

30 YEARS



The Fred Hollows
Foundation

**CELEBRATING
30 YEARS**

**WE
SEE A
WORLD IN
WHICH NO
PERSON IS
NEEDLESSLY
BLIND OR**

VISION IMPAIRED

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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF RESTORING SIGHT



Photo: Michael Amendolia

OUR STORY

The Fred Hollows Foundation is one of Australia's best-known and loved charities and a global leader in eye health and international development.

The Foundation continues the vital work of Professor Fred Hollows, a renowned Australian ophthalmologist and humanitarian, who passed away in 1993.

Delivering Fred's vision to end avoidable blindness was taken up by his wife Gabi, friends and colleagues who convinced the 1990 Australian of the Year to establish a Foundation shortly before he died, with the strategy and financial capacity to achieve his goal of ending avoidable blindness.

The Foundation works around the world so that no one is left behind, and in Australia we work tirelessly to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can always exercise their right to sight, good health and self-determination.

Today, Fred's vision has become a global legacy.

Over the past 30 years, we have restored sight to more than 3 million people and supported programs to deliver more than 200 million doses of antibiotics for trachoma.

The Foundation is unique in its approach. We not only support treating patients, but we focus on strengthening health systems, equipping hospitals, training eye health teams and working with health authorities and other partners to empower local people to deliver local services.

We are also a leading international voice advocating for more investment and focus on eye health.

The Foundation is proud of its record of training future generations of eye doctors, building local eye health capacity, driving innovation and advocating for the integration of eye health in national health systems.

GABI HOLLOWS

In the months leading up to his passing, Fred was a man on a mission to ensure the work he started would continue and the promises he made would be honoured.

At our family home in Sydney, friends and colleagues would come and go, sitting around a table to engage in conversations, discussions and arguments about how to continue Fred's goal to end avoidable blindness.

In 1992, Fred discharged himself from hospital to deliver on a promise he made to build Vietnam's eye health workforce.

Fred said we'd train 300 surgeons in three years. And six weeks after Fred passed away, I felt this incredible energy to ensure the work we're doing in Fred's name would continue.

When I arrived in Vietnam, I felt the energy of everyone I saw. I thought about the personal tragedies they had been through. It gave me this really powerful strength.

Many years later, I returned to Vietnam and, on a small island in the Mekong Delta, I hitched a ride with an ophthalmologist on his motorcycle.

I asked him how many surgeons he had trained.

"Oh, 100," he replied.

The work Fred started, and The Foundation continued, is like dropping a stone in the lake and watching the ripples grow.

Over the past 30 years, The Fred Hollows Foundation has accepted the challenge to deliver sight-saving surgery and treatments to people living in some of the most challenging places.

Fred was outspoken. Some people thought he was a bit grumpy and cranky – and yes, he was. He wasn't a saint. He wanted The Foundation to be daring and brave.

But we couldn't achieve this without the incredible support of the Australian public over these past three decades.

People from all walks of life knew about our story, they believed in us, and they are part of the growth and success of The Fred Hollows Foundation.

I know Fred would be looking down on us in wonder. I don't think he would have dreamt that 30 years on we would still be doing this work he started. I know he would be so proud and thankful.

Gabi Hollows AO is the Founding Director of **The Fred Hollows Foundation**



UK GLOBAL OFFICE

US FUNDRAISING OFFICE

WHERE WE WORK

The Fred Hollows Foundation's mission is to end avoidable blindness and vision impairment.

We work in more than 25 countries and have restored sight to more than 3 million people.

CAMEROON

ETHIOPIA

RWANDA

BURUNDI

KENYA

ERITREA

PAKISTAN

PALESTINE

UAE FUNDRAISING OFFICE

AFGHANISTAN

HONG KONG SAR FUNDRAISING OFFICE

INDIA

BANGLADESH

NEPAL

MYANMAR

CHINA

LAO PDR

VIETNAM

CAMBODIA

THE PHILIPPINES

INDONESIA

TIMOR-LESTE

THE PACIFIC

AUSTRALIA




OUR IMPACT

Since 2018, The Foundation has developed new ways to measure the impact of our work by estimating the cases of blindness and vision impairment we have helped to avert and calculating the years of sight saved.

Over that time, The Foundation has improved or protected the sight of more than **800,000** people and saved more than **6.5 million** years of sight.

The alternative is to do nothing and that's not an alternative

Over the past **30 years**, we have **restored sight** to more than **3 million** people around the world.

	People Screened	19,470,208 over 5 YEARS 41,772,221 over 15 YEARS
	Cataract operations	573,461 over 5 YEARS 1,556,899 over 15 YEARS
	Surgeries to treat trachoma	173,018 over 5 years 309,647 over 15 years
	People treated with antibiotics for trachoma	86,546,637 over 5 YEARS 132,196,451 over 15 YEARS
	Sight-saving or improving interventions delivered	2,385,432 over 5 YEARS 5,587,258 over 15 YEARS
	Glasses distributed	476,751 over 5 YEARS 904,019 over 15 YEARS
	Surgeons trained	628 over 5 YEARS 2,131 over 15 YEARS
	Community health workers trained	231,766 over 5 YEARS 439,404 over 15 YEARS
	Facilities equipped	8,337 over 5 YEARS 11,863 over 15 YEARS

The Foundation has chosen to present figures from the past 15 years which have the most complete and accurate data and information

EARLY DAYS

The Foundation's values are shaped by Fred's early work in outback Australia, Nepal, Eritrea and Vietnam.

Fred's determination to ensure everyone could access modern eye surgery no matter where they lived still drives The Foundation's vision to end avoidable blindness.

