

NEWS - JANUARY 2016

A GOOD START TO THE NEW YEAR

The best possible start to the New Year has been the delivery of a dual capability laser funded by means of generous donations from the Australian High Commission in Nairobi, Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust in Holland and a grant from EFEA.

The SLT laser offers a non-invasive treatment for Glaucoma by directing a laser beam to the drainage channels at the front of the eye. The side effects and complications are remarkable few and the success about 70%. This may be a boon in situations where compliance or access to eye drops is difficult.

The YAG component of the laser can treat 'after cataract difficulties' by means of 'depth charge' like bursts of energy to rupture membranes impairing vision - again with no need for blades or surgery. The new laser is a delicate piece of equipment and will need to be kept in a dedicated temperature and humidity controlled environment requiring additional funding. Nevertheless this will be worthwhile and may help to transform the long term visual prospects of our patients."

LOW VISION

In Decembers newsletter, we highlighted the importance of the Low Vision Department ([read about it here.](#)) This month, we want to tell you about some of the children who are benefiting from the great work they do!



This little boy is doing well after his cataract surgery on both eyes. He needs ongoing support from the Low Vision Department to make sure that he gets to school and does well.



In many cases, children with visual impairment do very well in mainstream school. It can encourage them to stay motivated and feel accepted. Here, our low vision therapist Almasi works with a boy with albinism at his school. He learns and plays with other local children and has made many friends!



This little girl was blind due to cataracts. She is doing well now after her surgery and looks forward to going to school with her friends. The Low Vision Department will continue to work with her to ensure her vision develops as it should.

COMMUNITY BASED WORKERS STEP UP THEIR ROLE

Our community based workers have been with us for many years now. Initially their task was really only to find people with eye problems, especially those with blinding cataract and send them to the Eye Centre.



Hamadi our Community Based Worker assessing a client in the field. This ensures screening costs are reduced and patients with minor eye conditions are treated in the field.

Naturally their roles have grown and they have become increasingly skilled at counselling, managing low vision children and making diagnoses.

We feel that the time has come to formally recognise this and expand their role such that those who prove accurate in diagnosis and counselling can work with community units and schools to make a provisional diagnosis and decide who needs to come to the Eye Centre for further treatment, and who can be managed in the community. This can be done without us sending a nurse, a driver and a vehicle. They come by public means.

Expanding the role of the Community Based Workers is beneficial to the Eye Centre in many ways. It reduces the cost of outreaches and enables us to help more of the rural community of Kwale. It ensures quality eye care services are accessible to the community, and helps us realise our vision of having a society free from avoidable blindness and inclusive of those with disabilities.



Naomi uses a torch to examine a clients eyes. She can make an initial diagnosis and refer to the Eye Centre for treatment if it is required.

Naomi (pictured on the left) is our only female community based worker. A determined and empowered woman she (very unusually for a woman in east Africa) rides a motorbike. Every patient whom Naomi sent into us last week was correctly diagnosed.

EMERGENCY TREATMENT



Injuries happen shockingly often in Africa and they are usually severe. Worse, it often takes days for the patient to reach us. This little chap did well after surgery to remove a piece of wood and stitch up his eye. We are doing more and more surgeries on children as people learn about our services and we overcome some of the barriers which prevent them from reaching us.

CHILD TO CHILD EYE CARE PROGRAMME

The Eye Centre have implemented a particularly exciting program called the Child to Child Programme in a number of pilot schools.

Our community based workers teach teachers and some chosen children in each of the pilot schools to test vision. Those children are then tasked to test the vision of every child in the school. Any child who cannot see the bottom line of the letter chart are then referred. This helps to ensure that every child with an eye problem is detected and treated.

The photo shows Hassan testing vision in his school.

NEWS - FEBRUARY 2016

FUNDRAISING IN WATFORD, UK

Specsavers Watford recently held a bake sale to raise money for Kwale Eye Centre. 200 cupcakes were baked and beautifully decorated. They were all sold out by 1pm! We would like to thank all at Specsavers Watford for the hard work they put into this fundraising effort.



CHILDREN'S EYE CARE

Detecting and treating eye problems in children remains a vital part of the work of Kwale Eye Centre. Often, if an eye problem is detected early enough we can intervene and prevent problems in later life. The Eye Centre's paediatric department has been recently refurbished, and the children are enjoying playing in their new environment!



Swaleh, who is visually impaired, plays in the refurbished paediatric department as a low vision therapist assesses him and his mother looks on.



