

## Background

Blindness is a major public health problem in India and other parts of the developing world. It is estimated that there are 9 - 12 million blind people in India, amounting to about one-fourth of the global number. A 2001 survey estimated a prevalence of 1.1% in India. The global prevalence of blindness is 0.7%. Though there are no reliable data on the incidence of blindness, it is estimated that the number of blind persons globally increases by about 1 - 2 million per year. Two-thirds or more of this blindness is avoidable, in that the causes are either treatable or preventable. Programs under the global initiative, VISION 2020: The Right to Sight, are designed to eliminate the causes of avoidable blindness by the year 2020, and bringing to all people in need the advantage of efficient and effective eye care services.

## 'Partnering' a Solution

In order to develop high quality, permanent and affordable eye care for underserved areas, vigorous efforts must be made to plan new facilities and strengthen those that exist. L V Prasad Eye Institute, through its community eye health wing, the International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eye care (ICARE), has developed a comprehensive eye care service delivery model with permanent infrastructure, spanning all levels of the service delivery chain from advanced tertiary to primary.

As part of this effort, and as a result of its intensive engagement at all levels of service delivery, ICARE has devised an end-to-end capacity building program that addresses the need for eye care services by bridging demand, need and capability to deliver. Working with partner eye care hospitals and development agencies, ICARE provides strategic and technical assistance to establish standardized systems of patient care, hospital management and community eye care programs in areas of need. ICARE works with the partner agency within the context of its service community to design an eye care solution that meets the highest standards of equity and excellence.



# The Accompaniment Program

ICARE's accompaniment program envisages working with 'partner eye centres' in underserved areas for a duration of four years. Shorter or longer engagement periods may be planned depending on specific need, feasibility and resource availability. Under the terms of the program, ICARE-LVPEI provides strategic and technical assistance to the partner eye centres to establish standardized systems of patient care and hospital management, along with effective community eye care programs among the target population.

## Our inputs

The accompaniment program normally runs for a period of four years. ICARE - LVPEI works with the partner eye hospital in the following areas:

1. Designing the facility and selecting equipment
2. Developing human resources
3. Planning service delivery and financial sustainability
4. Planning community eye health programs and operations research

### 1. Designing the facility and selecting equipment

ICARE advises partners on the technical aspects and feasibility of the infrastructure, including micro-details such as floor plans and architectural design. The implementation of the design is facilitated by ICARE-LVPEI, working closely with architects and contractors.

#### During this process, the following areas are attended to:

- Outpatient department
- Operating room complex
- Inpatient facility
- Training and faculty spaces
- Utilities complex and support services areas
- Administrative offices

ICARE also assists partners in selecting and negotiating prices for all equipment and infrastructural needs.

### 2. Developing human resources

ICARE-LVPEI works with the partner to identify and plan the human resources for the facility, with an eye to providing comprehensive eye care. ICARE works in close engagement with the partner and other stakeholders in the community to develop a full complement of eye care workers, covering all cadres.

The emphasis is on bringing on board clinical, para-clinical and administrative personnel so that a strong team is built that can handle the gamut of operations right from community mobilization to patient handling to clinical and post-clinical services. The model proposed by ICARE works on the assumption that each link in the chain of human resources for eye care is important to achieve comprehensive eye care and the range of training programs developed reflects this.

Cross functional teams work best in resource poor areas and our focus is on developing non-clinical personnel who can serve a variety of needs within the organization without compromising on quality, quantity and efficiency of services.

### 3. Planning service delivery and financial sustainability

The program helps put in place mechanisms to ensure optimization of services and achievement of financial sustainability. This includes systems for proper documentation, quality control in all clinical areas including surgical and treatment outcomes.

The focus is on achieving a balance between financial sustainability and making free treatment available to those who cannot pay. This balance is vital if equity is to be achieved in the developing world, and if well being is to be achieved across all sections of society. A multiplicity of systems are applied depending on the context of the partner eye centre, ranging from cross subsidies to revenue generation through spectacle sales.

