

a new vision

Together we will eradicate avoidable blindness



A NEW VISION NEWSLETTER

December 2015

Dear supporters,

Welcome to the final instalment of our newsletter for 2015. We trust it has been a year of good fortune and health for each of you and your families.

Sometimes magic happens! In January 2015 we conducted a successful Cataract Clinic in Jombang – East Java, the first we have done in this region. Since then, we've continued to receive many requests from people in the region to come back and do another. Sadly, neither our local partner, nor us at A New Vision, had enough funds to conduct another clinic on the same scale. Incredibly, luck was on our side. Mrs Aarti Lohia, chair of the Lohia Foundation (a regular sponsor of ANV clinics) became aware of our problem and she said to me, "Just do it, we will pay for it." We are so incredibly grateful for the Lohia family's generosity and belief in our mission.

You will see Lohia Foundation, and its parent Indorama, featured prominently in this newsletter - they have sponsored two of our three major clinics for this year. In writing this newsletter, we hope to spread the word about ANV's ability to run cataract clinics, and thus attract new donors (large and small), enabling us to increase the number of clinics we run each year.

Three years ago, I met a pastor who runs a charity doing cleft palate surgeries in Vietnam. At the time, I was worried about the future of ANV. We did not have a strong donor base and we never knew when the next donation would come, or how large it would be. We often still don't. The pastor advised me to just keep casting my net, don't give up, you never know what will come to you. I constantly remind myself of his words and the generosity of our donors who enable our work to occur.

As I'm sure many of our patients dealing with vision loss remind themselves every day, I too, in our mission to eradicate curable blindness, strive to "never give up".

Effi Jono, on behalf of everyone at ANV



Elation as eye patches are removed after surgery



Aarti Lohia working with a patient in Purwakarta

DID YOU KNOW?

There are only 5 ophthalmologists for every 1 million Indonesians, and of these doctors, only 50% can perform surgery?

As a comparison, there are 40 ophthalmologists for every 1 million Australians and 90% of these professionals are surgeons.

1 million Indonesians = 2 eye surgeons

1 million Australians = 36 eye surgeons

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Jombang Clinic, 22-27 April, 2015 1272 Surgeries

With much gratitude toward the Lohia Foundation for their funding, we returned to Jombang in April 2015 to conduct our next clinic. Over a 5-day period, which overlapped the devastating April 25th earthquake in Nepal, our team worked tirelessly, from early morning until late into the night, conducting a total of 1272 surgeries – 272 more than had been anticipated and prepared for. The surgery was led by 3 full time surgeons, 3 part time surgeons (a day each), 12 nurses and many nursing students. An average cost of \$90 per surgery was achieved, a lower cost than usual, due to the many fixed costs (community education, patient pre-screening, surgery set up / rental and 1 month



post surgical follow up) being spread among the high number of surgeries conducted.

Every clinic is supported with equipment from the Fred Hollows Foundation and quality supervision from Dr Ruit's Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology in Nepal. The Jombang clinic was supported by two Tilganga paramedics - Hari Karki and Gopal Karmacharya – in charge of anesthesia and quality control. Despite finding out midway through the clinic that their homes had been destroyed by the earthquake and their wives and children living in shelters, Hari and Gopal chose to stay and continue with their work. It was with tears that they were finally bid farewell at the completion of the clinic.

For your professionalism, commitment and empathic care toward each and every patient, we thank you from the bottoms of our hearts Hari and Gopal.



Image above and top right shows patients undergoing anaesthesia prior to surgery at the Jombang Clinic in April.

Nepal earthquake

Many of you, our supporters, received our email seeking funds for relief following the Nepal earthquake. Dr. Ruit and the Tilganga Institute team led the initial earthquake relief in Nepal by supplying food, medicine, and temporary shelters to the thousands of people in need. Incredibly, with thanks to so many generous supporters, A New Vision's campaigning contributed an additional USD \$250,000 to Dr Ruit's relief

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Purwakarta October, 2015 591 surgeries

For the past 3 years, Mrs Aarti Lohia has persistently lobbied the idea of conducting a cataract clinic in Purwakarta, a region in the West Java province of Indonesia, where the Lohia family has its flagship factory and plant.