He adopted a simple but effective formula – donating capital and skills and training local eye health workers to train others. He would say:

“teach the teachers first”

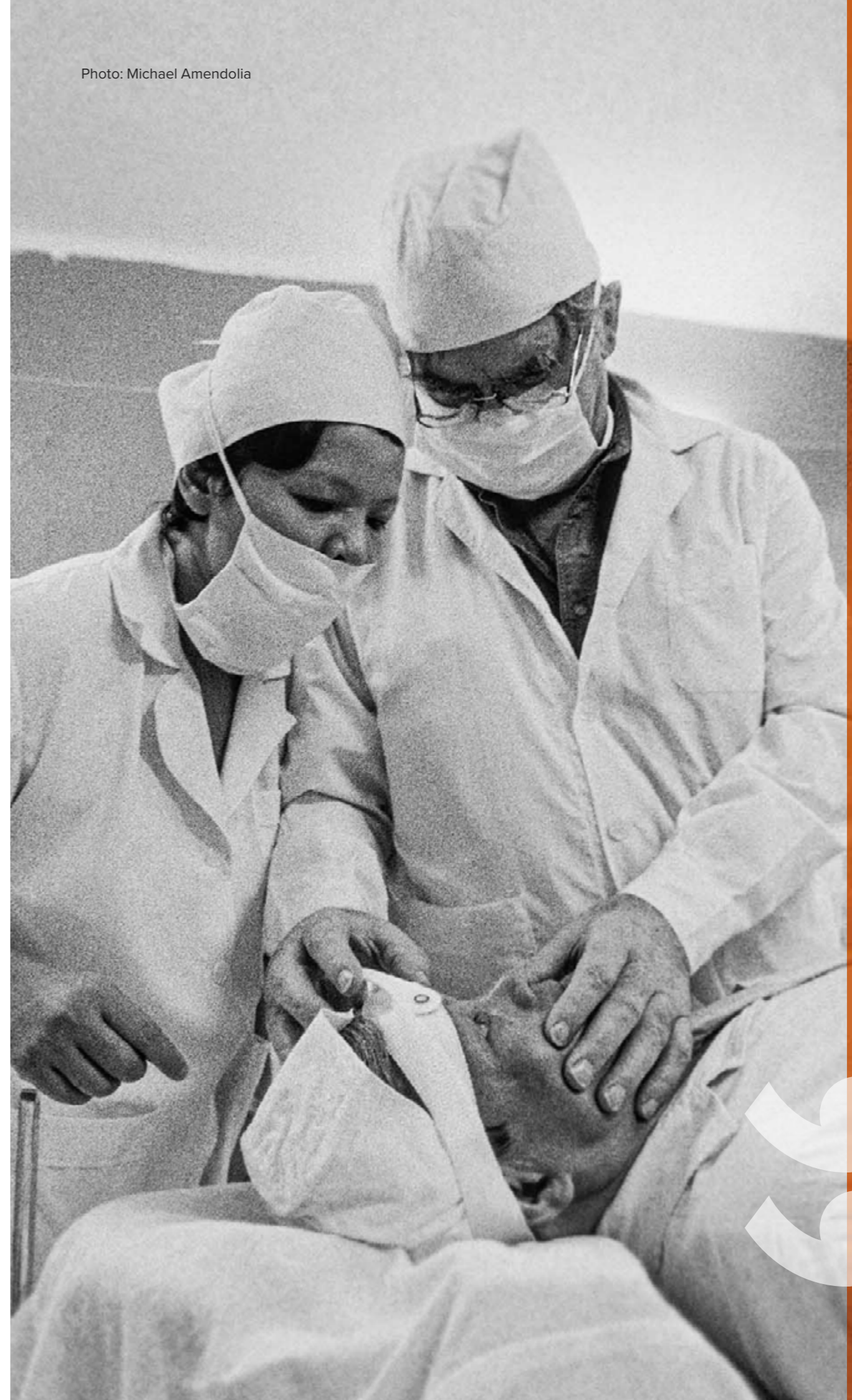
Eye doctors were trained in modern cataract surgical techniques and factories were built to produce high-quality intraocular lenses (IOLs) at a fraction of the cost of those made in industrialised countries.

Within five years, factories in Eritrea and Nepal were producing enough lenses for local demand and then for export to other countries.

By the time of Fred's passing, his **“train the trainer”** model had laid the foundation for the development of an eye health workforce in Eritrea, Nepal and Vietnam.

The Fred Hollows Foundation remains committed to First Nations Peoples' eye health and is a strong advocate for health equity through the Close the Gap campaign and social justice as a supporter of the Uluru Statement From the Heart.

Photo: Michael Amendolia



It's obscene to let people go blind when they don't have to

NEPAL

In 1985 Fred Hollows visited Nepal as part of a World Health Organization (WHO) evaluation of the country's blindness prevention program.

Fred Hollows met young eye doctor Sanduk Ruit in Nepal and the pair quickly developed a strong bond. Fred invited Ruit to Sydney to learn more about modern cataract surgery and the pair made a commitment to make the modern surgery available to blind people in Nepal.

However, they faced significant obstacles. In 1989, Fred and Ruit defied criticism from the medical establishment for daring to introduce modern cataract surgery in countries where eye doctors could only offer an inferior surgery that replaced damaged cataracts with thick glasses. They stood up to the establishment and argued that people in the “third world” had just as much right to good eye care as people in rich countries like Australia.

The high cost of the intraocular lens (IOL) was another barrier. The tiny pieces of plastic that replace the clouded lens in cataract surgery cost more than \$150 and made the operation too expensive. But Fred and Ruit pressed ahead with plans to build factories in Nepal and Eritrea that could produce large quantities of lenses at affordable prices for export to other developing countries. The cost would come down to less than \$5.

By 1992, Fred had made five trips to Nepal to train eye surgeons while Ruit was busy restoring sight to thousands of people in remote camps and establishing a reputation that would see him perform cataract surgery on the Prime Minister of Nepal – the first time a Nepalese VIP had undergone surgery of any kind in their own country.

The Foundation helped Dr Ruit establish the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology (TIO) and continues to work in partnership with the organisation to restore sight to millions worldwide.

