

IAPB Africa Newsletter



1.1 IAPB Africa – A year in review

The year 2020 did not turn out to be what we expected. The COVID-19 pandemic upended our plans (with respect to World Report on Vision launches, GA2020 and many others) and eye health services. However, the sector rallied and we had what can be called as wins. Despite this drastic turn of events, in Africa we still managed to achieve several great outcomes integral to our pursuit of strengthened eye health in the region.

1.1.1 A Resolution on Eye Health achieved at The East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community Health Ministers Conference

The East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community 69th Health Ministers Conference was held in February 2020 under the theme: “Innovation and Accountability in Health Towards Achieving Universal Health Coverage.

The ECSA-HC is an inter-governmental health organization that fosters and promotes regional cooperation in health among member states. In 2017, the ECSA-HC, with support of College of Ophthalmologists of East Central and Southern Africa (COECSA) and IABP established the ECSA-HC expert committee on eye health in an effort to raise and sustain the eye health agenda high at regional and national level in the ECSA-HC member states. The committee followed the ECSA HC processes during the subsequent years which entailed the development of specific recommendations for resolutions on eye health care in the region. The culmination of these efforts was submitted to at 69th Health Ministers Conference.



At the end of the Health Minister’s Conference, the Ministers considered and passed resolutions which included ECSA/HMC69/R1: Equity and Access to Eye Health in the ECSA region. This resolution urges Member States to:

1. Implement integrated approaches for prevention, control and management of eye health conditions at all levels, with emphasis on primary health care;
2. Increase access to eye health services at all levels, by investing in and ensuring equitable distribution of Human Resources for Eye Health (HREH) and promote inclusion of eye health agenda at national, regional and international level; and
3. Promote generation and use of evidence in policy and practice to improve eye health.

Additionally, the resolution directs the ECSA HC Secretariat to:

1. Support the member states to implement this resolution; and
2. Generate and disseminate evidence on eye health care in the region

IAPB will continue to work with our partners in the ECSA-HC expert committee on eye health with its remit to raise and sustain the eye health agenda high at regional and national level in the ECSA-HC member states.

1.1.2 Key Recommendations on Eye Health at the West African Health Organization 10th Annual HIS Managers and Partners Meeting

In January, the 10th Annual Meeting of Health Information Systems national managers, Technical and Financial Partners was organised by the West African Health Organization (WAHO) with the objective being to “to promote the production, sharing and use of quality health information throughout the Economic Community of West African States¹ (ECOWAS) region”.

The joint annual meeting of national managers and technical and financial partners (TFP) of Health Information Systems (HIS) in the ECOWAS region is an active platform for stakeholders to discuss organisational and operational matters related to NHIS and share experiences in the production, dissemination and utilization of information for decision-making at all levels of the health systems.

During a session dedicated to Eye Health, IAPB presented on the WHO Catalogue of Key Eye Health Indicators in the African Region and advocated for the integration of Eye Health Indicators into national Health Information Management Systems.

The following key recommendations on Eye Health are part of the broader set of recommendations coming out of the meeting:

- WAHO to work with regional Eye Health Partners to collect eye data in all countries for inclusion in the 2020 regional health situation;
- Member States National Health Information Management Units to work with national Eye Health Program Managers in order to identify and introduce the key eye health indicators in their Routine Health Data Collection System;
- Partners to provide technical and financial support to WAHO and members to implement HIS priorities and activities for 2020

Moving forward, IAPB and WAHO will continue to work with member states and partners to identify and agree on 2-3 essential eye health indicators for integration into national Health Information Management Systems in the region. We will also support the implementation of the Eye Health data collection and reporting.

1.1.3 Orientation Meeting for the implementation of the WHO AFRO Primary Eye Care Training Manual in Lusophone Member States

In 2018 WHO AFRO published The Primary Eye Care training manual, the purpose of which manual is to provide guidance in the design, implementation and evaluation of a course that aims to build and strengthen the capacity of health personnel to manage eye patients at primary-level health facilities in the African Region. Its content focuses on simple evidence-based practice that can be easily carried out in primary-level health facilities all over Africa.



¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia (The), Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

In 2019 IAPB supported WHO AFRO in sensitising the Anglophone and Francophone countries of Africa on the PEC manual. In February 2020, the Lusophone countries² were orientated on the training manual, following its translation into Portuguese.

