

**INSIGHT**

Project  
Southern Africa

# Fight4Sight and Medical Mission Eswatini Ophthalmic Traineeship Interim Report by Dr Josh Cummings



My name is Joshua Cummings and since June 2022 my wife and I have been based permanently in Eswatini. Prior to this I had been travelling the 6 hour journey from Hoedspruit in South Africa to Eswatini to spend around 10 days at a time, learning as much as I could.

In the past 5 months, I have been fortunate to have assisted on 3 Sight Flight outreaches and, although these outreaches are challenging with minimal equipment and resources, they have been some of the highlights of my traineeship thus far. We have not only diagnosed cataracts, but I have found some very interesting other pathology and have referred these patients to Good Shepard for further work up and treatment.

I am so excited to say that after only such a short time in training, I have been able to complete 2 Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery (MSIC's) and I look forward to doing more and being more efficient in theater as I progress. Training under Dr. Pons is amazing, and every day is a new challenge and with the help from my fellow trainee Dr. Els along with the international volunteers that Dr. Pons attracts there is never a lack of knowledge or support in the clinic.

My wife and I have been helping set up the new facility, Grace Vision Clinic, which required a lot of manual and technical set up of rooms and equipment which has been a unique experience. Establishing new eye services in Eswatini is very exciting because it is greatly needed and will further improve the standard and value of care in the regions of Eswatini, Mozambique and South Africa. I have frequently been seeing patients from all these communities as there are either very poor services available or prodigious financial cost for all patient populations in the region. The need for further trainees in eye care is significant.

The best experience so far has been the work ethic and culture of caring in the eye clinic, it is in stark contrast to working environments I have experienced in South African government hospitals. The eye clinic has forged an excellent team and they will stop at nothing to get the patient helped whether it be allowing for financial constraints or adding them to the already overbooked surgery list, no-one is afraid to ask for help or to work longer hours if the clinic has been particularly busy. I feel despite all the other good qualities in and around the clinic, attitude to patient centered care is the one that stands head and shoulders above the rest. As of the 3rd of October, I have been working at Grace Vision clinic and I hope we can build the same culture of caring there. I am grateful for the trainee sponsorship I received recently.

Dr. Josh Cummings  
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