Lukman had eye surgery three months ago, and attends regular follow up appointments at the Eye Centre. He is doing great after his surgery, and loves posing for the camera!

ANOTHER HAPPY PATIENT



Agnes had cataract surgery, and was so happy with her vision that she didn't stop smiling from when we removed the eye pad until she left to return home to enjoy a new life.

NEWS - MARCH 2016

AGNESS'S STORY

Our field worker in Taita (a region in Kenya near the Tanzanian border) visited Agnes at school as part of a drive funded by a grant from the Dutch Albert Schweitzer Foundation **NASF**. She obviously had significant eye problems so we asked her to come to the clinic to see the doctor. Her head teacher Patience (in the second photo with Agnes) was the one who realised that her learning, both social and academic, was being restricted by the fact that she could not see.

Agnes has Marfans syndrome and the focusing lens in her eye has subluxed away from the centre of the eye. She sees around the edges most of the time. She improved immediately with some highly powered spectacles. In the third photo you see her entrancement as she is suddenly able to see! She will need to have an operation to have her lenses removed. Meanwhile, we, together with Patience, will keep a watch on her to make sure that she continues to perform well in school.



Agnes



Agnes with her head teacher Patience.



Agnes happy that she can see with her new glasses!

NEW EQUIPMENT FOR THE EYE CENTRE

Recently, we welcomed Dr. Sarah Lucie and her team to the Eye Centre. This was the fourth year in a row Dr. Lucie visited us. She brought with her Imran Yusuf (this being his 4th visit), Bruce James - a glaucoma specialist, and Jane - a low vision specialist (this being her 2nd visit.)

Together with Dr. Helen they set up the new dual capability laser funded by means of generous donations from the Australian High Commission in Nairobi, Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust in Holland and a grant from EFEA.

The SLT laser offers a non-invasive treatment for Glaucoma by



Dr. Sarah Lucie and team with the Eye Centre staff

directing a laser beam to the drainage channels at the front of the eye. The side effects and complications are remarkably few. This may be a boon in situations where compliance or access to eye drops is difficult.

The team at the Eye Centre have begun a study looking at the success of the SLT laser in treating glaucoma. They have developed protocols, written patient explanations to back up what we tell them, and updated all consent forms.



Imran, Dr Helen, Bruce and Albert setting up the new dual capability laser

WORLD GLAUCOMA WEEK

6th - 12th March was world glaucoma week. This collaborative project between the World Glaucoma Association and the World Glaucoma Patient Association contributes to the elimination of glaucoma blindness by alerting people to have regular eye checks, including optic nerve checks.

Kwale Eye Centre got involved by offering free glaucoma checks for all. More information can be found at <http://www.wgweek.net/>

NEWS - APRIL 2016

EGGS SURGICAL SAFARI

Back in November 2015, we reported that the EGGs (Eye Go Game Spotting) fundraising event raised an incredible £11,550 for the local community.

These funds enabled the Eye Centre to carry out screening for over 1,000 people, and carry out sight restoring cataract surgery for 42 people. Toyota, who sponsor the EGGs event, visited our Taita clinic to see the people who could now see!



VOLUNTEERS FROM HOLLAND

Hermien, Jenni, Peterke and Carla are all nurses from Holland.

They were kind enough to spend some of their hard earned holidays helping projects in Kenya. We enjoyed their support during our EGGs surgical safari this year in which we saw over 1,000 people and operated on nearly 50 patients. (see above)



SCHOOL VISITS

We regularly visit visually impaired children in their school to ensure their needs are being met.

Sometimes, something as simple as a telescope can help a child see things on the blackboard.



NEWS - MAY 2016

FOCUSING ON CHILDREN

At birth vision is very poor indeed. A child's visual system develops in early childhood. If during this time the eyes are not getting enough visual input, or are not being used, the visual system does not develop properly which can result in reduced vision. This reduced vision becomes irreversible once the visual system has finished developing at around age 7. It is therefore imperative that any childhood eye conditions like squints, lazy eyes, cataracts etc, are found and treated before this age.

You can see why children's screenings and eye care is a very high priority for the Eye Centre!

Since primary education became free in Kenya we are able to reach many more children for screening, and offer treatment when required.

We were very appreciative to have Jane Tapley from Reading, UK, with us recently. She carried out some school screening and provided staff training. The photo below shows Jane hard at work!