The WHO AFRO NCD cluster held a two-day Orientation Meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, attended by Primary Care Unit Heads/Public Health Department Directors, National Eye Care Coordinators and Eye Health Partners of the Lusophone countries in the Region in order to support them in implementing the training manual at national level and to develop a plan for its implementation.



Country representatives were encouraged to advocate for the implementation of the PEC Training Manual upon their return to their countries. The success in Rwanda was highlighted as an example that PEC could be strengthened and indeed implemented at the national level.

The challenges of this year did however present new opportunities. We scaled up our online engagement with members and partners resulting in valuable interaction around dealing with COVID-19 in the eye health sector by way of virtual, group exchanges and a series of multi-lingual webinars. We also undertook the development of a system's strengthening review, planning and advocacy framework called a Multisectoral Systems Review to support African countries fulfil the World Report on Vision obligation to: Engage in Integrated People Centred Eye Care.

1.1.4 Looking ahead to 2021

In the coming year, 2021, we are looking to focus our efforts on implementing the recommendations of the World Report on Vision across the region by engaging with our sub-regional and national level partners with a view on moving closer to the goal of an integrated people-centred eye care that will accelerate universalization of health care services and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We will build on the achievements of 2020 by developing a set of recommendations on implementing the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community resolution on eye health. Similarly, we will work with the West Africa Health Organisation to realise the commitment by member states to integrate eye health into national Health Management Information Systems.

IAPB is working with the World Health Organization and its members to coordinate regional and national launches and policy dialogues on the World Report on Vision.

Click on this graphic below to see 2020 in Review: A Year in Photos



² Mozambique, Cape Verde, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe and Guinea Bissau

1.2 Vision Excellence Awards



2020 marked the end of VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – a global initiative launched in 1999.

The VISION 2020: The Right to Sight global initiative sought to promote: “A world in which nobody is needlessly visually impaired, where those with unavoidable vision loss can achieve their full potential.” The Vision Excellence awards will recognise the people who have significantly contributed towards its goals and

outcomes. [These pages](#) bring together and celebrate individuals whose vision, drive, commitment and quality of work contributed to successful outcomes and continued learning from the VISION 2020 agenda.

IAPB, with the support of its member organisations, celebrates individuals whose vision, drive, commitment and quality of work contributed to the successful outcomes and continued learning from the VISION 2020 agenda with our Vision Excellence Awards.

The awards recognise the achievements of individuals during the twenty years of VISION 2020. We have over a hundred nominations from IAPB member organisations and the nominees reflect the range and scope of VISION 2020’s influence on the sector. See all the awardees via the following links: [A-F](#); [G-L](#); [M-R](#); [S-Z](#)

	<p>IAPB Africa would like to thank the Organisation pour la Prévention de la Cécité (OPC) for their support in translating this Newsletter into French. Learn more about the work of OPC here.</p>
	<p>Fondation Théa supports the translation of this Newsletter into French</p>

1.3 Marking and celebrating the end of Seeing is Believing



December 2020 marks the close of the Seeing is Believing programme. So, 'the end of an era' here at IAPB and also for the many implementing SiB partners around the world. But there is still much to be celebrated, and much to share!

Seeing is Believing (SiB) has been an ambitious, internationally-recognised partnership between Standard Chartered and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) that focused on tackling avoidable blindness and visual impairment across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America.

Between 2003 and 2020, Standard Chartered raised USD104.2 million, enabling SiB to reach more than 219 million people across 38 countries. These funds were invested in supporting the eye health sector and increasing access to sustainable, quality local services across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America. This included building innovative eye health delivery solutions.

The long-standing partnership demonstrated what can be achieved when corporations and non-governmental organisations work together with governments and local communities and commit to a long-term strategy to meet an ambitious goal.

Here at IAPB we are immensely grateful for the US\$104 million that was raised by Standard Chartered Bank's employees over 15 years, and how these funds have been utilised by the implementing partners to deliver quality eye care activities over 17 years (2003-2020). This has been a true partnership across the years. See: ['A Visionary Partnership: 15 years of Seeing is Believing'](#).

Over 250 million
people reached

Over 5 million
sight restoring surgeries

Over 370,000
health workers trained

Seeing is Believing

In December Seeing is Believing held a successful day-long virtual closing event. The event, Celebrating Success, Sharing Learning, Staying Connected, marked the closing of Seeing is Believing – after 17 years of Standard Chartered fundraising over US\$ 104 million to support eye care service delivery and improvements. But also, a superb day to celebrate the many achievements and impact of 237 projects around the world.