Fred and Ruit's efforts were finally acknowledged in 1997, at a WHO ophthalmology conference in Kathmandu where participants nominated the IOL factory, modern cataract surgery and the eye bank as the three greatest achievements in Nepal over the past 20 years.



Good honest work. How many people have the opportunity to be part of that?





ERITREA

In 1980, Fred examined Fessehaie Abraham, a refugee from Eritrea, at his Sydney practice where he learned about the desperate state of eye health in the war-torn country in the Horn of Africa.

Years later, Fred visited Eritrea and was amazed to see freedom fighters manufacturing malaria tablets and intravenous fluid in underground caves.

These experiences inspired him to embark on a project to build an IOL factory in Eritrea.

With The Foundation's support, the factory became fully independent in 2004 and was soon producing about 160,000 lenses a year and exporting them to countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

The Foundation also trained local eye doctors and worked in partnership with Eritrea's Ministry of Health to fully integrate eye health programs into the country's national blindness prevention strategy.

The Foundation remains the single largest partner supporting eye health service delivery in Eritrea. Our three areas of focus are to ensure trachoma is eliminated in Eritrea, cataract is effectively managed and an adequate and skilled workforce is available to deliver eye health services.

While there has been a steady increase in cataract surgeries in Eritrea there remains a significant gender inequity in women receiving treatment. About **9,500 women** are blind with cataract compared to **6,000 men**.



VIETNAM

“All you blokes need is a bit of training and some equipment and you’ll be able to do it.”

In 1992, Fred was accompanied by some of The Foundation’s directors to Vietnam with plans to establish a third IOL factory.

The team also learned that only 50 “modern” cataract surgeries were being performed in Vietnam per year by just two eye surgeons. Fred asked the surgeons if they wanted to learn the new techniques and they

were overwhelmingly keen. Fred made a promise to return to Vietnam and train the country’s ophthalmologists.

Although he was gravely ill with cancer, Fred delivered on that promise, famously discharging himself from hospital and overseeing modern cataract surgery training with the support of many other talented surgeons.

Over the next few years, more than 300 Vietnamese eye doctors were trained in modern surgical techniques.

Dr Pham Binh was one of those surgeons – he went on to train more than 100 surgeons himself.

Now about 250,000 cataract surgeries are performed by more than 1,000 surgeons.

Today, The Foundation’s commitment to ending avoidable blindness in Vietnam continues.

The Foundation is a co-founder of Alina Vision, an innovative program delivering high-quality, accessible and sustainable eye care to about 400,000 people, with a focus on reaching out to those excluded from mainstream healthcare systems, particularly low-income people and women.

Alina established its first surgery centre in Vietnam and is looking to expand to other countries.



Photo: Mary Tran

CASE STUDY:

DR PHAM BINH

I first met Fred Hollows in 1992 at Hanoi. It was his second visit to Vietnam and I had been invited by the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology to meet him.

I remember he was always holding a pipe. Fred had so much to do on this visit. He was hot-tempered and super busy meeting people and facilitating the surgical training, but I got to know him and his son Cam over dinner.

After Fred had passed, people told me that Fred knew about me before we met.

While researching the eye health situation in Vietnam, Fred saw a photo of me performing surgery inside a mosquito net.

It was how he used to work with Indigenous Australians in the countryside. Fred found we had something in common and wanted to see me when he visited Vietnam.

It also explains how he knew my name even though I wasn't on the list for that surgical course in 1992. But I was trained in the second course in 1993.

I was motivated to succeed. When you know what you're living for, you can do it all. So with the support of The Foundation, we grew.

In the beginning, training was facilitated by foreign doctors. Our Vietnamese doctors were then able to train each other and master the skills across the country. That made me feel even more proud.

As a result, the eye health sector has grown substantially and we have learned to operate independently.

One of my proudest achievements was the establishment of the Da Nang Eye Hospital in 1998.

I was very determined to set up an eye hospital because our eye centre was always crowded. We even had to arrange beds on the front yard for patients.

This was the first provincial-level eye hospital in Vietnam and I was proud to be the Director and invite Gabi Hollows there for the opening ceremony.

Over the past 30 years, we have seen significant changes in our efforts to end avoidable blindness.



Fred, you succeeded. We have won. Your dream for the eye sector in Vietnam has come true.



Photo: Michael Amendolia

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PATIENT CASE STUDY

GIAP

I believe I have two dads – my father and Fred. They are the reason I can now see and be the main character in this famous story.

My father took me to many places for treatment. I had an operation in Thanh Hoa province where I lived but I still couldn't see anything and I had to leave school just as I was starting first grade.

My father wouldn't give up and brought me to Hanoi to the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology. We noticed a crowd in the hospital courtyard. People said Australian doctors were here to treat patients.

My father kept pushing me forward to a tall Australian man wearing glasses – I found out later he was Professor Fred Hollows.

That trip to Hanoi changed my life. Going back to school brought great joy for a child like me who loved to learn.

After graduating from high school, I studied mathematics, became a maths teacher and raised a family.

Vietnamese people have a proverb: **“When eating a fruit, be grateful to the grower”**. We always remember the person who helped us. That's why I have kept in touch with The Fred Hollows Foundation.

The Foundation contacts me regularly about my health and work so I feel a genuine connection that makes me understand how they have continued Fred's work.

Now the modern cataract surgery technique is everywhere and patients don't have to go far or wait for foreign doctors. This means a lot.



If Fred was still alive, I would tell him that my surgery motivated me greatly in my studies and life.

I would tell him that the great successes of eye care in Vietnam was made from those staff who followed in his footsteps.

I would tell him how eye surgery has changed in my hometown. I would say thank you very, very much.

And I would hug him as tightly as I did when my father pushed me into him. A miracle brought a doctor from a far away country and restored my sight.

Tran Van Giap has gone on to do well at school and university, and is now a teacher.

Fred's early formula of 'treat, train and equip' in Australia, Nepal, Eritrea and Vietnam provided the blueprint for The Foundation's global expansion.