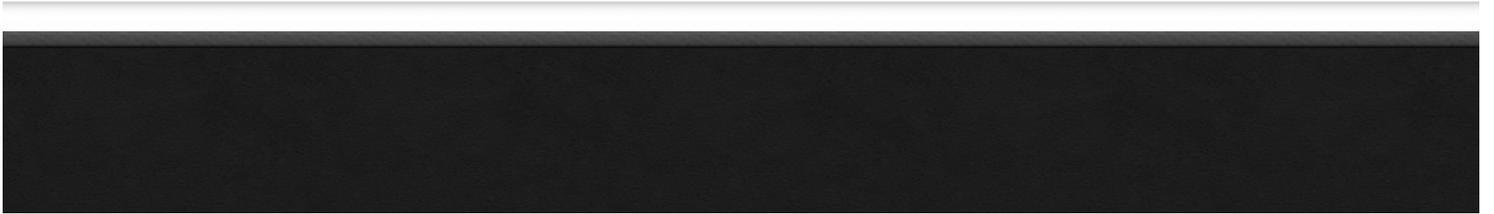
Sometimes a pair of glasses makes the difference between poor performance and success at school.



Jane Tapley



Eye Screening taking place at school



NEWS - JUNE 2016

DIANI RULES

Diani Rules is a mad sports event on the beach which we organize and play each year to raise funds for the Eye Centre.

This year Safaricom (a leading communications company in Kenya) sponsored the event with 1 million Kenyan Shillings (£7,500 sterling).

12 teams of at least 8 people played target, volley ball, table football with real people as pictured here, waterball and many more fun sports.

A raffle and auction added to the fundraising and Ksh1.6 million (£11,000 sterling) was raised. This will be used to continue to deliver our work of enabling affordable eye care to everyone.

Have a look at the Diani Rules website for more information - www.dianirules.com



Battle over the ball, with Dr. Helen playing for the Weir Minerals team in the Fussball on the beach event at Safaricom Diani Rules 2016.



While most people lay in their beds sleeping, Safaricom Diani Rules players were on the beach pulling with all their strength for the Tug of War!



The Safaricom Diani Rules games ended with an obstacle race.

VISITORS TO THE EYE CENTRE

Jeannot Scheid visits Kenya from Luxembourg often. He has supported many charitable causes including Kwale Eye Centre.

This year he came with two nurses to sponsor a field eye screening in Tswaka, Kwale County. 82 people were examined after the usual awareness talk and 15 people were transported back to the Eye Centre where they underwent sight restoring surgery. Thank you Jeannot for your help and support.



Volunteer nurses came with Jeannot from Luxembourg. Here they watch cataract surgery.



15 people from the screening came to the Eye Centre for sight restoring cataract surgery.

CATARACT IN CHILDREN

Babies and small children can be blinded by cataract. This is a lot more common in Africa than in the UK.

Peter was one of those children. His vision gradually worsened in his early years, and eventually his sight was so poor he could not walk around by himself. He was examined at our Taita clinic, and travelled to our main base to be operated on in June.

He can see much better now, and can play with his friends again. He is looking forward to going to school with them all too!



Peter before surgery



Peter after surgery



Peter happy that he can see again!

NEWS - JULY 2016

REPLACEMENT OF MOBILE OPERATING MICROSCOPE



Our mobile operating microscope has been used to restore sight to tens of thousands of people in Kenya.

It was originally donated by a number of donors and comes from scan optics Australia.

Now after many hard years of work it has developed fungus in the optics which cannot be removed.

Replacement of the head and optics of this excellent quality robust microscope is needed and will cost U\$2,000

Please can you help to enable people to see again!

Donate here: <https://www.generosity.com/medical-fundraising/replacement-mobile-operating-microscope>

TRAINING WITH THE SOKO COMMUNITY TRUST

The **Soko Community Trust** works in Maungu, a small Kenyan town about an hours drive away from our Taita Clinic. They provide people with the practical skills needed to see sustainable improvements in their lives and lift themselves out of poverty. Soko makes beautiful designer clothing for the online retailer **ASOS**. Also, many other women in the area work with weaving or beading.

The women were having trouble in that they could not see to do their work because they needed reading glasses. These were not easy to find in Maungu! The Soko Community trust came to us to find a long term solution to this problem. We got together and with support from ASOS we selected and trained 11 women in Maungu on basic eye health and how to safely issue reading glasses and refer those with eye problems.

Further to training these women, the Soko Community Trust together with our staff at the Taita clinic mobilized people in the area to attend an eye



The women receiving training on basic eye health

screening held in Maungu. 233 people were seen and 88 pairs of reading glasses were issued. 7 people had sight restoring surgery and 6 more will come for their surgery next week at our Taita clinic. This was all sponsored by ASOS.

