

East Asia Vision Program: Cambodia

Year two progress summary



Photo courtesy of the Brien Holden Vision Institute

East Asia Vision Program

The East Asia Vision Program (EAVP) is a three-year program (2013-15) funded by the Australian Government. It involves Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium members working together with country partners in Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Vietnam to reduce avoidable blindness and vision loss with a focus on strengthening the eye health workforce.

Eye health in Cambodia

- An estimated **43,800** people are blind in both eyes.
- Eye health and vision care services are **available in only 21 of 25 provinces**.
- The eye care workforce is small in relation to the population and the need for eye care services.

Key achievements in Cambodia

Highlights of EAVP activity level achievements in year two include:

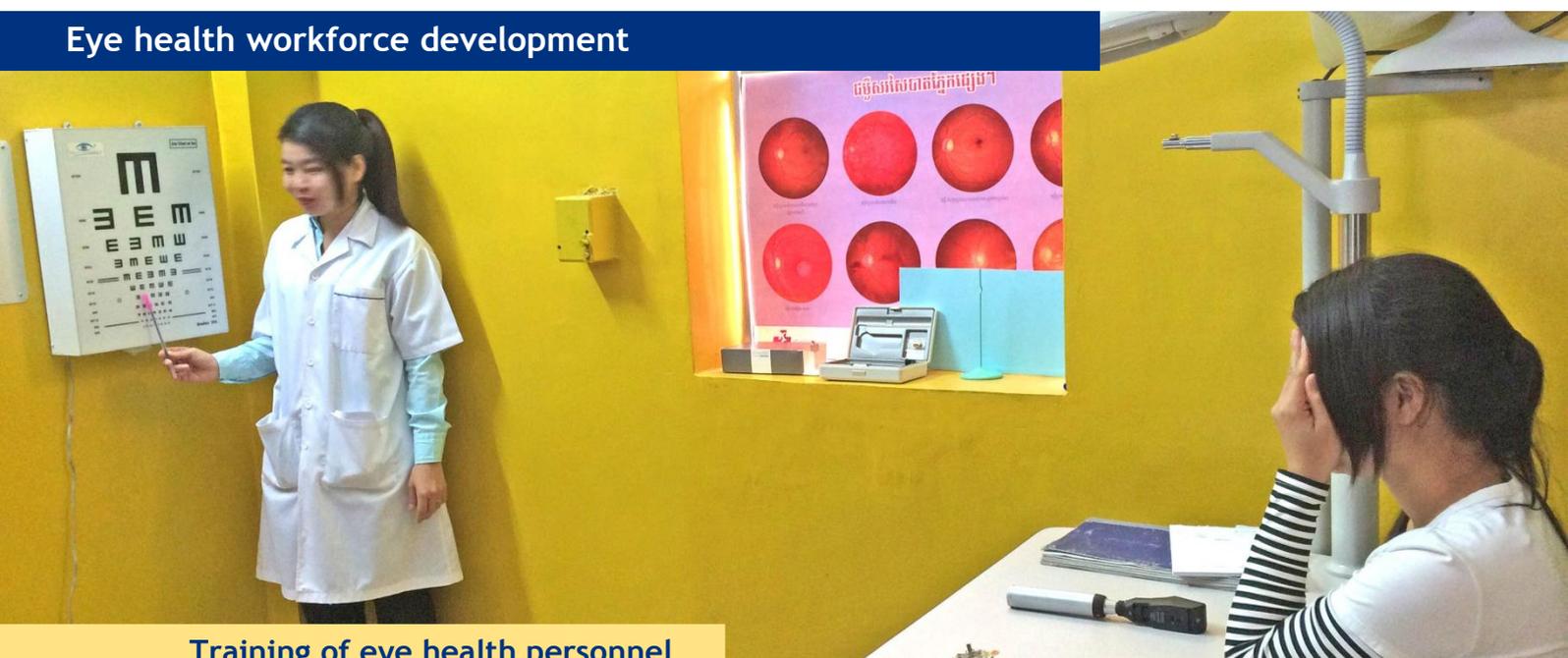
- Supported development of a 'road map' that will inform the *National Strategic Plan for Prevention of Blindness 2016-2020*.
- Establishment of a formal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program for members of the Cambodian Ophthalmology Society.
- Ministry of Health (MoH) approved the revised Ophthalmology Residency Training (ORT) and upgraded Ophthalmic Nurse (Diploma Specialist) curriculum.
- A treatment outcomes guideline for clinical microbial keratitis was finalised in December 2014.
- Expansion of support between EAVP trained senior trainers at the National Refraction Training Centre and junior trainers who are now conducting joint mentoring of other trainees and junior refractionists.

Governance, leadership and collaboration

The EAVP was designed to work with health and eye health leadership in Cambodia to strengthen systems, structures and capacity to improve eye health coordination, leadership and management. Significant achievements in 2014 include:

- Supporting the development of a 'road map' that will inform the Ministry of Health's process for developing the new *National Strategic Plan for Blindness Prevention and Control 2016-2020*.
- ORT Technical Committee and ORT lecturers now have access to updated tools and a framework for trainee assessment and feedback.
- Optometrist Society of Cambodia (OSC) has demonstrated significantly improved management and coordination skills to run courses without relying on the Cambodian Ophthalmological Society.
- Translation of child protection training materials to enable National Program for Eye Health (NPEH) trainers to lead this module in future training activities.

