



2023 campaign to Meki and Shamshamene

It was an exciting time for Eyes for Africa to return to Ethiopia after a 3 year Covid lockdown. Addis Ababa had improved with cleaner roads, rubbish bins and many flowers and trees planted in the centre of the roads.

The Tigray war had certainly impacted on the lives of Ethiopians. The inflation rate was reported at 130%. I was heartened that at last we had returned and we could change the lives and bring back joy to many people blind with cataracts.

Prior to our arrival at Meki a village of 55,000 people, mobilisation had begun. Announcements were made in churches, market places, towns and outlying villages.



Our self funded dedicated volunteers set about organising the rooms provided by the CEO of Meki Hospital. The Local staff were very cooperative and we employed cleaners, guards and translators to ensure a good patient flow.

The Hospital was recently built and in good condition. Recent planting of flowers and trees and diligent cleaning of the hospital rooms made it a very pleasant place for workers and patients.

We were fortunate enough to have two surgeons during this 2 week campaign and operated on 273 patients with cataracts. With support from EFA and donated supplies for TT surgery we were able to provide Trachoma care to 80 patients.

We also were fortunate to have a volunteer called Barry who demonstrate his skills acquired while working with Guide dogs in the UK. He was able to assist many residents of Meki and Shamshamene to walk safely with a white cane.

The clinic was amazing achievement given the usual difficulties of diarrhoea, head colds, extremely dusty condition and cessation of mobilisation many days prior to our timetabled departure.

The decision was made not to move our campaign to Wollenchetti as planned as there was talk of a security threat. Instead we arranged a bus transport timetable to move those patients to us.

When that plan failed we moved to Shamshamene and set up our Unit in a nearby house next to their Eye clinic



Shamshamene has a population of 208,500 people and home to the Rastafarians.

Due to the short notice of our arrival EFA funded the mobilisation to this clinic. This was very successful.

Despite our second surgeon as a no show we succeeded in restoring sight to 412 people with cataracts, 80 TT surgeries and dispensed many reading glasses to these with presbyopia during this 4 week campaign.



Thankyou to everyone who participated in making this campaign a success. Especially the self funded volunteers fom Australia: Dr David Ware, Dr Shaleish Murty, Dr Jenny King, Dr Tony Wightman, Cameron Tyers, Andrea Beard, Elise Chicks Barry O'Toole and David Knott. A ig thanks o he local staff: Dr Kalekirtos Taye, Seid Idris, Gadise Ephrem and Banchamelak Zeraye.

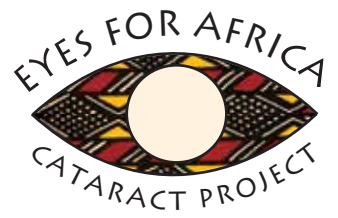
And a huge Thankyou to all the support staff at Meki and Shamshamene clinics

Special thanks to Virtual-I technologies for a strong financial support, Waverly garden Club and Fareshare, Rotary Club of Nunawading and Narangba Optometrists and Latrobe Uni Aged care for donations of glasses.

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Thankyou to everyone who knitted the wonderful beanies and teddies that were received with much thanks from our patients.
Thanks to Greg DeFries for his continual supply of donated sterile drapes.

Bureau, CEO of Meki Hospital , private sponsors and Eyes for Africa committee to establish the Meki eye clinic..



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Preceding the conclusion of our campaign we have recognised the need for an Eye Clinic at Meki hospital. Plans are under way in collaboration with the Oromia Health