

giving sight



International Centre for Eyecare Education - ICEE *(pronounced I See)*

Issue 2, 2010



The ICEE NSW Aboriginal Vision Programme celebrates 10 years of delivering eye care to Aboriginal communities. Read more inside.



Greenpeace International Executive Director, Dr Kumi Naidoo will address the World Congress on Refractive Error, South Africa, September 2010. Register at www.icee.org

Photo © Shayne Robinson / Greenpeace



Photo by Dean Saffron





From the Chief Executive Officer

It was deeply saddening to learn recently that a reported 100 million people in developing countries have been thrust back into extreme poverty as a result of the global financial crisis, as Marc Purcell, Executive Director for the Australian Council for International Development reported. We have a moral responsibility to respond to this crisis and the subsequent increase in aid spending has contributed to some remarkable poverty alleviation initiatives.

ICEE welcomed the Australian Government's announcement in May 2010, of an increase in overseas development assistance, particularly its support of higher education through the provision of scholarships. The substantial increase of support to Africa in particular, and the expanding focus to include Latin America and the Caribbean, is a step forward for Australian aid agencies and another initiative of which we can all be proud.

With this kind of funding, in the years to come, we can be confident that we are not just addressing the tragic result of the economic downturn but addressing the greater issue of poverty alleviation — it is equally important that all those living in poverty feel the benefit of this commitment.

The Australian Government's \$6.5 million boost for optometry provision, announced earlier this year by the Minister for Indigenous, Rural and Regional Health, the Honourable Warren Snowdon MP, will expand services to 106 rural and remote indigenous communities. Funding like this reinforces the importance of optometry in every community – not only in Australia, but around the world.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *giving sight* and thank you for your continuing support.

Professor Brien Holden OAM, Chief Executive Officer of ICEE



Congratulations to Prof Holden, CEO of ICEE and Prof Naidoo, Global Programmes Director for ICEE! Professors Holden and Naidoo received the 2010 Schwab Social Entrepreneur Award for Africa. The award recognises outstanding leaders who pursue poverty alleviation with entrepreneurial zeal and whose efforts are characterised by innovation, sustainability, reach and social impact.



ICEE congratulates Phyllis Tighe, Regional Eye Health Coordinator from Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, in Western NSW Australia who received the Director General's Award for Aboriginal Health.

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We have signed onto the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct. See www.acfid.asn.au for details.



Australian Government
AusAID



The first ICEE clinic was held at the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service in December 1999. By the recent 10th anniversary, ICEE had routinely provided clinics at 103 locations in NSW.

Optometrist, John Davis, (*pictured in background*) has been working at ICEE clinics throughout NSW for close to 10 years delivering eye care to Aboriginal people.

Back in 1999, ICEE and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC) developed a solution to the lack of vision care for Aboriginal people in NSW, by providing optometry services through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services across the state.

At a recent clinic at Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service, near Campbelltown in outer western Sydney, John reflected on his experiences with ICEE. "In 1978, I was a member of the first Australian optometric team that spent two weeks conducting clinics in, what was then, Western Samoa", John said. "The involvement in the ICEE Aboriginal Vision Programme was just a natural extension for me."

A local resident and practitioner at nearby Ingleburn for more than 40 years, John has regularly volunteered his time to go on multi-day trips around the state or take an early morning flight to locations such as Brewarrina to conduct one-day clinics. "Apart from being able to deliver that optometric care for the people, I have really benefitted greatly by learning a lot about the hardships and joys of 'rural and remote' lifestyles as well as problems facing Aboriginal communities", John added. "I am really proud of being able to contribute my small piece to the health and wellbeing of those communities."

*To learn more about ICEE
Aboriginal Programmes visit
www.icee.org*

The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation works to enhance the quality of life of members of the community, particularly the disadvantaged. With generous support from the Foundation's Eldon & Anne Foote Trust Distribution, ICEE has assisted

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia by developing optometric services, providing eye care education and strengthening ICEE models that will develop culturally appropriate eye care services.

