









TRIP REPORT MAY 2024

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Introduction

BACKGROUND

The Sumba Eye Program (SEP) is an eye care program established in 2007, whose purpose is to provide ophthalmic and optometric eye care to the under resourced East Indonesian Island of Sumba. The SEP has been focusing its activities toward -

- 1) Service delivery of cataract surgery and eye testing to provide readymade glasses.
- 2) Education and sponsoring local Eye Care Nurses (ECN).
- 3) Seeking strategic collaboration with Indonesian Ophthalmologists Association (PERDAMI) & Faculty of Medicine University of Hasanuddin (UNHAS) in South Sulawesi, and with other Indonesian NGO.

Since its inception, the SEP team achieved some remarkable results, such as conducting over 1,600 operations, 23,000 eye examinations and dispensing of over 17,000 low cost spectacles along side the supply of several pieces of medical equipment.

In 2024, the project is gaining momentum as the Foresight's team returned to Sumba in May. Once again, those missions proved to be vital for the people of Sumba providing vital eye examinations and access to affordable spectacles, furthering the cause of better eye health on the Island. At the same time, the team continued to further their collaborative efforts with representatives from PERDAMI and UNHAS as well as the local Government.

THE TRIP GOALS

The visit had three main goals:

- 1. Conduct a full week of eye clinic including surgical provision at the Waibakul Hospital in Anakalang, Central Sumba
- 2. Conduct outreach eye clinics in remote villages and local schools
- 3. Set up of the new Eye clinic at the hospital in Anakalang and supply the rooms with the necessary equipment to get both the Eye clinic and the optical workshop functional.

Geographical context

The visiting team arrived in Sumba on the 12th May and left on the Friday the 17th May after a full week.

Once known as the "Sandalwood Island", Sumba is one of the three main islands forming the Nusa Tenggara Timur Province (South East Indonesia). The island has a population of about 1,000,000 and is 11,153 km2. It is one of the poorest undeveloped islands in Indonesia with few resources depending on agriculture with poor soil and constant drought. It is classified as remote or island cluster. Health services are more difficult to access. Also, there is limited human resources and infrastructure. There is no permanent eye care service on the Central-West Sumba, that is why the Island is highly reliant on periodic visits by teams of specialist doctors providing the much-needed services, such as the running of eye clinics and cataract surgeries. The Island is divided into 4 districts as shown in the below map. The Sumba Eye program has been operating predominantly in the central, west and south-west side of the island where the majority of the population is.

The visiting team including the team from PERDAMI/UNHAS rolled out eye screening at the Waibakul Hospital for the full week as well as in some of the remote villages in Central Sumba and conducted surgical operations (more details below).



Clinic results

After a full week of work the team achieved:

...from the eye clinic



636

Patients seen during the week visit

407

Pair of spectacles provided





79

Referrals for surgery

Outreach screening

140 Students screened

97 People screened

19 Pair of spectacles provided



Outreach eye screening

The outreach eye screening was conducted over two days. On the first day, part of the team conducted screenings in remote villages, while on the second day, the team visited local primary schools. This activity aimed to increase capacity on the island, with a special focus on child blindness and vision impairment prevention as well as upskilling the eyecare nurses and teachers around the importance of vision and education, and eye health in relation general health.

<u>Findings:</u> Following the first visit in September 2023 where no myopic children were identified within the age group screened, the team decided to target primary school students range between 6 and 12 years old. Detecting and addressing myopia at this stage would offer an opportunity for early intervention and prevention.

Key takeaways and next steps:

The decision to screen older children compared to the last visit proved to yield better results. During the screening, the team identified several cases of high myopia and hypermetropia, multiple instances of strabismus and amblyopia, and one

case of presumed fronto-ethmoidal encephalocele that was referred for imaging, with a recommendation to refer the patient to Bali for a life-saving intervention.

Even during this visit, a noticeable lack of awareness about eye health among teachers and students in the visited communities was evident. To address this gap, our team plans to conduct additional awareness sessions, expanding our reach to include educators from various schools and other remote villages. Alongside these sessions, we will distribute informative posters and other helpful materials, thereby extending opportunities for those in need to access our forthcoming eye clinics.



