

Unite For Sight

GhanaUnited States
Jennifer Staple...



Organization type:

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Budget:

\$1 million - \$5 million

Website:

<http://www.uniteforsight.org>

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Unite For Sight has provided eye care to more than 1.3 million people worldwide, including more than 49,000 sight-restoring surgeries for patients living in poverty. Unite For Sight believes in the social entrepreneurial vision and commitment of local medical professionals, and we develop a powerful synergy by harnessing the entrepreneurial talent of local healthcare leaders with support in the form of human and financial resources. Unite For Sight partners with local eye clinics to eliminate patient barriers to care and to provide consistent, quality, and sustainable eye care to patients in rural villages, slums, and refugee camps.

About Project

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

Unite For Sight addresses global health delivery for patients living in extreme poverty. Global health delivery is complex, and programs are best developed by local medical professionals and local social entrepreneurs who know their communities, barriers to quality care, and cultural traditions and perceptions. We believe in the social entrepreneurial vision and commitment of local medical professionals, and Unite For Sight develops a powerful synergy by harnessing the entrepreneurial talent of local leaders with support in the form of human and financial resources. Unite For Sight partners with local eye clinics to identify community-specific barriers that impede effective eye care delivery to patients living in extreme poverty. The local ophthalmologists and ophthalmic staff provide the management and leadership. We work with the clinics to develop strategies to overcome patient barriers through sustainable systems of care. Unite For Sight develops existing local resources to meet eye care needs over the long term. Additionally, our programs are designed to continually enhance global health delivery, both with our eye clinic partners, and on a broad scale. We review cutting-edge research and share these lessons with each eye clinic partner so that they can apply new practices in the field. Concurrently, we also develop our own original research that is implemented by our Global Impact Fellow volunteers in cooperation and consultation with our eye clinic partners.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

Unite For Sight partners with local eye clinics to provide consistent, quality, and sustainable eye care. All eye care services are comprehensive, including examinations by local eye doctors, diagnosis and care for all treatable conditions, education, and prevention. This full range of services is delivered to the population year-round. Unite For Sight's outreach efforts extend to individuals in rural villages, some of which are located seven or more hours from the closest eye clinic. These patients are provided with follow-up care by the eye clinic outreach teams regularly throughout the year. Unite For Sight eliminates patient barriers to care by fully funding surgeries, bringing eye care services to the patients, providing transportation to the eye clinic for surgery as needed, and educating communities about blindness prevention. The eye care programs are locally led and managed by partner eye clinics. Those receiving care through Unite For Sight's programs are living in poverty and do not have other avenues for receiving care.

About You

Organization:

Unite For Sight

About You

First Name

Jennifer

Last Name

Staple- Clark

Twitter**Facebook Profile**

<http://www.facebook.com/uniteforsight>

About Your Organization

Organization Name

Unite For Sight

Organization Phone

203-404-4900

Organization Address

234 Church Street

Organization Country

, CT, New Haven County

Country where this project is creating social impact**How long has your organization been operating?**

More than 5 years

Is the project that you are entering related to this organization?

Yes

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

Innovation

What stage is your project in?

Operating for more than 5 years

Tell us about the community that you engage? eg. economic conditions, political structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with engagement efforts.

Unite For Sight's partnerships and programs occur on a daily basis in Ghana, Honduras, and India. Our greatest impact occurs in Ghana, where we provide eye care to all ten regions of the country.

The Unite For Sight outreach programs provide eye care to patients living in poverty in rural villages, slums, and a refugee camp. Unite For Sight cultivates and invests in the talent of local eye care leaders who have the determination and skill to create social enterprises that serve their community's poorest people.

Share the story of the founder and what inspired the founder to start this project

Jennifer Staple-Clark founded Unite For Sight in her dorm room while a sophomore at Yale University in 2000. During the previous summer, Jennifer worked as a clinical ophthalmology research associate. While interacting with patients, she learned about eye diseases that could have been prevented by early medical intervention. The patients' poignant stories made Jennifer recognize the need for community programs to eliminate preventable blindness, motivating her to found Unite For Sight.

Under Jennifer's leadership, Unite For Sight is now a leader in providing cost-effective care to the world's poorest people. A visionary leader and social entrepreneur, Jennifer Staple-Clark has been featured twice in Nicholas D. Kristof's columns in The New York Times. She was also featured weekly on CNN International in 2007 and 2008. A cum laude graduate of Yale University, Jennifer frequently gives presentations and keynote addresses about social entrepreneurship, global health, and international development. She is recipient of many awards, including the National Jefferson Award for Public Service. Jennifer is also the author of journal articles and book chapters about social entrepreneurship, best practices in

Social Impact

Please describe how your project has been successful and how that success is measured

As of mid-September 2011, Unite For Sight has provided eye care to more than 1.2 million patients, including close to 47,000 sight-restoring surgeries. Unite For Sight measures outcomes, not just outputs, meaning that we follow up with patients and ensure that surgeries and care provided were successful. We track the number of patients living in poverty who receive eye care through Unite For Sight's outreach programs, as well as those who receive surgery at the local partner eye clinics. Additionally, we track the number of patients with significantly improved vision after surgery. Unite For Sight requires extensive documentation from each eye clinic partner, including every patient's preoperative and postoperative visual acuity data, which is analyzed to ensure the quality, effectiveness, and social impact of the programs. We also assess the increase in each eye clinic's cataract surgical rate, targeted for patients living in poverty. Comparison measurements are made for cataract surgical rate before and after the introduction of the Unite For Sight partnership.