Australians

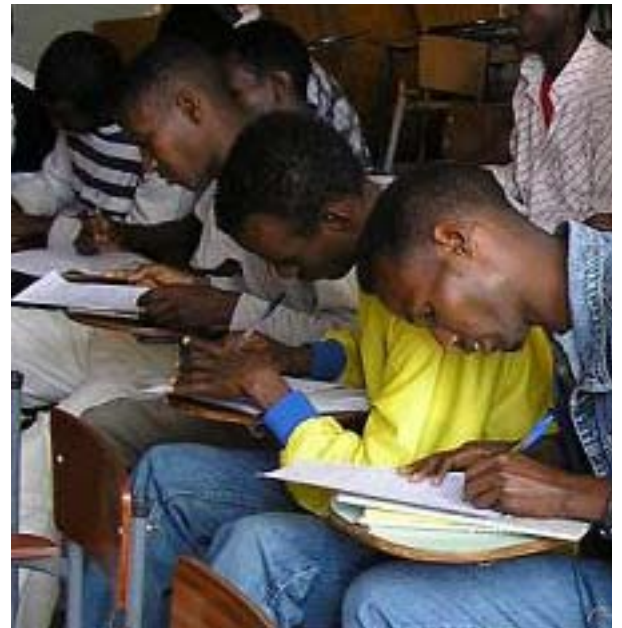


Eritrea

In Eritrea, like other regions of Africa, the problem of vision impairment can be addressed only if there are enough qualified personnel in the right places. At the Asmara College of Health Sciences there are 21 dedicated students striving to be the first graduates of the Optometric Technician Diploma* (picture R). The course is a celebrated achievement and great step forward for health care in a country that has faced many hardships.

Graduates will become qualified Optometric Technicians who are able to provide refractive error services, dispense glasses and screen for basic eye disease. The students will be a critical component of sustainable eye care services in the country.

ICEE Director of Global Human Resource Development, Luigi Bilotto, emphasised the significance of the programme. "In an effort to eradicate avoidable blindness due to refractive error, Eritrea set the very ambitious agenda of reaching the VISION 2020 human resource targets by 2015," he said. "With the evident motivation of the Minister of Health, Dr. Goitam Mebrahtu, and the institution involved in the programme, I am confident that this can be achieved."



*The Optometric Technician Diploma is a successful collaboration between ICEE, the Ministry of Health and the Asmara College of Health Sciences and is part of a five year National Prevention of Blindness Strategic Plan for Eritrea.

ICEE programmes in Eritrea are supported by funding from Optometry Giving Sight.

Ghana

In Ghana a new eye care facility was launched at Ayeduase in the city of Kumasi – the Ashanti Vision Centre.

Ghana currently has 107 optometrists serving a population of over 22 million. In stark contrast, Australia, with a similar sized population, has more than 4 300 registered optometrists.

The launch was the result of a collaborative project between ICEE and the Department of Optometry and Visual Science of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, the Ghana Health Services and the community of Ayeduase.

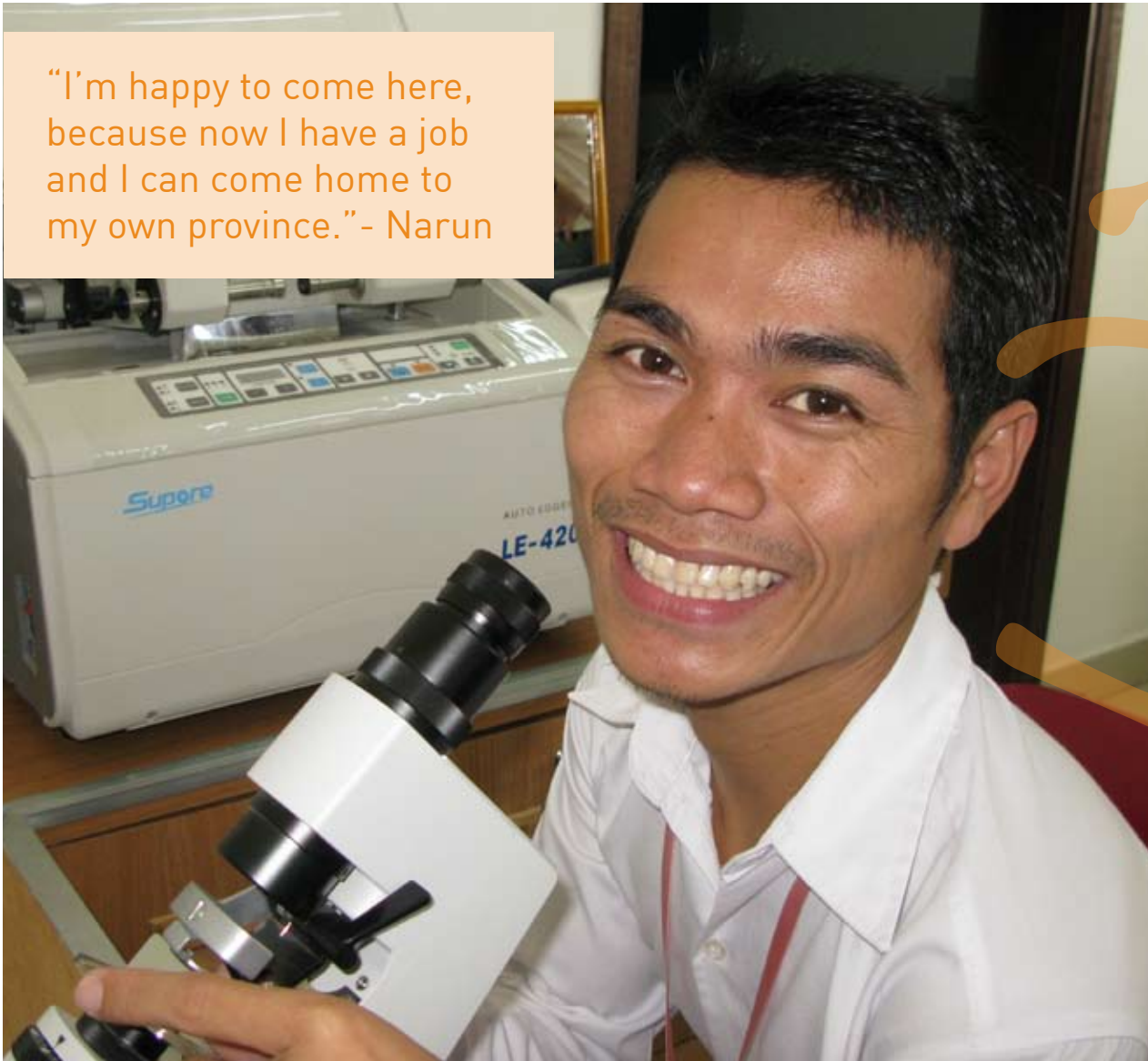
Professor Aboagye Menyeh, Provost of the University's College of Science, said, "The Centre provides access to affordable spectacles with the creation of an optical dispensing unit. It will also serve as a training centre for optometrists to build their capacity to undertake outreach programmes to reduce the incidence of vision impairment."