By 1998, The Foundation was active in 19 countries and now works to end avoidable blindness in more than 25 countries.



PAKISTAN

The Fred Hollows Foundation has worked in Pakistan since 1998 and achieved early success, building local capacity through partnerships with government and other agencies.

In the first two years in Pakistan, The Foundation provided the equipment and supplies for district hospitals and helped train 110 district ophthalmologists.

In less than 15 years, The Foundation and its partners halved the rate of blindness in the country from 1.8 percent to 0.9 percent, restoring sight to 1.5 million people.

The Foundation and partners built lasting and sustainable change through Comprehensive Eye Care Cells in 25 district eye units. This program was endorsed by a national government investment of \$54 million for a country-wide program to prevent blindness. By proving to the Pakistan Government that investing in eye health was a priority, they joined by providing significant investment.

Between 2001 and 2006, The Foundation set about improving access to eye health care for women by training about 4,000 Lady Health Workers in primary eye health.

Lady Health Workers visit families to assist women who, for cultural reasons, are often unable to leave their homes without being escorted by a male relative.

Trained to diagnose cataract, trachoma and other eye diseases, the workers refer women to the local eye unit for screening and further treatment.

The program was so successful that in 2009 the national Government assumed responsibility for the program training.

BANGLADESH

For more than 10 years, The Fred Hollows Foundation has been making major inroads in ending avoidable blindness in Bangladesh, the eighth-most populous country in the world.

In Bangladesh, The Foundation is making new ground in strategic partnerships and innovative gender programming, delivering high-quality eye health services to some of the world's most vulnerable people.

More than 80 percent of garment workers in Bangladesh are women and the intricate and repetitive work they undertake can lead to serious vision problems.

The women typically work six days a week and face barriers accessing eye health check-ups, but they risk losing their jobs and livelihoods through undetected eye conditions.

The Foundation works with partners in Bangladesh to set up visual detection corners at the factories so workers can access eye charts and be referred to hospitals for treatment.

In Bangladesh, The Foundation has been able to reach some of the world's most vulnerable people by forming strong relationships with partners and the national government.

When one million refugees fled across the border from Myanmar in 2018, The Foundation was the first eye health organisation to deliver eye care services to some of the most vulnerable people.

As many as 50,000 of the refugees were blind and thanks to the Foundation's strong decade-long relationship with the national government, we were able to partner with Baitush Sharaf Eye Hospital and other local organisations to conduct screenings within the refugee camps.

The Foundation also established the Fred Hollows Eye Operation Theatre at Baitush Sharaf Hospital near the camp to allow them to perform at least 100 extra cataract surgeries a week, restoring sight to Rohingya refugees and local Bangladeshi residents around Cox's Bazar.



Photo: Michael Amendolia

CASE STUDY:

DR ZAREEN KHAIR

I've worked for a number of international health NGOs in my 30-year career, but there's a real point of difference with The Fred Hollows Foundation.

The Foundation lets you work freely and to think outside the box and this has allowed us to deliver innovative programs to restore sight to some of the most vulnerable people in Bangladesh.

When the Bangladesh Country Office opened in 2008, our priority was to work with public district hospitals to strengthen the national health system.

But early on I was troubled by some of the data I was seeing. I knew women were 1.3 times more likely to be blind than men, but only 45 percent of women were receiving treatments for eye conditions.

We discovered many barriers that prevented women accessing eye treatments. For example, there was one queue for people seeking eye health care and often the men pushed the women to the side.

For cultural reasons, some women did not leave their house and others lacked awareness about the services available or needed encouragement to take up those services.



The Foundation acted quickly, visiting women in their homes, introducing separate queues for men and women, including breast-feeding areas for mothers and integrating gender-specific eye health into factory health centres where many women worked.

I always remember one of the first patients I met in 2009, Rasheeda, from Satkhira in south-west Bangladesh. She was the daughter of a rickshaw puller and had never seen the faces of her husband and two young children.

Rasheeda, 28, could not afford eye surgery and seemed resigned to a life of blindness until we assured her she could access free surgery through The Foundation and its partners.

The moment we removed her eye patch and she could see her family for the first time really touched my heart.

When she was blind, her husband had to organise the children's meals and take them to school which meant he could only work part-time. After eye surgery, Rasheeda's husband could return to full-time work, providing a better future for the whole family.

When you eliminate inequity in access to eye care for women and girls, we make greater inroads into eliminating avoidable blindness.

I'm so proud that The Foundation is continuing the work of Fred Hollows and that we are reaching the poorest and most marginalised people, especially the women of Bangladesh. As a woman that makes me incredibly proud.

Dr Zareen Khair is a former Bangladesh Country Manager. In 2016, Dr Zareen was awarded the L'OCCITANE Foundation Sight Award for Innovation for improving sight of women and children in rural Bangladesh.

Women were 1.3x more likely to be blind than men, but only 45% of women were receiving treatments for eye conditions.



MOSSAMUT

Mossamut Shopna Begum started working in the sewing section of a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh, at age 16.

But seven years later, the repetitive, fine work has taken a toll on her eyes.

They get itchy when she reads. She also suffers from migraines and watery eyes.

“When I work continuously at the same distance in the factory, my vision automatically becomes hazy and blurry.

“When I concentrate harder on my sewing it is really getting hard because of tears and headache.”

At the nearby Awaj Café, Mossamut is having her eyes screened by Doctor Selina Sency.

The Awaj Foundation is helping empower garment factory workers in Bangladesh by providing free legal, social and medical care.

The 21 Awaj Cafes across Dhaka and Chittagong provide free and low-cost services to over 40,000 members and 255,000 garment workers.

Thanks to support from The Fred Hollows Foundation and the Australian Government, these cafes now offer eye checks for the workers, with new equipment installed and specialist eye screening training provided for nurses and doctors.

It's a vital service for workers like Mossamut, who can easily develop work-related eye issues but are unable to afford medical services or find time to access them.

When Doctor Sency screened Mossamut's eyes, she discovered a more serious issue, possibly an infection, and prescribed eye drops.

