

16. Purpose Of The Project And Goals That Were Accomplished (150 Words)

The goal of the outreach was to do surgery on as many blind people with cataracts as possible. Due to the nature of the medical service that was delivered, being cataract surgery, the patients were mostly older people. In total we managed 41 patients received cataract eye surgery. Surgery was only done on patients that were blind in both eyes. Only one eye was done per patient.

Many more (approximately 200 in total) were examined and treated. Although the focus of the medical work was on the eye surgery we also managed to do additional medical treatment. About 100 dental patients received extractions; some had up to 6 root canals at a time. A total of 1400 other patients were examined and treated and about 10 000 prescriptions were filled out and dispensed. The pathology of the patients indicated that there is little to no health care in this province of Angola. Other conditions included leprosy, huge dental abscesses, open wounds and many other.

17. True Stories

17.1 Katarina



Before: *Katarina before the surgery*

Katarina was one of the blind ladies whose story became known to us through Angela Hess' investigations. She was a small old lady and very petite looking. She didn't know her exact age. Its also difficult to guess their age due to the health conditions.

She also looked very neglected due to her clothing etc. She was probably about 1,3 metres in height. She was also blind in both eyes due to cataracts. She came to our first

day's clinic, carried on the back of a bicycle, at a school called Pandera in Menongue, where she was screened for surgery.

During the second day's devotion she was deeply touched. She told me that the part where the preacher spoke about stealing touched her heart. That morning the preacher, Rev Alpheus Mdlalose also spoke about the blind man who, when he heard Jesus was near, rushed towards Him. Jesus then healed this man. The she went on saying that she believes the same applies to her. She is also blind and rushed to find help when she heard Doctors For life was there to help the blind. She told us of how difficult it was for her when she became blind.

Apparently it started happening very slowly. At that sage she still had 3 children but because of her blindness she couldn't take care of them anymore. On top of that, two of her 3 children then passed away. One died during the war and another one of measles when she was young. Now she has only one son remaining. Unfortunately for her he couldn't really assist her either. When her son had to go out for the day, she had to remain alone at home and she couldn't find anybody else to assist her going outside. She really couldn't do what she used to do like fetching wood and water, making food. She specifically mentioned that she couldn't go to church anymore due to her blindness. Even to come to the clinic, she said she had to force people to bring her. She came by bicycle sitting on the back while her son pushed or rode it.

She concluded that if we could help her then she will praise the Lord.



During the second day's clinic, Katarina and 17 others awaited surgery but we misjudged our capabilities slightly. The surgery took a bit longer than usual. He did surgery till about 10pm that evening and still he had to ask some to return the following days. He only did surgery on 1 eye per patient. He also only did surgery on patients that were blind in both eyes. The patients had to return the next day in order for the surgeon to remove the eye caps which he put over the eye that was operated on. This would

be time of testing!

It wasn't difficult to find people from our team to accompany Dr Gerhard Kok the next day to go back to the place of surgery to see the patients of the previous day. Everybody was in anticipation to see the reactions of blind people being able to see again. Katarina was amongst them.

**Before****After**

As with different personalities, each patient's reaction was also different. Katarina's reaction could best be described as kindling a small fire that would grow. Initially, she was a bit shocked, like so many others, and quietly just answered "I can see". As she sat down and adjusted to her new vision she became more spontaneous though. It takes a while for some to realize the delights of being able to see again. Other times, the eye takes time to adjust to the new images of light displaying in the brain. Slowly but surely her countenance changed dramatically. Eventually, even her skew teeth were very prominent for the first time as she smiled continually. She confided that she could now go to church again and said she had to thank God for this miracle like those blind men in the New Testament. Minutes later she mounted the back of a bicycle in style and her son took her home.



Katarina's son pushing her on the bicycle.

17.2 Blind Preacher

Another patient said that he used to proclaim the gospel but when he became blind, but

now he couldn't do it anymore. People looked down on him for being blind. But he said that God was still with him. "Look how merciful God is" he said. "He sent you come all the way from South Africa to help us to be able to see again". He concluded that, once again, he would be able to preach again.



Before

The whole group then clapped their hands in Luchazi style as a sign of appreciation. They do it clapping up and down, not horizontally as in the west. It was so wonderful to be able to remind them again that it was because of the Gospel that we were there in Angola. God has done this for us all.

