Gauteng Department of Health working in collaboration with Brien Holden Vision Institute, Standard Chartered Bank, Seeing is Believing campaign, Optometry Giving Sight and VSP Global, developed a public-private partnership that resulted in the successful delivery of three public health programs which have directly contributed to further development and expansion of eye care services within the existing health infrastructure, delivering to the broader community.

The three programs referred to are: Giving Sight to Soweto, Giving Sight to Gauteng and We See.

“I was scared about coming for an eye test, but I love the frames of my new spectacles. I’m very happy that my vision has improved, as it will in a way stabilise my employment. I was very scared that my boss might dismiss me for not doing my job right due to my vision problems, but now I don’t have to worry anymore. I’m so grateful for the help I received.”

Ms Ramoshshaba, eye care beneficiary at the Alexandra Clinic, Gauteng
Achievements

The most significant achievement of the public-private partnership facilitating the three programs is the integration of the delivery of eye care services within the primary health care service infrastructure.

This development at the primary health care level relieves the burden on secondary and tertiary eye care services allowing them to focus on medical and surgical interventions, necessary to reduce avoidable blindness attributed to eye health conditions such as cataract surgery, childhood blindness and glaucoma management.

The approach adopted by the three programs was the engagement of key stakeholders at the outset, with financial support from the Institute through its funding partners, thereby enabling the establishment of services within the Gauteng Department of Health’s institutions.

**Key outcomes achieved by the public-private partnership:**

- Further training and professional development of existing eye care workforce
- Employment of additional eye care workforce to establish services at new sites
- Provision and installation of equipment to existing and new service sites
- Provision of an affordable spectacle delivery system, covering school children and severe vision-impaired at no cost

**Key actions performed by the Gauteng Department of Health:**

- Providing suitable space for new eye care sites to be established
- Enabling existing workforce to participate in development and training workshops
- Installing new equipment into new and established sites and accepting responsibility for maintenance
- Creating positions for optometrists at new sites and recruiting more optometrists at established services to cater for expansion in patient inflow
Key achievements in numbers

- **404,721** people had their eyes screened or examined
- **31,903** people received spectacles or assistive devices
- **143,925** children received eye care
- **877** people attended eye care training
- **10** new or upgraded eye care sites were established
- **6** new optometrist positions were created and filled
“We are delighted to contribute sustainably to the eradication of treatable and avoidable blindness in South Africa’s poorest communities through our Seeing is Believing project. Launched in 2003, globally, we have committed to raise USD 100 million between 2003 and 2020 through fundraising and the Bank’s matching funds. We are on track to reach the fundraising target well before 2020. To date, we have invested just over USD 2 million - about ZAR 24 million in South Africa alone. Blindness affects the education and livelihoods of the individuals and families involved and also the economic well-being of communities. We are glad we can play a role and are grateful to all the stakeholders who partner with us to help deliver these services on the ground.”

Mr. Kweku Bedu-Addo, CEO South Africa and Southern Africa, Standard Chartered Bank

“The three eye care programs that have been active in Gauteng have addressed a desperate gap in provision of care, Our country faces many social and economic challenges and in such a context of competing needs, it is critical that civil society, business and government work together to address the community’s eye health needs. Brien Holden Vision Institute applauds the concern and care that the government, Standard Chartered Bank and VSP Global have shown in supporting these programs. This public-private partnership is a quality investment in the future of our community.”

Professor Kovin Naidoo, CEO Brien Holden Vision Institute

“Our overall objective is to guarantee that vision impaired and blind people are independent, are able to pursue their education and careers, that they are socially integrated into communities and are able to make contributions towards economic growth and development of Gauteng province. We are grateful to NGOs and our private partners, who have worked with us in restoring full sight to people with impaired vision over the years,”

MEC Gwen Ramokgopa, Gauteng Department of Health

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to the all partners, individuals and supporters of this public-private partnership – through this collaboration we have achieved so much more for Gauteng.

About Brien Holden Vision Institute

We believe sight is a fundamental right for everyone, everywhere. Our mission is to develop new solutions for vision care and eliminate vision impairment and avoidable blindness, thereby reducing poverty and suffering.

We are a global non-profit, non-governmental organisation who since 1998 has delivered sustainable eye care services, education and training programs in over 50 countries, providing eye care to over 14 million people at more than 400 eye care sites and training 250,000 eye care personnel.

#visionforeveryone