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The Mozambique Eyecare Programme – a Partnership which Addresses Avoidable Blindness in Lusophone Africa

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THE MOZAMBIQUE EYECARE PROGRAMME – A PARTNERSHIP WHICH ADDRESSES AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS IN LUSOPHONE AFRICA

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BACKGROUND

WHO Statistics:

831 million people are visually impaired worldwide, 45 million of them are blind.

Most people with visual impairment are older, and females are more at risk at every age, in every part of the world.

Uncorrected Refractive Error accounts for over half of all visual impairment. About 87% of the worlds visually impaired live in developing countries

Partners:

Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
Universidade Lúrio (UniLúrio), Mozambique
University of Ulster
International Centre for Eyecare Education (ICEE)

Aim:

To address the significant barrier of local human resource capacity development, through advocacy, optometric education, infrastructure and research . The “Mozambique Eyecare Project” (MEP) is an Irish Aid, DIT , ICEE, UniLúrio funded collaboration.

EDUCATIONAL MODEL



Optometry Students use their skills to examine children in a school screening September 2010



The MEP, is establishing an integrated programme of optometric education and vision-care services delivery in Mozambique using a multiple entry-exit model developed by Professor Kovin Naidoo. A four year Optometry Degree course has been established at UniLúrio.



OPERATIONAL METHODS

- Curriculum Development;
- Implementation of a management and reporting structure;
- Recruitment of students and staff;
- Development of a university optometric training clinic underway.
- Operational methods are monitored by the needs driven research.

(Right) Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between DIT, UniLúrio and ICEE, June 2009, DIT. Clockwise from left: Ms Karen Paarz, Ms Patricia Mordaunt, Dr James Loughman, Ms Reshma Dabideen, Prof Roger Anderson, Prof Jorge Ferrão, Prof Brian Norton, Prof Kovin Naidoo



(Left) Seminar to discuss the UniLúrio Optometry Curriculum, Maputo, June 2009. Representatives from MISAU, UniLúrio, DIT, ICEE, UEM and ophthalmologists

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. Evaluation of the Educational Model and deployment outcomes of the programme
2. Assessment of student clinical competencies
3. Development of a framework for the recruitment, retention and legislative support of students,
4. Draft Strategic Plan for Paediatric Eyecare in Mozambique
5. Economically sustainable approaches to Eye Care in sub-Saharan Africa

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

- ❖ Baseline Situational Analysis e.g. RARE
- ❖ Computerization of the health care system in Mozambique
- ❖ One Student One Family visual health education programme
- ❖ Ocular Manifestations of HIV



OUTCOMES TO DATE

- €1.5 million RCB grant awarded by Irish Aid
- Recognition by the Mozambican Ministry for Health (MISAU) that the model will address the immediate need for optometric human resources
- Involvement of the National Eyecare Coordinator in curriculum approval process as an initial stage in cadre recognition by MISAU
- 2 Faculty in place in UniLúrio
- 6 post graduate students

PROJECTED OUTCOMES BY 2013

- First 16 optometrists will graduate in May 2013, (educators will be identified from this group)
- 120 Students in Optometric Education
- 30,000 eye tests performed in the UniLúrio clinic (based on an estimation of student numbers and their primary clinic hours per week)



UniLúrio Optometry Students assist dispensing spectacles during the Campaign for Quality Vision 2009

CONCLUSIONS

While critically increasing the optometric human resource capacity within Mozambique and potentially Lusophone Africa, the programme will also establish a research infrastructure which generates such specialist knowledge as to influence policy and facilitate the implementation of sustainable systems in the developing world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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