The event was divided into four separate sessions. This enabled Seeing is Believing to both celebrate the huge success of the various projects from around the globe, alongside saying thank you and goodbye to all the partners and staff (from across MoH, Standard Chartered and eye care) who have been engaged with and actively delivering Seeing is Believing projects in 38 countries. The high level of participation from delegates was awesome! And the day ended with thoughts from key eye care leaders who had been engaged with Seeing is Believing projects. You can access recordings of the session [here](#).

We are immensely proud of what SiB has achieved and hope that the learning and progress will be carried into future eye care planning, and delivery of eye care services. Learn more about the Seeing is Believing programme [here](#).

1.4 The Valued Supplier Scheme continues to grow



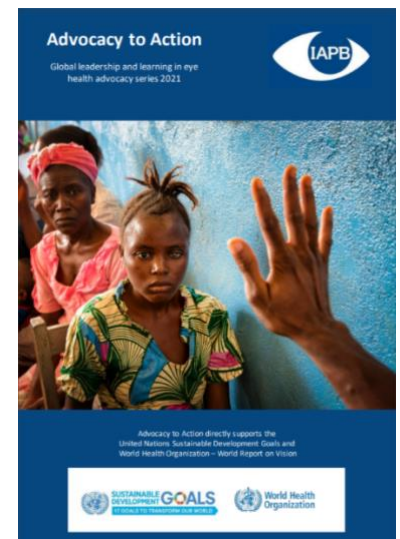
The Valued Supplier Scheme (previously the IAPB Standard List) would like to wish all our Valued Suppliers and website users compliments of the season. **The IAPB Valued Supplier Scheme (VSS)** launched in April this year, superseding the well-established and historic IAPB Standard List. The scheme provides specialist products covering a wide variety of eye health conditions, as well as Assistive Technologies and Project Vehicles backed by the IAPB Brand. The VSS also supports the WHO World Report on Vision's overall mission to help the 1 Billion disadvantaged communities access Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which cannot be achieved without the availability of affordable, innovative and appropriate technologies.

We have **26 Valued Suppliers** signed up with a further 5-8 in the pipeline, covering all aspects of eye health, assistive products and Project Vehicles. Also, after the initial drop at the beginning of the pandemic, we are back to around 5,000 unique visitors each month, and the scheme remains one of the popular offerings on our new IAPB website.

We have great plans for 2021, including an upgrade to the Valued Supplier website, and a series of webinars throughout the year. To keep up to date with all the activities, follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and the [Valued Supplier Scheme News Letter](#).

1.5 Advocacy to Action

IAPB is proud to announce our inaugural Advocacy to Action series for 2021. This new six-part series, delivered throughout 2021, seeks to use IAPB's global expertise, along with that of its members and partners, to develop skills and knowledge for advocacy action. As we look towards the rest of this critical decade for eye health, our 2021 series will be setting up the foundational areas to deliver effective advocacy to scale up eye care services to reach everyone that needs them. Join us in advancing global leadership and learning in eye health with the Advocacy to Action series, 2021. Please see the click [here](#) for more information.



Community Eye Health Journal

Search 'CEHJ' on Google Play or App Store



Don't miss out!
Download our free, data-friendly smartphone app and enjoy easy access to the *Community Eye Health Journal* wherever you go. Change text size and background colour for easy reading, or save your favourite articles in a secure Library, so you can stay informed even when you're not connected.
Welcome to the future.

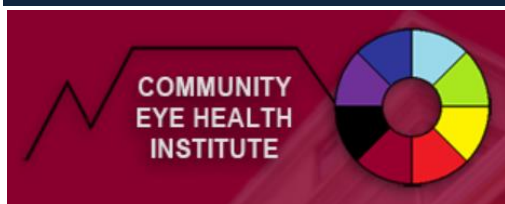


SCAN ME



2. Upcoming Training Opportunities and Events and Publications

2.1 The Community Eye Health Institute Courses for 2021



The Community Eye Health Institute (CEHI) was established in 2008 with the broad aim to build capacity in public eye health services in sub-Saharan Africa. Through education and training, programme development and research, CEHI aims to promote the application of the principles and techniques of advocacy, strategic leadership and programme management to improve the performance of district, provincial and national prevention of blindness programmes.

The CEHI training centre is situated within the premises of Groote Schuur Hospital, which is adjacent to the Health Sciences Faculty of the University of Cape Town.

The CEHI has a variety of education and training programmes scheduled for 2021 directed at organisations and individuals (e.g. clinicians, managers and support staff) working in prevention of blindness programmes in developing countries.

