

# Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium



## Vision 2020 Australia

Established in October 2000, Vision 2020 Australia is part of VISION 2020: *The Right to Sight*, a global initiative of the WHO and the IAPB. Vision 2020 Australia represents over 50 member organisations. Our mission is to be the national advocate for member organisations. We work in partnership, to eliminate the causes and remove the barriers of blindness and vision impairment in Australia and our region—focusing on core principles of collaboration, coordination, accessibility and equity.

## Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium

The Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium is made up of six member organisations involved in: local and global eye care; health promotion; low vision support; vision rehabilitation; eye research; professional assistance and community support.



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

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) Western Pacific Region is also a key partner of the Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium.

## The Australian Government's Avoidable Blindness Initiative

Since 2009 members of the Global Consortium have been implementing projects across Asia and the Pacific under the Australian Government's Avoidable Blindness Initiative (ABI).

In total, the Australian Government has contributed \$27.6 million to the Global Consortium under the already completed first phase of the ABI 2010-2012 and the current East Asia Vision Program (EAVP) 2013-2015.



The East Asia Vision Program (EAVP) is a three year program (2013-2015) funded by the Australian Government. It involves Consortium members working together with country partners in Vietnam, Timor-Leste and Cambodia to improve the delivery of eye health and vision care services and strengthen the health systems in these countries.

This health systems strengthening approach is in line with the WHO Global Action Plan for Eye Health which calls for international partnerships to support building strong and sustainable health systems.

*"The Global Consortium creates a platform for its members to speak with one voice to increase advocacy impact and reduce the administrative burden on partner governments."*

### Cambodia

During year one of the EAVP, the National Program for Eye Health (NPEH) initiated work on Cambodia's next National Strategic Plan for Blindness Prevention and Control 2015-2020. The NPEH Technical Working Group contributed to the development of guidelines for school screening and a curriculum for anaesthetics used on eyes. 276 training activities were completed, three people graduated as ophthalmologists, and one specialist doctor completed training in ophthalmology.



Above: Ms Heav at the Khmer Soviet Friendship Hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Photo courtesy of the Brien Holden Vision Institute.

### ABI phase one results 2010-2012:

- 772,182 people screened or examined
- 419,389 people received treatment
- 86 new eye health centres
- 48 new eye care services using referral pathways to disability services
- 49 eye care services buildings constructed or renovated
- 14,147 people received training

### Vietnam

In Vietnam, year one of the EAVP resulted in a commitment between the Thai Binh Provincial Health Department Medical University to support training of eye health trainees and staff. Provincial schools are collaborating with the eye health sector to improve low vision support for children. 265 training activities were completed, including in optometry for eye examinations and in cataract surgery. The first optometrist graduate is now working at the VNIO.



Above: Thanks to the Low Vision support she has received, Ha Anh is now confident to read in front of her class at Nguyen Dinh Chieu school in Vietnam. Photo courtesy of CBM.

### Timor-Leste

Year one of the EAVP in Timor-Leste saw 151 individual training activities to improve eye health skills completed, and six people graduated from training as new eye health personnel. Consultations took place and a draft National Eye Health Strategy (NEHS) was prepared and is expected to be finalised in 2014.

Since 2001, Joana Meluk has been developing the services available to blind or vision impaired people in Timor-Leste. This includes Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training courses led by visiting volunteers from Australia. To assist Joana, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons invited trainers from Australia to regularly deliver O&M training as part of the EAVP, and now Joana is a trainer herself. Joana will participate in additional instructor training in 2014 through the EAVP to further develop her skills.

## Looking forward

In year two (2014), the Global Consortium's EAVP will continue strengthening national and provincial eye health leadership, building workforce capacity and delivering services in target areas. 'Connect' workshops will be held in the second half of 2014 and will identify lessons learned and how they can be applied to strengthen the EAVP and its work with in-country partners for the remainder of the program.

In Vietnam, year two activities will continue to focus on building workforce capacity through: refraction training, development of the optometry education program, fellowships, a research skills capacity building workshop, up skilling of medical universities and low vision activities to build the capacity of the VNIO and provincial level community eye care services.

In Cambodia, year two will build on the achievements of year one by focusing on enhancing strategic direction, positioning and coordination of eye health at the national and sub national level, including the development and implementation of sustainable high quality frameworks and guiding policies and the finalisation of the next National Strategic Plan for Blindness Prevention and Control 2015-2020. The program will also continue to focus on building capacity to strengthen eye health leadership and the capacity of key national actors. develop national accreditation standards, curricula, and enhance service delivery and referral connections. A research skills capacity building workshop will be conducted, a Continuing Professional Development system will be implemented in 2014, and the Program will continue to work to ensure cross-cutting issues are addressed.

In Timor-Leste, Consortium member agencies will continue to work with key national actors and local partners to strengthen eye health and vision care mechanisms and systems. The NEHS 2013-17 is due to be finalised, and year two activities will align closely with the National Strategic Plan for the Health Sector 2011-2030. Hospital and clinic staff will receive training as part of the gradual approach to skills transfer and mentoring required for a sustainable hand over in Timor-Leste.