



**VISION IMPACT
INSTITUTE**

Giving Vision a Voice®

Statement on Africa Day

Vision Impact Institute Applauds Continent's Commitment to Good Vision

Dallas, Texas – May 24, 2018 – As we celebrate and recognize Africa Day on May 25, commemorating the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), The Vision Impact Institute applauds the efforts of African governments, NGOs, corporations, and individuals to unite around the priority of good vision.

“With the high prevalence of [vision impairment in developing countries](#), it’s easy to see the challenges the continent faces when it comes to vision care,” says [Kristan Gross](#), Global Executive Director of the [Vision Impact Institute](#). “We’re seeing another side to that story and are encouraged by the partnerships that have formed to tackle the challenge.” Countries like Botswana, Rwanda, South Africa, and Liberia are just a few examples:

- **Botswana:** At the end of last year The Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Minister of Basic Education reconfirmed a commitment to screen and treat every school child in the country for eye health by 2021. This will make Botswana the [first country in the world](#) to provide eye health screening to an entire generation of school children. The program is in partnership with [Peek Vision](#), a not-for-profit eye health organization supported by [The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust](#).
- **Rwanda:** Earlier this year, Rwanda became the first low-income country to provide [universal eye care to its entire population](#). The government has partnered with the organization [Vision for a Nation \(VFAN\)](#) to train more than 3,000 eye care nurses based in 502 local health centers, prescribing glasses and referring those with serious eye problems to national clinics.
- **South Africa:** In several rural communities across South Africa, vision care is coming to the people through a pair of [travelling hospital trains](#). The Transnet Phelophepa train is a collaborative effort between several government departments, local and international partners, and social and medical organizations and provides a variety of services including vision care. The train has 18 coaches with a dedicated vision clinic, and more than 20,000 patients register each year and receive the miracle of good sight. To date, the vision clinic has dispensed more than 500,000 pairs of eyeglasses to change the vision landscape for these rural communities.

- **Liberia:** After a 2017 meeting between President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and [EYElliance](#) Co- Founders Liz Smith and Jordan Kassalow, the three determined that Liberia's recent investment in the newly launched Liberia Eye Center was an opportunity to leverage the facility's impact and expand on those services to include access to eyeglasses. Bringing together the [LV Prasad Eye Institute](#), [OneSight](#), [SightSavers](#), [Our Children's Vision](#), [Essilor's 2.5 New Vision Generation](#), and the [New Sight Eye Center](#), EYElliance established a collaboration that will create a national eye health network which will serve as a road map for multi-sector engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Once operating at scale, the initiative will reach one million schoolchildren annually and 1.2 million adults living in Liberia's remote communities.

Working together these countries and organizations are rounding out the story of vision care in Africa. We applaud their efforts to put vision on center stage to tell a story that the whole world can emulate.

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About the Vision Impact Institute

The Vision Impact Institute's mission is to raise awareness of the importance of vision correction and protection to make good vision a global priority. Its Advisory Board is comprised of five independent international experts: Pr. Kevin Frick (United States), Pr. Clare Gilbert (United Kingdom), Pr. Kovin Naidoo (South Africa), Mr. Arun Bharat Ram (India), and Dr. Wang Wei (China).

The Vision Impact Institute is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which receives support from the Vision for Life Fund from Essilor, the world leader in ophthalmic optics. The Vision Impact Institute hosts an interactive web platform, a unique data base of research, available at visionimpactinstitute.org.

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