Unite For Sight significantly builds local capacity by investing in its local eye clinic partners. In Ghana, four of the country's 45 ophthalmologists are Unite For Sight partners. During 2008, Unite For Sight supported 5,011 (36%) of the 14,053 total cataract surgeries done in all of Ghana. During 2009, with Unite For Sight's support of and collaboration with four partner ophthalmologists, Ghana increased its surgical volume to 17,366 surgeries. That year, Unite For Sight's outreach programs with the partner eye clinics provided 46% of all cataract surgeries performed in Ghana, and these 8,060 surgeries were provided for patients living in extreme poverty. Unite For Sight was directly responsible for 92% of the cataract surgical increase in Ghana between 2008 and 2009. In 2010, Unite For Sight's four partner ophthalmologists provided more than half of all of the surgeries done by the 45 ophthalmologists in Ghana.

Prior to Unite For Sight's partnership, each ophthalmologist provided approximately 500 cataract surgeries per year to standard patients who were able to access and afford care. This surgical capacity is in line with Ghana's current average of 405 surgeries per year. In order to reach Ghana's Vision 2020 goal, each ophthalmologist is expected to provide 1066 cataract surgeries per year. After partnering with Unite For Sight, each eye clinic partner has been able to provide an average of 2500 cataract surgeries annually. This total includes continued surgical care for standard patients, coupled with Unite For Sight-supported surgical care for patients living in extreme poverty who are otherwise unable to access or afford care.

How many people have been impacted by your project?

More than 10,000

How many people could be impacted by your project in the next three years?

More than 10,000

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

Unite For Sight will provide eye care to more than 120,000 patients during the next six months, including at least 6,000 sight-restoring surgeries for patients living in poverty.

Task 1

Our first task is to apply the results of a recent Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved Unite For Sight research study about patient barriers to cataract surgery.

Task 2

We will apply the results of a recent IRB-approved Unite For Sight research study about barriers that prevent caretakers from bringing children to village outreaches for eye care.

Task 3

We will work with our partner eye clinics to further mobilize the communities so that the hardest-to-reach patients access quality eye care.

Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Unite For Sight will work with its local partner eye clinics to provide eye care to 240,000 patients during the next year.

Task 1

Currently, 100-300 patients come to each day's village outreach. Are there barriers that prevent other household members from also seeking eye care? We will explore this via a research study.

Task 2

We will further research and address barriers that impact the hardest-to-reach patients in each village.

Task 3

Working with our eye clinic partners, we will further develop social mobilization processes to increase the number of patients accessing the eye care provided in the village outreaches.

How will your project evolve over the next three years?

Over the next three years, Unite For Sight will expand its impact by partnering with new eye clinic partners that would like to provide eye care to patients living in poverty. Unite For Sight's existing partner eye clinics and ophthalmologists will continue to be integral to the establishment and development of new eye clinic partnerships. For example, an existing eye clinic partner's outreach optometrist will work for 1-2 weeks with a new eye clinic partner's outreach optometrist to teach and replicate strategies that have been proven effective with Unite For Sight's existing partner eye clinics. The ophthalmologists similarly closely collaborate on effective management and leadership strategies for the Unite For Sight outreach programs.

Sustainability

What barriers might hinder the success of your project and how do you plan to overcome them?

Unite For Sight's outreach programs bring quality eye care by local eye doctors to villages that otherwise would not have access to care. Our partner eye clinic outreach teams provide constant continuity of care, revisiting each village on a monthly basis. Despite all of the effective outreach strategies that have been developed and implemented, there are still many community members who have personal barriers to care that prevent them from accessing eye care. For example, some barriers include fear, a perception of fatalism, and a lack of awareness. Unite For Sight's partner eye clinics are constantly working to develop new strategies to overcome the barriers that impact the hardest-to-reach patients, particularly through research studies implemented by our Global Impact Fellow volunteers who travel abroad to work with our partners.

Tell us about your partnerships

By partnering with local eye clinics, Unite For Sight's programs provide consistent, quality, and sustainable health care. All eye care services are comprehensive, including examinations by local eye doctors, diagnosis and care for all treatable conditions, education, and prevention. This full range of services is delivered to the population year-round.

Prior to partnering with an eye clinic, Unite For Sight rigorously analyzes the clinic, establishes a pilot program, and assesses the impact and results. We partner with clinics that share our ideology of proper standards for community care and eye health, and we help them develop an outreach infrastructure that provides cost-effective care to patients living in extreme poverty. We support our partner eye clinics by investing human and financial resources in their social ventures and encouraging the longevity of their efforts.

