



Riding the Good Health Train

The Eye Clinic

Narrator

Nowhere is it more clear than at the eye clinic the need for basic primary healthcare.

Fifty percent of the African population over 65 is affected by loss of sight. Much of this preventable, with early treatment or education.

Optometrist

I'm not hurting you. Just ask him if he's uncomfortable, or is he okay? Okay.

Narrator:

The many eye injuries and hereditary conditions affecting sight remain untreated in children as well.

Taboha has pathological myopia. He is sixteen years old and this is the first time he's had his eyes tested.

Dr Terence Giles

You have to look very close at this box. And as you look at the student's next to you to see what they're writing down.

Male volunteer (subtitles)

Are you able to see what the pupils next to you are writing?

Taboha (subtitles)

No way – they would think I was trying to cheat.

Dr Terence Giles, Eye Clinic Manager

What is amazing in the rural areas is that so many of them, because they have not had either the opportunity or the affordability to attend an optometrist, they have been going through their schooling with tremendously high myopia. The teachers are very aware of it, because of their poor standards at school. But when the train comes round it is their first chance to actually have their eyes examined.

Optometrist

He could only see that size without the glasses. And we got him eventually to see that size. So it is quite an improvement. But it's not a hundred per cent.

Narrator

Taboha's glasses cost only 30 Rand, or three pounds. This was paid by his grandmother, from her pension. The lenses aren't full strength yet, as the change to his vision would be too disorientating.