



PICTURED: SECOND FROM LEFT: MR DEJENE MEKONEN; CEO MEKI HOSPITAL. CENTRE: JULIE TYERS OAM; FOUNDER EYES FOR AFRICA

MEKI EYE CLINIC NEWSLETTER

May 2025

MEKI EYE CLINIC OPENING

After 18 months of planning, the Eyes for Africa Meki Eye Clinic was officially opened on 15th November 2024.

Eyes for Africa worked in collaboration with the Oromia Health Bureau, Mr Amanuel Yadassa Deputy Head, Health Promotor and Disease Prevention Directorate Director and CEO of the Meki Hospital Mr Dejene Mekonnen along with Hospital management to bring this project to life.



Mr Delbo Vgesa
Meki Mayor



Dr Bokona Guta
Oromia Region Vice Head



Mr Legesa Telila
Zonal Administrator
Prosperity Party

The Opening ceremony was attended by over 100 representatives from outreach areas, local management, religious leaders, the Mayor of Meki, delegates from Oromia Health Bureau and political party leaders.

Among the attendees was a local elder who underwent bilateral cataract surgery through the Eyes for Africa project in 2023. We were fortunate enough to hear him speak about the life changing impact the surgery has had on his life.



Community Elders



Local Optometrist; Fikru Debede with glasses donated by Fareshare through Nunawading Rotary and Narangba Optometrist

Eyes for Africa commenced the employment of Fikru Debede, a local optometrist, on 26th September 2024. His position is generously sponsored by a private donor.

Since opening the clinic, Fikru has been screening approximately 100 patients per week. His most recent report highlights the patients are travelling from three districts - Dugda Meki, Zuway and Dugda Bora - with the clinic's catchment covering a radius of 250km.

Fikru is also trained to perform minor extraocular surgeries, including tarsal plate rotation and chalazion excision.

The most common ocular diseases he is encountering are cataract's refractive errors, conjunctivitis, blepharitis, fungal and bacterial keratitis, cellulitis, styes, pterygium, endophthalmitis, and trachoma. Severe eye conditions are immediately transferred to Adama or Addis for ophthalmic review.

We were fortunate enough to have most of our equipment donated.

The equipment was sent via Pack and Send Northlakes Queensland, and the Oromia Health Bureau facilitated the customs clearance at no cost to Eyes for Africa.

RAD Pharmaceuticals in Ethiopia supplied additional essential items, including a Mayo Stand, IV stand, kidney dishes, medicines and eye drops, among others. The Meki Hospital Pharmacy has agreed to support the clinic by providing ongoing supplies as needed.

The Fred Hollows Foundation generously donated a trial lens set, sutures and a kaleidoscope.

With the support from EBM PAF Pty Ltd and Eyes for Africa we have been able to provide 30 computers to Meki Hospital which will be integral to the successful integration of digital health records for the clinic.

Additionally, an agreement was reached between the CEO of Meki Hospital, Mr Dejene Mekonen, and Eyes for Africa to exempt all eye patients attending the clinic from paying the hospital registration fee.



Local Optometrist; Fikru Debede examining a patient

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Future Plans:

- Ethiopia is gradually integrating Digital Health Record Technology and has already achieved paperless systems in a few health facilities.
- Meki Hospital now qualifies for a visiting ophthalmologist and is scheduled to receive one in 2026.
- We are actively investigating learning institutions where Fikru can continue to upskill and expand his capabilities.
- Our next free sight restoring cataract campaign will take place on 18th November 2025. Fikru will have patients identified, screened, and prepared prior to our arrival, ensuring a smooth and efficient process. We will employ local staff to assist the project, further building local capacity.



This has been an incredibly rewarding project in sustainability for the Eyes for Africa committee. We are excited about the positive growth ahead as we continue working to facilitate access to quality eye care.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors, and we are deeply grateful for their ongoing support.



Electric Steriliser donated by River City Day Surgery Staff



Slitlamp donated by Juliana Cardenas Avila



Vertometer donated by Juliana Cardenas Avila



Donated by Design for Vision and sponsored by Ulladulla Rotary in memory of our past committee member Micheal Van Ewijk.

Thank you to our donors;

EBM PAF Pty Ltd

OKKO

Nunawading Rotary and Fareshare

Ulladulla Rotary

River City Day Surgery

Kallangur Probus

ECO MED

Retirees in Tasmania

Juliana Cardenas Avila

Fred Hollows Foundation