



Optometrists
Association *of* Uganda

OPTOMETRY IN UGANDA



Dr. Naomi Nsubuga

Mr. Wanok Godfrey

Background Pre 2004

- 1970s: a few Ugandans were trained as optometrists in UK but left the country during the civil unrest. Cowen & Rifkin also opened in 1974
- There were no optometrists in the country until the mid 1980s.
- 1980s: 2 optometrists graduated from University of Manchester in the Institute of Science & Technology UK. 1 returned to Uganda and the other went to Lesotho.. Others in Zimbabwe, SA and UK
- 1990s: Several Ugandans trained as optometrists in the UK, USA & Tanzania. 3 returned.



Development of optometry profession in the country

- 2004: Optometrists Association of Uganda (OAU) formed (4 members)
- 2004: Constitution for the creation of an Optometry Council submitted to MOH
- 2005: OAU invited joined NPBC at MOH after presenting the justification for recognition and regulation of optometry
- 2005: OAU started lobbying Makerere University to start an optometry programme
- 2006: OAU joined AFCO and WCO
- 2008: OAU hosted 10th AFCO Conference. Delegates included the WCO President, Dr Bob Chapelle. Lobbying for training and recognition for optometry

Development of optometry education in the country

- 2011: Stakeholders meeting held at Makerere University (Makerere, MoH, MOES, MoPS, professional bodies & NGOs)
- 2012: Cabinet memorandum developed & submitted to Minister of Health
- 2013: Curriculum developed and adapted to Makerere format. Approved by Senate.
- 2014: National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) approved curriculum
- 2014: MoH Allied Health Professionals' Council approved the curriculum and the professional for regulation
- August 2014; 1st intake 4-year Bachelor of Optometry at Makerere University College of Health Sciences following the 4-level WCO Competency-based model and MakCHS curriculum
- April 2018: Optometry gazetted

Optometry training – Optometry Teaching Clinic



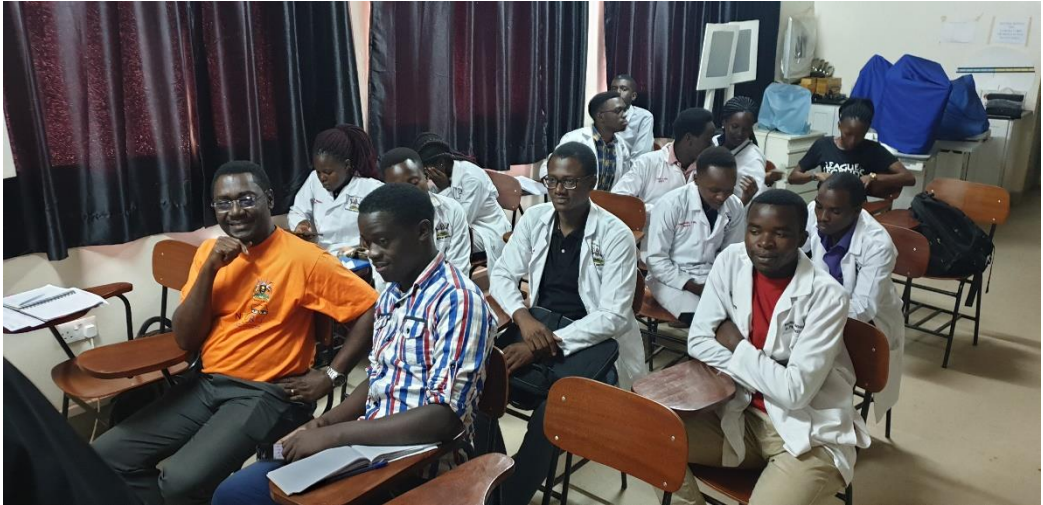
Optometry training – Academic Vision Centre at Makerere University Hospital





Enrolment

Year	Number
2017/18	17
2018/19	14
2019/20	15
2020/21	10
TOTAL	56



Current Status

- 10 graduates from 3 cohorts (2019, 2020 and 2021)
- 56 students currently in training
- 3 graduates pursuing Masters degrees planning to join faculty
- Scheme of Service
- OAU providing monthly online CPDs



Conclusion

- Optometry is a fast-growing profession locally and globally.
- Optometry Clinic at Eye Unit Mulago National Referral Hospital (Adult & Paediatric Refraction, BV and LV assessment)
- Optometrists will be posted at National and Regional Referral hospitals in public sector
- Unity and growth in eye would require all the established cadres to work together for the best interest of patients in Uganda.



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