Eye health workforce development



Training of eye health personnel

Photo courtesy of the Brien Holden Vision Institute

Capacity building activities in 2013 and 2014:

- 920 clinical and technical training
- 62 'train-the-trainer' training activities
- 996 individual training activities
- 14 management, communication and leadership training

Workforce development component includes the provision of training in clinical and allied eye health skills as well as adapting and developing eye health training curricula and strengthening teaching and management skills for higher quality training.

- A total of 996 individual capacity building activities have been held since the beginning of the program. 920 of these activities have been to improve eye health skills were through clinical/technical training. 380 of these were provided to allied health workers in 2014.
- 32 per cent of the individual training activities of EAVP were for women. This demonstrates there remains considerable work to do to ensure that women have equal opportunities for career progression training in the eye health sector.
- Formative assessment of learning and teaching in ophthalmology was conducted with seven trainees.

Curriculum development

The EAVP has contributed to strengthening the quality of health workforce skills training by improving training courses and materials. The program has developed and received official approval by the relevant Cambodian partner of one new curriculum, upgraded two existing curriculum and developed two training modules, including finalising a pediatric refraction training module, improved a local anaesthetic training curriculum and finalised the ophthalmic nurse training curriculum.

Research and data

The EAVP is supporting the Cambodian researchers to develop research skills and undertake research projects that will inform local eye health policy development and planning.

- Brien Holden Vision Institute and the Centre for Eye Research Australia held research workshops in 2014 with input from The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists. The workshops were designed to strengthen skills in research design, data collection and analysis and writing of scientific papers.
- Four researchers were selected from the workshop participants to be part of a research project and mentor program. The research projects seek to identify different treatment outcomes and approaches that can inform future treatment guidelines and protocols. The research projects supported by EAVP include:
 - the frequency of bacteria and antibiotic sensitivity for bacterial keratitis in adults not using contact lenses in Phnom Penh;
 - retrospective study on the causes of evisceration in Takeo Eye Hospital;
 - outcome of trabeculectomy compared to medical treatment in Takeo Eye Hospital; and
 - prevalence of endophthalmitis in post small-incision cataract surgery at Takeo Eye Hospital.

Inclusive eye health

Development inclusiveness is an integral part of all EAVP activities. Examples of the inclusive approaches and activities implemented by the program in year two include:

- Data is disaggregated by gender and monitoring of women's participation in training and professional development opportunities.
- A social responsibility module that addresses child protection, gender equity and disability inclusiveness has been developed and integrated into training modules and curricula.
- Cambodia has reflected the smallest proportion of women's participation in eye health professional development opportunities compared to the other programs involved in the EAVP. This is largely due to an ongoing gender representation disparity in the broader specialised health services. A strong focus will need to be maintained to promote women's participation in the eye health sector at all levels. Efforts to try and address some of the disparity within EAVP have included:
 - Social Responsibility module with content on gender equity, child protection and disability inclusiveness has been included in the National Refraction Training Centre (NRTC) course.
 - Course criteria included allowing general nurses into the six month training program in an effort to encourage increased women's participation in refraction.

Looking forward

A summary of key activities in EAVP year three are:

- Supporting the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and the NPEH to finalise the School Health Policy and complementary National School Vision Screening Guidelines.
- Support roll out of operational guidelines on eye disease diagnosis, eye screening and patient referral at the community level through PEC TOT, training and utilisation of Health Centre staff and VHV networks.
- Completion of supported eye health research projects and presentation of research papers at EAVP the Cambodia Ophthalmological Society Annual Meeting in December 2015.
- Transition of the pilot voluntary Continuing Professional Development program to be a compulsory structure for skills development of Cambodian ophthalmologists.
- Ongoing delivery of the Ophthalmology Residency Training at the UHS, the Takeo Eye Hospital and two other hospitals and six month refraction training at the NRTC.
- Ophthalmic Nurses trained using the upgraded curriculum developed in 2014.
- Continuing Medical Education conferences are held.
- Strengthened ophthalmology assessment standards based on new guidelines, assessment templates and establishment of an exam question data bank.

Results across the EAVP Program

Following is the EAVP achievements from Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Vietnam in 2014:

- **Building capacity:** 1,407 training activities to improve the skills of eye health workers.
- **Curriculum development:** five training modules and six curriculums have been developed and two training modules and three curriculums have been updated. Training content covers core eye health personnel training including basic eye doctor, ophthalmic nurse training and social responsibility.
- **Governance and leadership:** establishment, coordination and leadership of the eye health sector through Prevention of Blindness committees and provincial eye health strategies and planning. Strengthening of management skills, improved coordination between medical universities and establishment of continuing professional development learning events.
- **Building locally led research capacity:** training and mentor relationships with eye health research leaders.



Photos courtesy of the Brien Holden Vision Institute, CBM Australia and Royal Australian College of Surgeons

EAVP Cambodia's Program partners

The Program's partners include the Cambodian Ministry of Health, the National Program for Eye Health (NPEH), the Cambodian Ophthalmological Society, the University of Health Sciences, the Optometrists' Society of Cambodia and NGOs in Cambodia working in eye health.

Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium

Established in 2009, the Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium is a partnership of Australian eye health and vision care organisations involved in implementing programs 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. The Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium members are:



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

The Global Consortium members implementing the EAVP in Cambodia are the Brien Holden Vision Initiative, The Fred Hollows Foundation and The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists. For more information visit www.vision2020australia.org.au