

Press Release

Bridging the Vision Gap: A Pioneering Solution to the Global Eye Care Crisis

An estimated 950 million people worldwide cannot afford or have no access to basic eye care, including eyeglasses, leading to profound economic and social problems. The underlying problem is a severe global shortage of specialists trained to examine eyes. Becoming an ophthalmologist or optometrist typically requires years of training - a length of time that does not do justice to the urgency of the growing crisis caused by uncorrected refractive errors. GoodVision's one-year training program has evolved from a status of good acceptance to an officially recognized and integral part of a country's education system.

Ouagadougou, November 2024 – GoodVision is honoured to announce the official recognition of its one-year eye screening training program by the government of Burkina Faso. This approval within the national health system marks a groundbreaking achievement for the organization and represents a significant step toward addressing the global eye care crisis, especially concerning the growing number of people suffering from untreated refractive errors.

This new training program of Best Spherical Correction, inspired by the Competency-Based Approach (CBA), the National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NP/TVET) and World Health Organization standards, was validated on 18th November 2024 during a collaborative workshop.

It extends over 1,284 hours of intensive training, or about one year, and aims to equip participants with the necessary skills to become key actors in eye health and training a new generation of qualified technicians, committed to providing care tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable populations, thus consolidating its lasting impact on the social and economic development of Burkina Faso.

The Global Shortage of Eye Care Specialists

One of the biggest challenges in the global health sector is the severe shortage of trained eye care professionals. In many countries where the demand for eye care is high, there is a critical lack of qualified professionals. Becoming an ophthalmologist or optometrist often takes many years of education, which is difficult for a lot of young people, especially in rural areas, to access. This results in delayed treatments for refractive errors, leading to significant social and economic consequences.

A New Approach to Eye Care

GoodVision Germany (EinDollarBrille) has worked tirelessly to find a quick and effective solution to this issue. Through the training of the so-called GoodVision Technicians (GVTs), who are trained in just a few months to already perform basic eye screenings, GoodVision provides a practical and accessible response to the shortage of specialists. These short-term training programs are not only efficient but also cost-effective and are aimed at young people from rural areas who are willing to work in underserved regions.

The GVTs are trained to independently manage around 80% of patients with basic refractive errors (such as myopia and astigmatism), freeing up ophthalmologists and optometrists to focus on the remaining 20% of

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patients who require more specialized care, such as cataract surgery. This innovative approach helps relieve the burden on healthcare professionals, by reducing capacity bottlenecks and ensuring their time is used more efficiently with high specialized skills.

A Major Milestone achieved in Burkina Faso

The recognition of the one-year eye screening training program in Burkina Faso serves as a model for other countries looking for similar solutions. Since the organization's founding, GoodVision has already worked to collaborate with state-run training institutions to implement this innovative program. Burkina Faso is the first country to officially recognize this compact training program, and it represents a tremendous success.

A Global Model for Eye Care

GoodVision firmly believes that this model can play a pivotal role not only in Burkina Faso but in many other countries worldwide. The introduction of a tiered referral system—where simple cases are treated by GVTs and more complex cases are referred to optometrists or ophthalmologists—is key to improving eye care and addressing capacity shortages in many countries, offering a practical, scalable solution that can be quickly implemented to provide basic eye care in underserved regions.

“We hope that more countries will follow this example and establish similar training programs, closing the gap in global eye care and ensuring that no one is left without assistance due to untreated refractive errors, regardless of their location or financial situation” —says Karsten Wolf, Board Member of GoodVision.

For more information, please visit the official website of www.GoodVision.org

About GoodVision (EinDollarBrille e.V. Germany)

According to a WHO study, over 950 million people worldwide suffer from correctable defective vision but do not have the means to buy conventional glasses. Against this backdrop, GoodVision (EinDollarBrille e.V. in Germany) aims to provide high-quality, affordable, robust and customized glasses worldwide. The organization was founded in 2012 by Martin Aufmuth, the inventor of the GoodVision Glasses (EinDollarBrille), and is recognized by the tax office as a non-profit organization. The GoodVision Glasses can be manufactured and sold by local people. The material costs for a pair of glasses are around one US dollar. The selling price is two to three local daily wages. The training of the producers and the development of the project in the target countries are financed by donations. The project is sustainable: the proceeds from the sale of the glasses help to cover salaries in the country and the materials for new glasses. The aim is to establish basic optical care for people in developing countries.

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