

Winning Projects 2014



Divyajyoti Trust, India

Uday R. Gajiwala

Aim:

This project aims to bring door-to-door screening for glaucoma, diabetes and hypertension to the Surat District of India, as part of a community-based rehabilitation (CBR) program.

The project:

The project will take place in Umarpada and Mangrol Taluka (rural, tribal areas of the Surat district, with a population of over 67,000 people). The majority of people in this region are living in poverty and, as such, have little access to eye care services. Local hospital and population surveys have shown that there is a significant burden of diabetic retinopathy, cataract and glaucoma, even in these rural, tribal areas. With glaucoma being the second largest cause of irreversible blindness throughout the world, many residents of Umarpada and Mangrol Taluka are at high risk of developing sight loss without adequate screening and treatment.

This initiative, which is the first of its kind in India, aims to deliver glaucoma screening directly to individuals in Umarpada and Mangrol Taluka. The project also aims to identify people at risk of other systemic illnesses, including diabetes and hypertension, which can harm not only the eyes but the whole body. It is hoped that through this project, the number of referrals and subsequent treatments for these conditions will increase, all of which will be offered at a subsidized rate or free of charge to Umarpada and Mangrol Taluka residents.

Funding from XOVA will allow fully trained CBR workers to carry out urine and blood sugar tests, and measure intraocular pressure and blood pressure. The CBR program will also help to create awareness of glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, diabetes mellitus and hypertension amongst the people of Umarpada and Mangrol Taluka by developing various educational materials.

Overall, it is hoped that this outreach screening project will facilitate the referral and treatment of over 67,000 individuals who would otherwise have limited or no access to eye care services. If successful, the project will have a significant impact on the number of individuals receiving interventional eye care treatment and potentially avoiding permanent sight loss.

**Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO), Tanzania**

Elizabeth Kishiki

Aim:

Firstly, this project aims to provide subsidy for surgery, administer postoperative care, and supply assistive devices (low vision devices/distance corrections) to children with low vision and blinding eye diseases throughout eastern Uganda. Secondly, the project will train and empower a local refractionist from the Benedictine Eye Hospital (BEH) to help provide much-needed pediatric eye care services.

The project:

KCCO has been working with BEH in Tororo, Uganda, to link the hospital with children in local communities who have pediatric cataracts or other ocular diseases, and refer them for treatment in BEH. Currently, there is no access to subsidized surgical services, medical services, glasses or postoperative care for children with avoidable blindness and low vision in this region. Furthermore, there is an unmet need for additional staff in the refraction unit within the pediatric eye care division. One member of staff from BEH will attend a one-year refraction course, and return to the hospital to help increase the capacity of the clinic.

The project will also build 200 reading stands for distribution to local schools, and implement a large-scale awareness program to inform the community of the subsidized services available at the BEH. This part of the initiative will help the hospital to generate funds from those who are able to pay for pediatric services to subsidize those who are not. Thus, the continuity of this project is fully assured beyond XOVA support.

The XOVA grant will ensure that all local children who are identified with surgical or low vision needs can continue to receive support. If successful, it is estimated that in the course of 2 years the project will benefit more than 2,000 children.



Myanmar Eye Care Project (MECP) in partnership with RANZCO Eye Foundation, Australia

Hyong Kwon Kang

Aim:

To develop an operating theater sterilization and aseptic pathway at the Wacht Hospital in Myanmar.

The project:

The MECP was initiated in 2002, and has previously established sterilization and aseptic protocols that the local resources could reasonably meet and sustain. However, with the introduction of modern technology (e.g., phacoemulsification), the current practice is no longer adequate or safe. This was highlighted by an outbreak of endophthalmitis, where cross-infection from inadequate sterilization and handling of instruments resulted in many patients suffering vision loss.

Funding from XOVA will be used to upgrade the sterilization process and associated equipment so that procedures are carried out in a truly sterile and aseptic environment, helping to prevent the occurrence of further tragedies. Support will also be provided for the separation of dirty and clean areas to prevent contamination, the development of a system for correct labeling and storage of sterile instruments, and the training and education of local nurses in sterile and aseptic practice.

The initiative will ensure long-term benefits for the 6,000 patients who receive eye surgery at Wacht Hospital every year, as well as the 23 local ophthalmologists who are trained via the MECP.

**SIGHT
FOR SOULS****Sight for Souls, USA**

Demissie Tadesse

Aim:

To train and deploy mid-level ophthalmic personnel (MLOP) to help scale up eye care service volume in Ethiopia.

The project:

Ethiopia is one of the world's most medically underserved countries, with especially high rates of blindness in urban centers such as Addis Ababa. In Greater Addis Ababa, the estimated rate of cataract surgery is around 1,200 per million people each year, approximately 25-40% of the desired rate. Many more people require trachoma surgery, glasses or other eye care services, but the existing eye care centers often function poorly, in part due to the limited availability and use of MLOP. Sight for Souls is developing the Discovery Eye Institute (DEI) eye care center in Addis Ababa. The DEI will train ophthalmologists and MLOP with the view of developing a high-throughput eye care center.

This initiative will train and deploy MLOP in seven key roles, to achieve increased ophthalmic services:

1. Ophthalmic technician
2. Operating room team
3. Surgical counsellors (providing informed consent for cataract surgery and other procedures)
4. Pharmacy manager
5. Optical shop manager
6. Medical record department personnel (patient registration, medical record generation and retrieval)
7. Manager of ophthalmic equipment (maintenance and troubleshooting)

The initiative will also provide MLOP training and career opportunities for women, in a country where the employment status of women requires improvement.

Sight for Souls estimates that an additional 4,000-6,000 cataract surgeries would be performed over the first 3 years, along with other eye care services. It is also hoped that the success of the DEI will demonstrate the value of MLOP, leading to additional centers using the approach, thereby enhancing eye care service delivery regionally.



VISION 2020 LINK Programme at the International Centre for Eye Health (ICEH), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK

Clare Inkster

Aim:

The aim of this initiative is to ensure equity and quality standards for eye care services, provide high level training in the clinical and management fields and to enable affordable treatment for diabetic retinopathy (DR) in Nigeria.

The project:

The Guinness Eye Centre (GEC), at Lagos University Teaching Hospital, provides eye care to a population of 18 million people. Currently, patients have to pay for treatment and many who attend consultations are turned away because they cannot afford it. Major infrastructure problems also exist: inadequate plumbing means that infection control is very challenging; lack of equipment means that patients cannot be treated; and loss of power has frequent detrimental consequences in terms of safety and efficiency.

The Lagos–Bolton/North West Deanery VISION 2020 LINK project will redevelop the entire infrastructure of the GEC, purchase a laser machine to enable the treatment of DR, and train a technician to maintain it. The redevelopment will also include building a pediatric wing with new plumbing and solar panels to ensure a constant electricity supply. Sustainability will be achieved by empowering the multi-professional team through leadership development, and ensuring clinical and leadership training continues at the center. A sponsorship model will also be implemented to assist with future fundraising, and reduce the reliance of the GEC on federal health services funding.

Thee Lagos–Bolton/North West Deanery VISION 2020 LINK will establish a sustainable eye care service in Lagos, and provide high-quality treatments for those who would otherwise not be able to afford it.