As they continued thanking I thought of the ten men with leprosy whom the Lord Jesus had healed but only one of them had come back to thank God. Today almost all of the 11 did. Dr Albu finally closed the meeting in prayer while the translator interpreted his words. While I filmed it I especially noticed one man who had been rather quiet during the afternoon. He was now nodding his head as Dr Albu thanked God for their sight, praying that it will be to His glory.

18. How the gifts of MMI donors helped you accomplish your goals and objectives in 2008?

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we, Doctors For Life International, would like to thank you for your donations. Without the help of MMI and its donors this outreach would not have been possible. We were able to pay for most of the medications, equipment needed, transport and accommodation cost with the money donated. All of the funds given were used.

One of the blind ladies whom we could give surgery to, finally thanked us again saying that she sees God's hand in our visit to Angola. The group, out of their own initiative, wanted us to thank you (MMI) who made it possible for her to be able to see again.

The following are some direct examples of the change the eye surgery brought about. It was more than we expected.

18.2 The dramatic change



Above: A lady smiles as she sees for the first time after the surgery. After the removal of the eye-cap, it is put back over the eye to keep it from damage and infection.

The change was always dramatic from when we met them coming to the clinic and surgery until they leave after their eye caps were removed the following day. So many of them stumbled as they walked with walking sticks, or were lead by someone else. Some were brought on motorbikes and others by open pickup trucks. Rain or sunshine.

While sitting and typing this report, an elderly blind man caught my attention. He was one of the last ones left scheduled for surgery that afternoon. He sat down in a room that was obviously unfamiliar to him. He kept knocking around with a walking stick and feeling his way around. It looked like he was trying to establish what was around him because he did this sitting down. I thought how wonderful when he would see again the next day. And see he did.

18.3 “Here is my doctor”



Before



After

One of the most vivid pictures in my mind of the group who came for eye surgery first was the man that came last. When Dr Kok removed the eye-cap the man immediately said: "I can see, here is my doctor!" He was overjoyed.

18.4 “Eeeeeeeeee....”**Before****After**

"Eeeeeeeeee! Eeeeeeeeee!" another man shouted in ecstasy while shaking his head and smiling. In Kangela this is an expression of happiness. It was amazing to see his face beaming of sheer joy as he laughed and thanked us.

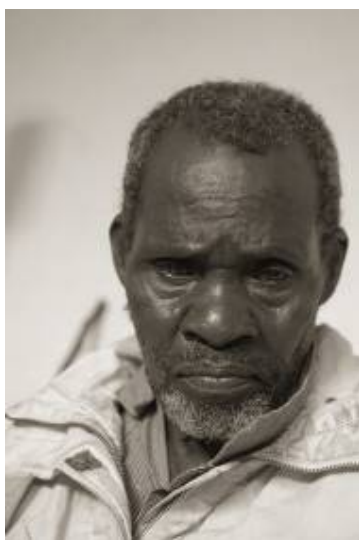
18.5 “Sherlock Homes”



The whole team left together to witness the removal of the eye caps of the second batch of eye surgery patients as well. The blind were about to see again. The contrast of before and after was extraordinary. Watching the people you notice that the stale unmoving eyes change to rapidly moving eye balls as they start noticing the surroundings. One man shouted “I see so many people”. He was shocked. Others just said “I can see!” It was moving to watch the change as they go back home. They come with canes tapping and stumbling. Many have guides bringing them. Usually a child or family member.

When the one man went outside Dr Gerhard removed the caps while his son waited. We called him “Sherlock Holmes” due to his heavy coat and beautiful hat. As usual he grabbed hold of the end of his grandfather’s cane to lead him as they walk home. Maybe out of habit or uncertainty, his grandfather allowed him to do this. Thomas, a

missionary, saw this and said to him: “You don’t need to do this anymore. Your grandfather can see”. He reacted a bit surprised and his grandfather I think too. Then his grandfather burst out laughing with the rest of us.



Before



After

“Yes” he said, “I don’t need to be led, I can see”. This made me wonder whether some had really expected to see again. Maybe some only thought they will get some treatment. Regardless, they saw...