We at ANV hesitated due to Purwakarta being located only a one-hour drive from Bandung, the home of Indonesia's National Eye Institute. And there are many factories in Purwakarta, which suggests that socio-economic conditions in Purwakarta should be, compared with other Indonesian regions, more robust. Therefore, we questioned whether there would be many cataract patients in Purwakarta.

As we considered Purwakarta's viability, the Ministry of Health (Indonesia) released findings from their recently conducted "Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness" for West Java, including data from two villages located in Purwakarta. Findings showed that the rate of cataract blindness in West Java is 2.8%. This figure is considered very high by international standards with a cataract blindness rate of 0.5% in Vietnam and 0.9% in Pakistan.

Compelled by this unexpected information, we held our first cataract clinic in Purwakarta from October 2-5, 2015, funded by Indorama. With costs around \$100 per patient, we conducted 591 surgeries across 4 days of surgery. All of this with 3 surgeons, 1 anesthetist, 10 nurse/paramedics and 12 volunteers. In addition to the surgery conducted, ANV provided training to 400 regional village nurses / community figures on basic eye health.

Logistics on the ground are rarely without drama and hiccups. In Purwakarta, set up (cleaning and prepping the space) commenced in the borrowed

military hospital days prior to surgery beginning. Surgery on the start day was delayed due to power failures every time the sterilizer was turned on. After 5 hours of outages, the cables at the hospital gave in and Indorama management immediately dispatched their engineering team to oversee electrical rewiring. Eventually, surgery commenced at 2pm.

Incredibly, throughout these delays, our 100+ patients and their families sat quietly and calmly, unquestioning and accepting of the situation.

We were very impressed by the personal touch given by the dedicated Indorama staff throughout the clinic. From the one-on-one counseling delivered to each patient before and after surgery, washing each and every patient's face, hands and feet and the deployment of in-house security and cleaners to ensure the hospital zone was cigarette and rubbish free. All of these tasks were significant with over 500 people on the ground every day.



Patients at Purwakarta waiting excitedly in anticipation of their bandages being removed and their sight restored.

.....Continued on page 4

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Indorama and Lohia Foundation, together with the local Government of Purwakarta have expressed a desire to make Purwakarta the first region in Indonesia to be free of cataract blindness. In achieving this aim, the same event will be held on a yearly basis, same place, same month, over the next 5 years. ANV is very proud to be a partner in this mission.



Crowd Funding Effort

Our volunteer Lee Siew Yian recently initiated a fundraising effort for ANV utilising crowd-funding website Indiegogo. Inspired by the story of one of the many people she met in Purwakarta, and illustrated with her beautiful photography, Yian utilised social media to spread word of her campaign far and wide. Thus far, she has raised \$6,460, donated by 54 people. Only \$1,500 shy of her \$8,000 goal, this being enough to fund 100 life changing cataract surgeries. What a superb effort by the ever generous Yian.

Meet Ridwan – Volunteer from Indorama Corporation

Initially, Ridwan was given the simple task of taking photos of each patient's record, ready for subsequent input in the computer. By the end of the day, Ridwan was juggling many jobs from testing patients' blood glucose levels, assisting in visual acuity testing, guiding patient from one area to another and was at any time able to find whatever and whoever we were looking for.

We asked Ridwan what he would take away from the event. This is what he said, "This has been an extraordinary experience. I work in the data input section

at Indorama. At the cataract clinic, despite meeting

many colleagues for the first time, as soon as we were on the ground, we felt strongly that every one of us at Indorama and ANV was one team. With every action having an immediate and direct impact on patients, I experienced an unbelievable feeling, to be able to contribute to such a cause, seeing people's lives

transformed. In turn, my life was transformed too. I learned so much. I shared stories and what I learnt about eye health with my own big family."



