

NEWS - JANUARY 2014

As we start a new year it's a good time to reflect on some aspects of the work done at the Eye Centre, other than removing cataracts.

THE PROBLEMS OF ALBINISM AND DIABETES

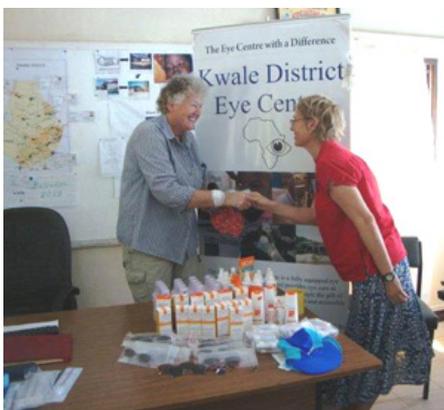


Mishi at school with Vanesa Sebag, an optometrist from France

Albinism

Children with oculocutaneous albinism not only face terrible stigma but also have visual difficulties. The biggest challenge for the Eye Centre staff is to enable them to be accepted into society. They are often hidden away as the family believed that they are the result of a curse.

Happily, young Mishi has been helped and it is delightful to see her in school surrounded by friends, who accept that she is a funny colour, hates sunlight and takes longer to read from a book than they do, but is very clever and fun.



Hermione presenting the sunblock and other items to Dr Helen.

Sun block and hats are important for children with albinism and the Eye Centre was fortunate to receive a visit from Hermione, a theatre nurse from Holland, who brought these items.



Dr Lilian preparing to give laser treatment to a patient with diabetes

Diabetes

Another problem is the increasing numbers of patients that the Eye Centre discovers are diabetic when they come to the clinic. All diabetics should have regular eye examinations, at least annually, as diabetes affects the eye, often before the patient is aware of it.

PRESCRIPTION SPECTACLES

The Eye Centre has been providing patients with reading glasses



'Papa' Helmut Gunther with Dr Helen

for a long time, but since 2013 when Helmut Gunther helped to set up the optical workshop, it has been able to offer prescription spectacles to patients as well.

Not only does this provide a 'one stop' service for them, but also it provides the Eye Centre with a useful income stream. Recently Helmut brought the Eye Centre a state of the art tinting machine for spectacles.

STAFF TRAINING



Verena helping with a post-op patient

As always staff training remains a high priority and is not limited to the medical staff. Eye Centre administrator Verena has recently been learning how to lend a hand with post-operative patients.

DONATIONS FOR THE CHARITY SHOP



Pamela and Dr Helen in the charity shop

Sometimes visitors from Europe know about the work of the Eye Centre before they arrive in Kenya, or they hear about it during their visit. Often their time is short so hotel staff bring donations from their guests to the Centre. The photograph shows donations from Paul and Lynn Britton, who were guests at Pinewood Hotel, being delivered by Pamela to Dr Helen in the charity shop.

We are also grateful to the Aylesford Foundation in UK for their recent donation through Eyes for East Africa.

UK FUNDRAISING EVENT ON 25 MARCH 2014

Eyes for East Africa UK, the charity which exists solely to support the Kwale District Eye Centre, is arranging a choral fundraising event in Central London on 25th March. In brief : the event is part of the Brandenburg Festival 2014 being held in St Clement Danes Church, which is located in The Strand, London. The concert starts at 7.30 p.m. and features the Bristol Cathedral School Gospel Choir.

Contact details – contact@eyesforeastafrica.org or tel +44208 992 4708 or +4477 1832 0368.

Ticket price £18 or children £5.

NEWS - FEBRUARY 2014

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN EYE CARE

We are proud to announce that the Eye Centre examined its 72,000th patient during February 2014. A very creditable achievement in just over 20 years. In the same time period more than 320,000 more people have been seen in the field and at the Taita clinic. Equally impressive, over 25,000 operations have been performed, in most cases restoring sight to patients, who are now able to lead normal lives in their communities.

STRATEGIC PLAN



Hard at work wrestling with the Strategic Plan

Life however does not stand still and development of the next Strategic Plan aimed at addressing the sustainability of the Eye Centre has been started.