The 11 women who have been trained on eye health will continue to perform basic eye testing and issuing of reading glasses. They will receive refresher training and an ongoing supply of affordable reading glasses which they can sell at a small price.

Over the next few months we plan to train 5 more groups of women around the same area.

This is one of the many ways in which we deliver affordable accessible eye care.



The trained women carrying out vision testing at a screening



Philip Chaka examines a patient at the Maungu screening sponsored by ASOS

A NEW VISUAL FIELD MACHINE FOR THE EYE CENTRE



Elektron Healthcare has kindly donated a top of the range visual field machine to Kwale Eye Centre. A visual field machine measures a patient's peripheral (side) vision. It is used to help diagnose and monitor glaucoma, as well as other retinal and neurological disease.

The Eye Centre sees about 80 glaucoma patients per week, and this new machine means we can reach a diagnosis of glaucoma (or not) more easily, and monitor the effect of treatment more accurately.

The new equipment is proving to be very beneficial to the work of the Eye Centre, and all of the staff are very impressed with it. Thank you to Elektron Healthcare for this impressive machine!





NEWS - AUGUST 2016

REPLACEMENT OF MOBILE OPERATING MICROSCOPE



Last month we asked for your help to replace a mobile operating microscope which had developed a fungus in the main head. We received donations both through the online appeal and direct to the Eye Centre. We now have pledges that should enable us to replace the needed parts, and look forward to being able to report that this has been done.

A huge thank you from all of our patients!

TRAINING WITH THE SOKO COMMUNITY TRUST

In our July newsletter we wrote about our work with the SOKO community trust in Maungu, a small Kenyan town about an hours drive away from our Taita clinic. We trained 11 women in the town on basic eye health, how to safely issue reading glasses and how to refer those with eye problems.

The programme is proving to be a success with many people in the community receiving reading glasses and getting treatment for eye conditions. In the photograph we see one of the women watching her patient undergo surgery.

There is another screening and operating list taking place this week, and another 3 planned in the future.



Dr Helen performing surgery

TEACHER TRAINING

Usually if a child has an eye problem, the sooner it is detected and treated the better the outcome. In Kenya, primary education is free and it is



Some of our younger patients having fun at the Eye Centre

compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 13 to attend school. This means that teachers are in an ideal position to be able to detect children with eye problems and refer them on for investigation.

We recently invited primary school teachers to the Eye Centre and trained them on how to identify children with eye problems. The training was sponsored by [christoffel blindenmission](#) (CBM).

We hope this will allow us to reach many more children who need our help.

A DAY AT THE EYE CENTRE



The photo on the left shows the average busy day at the Eye Centre. All of the patients in blue had surgery the previous day and are waiting for their check ups.



Of course, as well as all of the work we do at the main clinic, we are heavily involved in field screenings. If the patient cannot get to us because they can't see, can't afford to, or don't know how to, we come to them. The photo on the left shows patients waiting to be screened. As you can see, people of all ages come to our screenings.



Our community based workers (CBWs) are responsible for going out into remote areas and finding those who need eye care. Most of our CBWs are trained to be able to screen for eye disease and refer, meaning we do not have to send out nurses. The photo on the left shows Shaban, one of our CBWs sharing his report with his colleagues.

NEWS - SEPTEMBER 2016

FLEET ROTARY CLUB FUNDS A TONOMETER

The Rotary Club of Fleet (in Hampshire, UK) funded a new tonometer for the Eye Centre. A tonometer is a piece of equipment which measures the pressure of the fluid inside the eye. It helps in the diagnosis of many eye conditions, including glaucoma.

Needless to say, this is a very valuable piece of kit, and is already being put to excellent use at the Eye Centre, as seen in the photos.



