



2020.07.08

VISION FOR LIFE™ ANNOUNCES €300,000 FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME TO HELP PRIMARY VISION CARE PROVIDERS DURING COVID-19

Essilor's social impact fund, Vision For Life™, announced a €300,000 financial support scheme to help over 1,800 vulnerable primary vision care providers, whose livelihoods are at risk due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

These primary vision care providers are based in five countries – India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia and Kenya – and will each receive a cash assistance sum, equivalent to one month's income.

These primary vision care providers are mainly micro-entrepreneurs trained under Essilor's Eye Mitra (friend of the eyes in Hindi) program, first launched in India in 2013 and subsequently expanded and adapted to different countries around the world. The program trains young under- and unemployed women and

men in rural and semi-urban areas to carry out basic vision screening and supports them to set up their own business to sell prescription glasses and sunglasses in their communities. This helps bring sustainable vision care to areas where it was not available before. Today there are over 16,000 primary vision care providers globally, providing sustainable access to vision care for over 320 million people.

The pandemic has seen many countries impose stringent lockdown measures to contain the spread of the virus, impacting a lot of businesses, including the network of primary vision care providers. They have been forced to close or operate under restricted conditions. Even as countries emerge from lockdowns, business has not returned to normal for these vision care providers. A recent survey conducted by Essilor found that a number of them do not have enough savings to sustain prolonged business closures and are the only source of income for their families.

“In these trying and uncertain times, the safety and well-being of our partners and the communities we serve is of utmost importance. Our primary vision care providers are on the front line and a crucial link in the last mile connectivity of creating awareness of good vision and delivering eye care services to underserved communities. But they are in danger of going out of business, therefore we hope this support will sustain them and help them return to normalcy once it is safe for them to do so,” said Jayanth Bhuvanaraghan, Chairman, Vision For Life, and Chief Mission Officer, Essilor International.

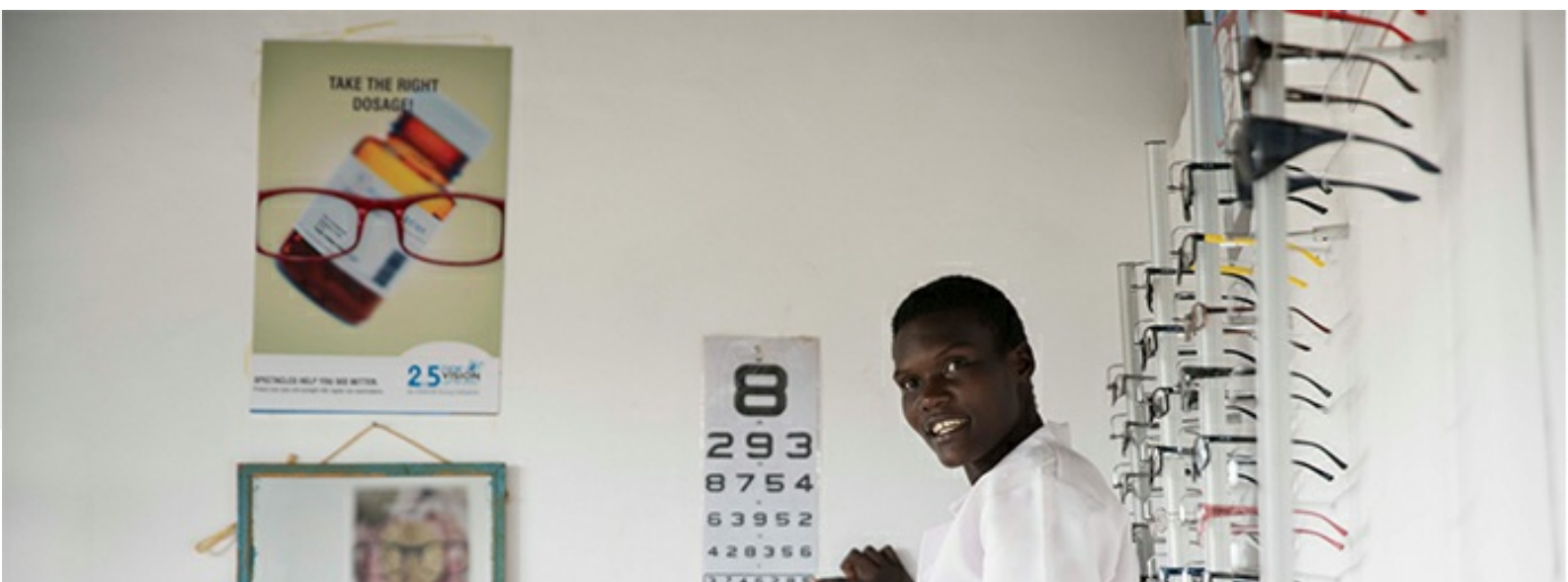
The cash assistance sum is equivalent to one month’s income for each primary vision care provider and will be disbursed to each primary vision care provider with the help of local NGO partners. Essilor has earlier issued personal protective equipment, safety tips as well as advisories on the safe handling and usage of eyeglasses to stem the spread of COVID-19 to its entire network of primary vision care providers. It is also providing online training, enabling them to upskill during this period. In addition, the Essilor teams are investigating relevant support schemes and assistance programs within each country, and helping the vision care providers apply for them.

“I’m thankful for this assistance. Without it, my family and I will have difficulties with our daily lives. The training and safety tips are also very helpful. I share the tips with my neighbours and customers so they know to wash their hands and keep a safe distance from one another. I am looking forward to reopening my business and helping more people in my village see clearly,” said Rakesh Yadav, primary vision care provider from Madhya Pradesh, India.





EYE MITRO IN BANGLADESH



MITRA MATA IN INDONESIA

SEE ALSO

2020.02.27

CORPORATE

ESSILOR'S EYE MITRA INCLUSIVE BUSINESS PROGRAM SHOWCASED AT DAVOS 2020



The challenge to provide eye care to the 1 in 3 people who cannot see the world clearly can sometimes seem insurmountable. 90% of people who still suffer from uncorrected poor vision live in developing communities where access to eye care professionals and awareness on the importance of vision in general, is limited.

2018.11.20

SUSTAINABILITY

ESSILOR GATHERS 700+ MITRA MATA TOGETHER IN INDONESIA FOR THE FIRST TIME



Essilor's inclusive business, 2.5 New Vision Generation (2.5 NVG), hosted its first ever Mitra Mata Convention in Indonesia which saw over 700 Mitra Mata come together to share best practices and to celebrate their achievements.