RECOGNITION BY CHRISTOFFEL BLINDEN MISSION INTERNATIONAL



Staff proudly display the trophy from CBMI

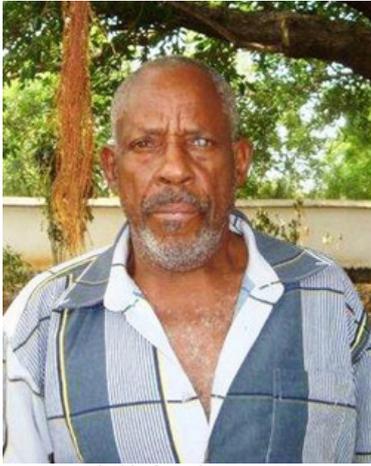
In recent weeks, the Eye Centre was recognised by Christoffel Blinden Mission International (CBMI) for its contribution in providing Quality Comprehensive Eye Care to the Community.



A more relaxed team celebrating their achievement

CATARACT OPERATIONS CONTINUE

Routine cataract operations continue all the time. The next two photographs show Rashid Salim Tunza, a 62 year-old from a



Rashid before the operation

remote village, before and after his operation.

Rashid wishes us to record his grateful thanks to all the donors who make such operations possible.



Rashid after the operation

NEWS FROM THE UK

Preparations continue for the fundraising Brandenburg Concert in London on 25th of March. Please refer to the flyer linked to the January news item for more details.

Finally some of you may have noticed that the News contribution is shorter than usual this month. This is because the editor has been on leave.

NEWS - MARCH 2014

EYE GO GAME SPOTTING

In early March, and for the third time since the Taita clinic opened, the Eye Go Game Spotting (EGGS) fundraising event sponsored an eye camp in the Taita area. It was a great success as in two days, 860 patients were seen, 487 bottles of eye drops were issued and 49 surgical interventions carried. The Eye Centre wishes to thank the sponsors and partners who enabled them to undertake the exercise in helping the community access eye care services and look forward to doing more eye camps and reaching other areas in future. To view photographs and the full report [click here](#).

GOLF FOR SIGHT



Sheena Round from Windsor Ladies Golfers Turner with Dr Helen

Each year, following the lady captainship and later the tragic death of Susan Blasetti, the Windsor Ladies Golfers in Nairobi donate proceeds from the competition in her name, to Susan's favourite charity. The Eye Centre will use this year's donation to enable people to have eye treatment even if they cannot afford the subsidised prices asked.

USING THE SKILLS OF OTHERS TO HELP STAFF AND PATIENTS



Dr Fiona in theatre doing surgery on a child

The team at the Eye Centre know that they are very lucky to have professionals from outside Kenya, who give up their holidays and fund themselves to come and pass on their skills by training staff.

One example is Fiona Dean, a paediatric specialist and a trainer at the University Medical School in Coventry, UK.

Dr Fi, as she is called, is a regular visitor and favourite with the staff as she really enjoys teaching. Thank you Dr Fi.

ANOTHER 20TH ANNIVERSARY CAKE!



Cutting the 20th anniversary cake

At the Eye Centre's twentieth Annual General Meeting the chairman, Mr Johnno Beakbane, produced a lovely surprise; a delicious cake! The photograph shows (from left to right) staff members Kiberiti, Francisca, Nsanite, Mwanasiti cutting the 20th anniversary cake to share with staff and patients.

NEWS - APRIL 2014

Another busy month goes by with a good number of patients seeking treatment in spite of their domestic workload of planting in preparing for the arrival of the seasonal rains.

DR HELEN RECEIVES AN AWARD



The SCRA award

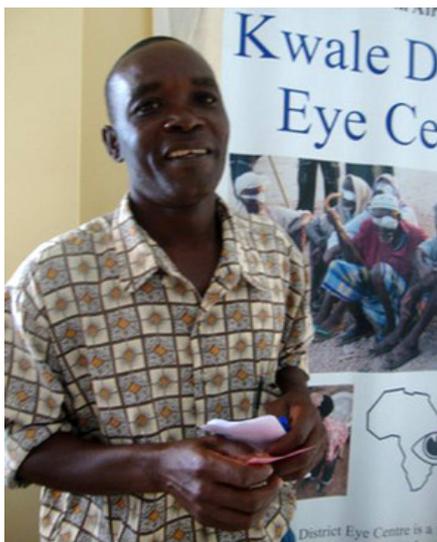


Dr. Helen thanking Luciana Parazzi, chair of SCRA.