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Reflections of a Volunteer—Megan Yem, Lohia Foundation Volunteer

When a friend asks for help, you don't think twice. So, when my friend Aarti asked if I could help out at a cataract camp with A New Vision, I said yes, not really knowing what I was getting myself into. I had never heard of A New Vision. I wasn't quite sure exactly what they did or how they did it. I hadn't heard of Dr. Sanduk Ruit or of the amazing work he had done in his home country of Nepal (and other places). I did not know about the inordinately high rates of cataract blindness in Indonesia, nor of the poverty that prevents needy Indonesians from availing themselves of the simple medical procedure of cataract surgery.

Well, my education was to come fast and furious over a weekend last October. I had booked my flight to Bandung, and Aarti had organized the rest. I was met by a man who kindly drove me to Purwakarta - an hour away, first by highway, then by narrow road into the village where the cataract camp was set up. Indorama Corporation had generously financed the camp as a part of their 40th Anniversary Celebrations.

I had no idea what to expect when we got to the camp the following morning. What I saw was unimaginable. Hundreds of people gathered in front of a disused military hospital (which had been repurposed and cleaned by Indorama specifically for the camp). Tents and chairs had been set up, and electric fans provided additional relief from the heat. The patients had been there since before dawn - many dressed in their Sunday finest, waiting quietly and calmly for the camp to be officially opened by local, and military, officials.

After the opening formalities, we volunteers were assigned various tasks: registering the patients, getting them washed and dressed in operating gowns, clipping their eyelashes, putting drops in their eyes, taking diagnostic measurements, and guiding them into the operating theater. The patients went into surgery apprehensive, maybe a bit scared, not knowing any more than I did about what was to happen. And when they emerged from the operating theatre 10 minutes later, they seemed a bit stunned, still unable to see, patches over their operated eye and disoriented. The volunteers cleaned them up, gave them their belongings and led them to their waiting families, grateful for the opportunity to perhaps realize their dream of being able to see again.

Although unable (due to my short time at the clinic) to see it for myself I heard about and saw pictures of the smiles of people, who just 24 hours prior, had to be guided, and held on to, because they couldn't see. The operation was successful in all cases - hundreds of previously blind men, women and children (yes, cataracts affect even children) could now see. No more would the young have to stay home from school to look after the elderly because their blindness prevented them from being able to take care of themselves. No longer would men have to depend on family and friends for handouts because their blindness prevented them from being employed. No longer would women be neglected and abandoned because of their disability. So much benefit for so little cost: the operation takes only 10 minutes and costs as little as \$80.

Originally developed by Dr. Sanduk Ruit in Nepal, this method of performing cataract surgery is now being taught to local Indonesian doctors who are in turn volunteering their time and expertise to help their fellow countrymen and women. What a gift A New Vision has been able to give these people of Central Java, generously funded by Indorama! AND what a gift to me from my friend Aarti, who asked only casually if I would be willing to join her. Little did she or I know that I would get almost as much out of that camp as the patients! I met so many interesting, inspiring volunteers and organizers. I got to work side by side with people of various nationalities who are passionate and bounding with energy and love for what they do. I learned about the country and culture that lies just south of where I live and I learned that I love to have contact with people - to help them, to guide them, to give them a loving touch which, I am convinced, heals as much as a knife. Megan Yem



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Patient Stories—Lives Transformed

Economic and Mental Health Benefits

Ading is a 49 year old man who was forced to cease his work as a truck driver after his vision degenerated. Eventually, he lost vision completely in one eye and could see only a distance of 1 metre with the other. He stayed at home, depressed that he had become a burden and useless to his family.

When we saw Ading a month after the surgery for follow up, he was beaming, “I have gone back to driving” he announced with a huge smile.

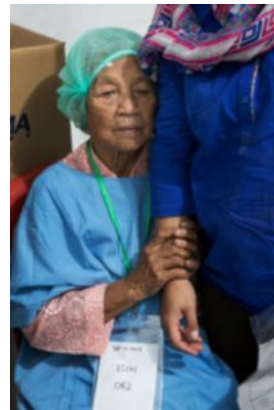
After years of blindness, culminating with a \$100 surgical procedure, Ading is now able to earn \$300 a month. An amazing economic return, and one that would not have been available to Ading had this free surgery not been offered to his community.



