FIFTEEN (15) YEARS OF UNITE FOR SIGHT INTERVENTION: HAVE WE MADE ANY IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITIES?

JAMES CLARKE, MD, MPH
CRYSTAL EYE CLINIC
ACCRA
GHANA
Outline

a. Situation 15 yrs ago
b. What we set out to do
c. What have we achieved, Impact
d. Challenges
e. Way forward
f. Conclusion
A. Fifteen Years Ago

- Ignorance about eye disease
- Non-availability, Inaccessibility and Unaffordability
- TEM (Traditional Eye Medication)
- Blind people stopped working
15 Years Ago

- Stigmatization
- Fear/misconceptions
- High level of poverty
- School dropouts
B. What We Set Out To Do

Through UFS Sponsored Outreach

1. Make it available, accessible and affordable to highly deprived communities
2. To educate about eyecare
3. To remove fear from people with eye disease
4. To remove stigma
5. Reduce poverty
6. Improve Quality of Life
C. Impact

1. Community based primary eyecare workers
2. Awareness demand for setting up of eye care centers in the communities
3. Available, accessible affordable eye care/surgeries
Decentralization
4. Lenses made available.
5. Improved reading habits in adults
6. Increased economic activity around screening locations:
   income generation for
   traders, volunteers
   hiring of chairs, canopies
   pharmacy shops stock eye medications
   hoteliers
   transport owners
   radio announcements
Return to Occupation
D. Challenges

1) Still many remote villages calling for eye care services, accessible only by foot or bicycle.
Challenges: Low Ophthalmologist/patient ratio

1. Upper West Region 0
2. Upper East Region 1
3. Northern Region 3
4. Brong Ahafo Region 4
5. Volta Region 1
6. Ashanti Region 19
7. Western Region 2
8. Eastern Region 6
9. Central Region 1
10. Gt. Accra Region 49

- TOTAL 86 / 26 mi (1/302,000)
E. Way Forward

1. Expanding team and coverage
2. Getting more local volunteers
3. Bicycles for local volunteers
4. More audio visuals for education

- New Map of Ghana Feb 2019
  - 16 Regions
F. Conclusion

- Impact has been huge and long lasting
- Children are not leaving school to care for blind parents
- Children return to school
- Poverty Alleviated: Beneficiary adults gain employment with care for the family
- Quality of life has improved as a whole
- People are generally very happy
Thank You