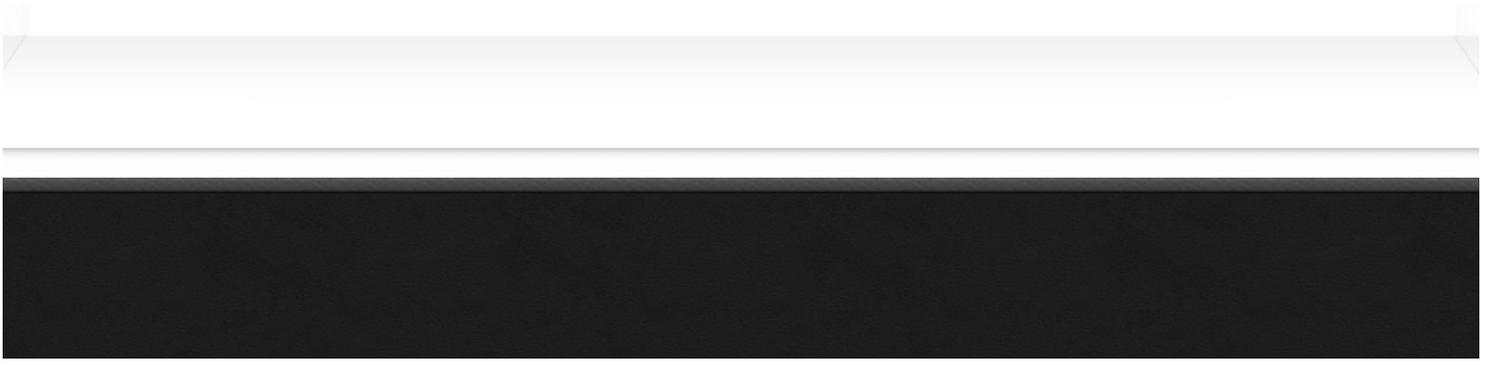
LIFE CHANGING SURGERY



After having cataract surgery, where the cloudy lens is removed and a clear lens is inserted, Mwero is back to his usual prowess on the football field.

When asked how he felt after the surgery, Mwero smiled and said, "Life is so much better when you can see!"

You can help someone see again, click on the 'support us' link above to find out how!



NEWS - OCTOBER 2016

EYE GO GAME SPOTTING RAISES FUNDS

Eye Go Game Spotting (EGGS) is an annual event held in the LUMO community wildlife sanctuary, Taita, south eastern Kenya. This year, it was held over the weekend of 20th-22nd October. 17 teams searched for animals, birds, plants, and animal tracks. The photographs and collections they brought back to camp were judged and an overall winner announced.

The local County Executive Committee Member for Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources Alexander Mwangeka attended the weekend. "This is an excellent initiative," he said to the triumphant contestants and delighted spectators. "We expect even more teams in October 2017 so that more people know about and visit this beautiful Sanctuary." 1 million Kenyan Shillings was raised (almost £8000 GBP), and this money will be used to continue to deliver eye care to the community, and improve the LUMO community wildlife sanctuary.



DR STEFAN VOGEL VISITS THE EYE CENTRE

Dr Stefan Vogel is an eye surgeon from southern Germany. He has links with Kenya as he taught in Nairobi in the 1980s. He visits Kwale Eye Centre every September to teach staff and always has new ideas on every aspect of running and eye centre in Kenya. The staff at the eye centre learnt a lot from his most recent visit.



EYE CAMP RESTORES SIGHT

Lack of affordable, accessible eye care is the reason why so many people in Kenya suffer from avoidable blindness.

Kwale Eye Centre took a screening and surgical team to Taveta (an area on the border between Kenya and Tanzania), and held eye screenings in 15 locations. The surgical team then carried out eye operations at the Taveta Government Hospital. This was in response to a plea from the clinical officer based in the area whom the Eye Centre trained.

1996 people received eye care. 124 cataract surgeries were done, and 3 children were referred back to Kwale Eye Centre to have surgery under general anesthetic.



Ladies recovering from cataract surgery



The surgeon, Albert, relaxes and chats with a patient.

STAFF TRAINING AT THE EYE CENTRE

The Eye Centre was recently visited by representatives from a charity called [Exploring Global Health Opportunities \(EGHO\)](#). Kate Silvester, Kerri Jones, Simon Knowles and Suzanne Obudo took 3 of the Eye Centres senior team on a leadership course. During their visit to the Eye Centre they looked at quality improvement of service.



EYE CENTRE STAFF RUN FOR EYE HEALTH

The Standard Chartered Nairobi Marathon takes place every year to raise funds for childrens eye health under the banner Seeing is Believing.

This year, some staff from the Eye Centre went to Nairobi and ran the 10k race for this great cause! The photo shows: Faith (receptionist at the Taita clinic), Beuchi (nurse), Fred (optician), Dena (community based worker) after the race.





NEWS - NOVEMBER 2016

TEACHER TRAINING

We recently held a half day training session for local primary school teachers. 20 teachers from Kwale county were trained on teaching children with additional needs, in particular those with visual problems. They learnt how to identify children with low vision, how to help them learn, and how to refer them to the Eye Centre if they need treatment. Our low vision therapist, Almasi, is also a qualified teacher so he was very well placed to deliver this training!