The South Coast Residents Association (SCRA) held their annual general meeting this month and awarded prizes to three members they considered to have given outstanding service to the community. One of the prizes went to Dr Helen. In the next photograph we see Dr Helen thanking Luciana Parazzi the Chairperson of SCRA after she received the plaque from Gertrude Mwebesa, one of the Committee Members.

Dr Helen said she was very grateful for award which was a complete surprise. Time had flown past since the setting up of the eye centre over 20 years ago. She looks forward to serving the community, with the aid of her team, in the years to come.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COMMUNITY WORKER (CBW)



Saidi Mrabu

Report written by CBW Saidi Mrabu.

I have been working at KDEC for 12 years now as a community based worker. The villagers in my area call me 'the one who knows about eyes' and I am proud of this.

I remember particularly Menza Chajembe, an old man whose job for as long as anyone can remember, was to take care of the cows and goats while they were grazing. He obviously loved his animals and would croon softly to them when he thought no one was listening. But as he aged he gradually lost his sight, until one day he staggered home late with three goats missing. He had become lost and could no longer tell how many cows he was herding.

Like many of his fellow villagers, his family had a long standing custom of seeking help from the local traditional healer and spent a lot of time and money in trying to get help using witchcraft. Of course it didn't work. It took many months of me talking to the son in law to persuade the old man to abandon the old methods and seek treatment at the Eye Centre. Eventually Mzee Menga agreed and had cataract surgery with us and now he is back in the village crooning happily to his cattle!

The community now realise the services we can offer them and they are happy and have confidence in us because of the successful results they have seen unfold before them.

TWO HAPPY PATIENTS



Asha

Two happy patients whose treatment was partly funded by donations - who knows it may have been yours.

Meet Asha, Eye Centre CBW Robert had a difficult time persuading her to come to the clinic for cataract surgery. Afterwards she was so happy she promised to spread the word to her friends and others in her village.



Mwanakombo

Meet Mwanakombo who could not hide her joy after successful surgery. She can now manage the family plot of land which she enjoyed doing before losing her sight.

NEWS - JUNE AND JULY 2014

It's summer time in Europe and it hopefully reminds our many supporters of the weather normally experienced at the Kwale District Eye Centre. Due to the holidays this edition covers two months instead of the regular monthly report.

DIANI RULES FUNDRAISING



The four way tug-of-war

Early June saw Diani Rules, one of the annual fundraising events in Kwale based around a weekend of beach games and social events. We're grateful for the generosity at the auction and raffle prizes supplied by local hotels, companies and individuals, which raised around \$2500 (Ksh 550,000). The photograph shows the four way tug of war, with Ali Barbour's Team fighting Civicon in the early morning on Diani beach.

EXTERNAL SCREENING PROGRAMMES CONTINUE



Screenings at the ferry terminal



Hamadi at the dispensing desk talking to a patient at the screening

The screening clinics held at the passenger waiting area at Likoni ferry, which connects Mombasa to the south coast and Tanzania, continue to be popular with potential patients seeking eye tests while waiting to board.

WORKING WITH ALBINO CHILDREN

Work with children in need of eye care continues, mainly thanks to the readers of this news report. As mentioned previously,

children with albinism are particularly in need of care and we have several in our programme. Here is one child who has been treated during the period of this report. Her name is Salome, she





Salome undergoing Visual Acuity with glasses

has made good progress and her best subject at school is English.

STAFF TRAINING



Low Vision therapist Almasi tests Christine

The Eye Centre has always made staff training a high priority and this is implemented through our Continuous Medical Training programme. An example is our Low Vision Therapist Almasi, who is shown in the first photograph testing ocular movements on Christine an albino. And there is Mwanalima, shown in the second photograph, who has undergone the CU training and is now confident in taking vision measurements and referring patients for further eye examination.



