

East Asia Vision Program: Cambodia

Summary of results

March to December 2013



Eye health in Cambodia snapshot

- An estimated **43,800** people are blind in both eyes
- Eye health and vision care services are available in only **21 out of 80** provincial/district based referral hospitals
- The eye care **workforce is small** in relation to the population and the need for eye care services

The East Asia Vision Program

The East Asia Vision Program (EAVP) is a three year program (2013-15) funded by the Australian Government and implemented through Vision 2020 Australia's Global Consortium. It involves Consortium members working together with country partners in Vietnam, Timor-Leste and Cambodia to reduce avoidable blindness and low vision.

Regional results

The following results represent the combined achievement of the Consortium organisations working in Vietnam, Cambodia and Timor-Leste as part of the East Asia Vision Program:

- 692 individual training activities were completed to improve the skills of those working in eye health
- 12 people graduated with new specialist (e.g. ophthalmologist) and general (e.g. eye nurse) qualifications. More people will graduate from these longer-term training courses during the remainder of the Program.



Program partners

- Cambodian Ministry of Health
- National Program for Eye Health
- Cambodian Ophthalmological Society
- University of Health Sciences
- Optometrists' Society of Cambodia
- NGOs in Cambodia working in eye health

Consortium members involved

- Brien Holden Vision Institute
- The Fred Hollows Foundation
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists

Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium

Established in 2009, the Global Consortium is a partnership of Australian eye health and vision care organisations involved in implementing programs and conducting advocacy work in Asia and the Pacific.

Consortium members use comprehensive and harmonised approaches to support the development of quality eye care and vision-related disability services in close partnership with local governments and organisations.

For more information, visit the Vision 2020 Australia website: www.vision2020australia.org.au



An Australian partnership working to eliminate avoidable blindness and reduce the impact of vision loss in our region

Leadership and collaboration

In partnership with the East Asia Vision Program, the National Program for Eye Health (NPEH) achieved the following in 2013:

- Initiated work on the next National Strategic Plan for Blindness Prevention and Control 2015-2020. It will be completed in 2014.
- The NPEH Technical Working Group contributed to the development of guidelines for school vision screening and a curriculum in anaesthetic used for eyes.
- Initiated a Provincial Eye Health Coordinator position, which is in line with the national strategy and will strengthen provincial planning, implementation of services and data collection.

Training of eye health personnel

- 276 training activities to improve eye health skills were completed (see below). This training was primarily in clinical/technical areas. Trainees included eye health staff who test patients to see if they need spectacles (refractionists) and specialist eye doctors (ophthalmologists). The training involved ongoing improvement of eye care skills as well as teaching 14 people to be National Refraction Trainers. These trainers will train others in order to expand the eye health workforce.
- Three people graduated as ophthalmologists. More will graduate from these longer training courses during the program.
- A specialist eye doctor completed training in oculoplasty (surgery for tear ducts and other structures around the eye) in Nepal. He returned to Cambodia and completed 950 consultations for patients with conditions related to his training, and performed surgery on 143 patients. He also developed a training module in a related area, and trained two doctors.
- Progress was made in adapting the curriculum for training specialist eye doctors so that it meets international standards and is also relevant to eye health in Cambodia.

Building capacity of eye care professionals

During 2013, the East Asia Vision Program helped build capacity of eye care professionals in Cambodia by conducting a range of training activities.



- **250** clinical and technical training activities
- **13** 'train the trainer' training activities
- **13** management, communication and leadership training activities

Continuing professional development system

The EAVP is collaborating with the Cambodia Ophthalmological Society (COS) and other partners to establish the first formal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system in the health sector in Cambodia. Such a system will ensure that doctors are actively maintaining high professional standards in clinical care and management.

During 2013, the management structures for the CPD system were established and educating COS members about the CPD system took place. The system will begin operation in 2014. It has the potential to be adopted by other parts of the health sector in Cambodia.

Improving eye care research

Planning commenced for activities to increase the research capacity of specialist eye doctors. These activities will include training and mentoring of research projects. Results will be available in 2014.

Reaching all people



Four training modules in eye health were developed or upgraded in 2013 in Cambodia.

Some of these included training on the provision of eye care services to people with a **disability**; ensuring **women** have equal access to eye care; and making sure **children** are treated and cared for appropriately during service delivery.

The remainder will be upgraded to address these issues in 2014.

Reaching women

- There were more males than females participating in training activities. The Program continues to actively encourage female trainees. For example, there is now one female National Refraction Trainer and half of all trainees in the 2013 National Refraction Course were women.

Reaching children

- The revised curriculum for specialist eye doctors included training on recognising and knowing how to act in cases where child abuse may have occurred.

Reaching people with a disability

- The EAVP supported the NPEH in developing a tool for assessing the eye teaching hospitals in Cambodia. The tool assesses the facilities at the hospitals to see if they are accessible for people with a disability. The findings will be used to encourage improvements to hospital facilities.

Reaching the poor

- Some participants in training for testing the vision of patients came from provinces with a high proportion of the population living below the poverty line e.g. Kratie and Battambang. The trainees may return to these provinces to provide treatment.
- The revised curriculum for specialist eye doctors included information on eye diseases associated with poverty.