CAMP KENYA A SUCCESS

80% of blindness in Kenya is avoidable.

The main reason people go blind and remain blind is that they have no access to eye care. It is therefore very important to provide eye care and make it accessible to as many people as possible.

Camp Kenya brings volunteers together to get experience, and this time they provided medical experience to professionals. For 6 days people from the UK, mainly nurses, worked with Dabson, our nurse, and Robert our community based worker. They raised awareness of our presence in the local community, and screened many local people for eye disease.

501 people were screened, 252 bottles of eye drops were issued, 109 pairs of reading glasses were dispensed, and 21 cataract surgeries done. The volunteers paid the cost of all this treatment.





Volunteer nurses from the UK with a teacher from a local school. The young boy in the middle wants to be an optician when he grows up.



EYE GO FISHING RAISES FUNDS

Eye Go Fishing is an annual event held on the Kenyan coast to raise money for the Eye Centre. This year many fish were caught and 411,000 Kenyan Shillings (£3172 sterling) was raised!



Dr Helen with the team at Liaison who generously donated.



L- R: Jim Ross, Phil Gschwend, Julie Webb, Michael Tamm, Tariq Malik and Ian Andrews who won 1st prize



Swee collects Salim Abaids present



Julie Webb awards Junior prize to Ahlam Baradia. She wins 4 cinema tickets.



Julie Webb awards Muhsin Baradia 3rd prize.

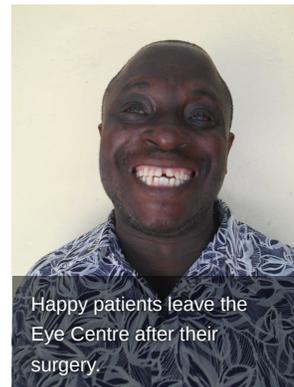
NDIYO HIVYO SCREENING CAMP

Ndiyo Hivyo is a tough, dry, poor, remote place about 70km from the Eye Centre. The name translates as "this is how it is" referring to a tough life. We recently carried out an eye screening in Ndiyo Hivyo with help from Kenia-Hellef-Lëtzebuerg.

Kenia-Hellef-Lëtzebuerg donated 182,243 Kenyan shillings (about £1500 sterling). This paid for the screening and surgery for 20 people.

Everyone was very pleased with the outcome! We look forward to extending our help where it's needed most.

This is what we ask people to sponsor - with less funding we reach fewer poor people.



EYES FOR EAST AFRICA NEW TRUSTEES

Eyes For East Africa held their Annual General Meeting in

London this month, and appointed 2 new Trustees - Jonathan Arkle and Rachel Carson. The photo on the right was taken at the AGM and shows the current Trustees.

Back Row L - R: George Walton, Roger Humphry, Tom Parkinson.
Front Row L- R: Jonathan Arkle, Rachel Carson, Jim Crow.



NEWS - DECEMBER 2016

WORLD DISABILITY DAY 2016

December 3rd was World Disability Day - an international day set aside to create awareness. This year in Kenya, Kwale County (where the Eye Centre is located) was honoured to host the nations celebration. Staff from the Eye Centre gave speeches to raise awareness of visual disability, and carried out eye screening in Kwale town. 254 people were tested in one day!



DONATIONS RESTORE SIGHT

KKBabla is a philanthropist who has probably restored sight and saved the sight of more people in Kenya than anyone. His incredible lifelong generosity has been a huge contribution to battling blindness in Kenya. The photo shows Dr. Helen with some children who have just undergone surgery thanks to his generosity. These children would remain blind if they could not access help.

Every year the Eye Centre does around 100 operations on children under general anaesthetic, mostly cataract operations. Donations are always required to ensure this important work continues.



THE IMPORTANCE OF REHABILITATION.

Although we are able to treat many patients who visit us, sometimes blindness is irreversible and no treatment is available. In these cases rehabilitation is important. A person can be helped to maintain independence despite their sight loss. The photo shows a young man who is completely blind in both eyes. He first visited the Eye Centre at the age of 7. We could not make his vision better, but went to a nearby school for visually



impaired children, and was followed up regularly by the Eye Centre. He is now in his 4th year of university and is able to get out and about without help! In the photo he is with our Low Vision Therapist Almasi, who is explaining how to use a white cane to get around unaided.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR!

Finally, Dr Helen and some of the staff and patients of the Eye Centre have donned their festive hats to wish you all a very merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy 2017. Thank you all for your help and support this year.

