

EYES FOR EAST AFRICA (UK)
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1053222
SUMMER/AUTUMN 2004 NEWSLETTER

Patient numbers

Since 1993 when the Eye Centre opened, 25,000+ new patients have been registered and 7,000+ have had their sight restored.

Stories from Kenya



People waiting patiently in line for eye testing at a screening at a local primary school. As you can see there are people of all ages. Note in the background by the illiterate E visual acuity chart an elderly man who is totally blind being led in for testing.

Sadly it's not often that the doc goes out into the field. Here she is nattering to a patient with the community based worker (lady in red) and the rehabilitation officer (man to the right of the picture). The patient is the man with the stick. He is partially sighted but is loosing his vision from glaucoma and age related macular degeneration. He crosses a busy road (the only one in Kwale District) every day to go and chat with his friend over a cup of coffee. He finds his way home by using familiar land marks such as a big mango tree but is completely lost when he goes out of his usual path. Kwale District Eye Centre will teach him how to use his stick more effectively to navigate his way around. Crossing the busy road is

worrying but the field team agreed that it was vital that he retains his confidence to do so in order to retain his current quality of life. This is what rehabilitation and low vision training are about. Retraining or regaining quality of life when nothing can be done to restore actual sight.



Mr Katana Lewa Ngalaa

Mr Ngalaa lives about 100 kms from Kwale District Eye Centre in a remote village. Knowing that most people are blind because they cannot reach treatment Kwale District Eye Centre went into this relatively inaccessible area to screen people for eye problems. Mr Ngalaa seemed fit and well but was not able to look after himself or walk unaided. This is because he was totally blind due to cataract. He was led to the screening place in the primary school by his youngest son who was guiding him by a stick. Surprisingly, Mr Ngalaa did not complain of blindness when he was asked what his problem was but he said instead that his eyes itched. All he was coming for eye drops to reduce the itching. When the eye nurse asked him about his sight Mzee Ngalaa said that he had been like this for so long that he had now got used to it! The nurse assistant asked if he wanted to see again but he didn't take her seriously.

Fortunately, also in the screening room was a member of the local village health committee who was a relative of Mzee Ngalaa. He persuaded him to go with the returning team to Kwale District Eye Centre to have surgery, agreeing to go with him for support Mr Ngalaa had successful surgery on both eyes. He was so excited to be able to see again. Mr Ngalaa walked faster than his helper to the field nurse's office. He had thrown away his guiding stick that had been his constant companion for the last five years. Kwale District Eye Centre have an ever increasing collection! The staff watched with delight as this seemingly elderly man marched confidently around the Eye Centre shaking everyone's hands and thanking them. It seemed as if a different man got into the car to return to Kilifi from the one who had arrived two days earlier!



Rosemillia, the Eye Centre Project Manager, is being taught how to use a white cane to walk unaided. Teaching her is Mr Harun Lwangu of the Kenya Society for the Blind. She is entering the Kwale District Eye Centre from the car park and is on her way to reception to register herself as a patient. If her sight can be restored then the Eye Centre will do so. Most patients cannot afford to pay but no patient

remains blind for lack of money. The poor patients fund is accessed. Very few people can afford the real costs of surgery. If her sight cannot be restored she will enter onto the rehabilitation programme. A map of where she can be found will be completed and a field opened. The Community Based Worker for her area will visit her at home and a rehabilitation plan with targets and activities made out. Once she has learnt to use the white cane she will need to find some way to earn a living. Perhaps, through the use of Braille. Fortunately, all she required, was removal of her eye pad and she is busily employed at Kwale District Eye Centre.



Fund-Raising

In Kenya fund-raising continues to be of major importance to Kwale District Eye Centre.

Diani Rules on the 1st June was sponsored by Safaricom and £5,200 was raised. The event was held on the beautiful beach of Kenya's South Coast and a great deal of fun was had by all. 16 teams of 8 people (of whom 3 must be women) played a lot of silly but exhausting games for eye care.



How Eyes for East Africa spent your money so far this year:-

£121 medical text books for Eye Centre.
£220 compulsory medical insurance for the eye surgeon
£2,292 on medical instruments/equipment
£4,000 directly to the Eye Centre

Website Update.

Thanks to the assistance of Catalyst Systems our website, (www.eyesforeastafrica.org) has recently been given a makeover and now has a different, cleaner looking, colour scheme. The list of items offered for sale through the site is also about to be updated. The addition of a monthly news feature which was introduced last October, provides a regular up to date view of life and events at the Eye Centre. Recent bulletins have included details of fundraising events in Kenya and stories about patients who have been helped thanks to your donations. Since records began in July 2002, there have been almost 6,000 page viewings on the site from visitors in 126 countries.

Making the most of Donations to EFEA

Donations by Standing Order.
If you would like to make a

regular monthly donation to Eyes For East Africa (UK) please ask Jane Burrage (address below), for the necessary form.

Gift Aid Scheme. Donors are reminded that EFEA (UK) can increase the value of most donations made by UK taxpayers by 28%, if donors complete a simple form under the UK Government Gift Aid Scheme. For higher rate tax payers, they too can benefit by reclaiming Income Tax on the difference between the basic rate of tax and the 40% rate for any donations made from personal income. These benefits are of great value to the charity and if you have not already done so, please ask for a Gift Aid form available from Jane Burrage, at the address below.

Wills. Have you ever thought about leaving EFEA (UK) a legacy in your will? We hope you have. At present less than 5% of the adult population include a charity in their will. Please think about us.

DONATIONS

Should be sent to
Eyes for East Africa (UK)
C/o Jane Burrage,
28 Cross Road, Southwick,
West Sussex, BN42 4HF

FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM

The above address,
Or email
jab@jburrage.freemove.co.uk
or
Our web site at
www.eyesforeastafrica.org