Above: His son unnecessarily trying to lead him again

18.6 Eliza

One of them, Elisa, probably stands out the most of all of them. When Dr Kok took of her cap she first looked around in absolute shock. Then she started turned her head slowly while saying “Eeeeeeeeeeee” “I can see”, her face of amazement was extraordinary. While she started to adapt to light the lady’s cap next to her was removed. Within a split second after her cap was removed she shouted with a trembling voice: “Ewa, hey Mama,... “ or at least that’s what it sounded like me. She started laughing and said “I can see!”



Before



After



Meanwhile Elisa suddenly noticed her dress and from then on she was captivated with it. She said that she didn’t realize she had such a beautiful dress on. Elisa’s happiness grew

more and more. People would talk to her but every so often she would be distracted by the colors while pointing to them. "I can see this red!" Then she spontaneously started dancing. " I feel like dancing", she said. She continued to examine her clothing and colors up close while speaking to the ones to the left and right of her pointing to things.

What probably struck me about Elisa the most is the contrast before and after the surgery. When she came to the clinic the first day I specifically noticed how sad her countenance was. I didn't expect much reaction from her then. She had a straight face and showed little to no emotions what so ever. In fact she looked a little angry. Some of these people have gone through a lot in life and I am not just referring to their blindness. Many lost children, husbands, family and friends during the 30 war. Small children lost limbs due to landmines explosions and lived in fear of not seeing the next day.



Before



After



Above left and middle: Eliza dances of joy.

Above far right: Eliza examines her dress

Maybe they appreciated this much more than people do in any 1st world country. Again, they all thanked us and God for this miracle. What a blessed experience it was to remind them again that it's all thanks to Christ that they could see. He was the reason for our visit to Angola.



Above: The 2 ladies together after the removal of their eye-caps

18.7 Ta Bonita



Unfortunately I missed the third surgery group experiencing their first sight after the surgery. I did manage to catch a glimpse of the last patient though. It's been interesting how it has almost always been the late coming last patient who responded the most spontaneously to being able to see. She grabbed hold of Dr Kok's arms shouting, "Ta-bonita" she said with a HUGE grin on her face. She started counting his fingers spontaneously almost as if she was saying, "Ask me that question again. I can count now". After counting she then clapped her hands at herself. She would also tap her chest and while repeating "Nane nane nane nane..." I am not sure what that means. She also made slight dancing movements while sitting down. She couldn't stop smiling.

When she and the other patients left the building they were met by a crowd of people standing outside waiting for the day's clinics. People asked them questions and they would explain to them how they

can see things again. She went pointing to a man's T-shirt and hat and started to read while pointing with her finger. Still she couldn't stop smiling. And then something happened that made me realize how these outreaches affects people beyond what we sometimes see.

Amongst the crowds I noticed her meeting up another lady whom she obviously knew very well. It was touching. She must have been a very close friend or relative. When she realized her friend can see she started crying, embracing her warmly. They hugged and cried. I thought of how much this must mean to see her having regained her sight.

18.8 Preaching

We had numerous opportunities to preach and show films twice as we traveled at small remote villages. We would stay in the bush near a river and then show a film to a village nearby. That night, the chief of the village made a commitment to serve God and when he did almost the whole village decided to follow suit.

Another man came to one of the preachers afterwards and said to him: that God, Jesus, whom you spoke about, I also want Him in my heart.

While traveling through Namibia one of the missionaries in our team, George, felt he had to speak to a tourist who took a motorbike tour through Africa, about Christ. It turned out the man was desperate for help. George could give him some literature and advise. As we continued traveling back to SA, we met another missionary, John, and told him this story. Amazingly, after returning to South Africa, we heard that John met the same man in another country, Botswana, and could speak to him again!

19. Important needs in 2009 that are still unmet.

Logistically this trip was a great challenge. We had to locate an eye surgery microscope and of course the eye surgery instruments without which the trip would not have been possible. After all around, we eventually found 1 place who was willing to lend us their microscope. It was a University in South Africa. It was an old big microscope which was difficult to transport. The Eye surgery instruments we borrowed from an Eye Surgeon in Swaziland.