Staff training day

NEWS FROM THE UK

On 18th July, 38 teenagers from several schools embarked on a visit to Tanzania with award winning Camps International Ltd, carrying 50 pairs of reading glasses destined for Kwale Eye Centre. Lucy Bompfrey of Robert May's School, Odiham in Hampshire had the idea of supporting the Eye Centre in this way after talking to Eyes for East Africa trustee, Jim Crow. Lucy and her friends had great fun trying on the glasses at school before they packed them. We look forward to photos in a future newsletter, recording the journey of the glasses to the Eye Centre.

NEWS - AUGUST 2014

Much happened in August and we start by reporting on people who are connected with the Eye Centre rather than focussing on patients and their care.

OSCAR MARRIES JERUSHA



1 - Oscar and Jerusha

Firstly, Oscar the maintenance man, who is a long term and key member of the Eye Centre team married Jerusha, whom he had met while she was working in a Mombasa hotel. The service was held in the Mombasa Lutheran church and attended by the bride and groom's parents. Those present included around 500 guests, who then went on to enjoy the reception. We are grateful to Vera our administrator, another long term member of staff, for the photographs. Photograph 1 shows the parents giving the bride and groom to each other.



2 - Oscar with the mic

Photograph 2 shows Oscar addressing his guests, flanked by his best man and new bride Jerusha.



3 - Some of the guests

Photograph 3 shows three of the guests from the Eye Centre you may have read about. They are from left to right - Francis Mwangemi, procurement and logistics man; Caroline, ophthalmic nurse and Evans, the dispensing optician; all dressed up for the event.

LUCY BROMPHREY CONTINUES HER WORK

Meanwhile Lucy Bompfrey from the UK, whom we mentioned in last month's report, had been busy making sure that the reading glasses she had collected for us with the help of friends, were making their way to the Eye Centre. Thanks to Lucy, a former pupil of Robert May's School in Hampshire, we received 123 pairs of pre-owned reading glasses, 80 of which came with cases, more





Lucy with some of the glasses

then double the number of glasses we expected which was really useful. The glasses had been distributed amongst her fellow adventurers travelling on a Gap Year community assistance project with Camps International Ltd to East Africa. Thanks also to Simon Englefield the MD of the company and his staff who helped speed the consignment on its way, the items eventually reached us after a journey overland from Tanzania. Dr Helen was delighted to receive the spectacles and said they would be of great benefit to many patients.

NEWS FROM THE TAITA CLINIC



5 - Sabina with 2 eye patches

We thought it time to bring you the latest news from our outlying clinic at Mwatate in the Taita Hills, almost 200 Kms from the Eye Centre's base at the coast.

Photograph 5 shows Sabina (centre), who had bilateral cataracts, receiving treatment at the Taita clinic. Her daughter, who escorted Sabina to the clinic, told us her mother had been blind for two years. She was delighted to see her Mum regain her independence.



6 - Sabina after the operation

Photograph 6 shows Sabina after the operation happy to be able to see again. After two years of darkness, she said it was a miracle to her.



7 - Dr Helen operating at the Taita clinic

Dr Helen sometimes carries out operations at the Taita clinic. Photograph 7 shows her at work. Note the difference in the surroundings compared with the modern and smart operating theatre back at base.



8- Staff and patients at the Taita clinic

Photograph 8 shows patients and staff at the Taita clinic, which is located next to the Taita Honey Farmers Cooperative.



NEWS - SEPTEMBER 2014

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FERRY SCREENING



Eye centre and ferry staff at the monthly screening

During the monthly screening held at Kenya Ferry we were approached by Juma a poultry farmer. He could not see clearly, his sight had been failing for some time and he needed to support his family. The problem was he was afraid at any mention of surgery. We managed to persuade him to come to the eye centre so that we could remove his cataract.

When the short operation was completed he remarked; "Is that all?" He thought it would take so long and couldn't believe that his sight was restored in just a few minutes. He thanked all the staff and set off to look after his chickens with a renewed vigour.



Juma just after surgery

The screening team had a visit from a radio reporter from nearby Mombasa local radio station, Baraka FM. The eye centre administrator, Vera, was on hand to tell him about the eye centre and the patient care we provide. A very useful publicity exercise.