“I am really happy getting eye service for free because I was having vision problems for the past couple of weeks. I heard the news from my colleagues and today I came. I am happy the service is free.”



Photos: Michael Amendolia



Photo: Daniel Jesus Vignolli

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA PROGRAM

In 1968, Fred Hollows was in his Sydney eye clinic when two Gurindji Elders presented with eye problems he'd never seen before. After treating the men, Fred was invited to visit Wattie Creek in the remote Northern Territory in the camps where they lived.

Fred was shocked and appalled by what he saw – blinding trachoma, a disease he didn't think existed in modern-day Australia.

His outrage about the state of health in remote Aboriginal communities would lead to the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program.

Between 1976 and 1978, Fred led a team that visited more than 465 communities treating more than 100,000 people, and halving the rate of blindness for Aboriginal Peoples.

The Trachoma Program's success was driven by the involvement of First Nations Peoples in the design and delivery of services. It was the first health project of its kind in Australia and this approach continues to guide The Foundation.



Trachoma Program leaders like Jilpia Nappaljari Jones, Dr Gordon Briscoe, Reg Murray, Rose Murray, Clarrie Grogan, Mick Miller and Trevor Buzzacott have provided the inspiration and drive for The Foundation's work through the Indigenous Australia Program.

The Foundation works in partnership with First Nations-controlled health and community organisations and was an early and active member of the Close the Gap campaigns to improve the health and life expectancy of First Nations Peoples.

Through the Indigenous Australia Program, The Foundation adopts a patient-centred approach that prioritises community control and cultural safety for First Nations Peoples.



Photo: Michael Amendolia

Dr Kris Rallah-Baker is a Yuggera/Biri-Gubba-Juru man and Australia's first and only First Nations ophthalmologist

The Fred Hollows Foundation stands apart from other eye health organisations because of Fred. I was 14-years-old when I heard that he had died. I knew what he had achieved through the National Trachoma Program and he inspired me to achieve the impossible and become the first recognised Indigenous ophthalmologist in Australia.

Fred Hollows was a true ally and an advocate of self-determination. He understood that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples needed to be front and centre of efforts to improve eye health.

This legacy underpins The Foundation's approach to help close the gap in eye health – training First Nations eye health workers, partnering with community-controlled organisations and delivering culturally-safe health care.

For me, there's no better feeling than seeing the joy on a patient's face when their patches

are removed. In 2014, I spent six months working with The Foundation as an outreach fellow in the Northern Territory. We had just finished cataract surgery on an elderly man who was excited to have his vision back.

It meant he could now take his grandchildren out into the bush and teach them culture and maintain that connection with country.

Through The Foundation and its partners, we are not just restoring sight – we're strengthening communities and this plays a critical role in our efforts to close the gap in eye health.

When Fred was alive, First Nations Peoples were 10 times more likely to be blind than other Australians. Today, First Nations Peoples are three times more likely to be blind than other Australians. This is a significant achievement, but more needs to be done to close the gap.

We are entering a new era and in the not-too-distant future we will have more than one First Nations ophthalmologist in Australia, which is extremely exciting. I think Fred would be proud but pushing us to do more.

ETHIOPIA

Since Fred Hollows started tackling trachoma in Australia in the 1970s, The Foundation has led efforts to eliminate the debilitating disease, which is the world's leading infectious cause of blindness.

Trachoma is transmitted from one person to another, particularly from children to mothers.

Blinding trachoma can be treated with a relatively basic 10 to 20-minute surgery. The infection can also be stopped with antibiotics, improved sanitation and access to water so people can wash their faces.

In 2018, The Foundation implemented the largest trachoma-elimination initiative in the world, supporting one in five trachoma surgeries and the distribution of one in five doses of donated antibiotics globally.

Over the past five years in Ethiopia, The Foundation has invested heavily in workforce capacity, training more than 156,000 people including surgeons, community healthworkers and teachers.

Ethiopia has the highest burden of trachoma in the world with more than **70 million** people at risk.



Photos: Michael Amendolia



CASE STUDY:

DR WONDU ALEMAYEHU

For more than 30 years, I've been fighting blinding trachoma – an ancient disease that should have no place in the 21st century.

Fred Hollows said of trachoma: “It is scandalous that these nineteenth century diseases of poverty should continue.” Nearly 40 years later we're still trying to eliminate it.

Trachoma is the leading infectious cause of blindness and my country, Ethiopia, has the highest burden of the disease in the world, particularly in the Oromia region where more than 30 million people live.

This preventable and treatable disease is caused by an infection that thrives in areas where drinking water and basic sanitation is poor, and it is easily spread through personal contact and by flies that have been in contact with people's eyes or noses.

For sufferers, mostly mothers, their eyelashes turn inward (a condition known as trichomatous trichiasis) following repeated infections and scratch the clear part of the eye, resulting in severe pain and visual impairment and, if left untreated, blindness.

Every blink of the eye with in-turned eyelashes is agonising. On average, a person blinks more than

19,000 times a day – to see people suffering from this preventable and treatable disease is heart-breaking.

In 2013, The Fred Hollows Foundation decided to take on the challenge of leading the world's largest trachoma elimination program in Ethiopia, working in partnership with the government and partners.

When we started, we had to address a huge backlog of the potentially blinding trichomatous trichiasis. But there were a limited number of ophthalmologists available. This backlog meant that integrated eye care workers needed to be trained to perform the 10-minute procedure to correct the deformed eyelids.

Today, surgery, distribution of antibiotics, improved access to safe water and adequate sanitation and teaching families and children about hand and face washing are key approaches to achieving our goal of eliminating trachoma as a public health problem.

Globally, I believe many countries in which The Foundation operates can eliminate trachoma by 2030, and perhaps sooner, if we build on the excellent partnerships we have with governments, donors and supporters.

Dr Wondu Alemayehu is The Foundation's Technical Advisor for Trachoma in Ethiopia.