The Foresight team will continue to target remote areas of the Island where the need for eye care services is most needed. As the new eye clinic in Anakalang will start providing those services in more central areas, the team will focus resources toward remote villages and continue to target more local schools.

New eye clinic

The establishment of the new eye clinic in Anakalang, Sumba, represents a significant step forward in addressing the eye health needs of the region. By enhancing diagnostic, surgical, and refraction services, the clinic will provide critical eye care to a large and underserved population. Through continued support and development, we aim to create a sustainable model of eye health care that can be replicated in other remote areas.

Clinic set up:

During the visit, the Foresight team equipped the allocated rooms with the diagnostic tools to provide comprehensive eye exams and diagnostic capacity. The new rooms of the eye clinic will have an area for the newly appointed Ophthalmologist, the Refractionist with a dedicated area for vision testing and prescription of corrective lenses and dispensing area for the distribution of spectacles and other optical aids.



Key Objectives:

- Improving Access to Eye Care: Ensuring residents of Anakalang and surrounding areas have access to high-quality eye care services.
- Special Focus on Child Blindness and Vision Impairment Prevention: Emphasizing early detection and treatment of vision problems in children to prevent long-term blindness.

Projected Benefits:

The new clinic will significantly improve access to diagnosis and treatment for approximately 250,000 people in the district.

Enhanced training facilities for local healthcare providers, including registrar training for sustainable eye care service provision.



Surgical capacity:

- Improved Surgical Capacity and Facilities: Providing modern surgical equipment and a sterile environment for ophthalmic procedures.
- Enhanced Surgical Training Facilities: Supporting the training of local ophthalmologists and healthcare providers.
- Expansion of Sub-specialty Services: Introducing services previously unavailable in the region.

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved surgical services accessible to the local population.
- Establishment of a sustainable model for surgical eye care in Anakalang.



Optical workshop:

The clinic will include a fully equipped refraction unit to serve the local community's needs for vision correction.

Key Features:

- Comprehensive Vision Testing: Accurate assessment of refractive errors and prescription of glasses.
- Spectacle Supply Mechanism: Ensuring a steady supply of affordable spectacles to the community.
- Refurbishment and Equipment: Identification and procurement of necessary equipment and furnishings.



Partnership with One Sight/Essilor:

One Sight had previously made a generous contribution by providing spectacles tailored to the needs of the children screened during this visit, ensuring they received the glasses they required. One Sight will play a pivotal role in supporting Foresight's efforts to establish a permanent optical workshop at the Anakalang hospital, offering ongoing training and guidance to ensure the clinic is well-established and can operate smoothly over time.







Summary Plan for the new eye clinic

Eye Clinic + Theatre at the Waikabul Hospital

The general objective of this plan is to work toward the integration of eye health services for a large area of the Sumba Island (from Central to West) which is currently lacking of those services. This plan is aimed at adding Ophthalmology to the existing community-level health services and to encourage a greater understanding of eye health issues, services and information available in at least two locations in Central-west Sumba.



EYE CENTRE



OPTICAL WORKSHOP



SURGICAL THEATRE



HUMAN RESOURCES



COMPLETED

- Refurbishment of the room allocated for the eye clinic
- Equip the room with the necessary tools for eye examinations



COMPLETED

- Refurbishment of the room allocated for the permanent optical workshop
- Equip the room with the right devices



NEXT STEP

- Refurbishment of the hospital theatre
- Upgrade the Theatre with a Phacoemulsification machine



NEXT STEP

- Include Ophthalmology in the next Budget with the employment of a part time Ophthalmologist and one nurse/refractionist
- BPJS coverage

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Meetings conducted

One of the primary goals during our recent trip was to strengthen our collaboration with Waikabul Hospital in Anakalang to establish a permanent eye care service for a significant portion of Sumba Island, potentially reaching around 500,000 people. Key objectives of this initiative include:

- Providing ongoing access to eye care services and surgeries.
- Developing the capacity of the eye health workforce within the hospital system.
- Strengthening the current health system on Sumba Island.
- Advocating for sustainable eye healthcare.