Happy Juma ready to return to work



Local radio reporter interviews administrator Verera Ndunda

INFANT EYE CARE



Lukman recovering from surgery



Baby Lukman was born blind and his mother had not realised it until the boy was a year old. When she learnt from our local community based worker that surgery would restore his sight she



Lukman at the slit lamp with his mother after surgery

couldn't wait to bring the child to us for surgery. She would not have forgiven herself if her boy had remained blind for life. Now he has a bright future.

NEWS - OCTOBER 2014

WORLD SIGHT DAY



Crowd gathers for eye tests



Street theatre by Eye Centre staff

World Sight Day was celebrated in October and we played our part at the Eye Centre by staging a public awareness meeting at the town of Kinango about 60 kms from the main clinic. It was attended by the County Medical Officer for Health and many other stakeholders in health together with about 3,000 local people. "Call to Action" was the theme; action that is, against needless blindness. Astonishingly, 80% of blindness in Kenya is avoidable mostly due to lack of access to affordable eye care.

We explained to those attending how to combat eye disease and where to come or send someone with an eye problem. We toured the town with a loudhailer telling people to come and have their eyes examined. Over 100 people took this opportunity and we were able to explain further about their eye problems. Picture 1 shows the crowd gathering outside the county offices to register for a free eye check up.

Eight people had serious eye disease, mostly blinding cataract and arrangements were made for them to come to the Eye Centre for sight restoring surgery. Three children were in need of glasses in order to see well at school and they were asked to come for measurement and dispensing of these as soon as possible. Picture 2 shows theatre in the main street in Kinango. Staff play out a scenario of a person who is blind who comes for help at the Eye Centre as passers by watch.

CHILDREN'S EYE CARE



Othman getting his glasses

Six year old Othman had challenges in school as he couldn't see in his left eye. His parents were not ready to accept surgery as they feared for their son but after further counselling by their community based worker they were reassured. Othman has now undergone surgery and a check up at the slit lamp.

The photo shows Othman after surgery being fitted with his glasses before he goes home to share his joy. He looks forward to improving in his class work. His parents are so grateful and wished they had come earlier. They have volunteered to tell other parents in their village there is nothing to fear about our eye care and should arrange for their children to have an eye check.

GOAT DERBY ANNUAL FUNDRAISER



They're off!



The Eye Centre's stall

Once again we are grateful to the Diani branch of the East African Women's League for arranging this great fundraising day out for many. It has sometimes been described as 'Possibly the Highlight of the Diani Social Season !'. The first photo graph says it all, capturing the excitement which encourages those attending to give to good causes. Amongst the many side shows, the Eye Centre stall has a prominent place providing information and selling eye care essentials.

NEWS - NOVEMBER 2014

NEW CAMERA HELPS DIAGNOSIS



An examination using the new camera



Retina photo from the new camera

The Eye Centre has recently received a high tech fundus optical camera from a UK donor thanks to Eyes for East Africa UK. The camera is used to take images of anything in the retina for record purposes or, thanks to telemedicine and the internet, images can be sent elsewhere such as a major hospital, to ask for a second opinion.

Dr Helen said "I can't tell you how valuable telemedicine is in a relatively isolated situation such as ours. Thanks to all involved for your help and generosity."

ANNUAL EYE GO FISHING COMPETITION



Fishing prize giving

In November, 21 boats from the fishing community on the coast, supported by hotels and national companies, raised Ksh559,750 (over \$US 6,000), to provide eye care for the patients of the Eye Centre. There were enough fish around to keep the anglers busy. The drinks and bitings (East African snacks) that were sponsored by Captain Andy's Boatyard went down very well. Liaison Insurance also sponsored this event and there were well over 100 supporters to cheer the fishermen on their return on Sunday afternoon. Justin Walters, Sean McGovern and Max Donner fishing on Delta came first in the professional boat category and De Grand Cat fished by Hamid, Saeed Salim and Abdul Zira came first in the amateur section. Picture 3 shows John Webb (left) awarding the trophy and first prize to Justin Walters who tagged a sailfish.

UK DONORS FUND MORE OPERATIONS



Thinking about it? £60 will pay for a cataract operation. Meali had been blind for at least 5 years in her left eye before she came to a screening near her home. A neighbour told her about it but she didn't really believe that her eye would ever see again. After the eye pad was removed she was overjoyed! "That's astonishing" she was heard to exclaim. "I thought that I would always be blind in that eye."



