Eliminating Trachoma is Necessary to Close the Gap for Vision

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Introduction

- Australia is the only high-income country to still have trachoma
- Trachoma is a blinding eye disease spread mainly by infected eye and nose secretions in young children
- Australia has committed to eliminate trachoma by 2020
- The WHO endorsed SAFE strategy is used to eliminate trachoma
- IEH’s Trachoma Health Promotion Program concentrates on the F component of the SAFE strategy to promote ‘Clean Faces, Strong Eyes’

Methods

- Milpa the Trachoma Goanna mascot and the ‘Clean Faces, Strong Eyes’ slogan were created in collaboration with Katherine West Health Board and Centre for Disease Control NT in 2009
- Activities were funded by DoH and private donors

Results: IEH Trachoma Health Promotion Program Activities July 2015- November 2016

Milpa features in all IEH’s trachoma health promotion resources and activities

1. Trachoma Story Kit

- Includes print and multimedia resources for use in schools, clinics and communities
- Order a free kit online from www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

2. Social Marketing

- TV Commercials on Imparja and ICTV
- Community Service Announcements on CAAMA Radio
- ‘Clean Faces, Strong Eyes’ Facebook Page
- www.facebook.com/cleanfacesstrongeyes

Conclusion

To eliminate trachoma in Australia by 2020, the following is essential:

- Sustained, multi-sector effort
- Continued collaboration with stakeholders
- Continued allocation of resources for the elements of the SAFE strategy, especially for F and E initiatives.

3. Health Education and Public Awareness

- Song, music and video events with:
  - Milpa and Yamba Roadshows: 29 communities
  - Indigenous Hip Hop Projects: 3 communities
  - The Jimmy Little Foundation: 5 communities
  - Sean Choolburra: 8 communities
- Football Clinics with Melbourne Football Club and NTAF: 6 communities

4. Collaboration and Partnership Engagement

NT Department of Education

- Clean Faces Strong Eyes Policy- includes daily hygiene routine in schools and “washing faces whenever they are dirty”
- Prime Minister & Cabinet
- Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)- trachoma education for school attendance officers
- Community Development Programs (CDP)- delivery and installation of safety mirrors in schools

5. Supportive Environments

- Child-height mirrors help kids check for clean faces
- Safety mirrors were donated by Bunnings. 94 have been distributed so far to community clinics, schools and early learning centres

References:

Melbourne School of Population and Global Health

Left: Hip Hop Video Oak Valley. Middle: Milpa and Yamba Roadshow. Right: Sean Choolburra

Progress

- Trachoma rates have been reduced dramatically

But we need to finish the job!