

## Our network is a precious asset

### From Massachusetts to the Gambia

Sometimes all the stars align for a good outcome. In this opportunity, a little patience, persistence, and making the most of our network resulted in a project in the Gambia benefitting from donated equipment to continue offering patients eye health care.

This story started in Massachusetts where Dr Marie K. Salvas after 40 years as a solo practitioner decided to retire. Dr Salvas explains *“As I used paper charts, I could not sell the practice, and decided to sell the equipment individually. After further inquiries, I decided I would rather donate my equipment. I remembered VOSH from my college days and contacted them”*. VOSH/International contacted neighboring chapters to assess their interest in the donation. After several attempts and in coordination with the VOSH-Southeast team, a new home for Dr Salvas’ donation was identified.

In a network like ours, contacts are a precious asset. A VOSH-Southeast member who had previously worked with [the Bansang Swiss Project](#) and knew of their great work, recommended they could benefit from this donation. This project focuses its work in Bansang, a town located about 350 km from the capital Banjul. This is a rural area where people are subsistence farmers. The Bansang project focuses its comprehensive efforts on the schools in the region, including a free eye care screening outreach program. The project has sponsored the undergraduate studies of an optometry student who now leads this important work and is an advocate for the people in this region.

In the past, VOSH-Southeast donated a phoropter to this project. Dr Salvas’ equipment complemented their equipment needs including new frames and cases. Dr Salvas concludes by saying *“I am extremely happy with the outcome and recommend this path to other doctors. It is fulfilling to help others even after my working days are done”*

VOSH/International is grateful to work with kind people like Dr. Salvas and colleagues from VOSH-Southeast, especially Susan Stees, VOSH-OH, VOSH-PA, and Dr Bina Patel who all contributed by connecting, considering, and completing this work.

We wish the Bansang Swiss Project continuous success in caring for the people of the Bansang region.

More information on the Bansang Swiss Project here: <https://www.thebansangswissproject.org/> and a recent article on their school screenings [here](#)

VOSH-Southeast can be found here: <https://voshsoutheast.org/>



*Optometrist Tata S Jobe leads the school screenings for the Bansang Swiss Project*