Present at the launch was Professor Kovin Naidoo, Global Programmes Director for ICEE, who commented, "The launch of the Centre in Ghana was just amazing. A local businessman drove past, saw the community working on the project

and then asked what was happening. He was so moved he came back and donated the first of two computers he is giving the Centre. We talk about true partnerships and this project has got it right; community, Government, the University, with ICEE providing technical expertise and part funding."



“I’m happy to come here, because now I have a job and I can come home to my own province.”- Narun



Narun is a Spectacle Technician working at the Takeo Eye Hospital in the southern Cambodian province of Takeo. After finishing high school, Narun was selected by the hospital to attend an ICEE Spectacle Technician training course in Phnom Penh. The two-week intensive course he completed in November 2009, equipped him with the skills to cut and fit spectacle lenses.

Narun’s magnetic smile and enthusiasm to demonstrate his work immediately tells you he’s thrilled to have had this opportunity. “I’m happy to come here, because now I have a job and I can come home to my own province. I can still return to Phnom Penh on weekends to visit my brother and sister.” In a country teeming with motorbikes, it’s no surprise he’s also excited at the prospect of soon having enough money to buy his own. “I’m happy to be able to earn some money and hoping in a few months I’ll have my own motorbike,” he says with a broad grin.

Narun performs an important role by providing low-cost, custom-made spectacles for patients at the hospital’s optical shop. Prior to the collaborative efforts of VISION 2020 Australia Global Consortium members and the Australian Government AusAID Avoidable Blindness Initiative, no such service existed for the people of Takeo, nor did the job that now fills Narun with optimism about his future and provides him with an income and the ability to help support his family.

Education programmes are the basis through which ICEE is helping to fundamentally change access to eye care throughout the country. By developing human resource capacity to not only deliver eye care services but to create systems that result in local educators training eye care personnel, ICEE is ensuring these services are sustainable and provided and maintained by local eye health workers.

in the field



A crowd begins to gather before the Mount Hagen Vision Centre launch



Traditional dancers mark the opening of the Mount Hagen Centre



A beautiful section of river in the remote highlands of PNG



Dancers prepare for the Mount Hagen opening



Dr James Kintwa, Mount Hagen General Hospital CEO



The Mount Hagen celebration was well attended



Phillip Lus, Workshop Operator at the Lae Vision Centre



Papua New Guinea is renowned for vibrant traditions

In the Asia-Pacific region the deficit in eye care services has been a significant, but often overlooked, problem. However, in Papua New Guinea (PNG) progress is being made and the people of Lae and Mount Hagen are seeing differently with the opening of two new Vision Centres*. The centres provide free eye examinations, affordable eye glasses and are a long-term solution to the scarcity of eye care in the region.