Course Title	Aim and Purpose	Timing and Duration
<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Community Eye Health (PgDCEH)</i>	Provide training in eye care programme management in order to plan, coordinate or manage community eye health programmes at national, district or facility level. It does not provide a clinical training in ophthalmology.	Feb - Nov Duration: one year Application due date 30 September Apply online at: www.uct.ac.za Enquiries: cehi@uct.ac.za
<i>Master of Public Health (Community Eye Health track) (MPHCEH)</i>	Provide training to enable participants to undertake clinical and operational research that might inform the planning and management of eye care programmes. It does not provide a clinical training in ophthalmology.	Feb - Nov Duration: 1-year coursework + 6 months mini-dissertation Application due dates 31 July & 30 September Apply online at: www.uct.ac.za Enquiries: cehi@uct.ac.za
<i>L&M: Leadership and management for success in eye care</i>	Provide training and support to develop leadership and management capacity in participants to apply for effective planning, design and implementation of eye care services.	Jan - Mar Duration: 12 weeks Application due date 31 December Submit completed application form to cehi@uct.ac.za
<i>DAP: Developing action plans for eye care programmes</i>	Provide training and support to enable participants to develop eye care plan for a health district (or relevant statutory demarcation), complete with budget, monitoring framework and human resource development plans	Apr - Jun Duration: 12 weeks Applications due date: 31 March Submit completed application form to cehi@uct.ac.za
<i>PMA: Project management essentials for success in eye care</i>	Provide training and support to enable participants to develop a comprehensive project plan, from conception to feasibility assessment and marketing, based on the project management approach.	Jul - Sep Duration: 12 weeks Applications due date 30 June Submit completed application form to cehi@uct.ac.za
<i>PIM: Programme implementation and management</i>	Provide training and support to enable participants to effectively manage the resources (human, infrastructural and financial) to meet pre-determined implementation targets throughout all the phases of the programme.	Oct - Dec Duration: 12 weeks Applications due date 30 September

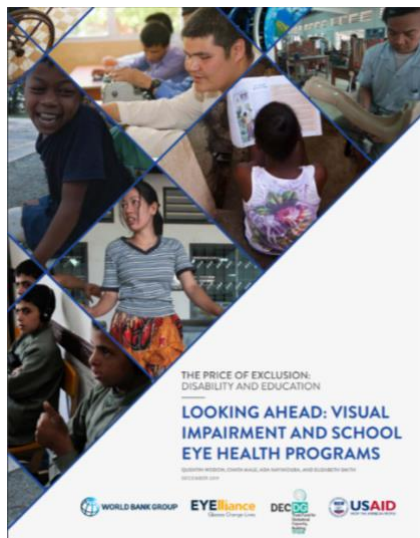
2.2 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in June 2021

The President of Rwanda HE Paul Kagame and Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland have announced the new date for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which was to have been held in Kigali in June 2020 but was postponed because of the impact of COVID-19. The new date agreed with member countries will be the week of 21 June 2021.

[Visit Rwanda's CHOGM Website](#)



2.3 Looking Ahead: Visual Impairment and School Eye Health Programs



Children with visual impairment lag behind in both school enrolment and learning outcomes, according to research from the World Bank and the EYE Alliance. School eye health programs, which provide vision screening and eyeglasses to children in schools, are a simple solution.

The study, [Looking Ahead: Visual Impairment and School Eye Health Programs](#), finds that after controlling for other factors affecting educational outcomes, children with visual impairment are on average five to seven percentage points less likely to ever enroll in school, complete their primary education, and be literate than children without disabilities. This finding is based on analysis of census data for 21 countries.

Access the full press release for this study [here](#).

2.4 New UHC advocacy guide in COVID-19 context for HIV civil society and community partners



On International Universal Health Coverage Day, PITCH – a strategic partnership between Aidsfonds, Frontline AIDS and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, launched a new guide for civil society and communities to support them in their advocacy for an inclusive UHC during COVID-19 and beyond.

COVID-19 has more than ever demonstrated that global solidarity, shared responsibility and protecting everyone is critical to any serious effort to end pandemics, including AIDS, and achieve health for all.

The new advocacy guide supports partners in developing advocacy approaches that integrate rights-based, community-led and inclusive responses into the UHC agenda in the context of COVID-19 and beyond. It informs longer-term advocacy and messaging to ensure countries have health systems in place that contribute to ending AIDS and are strong and resilient to future health crises. Access the guide [here](#).