

WHO IS
HUSSAIN

GIVE BACK GRANT REPORT: EYE CATARACT SURGERY - MBEYA

As part of the Who is Hussain Give Back Grant, an internal grant set up for the benefit of our global teams, the Eye Cataract Surgery project was undertaken by Mbeya (Tanzania, Africa) in June 2023.

VISION RESTORED

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH EYE CATARACT SURGERIES IN MBEYA, TANZANIA

Blindness is increasingly becoming a problem in the rural areas of Mbeya, a city in southwest Tanzania, Africa. Caused by cataracts, in most cases, blindness is reversible and **eyesight can easily be restored** through a simple and straightforward procedure. Healthcare however isn't readily available, accessible or affordable amongst the rural communities, which account for more than 60% of Mbeya's total population.

A debilitating condition, **cataracts impact much more than an individual's ability to see**. Prevalent amongst the older population, blindness caused by cataracts **affects their ability to participate in family and community life**. Making them feel isolated, they are left feeling hopeless and unable to do even the most basic tasks, such as cooking or moving from place to place.



According to recent research, the use of firewood for heat and cooking in rural villages has been linked to increased rates of blindness caused by cataracts. **Blindness ranks as the the most widespread health condition in Mbeya**, thus, concluding that there is an extreme need for eye cataract surgeries.

The Solution

Experienced in conducting eye health camps and facilitating cataract surgeries, Mbeya sought to provide cataract surgeries to those most in need. Having **organised 3 camps in the past year which helped to restore sight to more than 90 individuals**, the team were well equipped to undertake this project. Using their **expertise** and **established relationships with local ophthalmologists** the team sought to restore sight, hope and the quality of life to those who may otherwise not have had the opportunity.



HOW WAS IT DONE?

Undertaken in phases the entire process took a few weeks, from the screening process to determine eligibility through to post operation check ups to ensure the procedures were successful.

Screening

To determine those eligible for surgeries, numerous individuals came forward for an eye health check-up at the hospital. Those presenting with eye conditions were then screened at the hospital to determine whether they had cataracts. **Patients were selected for surgeries based on the severity of their conditions.**



Operations

Undertaken in a local hospital in Mbeya by qualified and experienced ophthalmologists, procedures were performed in a day. Cataract surgeries are **simple and straightforward procedures**, which are impactful and transform lives - if they are accessible and affordable.



Post-Operations Check Up

To ensure the procedure has gone well, there were no complications or infections, **patients were monitored and their eyes were checked 24 hours post-surgery.** The team also visited some patients in their villages a few days after to see the **immediate and long-term impact** the surgeries have had to their lives.



THE IMPACT

In this particular eye camp, out of the 46 patients who were screened, only **30 underwent the procedure** - based on their age, financial need and severity of the condition. The impact of these surgeries extends beyond the individual. **Restoring the sight of just one person positively transforms entire families and communities.**

Bringing back independence, individuals are able to **resume daily activities** and **provide for their families**, particularly if they are the main breadwinner - the financial strain on their families is lifted. They are also once again active members of society and contributing to the country's economy. So, it is not merely 30 individuals' eyesight and quality of life that is restored - *the impact is felt far beyond* - amongst their families and the communities in which they reside.

Unfortunately due to the circumstances in which they live, cataracts will always be prevalent amongst the more impoverished populations. In villages such as the ones in rural Mbeya, where they rely on firewood for cooking and supplying heat, the smoke caused as a result of burning firewood is a contributing factor to cataracts. Thus **there is a constant and widespread need for projects such as Mbeya's eye camps** as there are still countless individuals who will eventually require the surgery.

Thanks to donors like you, our teams can undertake projects such as these, sustainably transforming lives.