Then during the outreach the microscope's bulb (or its related electronics) packed up. We tried to fix it but without success. We ended up doing the remainder of nearly 25 eye surgeries with flashlights. The need for our own mobile microscope became evident.

During another incident, on the first day's surgery, it started pouring down with rain and the roof leaked right above where the surgery was taking place. It was also extremely hot as the summers so often are in these areas of Angola. I had to continually wipe off sweat from the surgeons face. It made it rather difficult for him to operate in these circumstances but it was wonderful to see his determination to help these people. A surgery tent with

proper air-conditioning, a product that the military sometimes use in field operations, would have been helpful.

After the outreach, I asked the Eye Surgeon who went to Angola with us, Dr Gerhard Kok, for a list of basic needs that would help him be more efficient with the eye surgery on our outreaches. He mentioned a surgery table, and surgery chair

19.1 Girl With Cancer



A girl with cancer in her eye. Unless the eye ball is removed she will probably not survive for longer than a few months still.

A man, probably her father, brought a child with an ocular tumor (most likely retinoblastoma) to us. She could have been helped if we had a theatre with anesthetic machine (and related equipment, i.e. oxygen, anesthetic gases, drugs, etc), an anesthetist, etc. General anesthesia will also be preferable if eviscerations (removal of an eye) is performed (even on adults). Unfortunately we didn't have this equipment. Not even the provincial hospital did! The provincial hospital didn't even have oxygen to perform surgery.

We have made contact with an eye surgeon in Angola, who lives in another province. They are willing to perform this life saving surgery if she could fly to them.

“As for the child with probable retinoblastoma. If she can come to where we have anesthesia and oxygen etc., I can do an enucleation on that eye. Follow-up chemotherapy or radiotherapy, however, would not be possible here in Angola. We could only hope that the tumor has not tracked up the optic nerve, and we can get it all out. It is worth a try, certainly, considering the dismal prognosis if nothing is done.”

The lack of funds, however to travel there remains a hindrance to her. It would probably cost in the region of **\$1200** to possibly save her life. This will included traveling and accommodation for her and her father.

19.2 Wailing Song



Above: Dr Gerhard Kok and the blind lady during examination

Unfortunately there were also many others we couldn't help. The response of one blind lady, touched me. Dr Gerhard would close her one eye and ask her to count his fingers. If they couldn't he would make a note. He then would switch a light on or off and ask them if they could see it. She said "No". After Dr Gerhard examined both eyes closely he told us that unfortunately he wouldn't be able to conduct surgery on her. She was a risk patient.

When the translator told her this you could see the sheer disappointment on her face. She begged him saying "Wait, I actually could see that light after all". Dr Gerhard smiled a little while understanding her desperate situation. Still we couldn't take the risk.



Above: Afterwards she just went to sit outside and started crying while singing a wailing song

She went outside and sat down on the veranda amongst the crowds and started crying. She was singing a sort of a wailing song. It was very sad to watch.

Being a risk patient can mean one of a few things. The patient maybe only had a cataract in one eye which means the other eye could still see. Fully blind people had first priority. It could also mean that the cataracts are not ripe “yet” i.e. the patient is not fully blind yet. It also referred to patients who had cataract but in addition also had other eye problems which meant that the surgery could cause total blindness. It was clear from these assessments that, for some of the patients, surgery would be viable within the next few years. Additional medical equipment might be needed for others. It was amazing to see that even young people and children came to us with cataracts. To do surgery on children oxygen and general anesthetics would be needed though. We didn’t have these at hand and would add to the cost of the outreaches.

20. EXTRA PHOTOS

A CD/DVD with photos will be posted to you.

Following are some more examples of medical cases that were witnessed. This medical work is vital to their survival and an important vehicle to bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

20.1 Lady with Leprosy



Above: A lady with leprosy

20.2 Girl with Abscess



Above: Girl with badly infected jaw due to dental abscess

20.3 Other medical cases



Many of those blind people who came to us were children. A lot of blindness were caused due to injury. If treated immediately they might be helped Menongue does not have the equipment or expertise to do so.



One of the many blind people whom we couldn't help. We could only do cataract surgery.



Above: One man came to us with a huge open abscess under his foot. Unfortunately its not visible on this foto, but the blood on the floor indicates the extent of the wound.