Over the past decade in Ethiopia, we have achieved remarkable things, with your help. But Fred would be telling us to keep going until this terrible disease is once and for all consigned to the history books.



“
I want to finish school and get a good job. I must build a good house for my father.”

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PATIENT CASE STUDY

COLLINS

When The Fred Hollows Foundation first met Collins in western Kenya, he was blind with cataract in both eyes and led a lonely existence.

Unable to attend school or play with friends, the 6-year-old remained by his father's side in their small village, going to work with him at a local quarry.

Collins seemed destined to remain blind. Local doctors were not equipped to perform eye surgery and his father Enoch didn't have enough money to take his son to hospital. The six-hour journey to the hospital alone would have cost Enoch his entire monthly wage.

For 74 percent of Kenyans living in rural areas, access to health services is extremely limited.

Fortunately, The Foundation trains eye health workers in Kenya who are able to find children like Collins and arrange free surgery at Sabatia Eye Hospital.

Two years after his surgery, The Foundation returned to check on Collins' progress.

At Kamelilo Primary School in Baringo County, Collins is immersed in his schoolwork and showing everyone his skills on the football field.

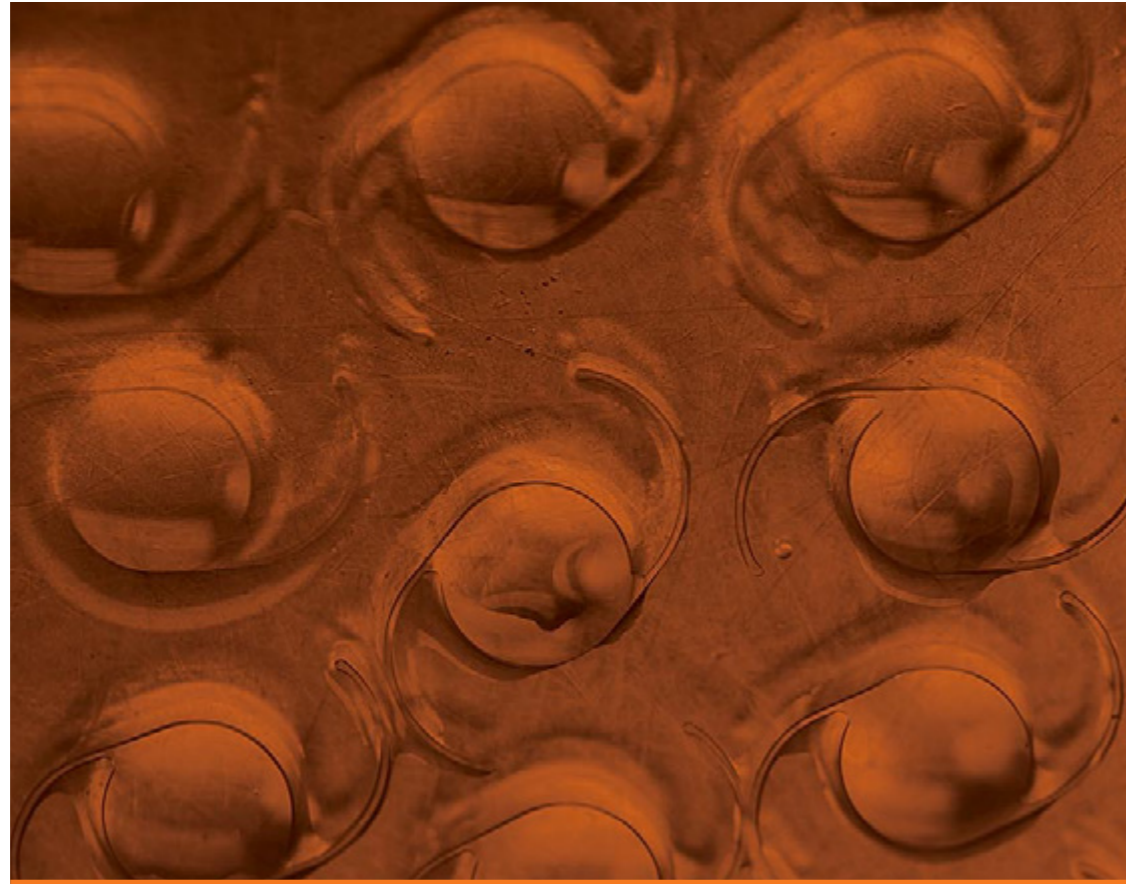
“Collins is doing great at school,” his teacher says. “He is really trying to catch up with the others in his class. Before the year ends, I know he will be one of the top students in my class.”

Collins says his favourite subjects are English and maths. He is motivated to do well at school.

“I want to finish school and get a good job. I must build a good house for my father.”



Photo: Michael Amendolia



Fred Hollows understood the need to make the best technology available to eye health professionals no matter where they worked.

It was unfair that modern cataract surgery was reserved for patients in richer industrialised countries while some of the world's most vulnerable people received inferior eye care that left them with thick glasses and a poorer quality of life.

Fred set about training eye surgeons in modern cataract surgery in Nepal, Eritrea and Vietnam – and insisting that they train others. He developed plans for local production of intraocular lenses (IOLs) and he equipped local hospitals and clinics with the latest technology.

Over the past 30 years, The Foundation has led the development of many other technological innovations, including the SO-161 microscope, the redesign of the YAG Laser, the Arclight ophthalmoscope and the Better Operative Outcomes Software Technology (BOOST) app as well as ground-breaking global research.

The Foundation has also played a leading role in the delivery of health care financing through the Cameroon Cataract Development Impact Loan and the delivery of eye health services through Alina Vision in Vietnam.



CASE STUDY: ALINA VISION

The Foundation is a cofounder of Alina Vision - a social enterprise that aims to address demand for eye health services by building a network of eye care centres in the world's most under-served communities.

In 2018, Alina established its pilot surgery centre in Hung Yen Province, a few kilometres outside the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. Currently, they operate the Alina Vision Hospital, along with three smaller vision centres in nearby provinces.

