening Project, Mozambique.



Students Learning with Communities



Background

The Mozambique Eyecare Project is a DIT led multi partner collaboration (see partners) which aims to provide a sustainable solution to avoidable blindness through the establishment of Mozambique's first Optometry School in UniLurio, Nampula, Mozambique. In the final year of the DIT BSc in Optometry, students are invited to accompany a DIT team on a visit to UniLurio. Activities carried out by students include observing eye exams in the UniLurio clinic, supervised vision screening and testing in primary schools, as part of a post grad research project and their paediatric and primary care modules, and visiting families in local communities to talk with them about their eye and health care needs.

The Community

Between 2011 and 2012 seven DIT students travelled to Mozambique. The students worked long days in local schools and communities alongside their UniLurio counterparts in mutually beneficial community outreach. The clinical nature of the work exposed the DIT students to tropical ocular diseases, challenges facing poorer families in accessing health services and maintaining good health. The optometry students were challenged and inspired by the people they met and for some it was a reminder of the important role the optometrist plays in community primary care. They relished tutoring younger students in core optometry skills while carrying out the screenings.

Results

Over two years the DIT and UniLurio optometry students and staff screened over 1200 children ranging from age 5 – 18 years, in 3 schools, for ocular health and vision problems. The schools were chosen based on their rural, urban and suburban locations. The children with vision problems chose glasses and were tested onsite. Those with ocular health problems were referred to the local hospital.



Partners



Photos

Students of UniLurio and DIT in white coats at the screening campaigns and visiting the community as part of UniLurio's community links programme.

Optometry staff:

James Loughman, John McGann, Veronica O' Dwyer, Aoife Phelan.

Primary Schools, Nampula, Mozambique; EPC Namutequia; EPC Carrupeia; EPC Mutita

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