Meali after her operation

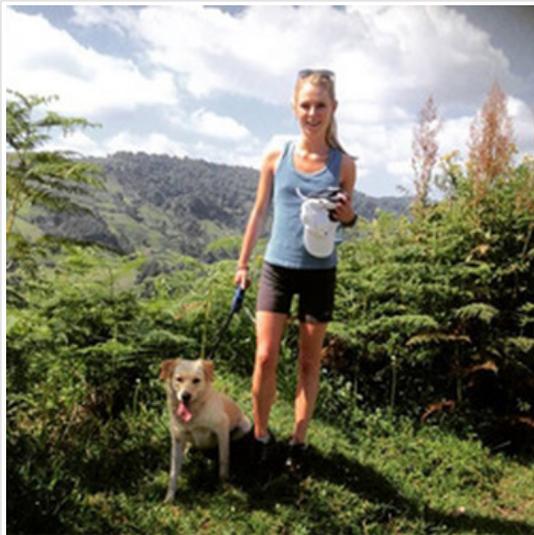


Kangome after her operation

Barbara's patient Kangome was totally blind in both eyes and has been for at least 2 years. Like most Africans she didn't complain, she thought it was normal to go blind when you are old. As you can see when she had both eyes done she couldn't stop smiling! Someone else paid for her second eye to be done. Kangome asked us to thank the people who had made donations to restore her sight.

NEWS - DECEMBER 2014

LAUREN MELLOWS FUND RAISING MARATHON



Lauren Mellows

Marathon runner Lauren Mellows aims to raise £500 to help the Eye Centre. Lauren is running the Bath Half Marathon in UK on 1st March 2015 to support Kwale Eye Centre through Eyes for East Africa which exists solely to support our work in Kenya. In particular she would like to focus her donation on the eye testing, protection and basic treatment of a small fishing village a few miles along the coast, to combat the totally unnecessary rate of blindness that occurs in the area. Lauren's already well on the way to reaching her target. Please support her to exceed her target by making an online donation where no fee is charged at <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/laurenmellowshalfmarathon>. You can also read more about Lauren on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/Eyes-for-East-Africa/149008588476522 Lauren said that the thought of training in rainy Bristol will be a challenge compared to our wonderful Diani beach here in Kenya. We will be thinking of you training every day, just think of how many people will benefit.

A WHITE CANE STORY



Abdulla leaving the centre

Rahemtulla a member of the local community is one of our management committee members and was recently at the eye centre for a meeting. He had mentioned a destitute man, Abdulla, who couldn't see. Dr Helen warned Salim that she may not be able to do anything about the sight but would like to see him. It turned out that Abdulla was blind from glaucoma. There was indeed nothing that could be done to restore his sight. But we are not just an Eye Centre! We provided him with a white cane and taught him how to get around on his own. Within half an hour he had mastered the technique of using it. His wife (who had been leading him everywhere for the last 4 years) was really impressed and Abdulla's face was wreathed in smiles. Salim was delighted. 'I was so disappointed when you couldn't help him' he said 'it took so much hard work to get him to come to you. But now look at him!' 'Ah well, that's what we mean by comprehensive eye care' said Dr Helen 'we couldn't restore his sight, but thanks to your efforts and a modest

donation he has a bit more independence'. The photo shows Abdulla with his wife and our committee member Salim Rahemtulla leaving the Eye Centre.

EYE CENTRE AT LOCAL CRAFT FAIR



In the run up to Christmas, Nomad's, a local Hotel always holds a craft fair. Never wishing to miss an opportunity, Victoria, the manager of our charity shop in Diani, took the opportunity to display our wares and remind visitors we bring eye care to the community.

PATIENTS BENEFIT FROM DONATIONS



The photo shows three lucky patients enjoying meals after cataract surgery this month, which was paid for by personal donations made to Eyes for East Africa UK.

AN OLD LADY WITH A SWAHILI PROVERB



One old lady, Amina, said to Dr Helen when the bandage was taken off after surgery something which she didn't initially understand and had to find someone translate.. ' I hope you grow so old that your teeth fall out! ' ..apparently one of the greatest compliments in Africa as so few people reach such an old age. Amina was so delighted to be able to see her 4th grandchild for the first time ever !