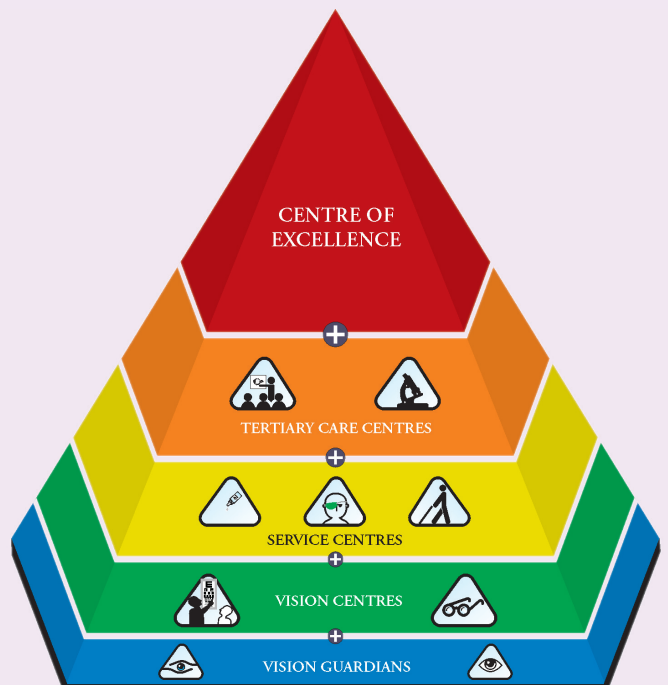
### 4. Planning community eye health programs and operations research

ICARE-LVPEI works with the partner to implement the LVPEI pyramidal model of eye care service delivery, which is a 4-tier strategy to plan community eye care services for a target population. This includes mechanisms of community mobilization and generation of human and material resources from the community so as to encourage ownership of health care, and follow up research to monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

The relationship established with the partner is more than a short-term consulting assignment. It has the potential to evolve into a longterm strategic and functional engagement that creates a special synergy. A synergy that will, in time, help us combat avoidable blindness in communities everywhere.

### In summary, ICARE-LVPEI offers planning and implementation support for

- Development of tertiary eye care services and a Centre of Excellence
- Development of secondary and primary level eye care services
- District level eye health initiatives
- State level eye health initiatives
- Infrastructure development for eye care services
- Human resource planning and development for eye care at all levels
- Development of effective and efficient eye care management systems
- Monitoring and evaluation of eye care programs



# L V Prasad Eye Institute: An Introduction

L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), located in Hyderabad, India, is a world-class eye hospital and research, training and rehabilitation centre. Since its establishment in 1987, LVPEI has grown into a Centre of Excellence and is now a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Prevention of Blindness, developing eye health models for underserved areas of the developing world.

The Institute's coordinated and interlinked functions of patient care, training, research, rehabilitation, community eye care and product development serve a wide population of persons in need, with a large network of medical, para medical staff, and students. A web of national and international partnerships provides a solid framework of support. Underpinning all our efforts are three dominant themes — efficiency, equity and excellence.

## International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eye care (ICARE)

The International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eye care (ICARE) was founded in 1998, and is an integral part of the Institute. The Institute's community eye care services are planned and managed by ICARE. LVPEI is involved in developing eye care services in those areas of Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India and the developing world where such facilities are neither available nor well developed.

ICARE works towards the following major objectives:

- To develop high quality self-sustaining eye care services in the needy areas of India and other parts of the developing world;
- To train all cadres of eye care personnel to provide excellent and efficient eye care services;
- To participate in the planning of eye health initiatives in the developing world based on well-documented and reliable epidemiological information about blindness and visual impairment among the population; and
- To undertake operations and research projects to understand the best way to deliver eye care services to entire communities.

ICARE was established with support from  
Christoffel-Blindenmission International, Germany,  
and Sight Savers International, United Kingdom.



For more information please contact:

icaresecretary@lvpei.org  
International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eye care (ICARE)  
LV Prasad Eye Institute  
Kismatpur Campus, Don Bosco Nagar Post Office,  
Near Kali Mandir (Hyderabad - Vikarabad Highway Road)  
Hyderabad - 500 086, Andhra Pradesh, India  
Tel.: 040-3061 5610, Fax: 040-2401 1293  
Web: www.lvpei.org