

## Debbie Jankowski

Specialist Ophthalmic Nurse, *Cambridge University Hospitals*



*'There's such a lot we can do, at the moment we're only just scratching the surface.'*

Debbie Jankowski is a Specialist Ophthalmic Nurse working at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Through Addenbrooke's Abroad she has played a crucial role in launching a national Diabetic Retinopathy screening Programme based at the Princess Marina Hospital in Botswana. She has volunteered there twice and is now very involved in the setting up of a glaucoma screening service.

*'The whole experience has made me a better nurse and I really value how lucky we are to have the NHS in the UK. I have gained valuable insight into how ophthalmology is organised in resource poor hospitals and have a greater respect for other cultures. It was an honour to have worked alongside Dr Bangure - who is the main consultant ophthalmologist in Botswana - and it made me realise how important it is to be passionate, enthusiastic and inspiring to those around you.'*

Debbie has also spent time in hospitals and clinics in Molepolole and Mochudi in Botswana. During her visits she had the opportunity to teach nurses how to recognise signs of early glaucoma and how to treat patients. Learning the cultural differences really helped her understand systems and how to teach new nurses in an educational and sustainable way.

*'Having never traveled by myself before, I feel that I have also grown and developed as a person. Giving ophthalmic presentations and talks in Botswana boosted my confidence as a nurse and I feel that it has helped me progress considerably here in the UK. I also realise that there are different ways of doing sight tests and have educated my colleagues about that here. I truly value the friendships I have made and through them realised that we can do things in different ways and learn from each other.'*

*'Volunteering abroad is a highly personal experience and the perfect opportunity for self-reflection and learning. I'd recommend it to anyone who feels they are up for the challenge.'*