Additionally, Unite For Sight partners with businesses and organizations, including companies that supply our eye clinic partners with new reading glasses and distance eye glasses. We also partner with businesses that provide pro bono enterprise information management, commerce, and media systems. For example, instead of incurring expenses to print and mail donation receipts to donors, all donation receipts are automatically sent electronically to donors utilizing our electronic commerce system.

Explain your selections

Unite For Sight focuses on generating revenue through its four program divisions: Global Health Delivery Program with Global Impact Corps; Global Health & Innovation Conference; Global Health University; and University Health Chapters. Approximately 90% of Unite For Sight's annual income is generated through its programs. Additionally, each revenue-generating program scales on an annual basis, and new programs are regularly developed and implemented. Unite For Sight also receives donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations.

Unite For Sight maintains the highest standard for financial responsibility, and we focus on financial ethics, efficiency, and resource maximization. 100% of all donations go directly to providing eye care for patients living in extreme poverty, and 0% goes to any other purpose. Unite For Sight has other funding sources for the 0.9% administrative & general expenses. Our financial model far exceeds the efficiency of other nonprofits by a wide margin.

How do you plan to strengthen your project in the next three years?

Unite For Sight's programs are designed to be continually enhanced and strengthened. We review cutting-edge research and literature about global health delivery, and share knowledge with each eye clinic partner so that they can apply new practices in the field. Concurrently, we also develop our own original research by recruiting volunteers to serve as Global Impact Fellows. We work with the Fellows to design and implement research studies that contribute to a greater understanding of health care delivery. For example, one recent research study explores patient understanding of postoperative medication and evaluates the use of visual communication to enhance patient comprehension about their medication regimen. All research studies are reviewed and approved by the Fellow's university Institutional Review Board. While designing and pursuing the research, Global Impact Fellows gain an in-depth appreciation and understanding of global health delivery. Most Fellows present their research findings at conferences or in peer-reviewed journals, and therefore contribute to public health knowledge.

Unite For Sight offers an unparalleled global health volunteer experience abroad for our Global Impact Fellows, coupled with the highest quality health care programs through our partner eye clinics. Global Impact Fellows complete extensive global health training, receive a Certificate in Global Health & Program Delivery, and they are nurtured and encouraged to apply the global health skills developed through the Unite For Sight experience to become new leaders in global health.

Challenges

**Which barriers to health and well-being does your innovation address?
Please select up to three in order of relevancy to your project.**

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

Lack of physical access to care/lack of facilities

TERTIARY

Lack of insurance/financing options for healthcare

Please describe how your innovation specifically tackles the barriers listed above.

We eliminate barriers to care by fully funding surgeries, bringing eye care to the patients in their villages, providing transportation to the eye clinic for surgery as needed, and educating communities about blindness prevention. The eye care programs are locally led and managed by partner eye clinics.

Unite For Sight's eye care programs are comprehensive, and include examinations by local eye doctors, diagnosis and care for all treatable conditions, education, and prevention. This full range of services is delivered to the population year-round. Outreach services are brought to the people in their villages, which can be seven or more hours from the nearest clinic. These patients are provided with consistent follow-up care by the clinics' outreach teams throughout the year.

**How are you growing the impact of your organization or initiative?
Please select up to three potential pathways in order of relevancy to you.**

PRIMARY

Influenced other organizations and institutions through the spread of best practices

SECONDARY

TERTIARY

Grown geographic reach: Global

Please describe which of your growth activities are current or planned for the immediate future.

In addition to our own global health delivery programs, Unite For Sight spreads best practices through its three other program divisions, including the annual Global Health & Innovation Conference. The conference is the world's largest global health and social entrepreneurship conference.

Public health program metrics are often measured in outputs (i.e. how many condoms or malaria nets are distributed), as opposed to outcomes (i.e. how does the intervention reduce HIV/AIDS or malaria rates)? The conference focuses on outcomes and real impact, and the accepted conference presenters have submitted abstracts that specifically discuss data and outcomes. The 2,200 annual conference participants learn about the importance of best practices, outcomes, and measuring real impact.

Do you collaborate with any of the following: (Check all that apply)

Technology providers, NGOs/Nonprofits, Academia/universities.

If yes, how have these collaborations helped your innovation to succeed?

Unite For Sight's program operations utilize robust pro bono enterprise information management, commerce, and media systems. Using streamlined, high performance electronic systems allows us to maintain few paper files and eliminates the need for staff to complete many administrative tasks. It also minimizes our amount of environmentally unfriendly paper waste.

Our Global Impact Corps program annually engages approximately 300 university students and professionals as Global Impact Fellow volunteers. While volunteering abroad, Global Impact Fellows support and learn from the partner clinics' talented medical professionals who are social entrepreneurs addressing complex health issues. Concurrently, the volunteers contribute their unique skills and talents to the eye clinic partners.

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