



Prof. Kovin Naidoo joins Vision Impact Institute Advisory Board

*Acclaimed Optometrist Joins Team to Raise Awareness of the
Consequences of Poor Vision*

(Charenton-le-Pont, France - April, 14, 2014) – The Vision Impact Institute (VII) today announced the addition of Professor Kovin Naidoo to its distinguished advisory board.

Born in South Africa, Professor Naidoo is a renowned academic, optometrist, researcher, educator and internationally celebrated public health leader. He has worked hard to improve access to and delivery of eye care in Africa and is a strong advocate for the disadvantaged throughout the world. A Fullbright Scholar, Professor Naidoo has a long history of working to raise awareness around the impact of uncorrected vision and was also announced the World Economic Forum African Social Entrepreneur of the year in 2010.

“I am honoured to be asked to join the Vision Impact Institute’s Advisory Board, where I can help further raise the awareness of the need to provide everyone – rich and poor, young and old – with access to quality eye care,” said Professor Naidoo. *“I’ve seen first-hand the impact that can be made by ensuring communities have access to eye screening and corrective lenses and I am committed to playing a role in helping address this critical social issue.”*

The Vision Impact Institute serves as a global connector of knowledge, data and solutions in a quest to achieve better vision globally. The Institute’s mission is to raise awareness about the socio-economic impact of poor vision and to foster research where needed, encouraging measures in the field of corrective vision. Impaired vision is currently the world’s most widespread disability, affecting 4.3 billion people throughout the world, of whom 2.5 billion have no access to corrective measures. The cost of this significant public health issue is today either unknown or underestimated by the policy makers even though all the required solutions including eye exams and corrections are available.

“The Vision Impact Institute is delighted to welcome Professor Naidoo,” said Jean-Félix Biosse Duplan, President of the Vision Impact Institute. *“The social and economic costs of uncorrected visual impairment are significant, and the global community will benefit from his extensive knowledge, experience and expertise in fighting this international challenge.”*

The underestimated economic impact of impaired vision

While one of the most widespread disabilities in the world, impaired vision is generally underrepresented as an issue in developed and emerging countries. Globally, 30 percent of people under the age of 18 suffer from uncorrected refractive error. This figure reaches 33 percent in the labour force and 37 percent for the elderly, and is tragically often not diagnosed due to lack of awareness or access to care.¹

The World Health Organization's estimate of USD275 billion in lost productivity per annum² is approximately the same as the cost of providing an eye exam for half of the current world population, highlighting the need to improve awareness and access to screening procedures in both developed and emerging countries.

The Vision Impact Institute's mission

The VII collates research and data and publishes it to a global audience. It's designed as an interactive web platform to unite a community of experts and galvanise a worldwide movement to increase data research and fight impaired vision in the world.

VII Advisory Board

Independent and distinguished international experts sit on the Vision Impact Institute's Advisory Board:

- Kevin Frick, Ph.D., MA, Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, Baltimore, USA;
- Clare Gilbert, Ophthalmologist, Professor in International Eye Health, International Center for Eye Health, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, United Kingdom;
- Arun Bharat Ram, Chairman of SRF Limited (Shri Ram Fibers) New Delhi, India;
- Wu Jianmin, former ambassador in France and in the Netherlands, former permanent representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations in Geneva;
- Kovin Naidoo, Ph.D., OD MPH, Africa Chair of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and Global Programmes Director of the Brien Holden Vision Institute.

These leading experts help to guide the VII and act as ambassadors to disseminate the work of researchers around the globe. They all have a role to play in raising awareness and combating the global issue of uncorrected vision.

Explore the cost of vision impairment at visionimpactinstitute.org.

¹ Source: World Bank, Boston Consulting Group

² Source: World Health Organization



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About the Vision Impact Institute

The Vision Impact Institute's mission is to collect and make accessible data on the impact of impaired vision in order to raise awareness among opinion leaders, public organisations and eyesight professionals of the socio-economic consequences of impaired vision and the solutions that could be deployed. The Advisory Board of the Vision Impact Institute comprises five independent international experts: Pr. Kevin Frick (United States), Pr. Clare Gilbert (United Kingdom), Pr. Kovin Naidoo (Australia), Mr Arun Bharat Ram (India) and Mr Wu Jianmin (China). They will support the Vision Impact Institute's action and provide advice to guide the Institute's work.

The interactive web platform of the Vision Impact Institute, a unique data base of research is accessible from: visionimpactinstitute.org

The Vision Impact Institute is a non-profit organization which benefits from the support of Essilor, the world leader in ophthalmic optics.

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