During the trip, Remy and Mark had a productive meeting with the new Director of the Hospital, Dr. Ridho Samani, and the Secretary General, Dr. Bernard Gela. They agreed that Foresight will equip the new room allocated for the eye clinic at the hospital. Additionally, the hospital will submit a revised budget in July 2024 to cover the salary for an ophthalmologist who will manage the new eye clinic. Foresight and UNHAS will provide guidance throughout the process of setting up the clinic and offer ongoing training and development for the hospital staff.

The meeting also included discussions about the potential relocation of the eye clinic to a larger facility within the hospital campus in the future. The partnership is expected to expand with the involvement of the Foundation One Sight, which will assist by providing the necessary equipment and spectacles for the new optical workshop included in the eye clinic.

The expected outcome of these efforts is a substantial improvement in the identification, prevention, and treatment of visual impairment on the island, significantly reducing the burden of blindness and vision loss for a large portion of the population. Through this comprehensive approach, we aim to create lasting change and enhance the quality of life for the residents of Sumba Island.



Patients' stories

Andre, a lively 9-year-old boy, lives in Kodi, a remote area in West Sumba, Indonesia, where access to medical care is limited. For the past three to four years, his vision has been declining due to developmental cataracts, a condition often linked to nutrition and other environmental factors.

Kodi is three hours away from the nearest hospital by car, a journey that is both time-consuming and costly for Andre's family, who are farmers. Due to his worsening vision, Andre had to leave school in the second grade and could no longer play his favourite game, soccer. With his parents unable to bring him to the clinic, Niki, a refractive specialist from the Sumba Foundation trained by Foresight, took it upon herself to ensure Andre received the care he needed.



Upon hearing about the Foresight clinic through one of Niki's screenings in Kodi, Andre was brought to the hospital where he underwent cataract surgery in both eyes and received intraocular lens (IOL) implants. The surgery was life-changing for Andre. Not only did it significantly improve his vision, but it also meant he could dream again.

"Yes, I can go back to play with my friends now," he exclaimed with a gleeful smile. His recovery was swift; he could kick and catch a ball without any issues, a testament to the success of the procedure. With his vision restored, Andre is eager to return to school and play soccer with his friends. The surgery has given him a second chance at a normal childhood, full of learning and play. He will need to wear glasses for follow-up care, but the dramatic improvement in his sight means that he can now fully engage in the activities he loves. Rowena, a member of the Foresight Medical team, remarked, "Andre's transformation has been incredible to witness.

Seeing him regain his dreams of returning to school and playing soccer is why we do what we do. His story is a powerful reminder of the impact that access to eye care can have on a child's life." Andre's story is just one example of the profound difference that the Foresight team is making in Sumba. Through the generosity of donors and the dedication of medical professionals and volunteers, children like Andre are given the gift of sight, and with it, the opportunity for a brighter future.



Project plan

The general objective of this plan is to work toward the integration of eye health services for a large area of the Sumba Island (from Central to West) which is currently lacking of those services. This plan is also in line with the paper published by the Indonesian Ophthalmologist Association (Perdami) named "Roadmap of Visual Impairment Control Program in Indonesia 2017-2030" with the goal to the reduce the prevalence of visual impairment and blindness in Indonesia. (see also ANNEX 1 Summary) The plan includes the following priorities:

1 Setting up a permanent eye clinic in both the general hospitals in Anakalang and potentially another site in West Sumba

This will provide diagnostic and treatment capacity for eye health for about 500,000 people including access to a working theatre to conduct surgical procedures. This will also include an optical workshop in conjunction with the permanent eye clinic will allow the hospital to provide a full service for any specific need for each patient attending the eye clinic.