The Incredible Transformation of Ecoh

For Ecoh, blindness robbed her of every independence, confidence and security. She became afraid and reliant on others for everything, unable to move on her own. Clinging tightly to anyone nearby - family, friend or stranger, many of us at the clinic, prior to her surgery, were hugged by Ecoh, each of us moved by her obvious fear. Some of us even wondered does she suffer from dementia? But the

very next day her eye patch removed, Ecoh's face and demeanor immediately transformed. Happy, confident and overjoyed to be able to see. These pictures of Ecoh before and after surgery show the dramatic change.



An Eleven Year Wait to see again

Suparmi waited for 11 years, in darkness, before she received this opportunity to restore her sight. Needing just a 5 to 10 min operation to see again, she was unable to afford the surgery which a doctor quoted at US\$400. Further to this, she would require numerous referral letters from various levels of local government. Suparmi explained “I don't have that kind of money nor anything of value to sell.”

Suparmi was depressed and frustrated. To prove her ability, she often purposely trekked 2 kilometres to fetch water from the local well. Risking falling or being robbed or attacked, she continued, unconcerned about the risks she took.

The journey of Suparmi's surgery wasn't without trials. Her blood pressure was above our threshold. We had given her medication during screening 2 weeks prior to surgery, but it still had not dropped to an acceptable level. On the day of surgery, we retested her. Finally, after 6 hours and on the 3rd test, Suparmi succeeded. By this time it was close to 7pm and she was one of our last patients for the day.

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Patient Stories—Lives Transformed

Suparmi's daughter, who accompanied her to the hospital, did not dare to leave her Mother's side, even for a toilet break, anxious and worried her mother may miss out on this opportunity to get her sight back.

"I can now see ants" Suparmi said convincingly when we visited her house a month later. Her family at times can still not believe Suparmi has regained her sight. With disbelief of her new visual ability, they often test her asking "Mum, what is the color of the vegetable guy's shirt?" Her correct answer of "blue" impressed them all. And with her vision restored, Suparmi is constantly busy, contributing to the well-being of her family. "Mum cannot stop working, she's always sweeping the floor, cleaning, washing" laughed her daughter.



Husband and "Carer" now able to help his disabled wife

This is Sardji. With his wife suffering from paralysis following a stroke, Sardji has cared for her as best as he can despite his own blindness. At 56 years of age, and no children to assist them Sardji and his wife have struggled to cope financially and on a daily basis. A 5-10 minute procedure has enabled this husband and wife to improve their lives exponentially.

A young boy's dream revived

Meet 11 year old Handi. The sweetest boy who has a love for animals and dreams of becoming a vet. Now, with his sight restored, Handi can strive to achieve his dream, just like other boys his age.



Eleven year old Handi awaits his bandage being removed and being able to see once again.

Sardji rests after his surgery.



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North Sumatra

In August, a small team from ANV, led by Dr. Mohammed Irsan travelled to North Sumatra and conducted 119 cataract surgeries. Dr Irsan returned to North Sumatra in December and conducted 70 more surgeries.

Singapore

ANV collaborates with the People Association to conduct regular free eye examinations in Singapore's heartland. To date, close to 300 people have had their eyes examined by Dr. Ronald Yeoh,

Dr. Nicole Tan and Dr. Sudarshan Seshahai. Following these exams, 4 people underwent free cataract surgery under the care of Dr. Yeoh and Dr. Tan at Singapore's Glen Eagles Hospital.

East Java

A New Vision continues to sponsor a once a week clinic run by Dr Teguh in East Java. Once a week Dr Teguh runs a clinic from his surgery where he restores vision for patients suffering from cataract. Funded by ANV, to date in 2015, Dr Teguh has restored vision in 500 people affected by cataract induced blindness.

