

## Public Health – Case Study

**Name:** Esther Solomon

**Sex:** Female

**Profession:** Optometry Technician

**Age:** 25 (in 2018)

**Location:** Malawi

**Region:** Africa

**Program:** Optometry development



“My name is Esther Solomon and I am an optometry technician from Malawi. I am very happy that I’m graduating after three years of hard work, and have overcome all the challenges throughout the new program.

It hasn’t been an easy ride, but I can proudly say that I’m now a qualified optometry technician. I studied at the Malawi College of Health Sciences and I am grateful to our lecturers who worked so hard to see us throughout the course.”

Establishing optometry, as a profession in a country where it previously did not exist, is a sustainable solution that Brien Holden Vision Institute has been working in partnership to implement in Malawi.

Collaborating with local partners, government and universities to develop optometry in the local context, the Institute invests funding from supporters like Optometry Giving Sight, to establish sustainable solutions in the form of optometry schools and vision centres.

“I am originally from rural Liwonde where I grew up living with my parents. I studied optometry because I want to be part of the profession helping to close the gap in eye health provision in our hospitals.

I feel honored to receive an award for my performance. Thanks to the Optometry Giving Sight for my award and the recognition it brings. This is a big confidence booster for me as I look forward to the real work.

I hope to work within the government public health system and be able to promote information around eye health, and educate people about the importance of taking good care of one’s eyes. I would also like to make sure that people even in remote areas understand the importance of having a regular eye test.

I understand that the optometry profession is new in Malawi and our hospitals sometimes don’t have enough equipment or materials needed especially for operations, but I do believe things will be better in time. I am very grateful to the supporting organisations like Brien Holden Vision Institute, and for funding organisations like Optometry Giving Sight for providing many resources for us to be able to continue our course work. I think the most important for now is to learn, encourage more students to enroll in optometry and to be an optometry

technician – thus increasing human resources in the only way I can contribute to the bigger problems of great need.

It is my vision to see myself as part of the outreach activities with the optometry team visiting remote areas to provide eye tests, educate the communities and train some to assist their fellow villagers when an eye problem is detected and encourage them to visit local clinics or hospitals for further tests. I think that can make a difference and bring people into understanding optometry and be more alert to their eye health.”