Alina offers comprehensive eye checks, glasses, and surgeries for cataract and other conditions. The business operates on a cross-subsidy model, where fee-paying patients help cover the costs of subsidised services for lower-income patients. All patients receive the same high-quality care, but get to choose a treatment package based on their ability to pay. We also organise regular eye camps and outreach events in under-served communities.

The social enterprise is the result of a global collaboration with Japanese pharmaceutical company ROHTO.



Over the next five years Alina aims to establish more eye centres in Vietnam and across the region, training hundreds of eye health workers and conducting thousands of cataract surgeries each year.

Stepping up to meet the challenges of climate change

Globally, climate change is leaving a devastating impact on our environment and the health of some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people.

Climate change is resulting in an increased number of trachoma infections, cataract cases and other eye conditions, while our ability to deliver eye health services is compromised by its impact on medical facilities and supply chains

The eye health sector is also a massive consumer of resources and emitter of greenhouse gasses, accounting for 4.4 percent of global emissions.

As a core member of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), The Fred Hollows Foundation is promoting leadership and coordinated action across the sector to address these issues.

Over the past 30 years, The Foundation has played a key leadership role in strengthening and mobilising the global eye health sector to make ground-breaking and lasting changes.

The Foundation's call to action will embed environmental sustainability into our operations in leadership, advocacy, sustainable procurement, facilities management, service delivery, education, research and collaboration.

The Foundation is partnering with the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology in Nepal to build an energy efficient community eye hospital.

The Nijgadh Community Eye Hospital will implement environmentally-sustainable practices including appropriate choice of building materials, responsible use of ground-water, correct handling of medical waste, energy efficiency, recycling and planting of trees.

The Foundation views Nijgadh a showcase hospital for the future of the eye health sector.

An eye health service has started in the community health centre while construction starts on the permanent facility.



Climate change is resulting in an increased number of trachoma infections, cataract cases and other eye conditions, while our ability to deliver eye health services is compromised by its impact on medical facilities and supply chains.

THOL

When Thol, from rural Cambodia, was pregnant with her youngest child Cheet she developed cataract in both eyes.

Then her husband abandoned her - he didn't want a wife who was blind.

With four children to support, Thol was alone. She couldn't work or move around freely and her three eldest children couldn't go to school, spending their days fishing or selling bags of rubbish to support the family.

Thol lived just 10 minutes from a hospital but there was no eye surgeon. Travelling to seek help was nearly impossible for a family barely able to afford food.

Fortunately, Dr Sarath, who was trained in cataract surgery with the support of The Foundation, was able to visit Thol's town in the country's north.

After a 15-minute operation, Thol's life had changed forever.

When the patches were removed and she opened her eyes, she reached for baby Cheet and saw his face for the first time.

"He's fat!" she said. But Thol could also see the condition of her home - a tiny bamboo structure balanced on a wooden platform - and its surrounds.

She realised this wasn't the life she wanted for her children.

The Foundation returned later to see Thol at work selling vegetables with Cheet playing happily close by.

Thol's older children - Jay, Thas and Chang - are at school. They don't have to fight for their survival and can be kids again.

After a 15-minute operation, Thol's life changed forever.



Photo: Michael Amendolia



ADVOCACY

Fred Hollows was more than an ophthalmologist – he was a humanitarian who believed that the basic attribute of mankind was to look after each other.

He advocated on behalf of the world’s most vulnerable people to the highest levels of power, and it was these qualities that endeared him to the Australian public and earned him Australian of the Year honours in 1990.

The Foundation is inspired by Fred’s power to influence decision-makers and we work in partnership with government and other agencies to end avoidable blindness at all levels, from local to global, to integrate eye care into national health systems and to secure global agreements in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 1998, The Foundation joined the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)** to launch the **VISION 2020: The Right to Sight** campaign and has supported efforts to secure a succession of World Health Assembly resolutions in the intervening two decades.

With our focus moving beyond 2020, The Foundation played a leading role in helping deliver the first WHO World Report on Vision, released in 2019 setting the scene for a renewed global effort to 2030. In 2020, we were instrumental in the 73rd World Health Assembly adopting the resolution on Integrated People-Centred Eye Care – a global agreement to bring eye health from the margins into the mainstream as part of achieving Universal Health Coverage. And one year later, agreement on new global targets for eye health were passed to hold the world to account and the first UN General Assembly resolution was adopted during the 75th session, committing the international community to eye care for the 1.1 billion people living with preventable sight loss by 2030.

Equity was at the heart of what drove Fred and as such, The Foundation has made gender equity, a strategic priority. Gendered inequities, the disparities between men and women statistically mirror the disproportionate impact of eye health and vision impairment on women and girls. Of the 1.1 billion

people with avoidable vision loss, 55 percent are women and most live in low and middle-income countries (LMIC) and are less likely to get treatment. The most common conditions – cataract and refractive error – can be prevented and treated. **Yet we know that if we don’t act now by 2050 it is estimated more than 61 million people will be blind** because of the growing and ageing population. Services are not keeping pace with growing need.

COVID-19 has exacerbated access to services and in many countries, extended the backlog. This makes The Foundation’s work even more critical.

The Foundation is scaling up programming to meet the unmet demand and is campaigning for increased investment in eye health in global health agreements and national health systems.

Our efforts to have eye health recognised as a vital element of health and development continue the work that Fred started in the 1980s. As Fred declared: Every person should have the right to good eye care.

SEE NOW

In 2017, The Foundation embarked on a new approach to mobilise diverse audiences to take action to end avoidable blindness, launching See Now.

A pilot in India, featuring Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan, resulted in over:

- 9,000 eye screenings
- 2,675 pairs of glasses
- 1,623 cataract operations

In the USA, See Now helped engage Congress members and mobilise 80,000 people to lobby Congress for eye health action for 15 million Americans, securing an increase of \$US40 million for eye health initiatives in the US.