A Huge Thank You to our Donors and Volunteers for 2015

Adam Chan, Albert Ngadiman, Allan Darmawan, Amilia Gunawan, Ann Ee, Annebel Yu, Shelly Yen, Belinda Tanoto, Bittel Asia, Buddhi Tzu Tzi Malang, Prof. Chan Yoke Kai, Chang Ming Yu Chen Sun He, Cia Hui Sien, Cou Siau Pau, David Carman, David Kolpak, David Wang, Desiree Permata, Desmond Yong, Dodi Saputra, Dr. & Mrs Chang Ming Yu, Dr. Jimmy Tang, Dr. Ong Eng Keow, Dr. Yeo Chor Tzien, Dr. Baey Lian Peck, Dr. Chua Choon Lan, Dr. Fitri, Dr. Haryoko Wihardjo & Nguyen Minh Thuong, Dr. Henning, Dr. Irene Kwee & Edmund, Dr. Loon Seng Gee, Dr. Muhammad Irsan, Dr. Nicole Tan, Dr. Oscar, Dr. Ronald Yeoh, Dr. Sri Wulansari, Dr. Sudarshan Seshasai, Dr. Teguh F Metaputra, Dr. Uyiik, Drg Johan Lim, Drg Munasti, Eddyanto Condro Tanzil, Drs. Kofie Foundation, Elaine Tjondropuro, Elisabeth Subolo, Emily Octiva, Enggal, Erwin Salim, Fang Yoke Lan, Freya Tan, G-Resources Martabe Management & Staff, Gan Kok Koon, GM Bakery, Goh Su Yin, Habibie Tenggono, Han Fook Kwang & Frances Han, Heather Raineri, Herlina, Hyunh Tran Nguyet Thi, Indorama Management & Staff, INTI Jakarta, Jombang & Medan, Ita Marsyita, Jana Tan, Jeffrin Sundarto, Jono Elwi & cousins, Jono Janti, Jono Nilawaty, Jono Sujanto, Ju Susantyo, Kao Kwon Fu, Khoo Boo Tat, Koh Choon Heong, Kosnen Herman, Lee Seiu Kin, Lee Siew Yian, Leong Mun Wai, Lili Esrie L/Joh, Lim Boh Chuan, Lohia Foundation Management & Volunteers, Marion Ng, Melanie Ng, Meng Ni, Mikael Ng Chee Siong, Mimi, Min Sheng ID Tags, Mohammed Farook, Myra Loh, Ng Mei Chu, Patrick Chee, Peter Sam, Platinum Ceramics Industries, PP Tebu Ireng, Rahim Tantri, Regina Lim, Richard Soh, Robert Lo, Roger Lim, Rosemary Clemente, RS Unipdu Jombang, RSNU Jombang, Seah Siok Teng, Sepphiah, Singgih Gunawan, Soeharsa Muliabarata, Soewandi Sudjiati, Sugianto Wahyudi, Sunaryo, Surjantoro Siswanto, Surya Tanadi, Surya Widjaya, Susana, Suwandir Tandjar, Suyanto Gondokusumo, Tan Chee Meng, Tan Poh Hiang, Tan Shi Xiang, Tan Tee Jim, The Fred Hollows Foundation, Theresia Sembiring, Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, TNI Indonesia, Vara Bennett, Verayani, Virginia Vivian, Viroj Thongpachan, Wahyudi Gatot, Yang Siau Ing, Yayasan Sosial Abdi Husada Utama and Yu Hsiao Chuan, BHP Employee Match Giving, Charles Baey, Elvin and Angie, Maxim Robinson, Wong Lian Hua.

Our apologies if we have unintentionally omitted anyone's name.

A New Vision Limited is a Singapore based not-for-profit, non sectarian organisation, registration number 201112891E. It is run by a band of volunteers, thus all donations contribute 100% toward restoring sight in people suffering from cataract blindness.

To make a donation to A New Vision, please refer to our website under the tab "contact us".

Donations may be made via cheque, bank transfer or credit card.

www.anewvision.org

You may email us at we@anewvision.org