Tricia Keys, ICEE Programmes Manager for Asia-Pacific, said that in PNG there is a desperate need for affordable, accessible eye care services. "Just the simple need for a

pair of eye glasses is one of the leading causes of vision impairment in the country," she said.

The Centres are supported by the Australian Government AusAID Avoidable Blindness Initiative through the VISION 2020 Australia Global Consortium, a partnership of nine Australian eye health and vision care organisations working to eliminate avoidable blindness and vision loss in the region.

"The costs associated with establishing infrastructure, training personnel and providing resources can be



Papua New Guinea



Traditional house in the tropical countryside of PNG



Dr Theo Likei, Health Advisor, Morobe Provincial Health Office addresses the Lae opening



Traditional dancers mark the occasion with rhythmic song and elaborate dance



Dr Kintwa and Tricia Keys tour the Mount Hagen Centre



Dancers lead a procession of guests to the Lae Vision Centre



Fresh produce at the busy Mount Hagen market



(L-R) Tricia Keys, Philip Lus, Priscilla Drikor and Mitasha Marolia at the Lae Vision Centre



Dancers celebrate the Lae Vision Centre opening

significant, but not having accessible eye care in a region presents even greater costs,” added Ms Keys. “A person who suffers from uncorrected vision impairment is stripped of their opportunity to contribute financially – which makes their fall into poverty shorter and the ability to work their way out of poverty that much harder.”

Dr Theo Likei, Health Advisor, Morobe Provincial Health Office said at the Lae opening, “Communities in PNG are in great need for this [eye care] service. It couldn’t have come at a better time to help benefit our people. Vision impacts everything – our eyes are very important.”

Dr James Kintwa, Mount Hagen General Hospital CEO, who officially opened the Mount Hagen Vision Centre, spoke about the importance of the project. “In Mount Hagen there was no place to get glasses,” he said. “This initiative is really exciting! I believe in it and fully support the project. Having spectacles is not just about health care it impacts everything, all aspects of life.”

* The Mount Hagen and Lae Vision Centres, are an initiative of PNG Eye Care and ICEE, and supported by funding from the Australian Government AusAID Avoidable Blindness Initiative.

ICEE Welcomes the Delhi Declaration

A groundbreaking decision by Indian and international optometry representatives has led to firm support for the expansion of eye care services throughout India. The New Delhi meeting concluded with the signing of the Delhi Declaration, which heralds a significant step towards the sustainable development of optometry in the country.

Amongst the delegation was Professor Brien Holden, CEO of ICEE, Professor Holden said an estimated 456 million of India's 1.12 billion people require vision correction. "The reality is that to provide the necessary vision care to the

population, India needs 115 000 optometrists, but the fact remains that currently the country is underserved," he said. "India will need approximately 100 schools of optometry over the next few decades to meet the demand."

The Delhi Declaration represents an unparalleled commitment to the development of optometry in India and the profession has the capacity to make a major and very public contribution to the health and welfare of the people of the country.

Don't miss this opportunity...

Across the world, developing countries are confronted by vision impairment and its severe impact on poverty levels. At the *World Congress on Refractive Error* leaders in development and eye care fields will define global eye care priorities and discuss strategies that encompass social, political and economic solutions.

Special Guest

Dr Kumi Naidoo,
Greenpeace International Executive Director

International Guest Speakers

Dr Hannah Faal, Programme Development Advisor-Health Systems, Sightsavers International — Ghana

Professor Kevin Frick, Department of Health Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health — USA

Joseph Cho, Division Head, Research and Development, Hong Kong Society for the Blind — Hong Kong

Professor Kavin Naidoo, Global Programmes Director, International Centre for Eyecare Education — Africa Chair, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness — South Africa

Dr Haroon Awan, Director Programme Innovations and Technical Cooperation, Sightsavers — Pakistan

Kashinath Bhoosnurmath, Senior Director, Operation Eyesight Universal — India

Professor Clare Gilbert – Professor in International Eye Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine — UK

Dr Caroline Harper, Chief Executive, Sightsavers — UK

Professor Brien Holden, CEO Brien Holden Vision Institute — Australia

Professor Gullapalli Rao, Chair, LV Prasad Eye Institute — India

Peter Auckland, CEO, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness — UK

Hasan Minto, Programme Development Advisor, Sightsavers — Pakistan

Pat Ferguson, President & CEO, Operation Eyesight Universal — Canada



Register today at www.icee.org

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World Congress on Refractive Error

Vision Correction: Broadening The Development Agenda

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