See Now has reached more than 24 million people globally using innovative engagement techniques.



Photo: Michael Amendolia



Photo: Michael Amendolia

World Health Assembly and UN General Assembly Resolutions

As an official partner of the World Health Organization (WHO), The Foundation is a major player in promoting eye health in global policy discussions.

In 2020, The Foundation was instrumental in securing a significant breakthrough in global efforts to end avoidable blindness, when the 73rd World Health Assembly adopted a resolution integrating eye health into universal health coverage.

The resolution, for the first time, makes an explicit link between eye health and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), relating not only to health but also poverty, education, gender, employment and economic growth, and inequity.

In 2021, a United Nations General Assembly Resolution Vision for Everyone: accelerating action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, committed 193 countries of the United Nations to ensure full access to eye care services for their people and to make eye health part of their nation's journey to achieving the SDGs.

This was the culmination of advocacy from The Foundation and members of the UN Friends of Vision Group led by the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh and Ireland, co-sponsored by the Australian Government and over 100 other Member States.

The plan means that by 2030, the 1.1 billion people globally living with sight loss should have access to support and treatment.



I know Fred would have been proud to see this too. He'd be proud and humbled by the public support The Foundation has received.

OUR SUPPORTERS BY RAY MARTIN

I first met Fred and Gabi at Wattie Creek in the Australian outback in 1980, as a journalist reporting on their work on the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program and the appalling state of Aboriginal health in Australia.

Fred was one of a kind – brash, gruff, no nonsense – and fiercely committed to fighting injustice and ending avoidable blindness.

It's no surprise he ended up Australian of the Year a decade later – because he appealed to the Australian public and earned its admiration and respect.

Today I see his qualities in everything The Foundation says and, more importantly, does. It gives me great satisfaction knowing that over the past 30 years hundreds of thousands of Australians have supported The Foundation.

When Fred demanded I step into the role of inaugural Chair of The Foundation in 1992, we had a real mountain to climb if we were to achieve Fred's vision.

We had no staff, no office, but the public's support kept us going. People from all walks of life rallied to the "Fiver for Fred" campaign and I quickly lost count of the number of people who knew Fred.

At the time I was hosting The Midday Show and Fred would ring up and invite himself on to talk about his work – he really was like no other!

The donations rolled in, big and small – from Dick Smith's unexpected \$1 million to the taxi driver who recognised Fred in heavy Sydney traffic and handed him \$5 through the car window.

This support has allowed The Foundation to grow and attract corporate partners and institutional donors to scale up our operations in Australia and globally.

Governments and ministries of health have adopted The Foundation's programs and integrated them into national health systems.

I've seen this work firsthand many times. I particularly remember the miracle of Samlan and Sintham, 7-month-old twins from Lao PDR who were born with cataract in both eyes. The Foundation was there to restore their sight – it was the first time an ophthalmologist in Laos had operated on children this young.

I was also there when The Foundation made eye health available to blind Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar for safety in settlements in neighbouring Bangladesh. Their harrowing stories will stay with me forever, as will their smiles when their sight was restored, giving them some hope.

I know Fred would have been proud to see this too. He'd be proud and humbled by the public support The Foundation has received.

Without this we wouldn't have been able to restore sight to at least 3 million people, train thousands of eye doctors, lead efforts to eliminate trachoma and secure historic and significant advocacy wins at the United Nations.

As I've often said to Gabi, I'm sure Fred would be sitting somewhere, sucking on his pipe, having a whisky and forever grateful for what we've been able to achieve with your support.

Ray Martin was the inaugural Chair of The Fred Hollows Foundation



Photo: Michael Amendolia

CASE STUDY:

ANCP

Our supporters and donors are a vital part of The Fred Hollows Foundation's sight-restoring work in more than 25 countries around the world.

Individual and corporate supporters, major donors, community fundraisers and institutional donors like Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FDCO) all make a real difference to some of the world's most vulnerable people.

Since 1995, The Foundation has received annual funding through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), as funded by DFAT to improve eye health.

The ANCP is a unique Australian development program. It is a partnership between the Australian Government and highly effective Australian Non-Government Organisations.

The ANCP is the Australian Government's longest running and largest NGO program. Each year, it supports more than 55 Australian NGOs and 2,000 local partners to deliver projects in around 50 countries.

The ANCP requires NGOs to contribute their own funds, raised from the Australian community, to their ANCP projects. So the support from everyday Australians helps us secure ANCP funding.

Some ANCP funds are programmed by The Foundation to support women in rural areas, like 83-year-old Junti who is attending a mobile eye camp at Vang Vieng Hospital in Lao PDR.

Without this camp, Junti and other local patients would need to travel for hours by road to the capital Vientiane for cataract surgery.

Junti had a cataract removed a few years earlier. Now that she was losing sight in her other eye, she was worried she is becoming a burden to her family.

She walks slowly but surely into the hospital, surrounded by two of her seven children and one of her 18 grandchildren.

Gripping the side of the table with one hand – her other resting on her heart, Junti is nervous as she is brought into the small waiting room.

Less than 15 minutes later she is up, smiling already and thanking every person in the room – three times at least.

Early the next morning, Junti is sitting proudly in the front row outside the hospital where 30 other cataract patients wait.

Junti's big brave smile stands out once more and she loves having her picture taken. She can't stop thanking hospital staff and can't wait to return home and see her grandchildren.

When the doctor removes the eye patch, Junti laughs with joy. She has a small Polaroid photo of herself which she stared at and proclaimed: **"I'm as beautiful as I always have been"**.



Photos: Fred Hollows Foundation



30 YEARS OF RESTORING SIGHT

30 years ago **Fred Hollows** captured the hearts of people across Australia with his vision of helping people see, no matter who they were and where they lived. His vision led to The Fred Hollows Foundation, which has now restored sight to **more than 3 million** people and impacted millions more. This little Australian charity has become a global leader in eye health. And it's because of those Australians and many more people around the world that it's been possible.