2 Training and development

Our plan includes providing ongoing training in advanced surgical skills for local doctors, upskilling nurses in eye health practices, and enhancing overall operational management for the clinic. This initiative is designed to empower local healthcare professionals with the knowledge and expertise necessary to deliver high-quality eye care services independently. By fostering continuous professional development, Foresight is committed to creating a lasting impact and ensuring that the eye clinic operates efficiently and effectively, ultimately transforming the lives of countless individuals in the community.

3 6 monthly outreach visits organized by UNHAS and Foresight

During the trip it was agreed that the team will continue the outreach visits to Sumba in the coming years. The area around the hospital will be served by the new eye clinic, therefore there will be a need to cover remote areas of the island and those patients who have limited access to eye care services. The team will also bring across other team members with other subspecialty expertise, such as in paediatric Ophthalmology with surgeries totally carried our by dedicated PERDAMI/UNHAS team.

4 Implement a community-based vision screening program in schools for children

Children can only access eye care services through those clinics organized by visiting teams a few times a year. Unfortunately, there is no data about how many children need eye care. However, according to some data acquired by the Ministry of Education there are about 700 primary schools in the Sumba Island with about 200,000 students attending those schools. There is a high chance that many will need a pair of glasses or need to access eye care services.

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Next Steps

In the coming months, our team will maintain a dual focus. First, we will concentrate on preparing for the upcoming outreach visit scheduled for September 2024. Concurrently, we will plan and guide the establishment of a permanent eye clinic at Waikabul Hospital. The hospital will require assistance in setting up the clinic, budgeting, and supplying it with the necessary consumables and medications. Additionally, human resources will be provided through UNHAS. Specifically, we will undertake the following actions:

Planning for the next outreach visit in September 2024

- Liaise with the UNHAS team to plan for dates and fundings for the trip
- Evaluating the previous trips to improve efficiency and effectiveness of next trip
- This trip will mostly likely focus on the outreach eye screening and training and development at the new eye clinic in Anakalang

2 Setting up of eye clinic rooms in Anakalang

- Liaise with Dr Ridho and his staff of the hospital to plan and budget to get operations of the new eye clinic started
- Liaise with UNHAS and initiate the process of finding the right candidate to take the role of the first Ophthalmologist at the new clinic
- Plan for first training and development of the new staff at the eye clinic
- Liaise with One sight for providing the first seed of spectacles and relevant equipment for the optical workshop

3 Develop and implement a school based vision screening program for children

- Continue screening in schools
- Develop an awareness program for primary school teachers
- Train community workers or nurses in visual acuity that have access to remote areas

4 Fundraising

- Apply for further funding in Australia and Indonesia through different grants
- Organise two events one in Sydney and one in Melbourne to raise more awareness of the Sumba Eye Program and raise enough money to cover for the upcoming cost of the trip in September but also for 2025



ANNEX 1



One person goes blind every minute in Indonesia. 80 percent of blindness can be cured. Most cases of blindness in Indonesia were caused by cataracts. The incidence of cataracts in Indonesia reached 240,000 annually, while the number of cataract operations performed in the nation numbered only 100,000

Eye Health in Indonesia and Sumba

Indonesia has the second-highest prevalence of blindness among countries in the world. The surveys found that 1.8% of people aged 50 years and older were blind, while 4.2% had moderate or severe visual impairment.

Awareness and Education: Public awareness is crucial. so as the importance of regular eye examinations, eye health maintenance, and prevention of eye diseases. Educational campaigns and initiatives aimed at promoting eye health awareness can play a significant role in preventing avoidable vision loss.

Prevalence of Eye Diseases: In Indonesia, common eye conditions include refractive errors (such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism), cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration.

Current Population in Sumba is about 500,000 excluding East Sumba. If considering the statistics of the prevalence of blindness in Indonesia, 9,000 are blind (1.8%) in Sumba and about 21,000 have moderate or severe visual impairment.

Loss of productivity due to eye health issues is a significant concern. When individuals experience vision impairment or eye-related conditions, it can have a detrimental impact on their ability to perform daily tasks, education, and work-related activities. Eye health problems can also have psychological and emotional effects, including stress, anxiety, decreased self-esteem, and social withdrawal.



Thank you to all our volunteers of this trip!

