

# Transforming Vision: Establishing a replicable and scalable model for primary cataract eye care.

## Focus Area: Tamil Nadu, India

### Interim Progress Report (August 2025 to January 2026)

## 1. Project Goal and Objectives



#### Goal:

To develop and establish a replicable and scalable model of a novel outreach camp that extensively uses information technology and portable advanced diagnostic devices to improve early identification and treatment of cataracts with timely follow up of patients. The transformative initiative will be initiated in underserved regions of India starting with eight key districts in Tamil Nadu; Cuddalore, Vilupuram, Tiruliannamalai, Nagapattinam, Kallakurichi, Ariyalur, Mayiladuthurai and Thiruvarur.

#### Objectives:

- I. To strengthen community-based screening and detection for cataract and other chronic eye conditions through the novel outreach camps by introducing the use of portable equipment and technology.
- II. To strengthen referral pathways and post-operative follow-ups, leveraging a digital data management system, ensuring a continuum of care.
- III. To generate evidence for demonstrating effectiveness and facilitate scale-up.
- IV. To reduce avoidable sight loss in adults through early screening and timely treatment, empowering individuals to regain their independence, return to work, and improve the economic wellbeing of their families and communities.

## 2. Project Interventions

Outreach eye camps will be conducted following uniform clinical and operational protocols to ensure quality and patient safety. Portable diagnostic devices, including handheld slit lamps, autorefractors, vision screeners, and fundus screening tools, will enable comprehensive eye examinations at the community level, supporting early identification of operable cataract as well as chronic and posterior segment eye diseases and strengthening primary eye care services in rural communities.

A digital AI-enabled data management system will support real-time patient registration, screening, referral, and follow-up tracking, ensuring continuity of care across outreach camps, vision centers, secondary facilities, and tertiary hospitals. Structured referral pathways will facilitate timely treatment, supported by patient counseling and assistance with scheduling. Post-operative and post-treatment follow-up will be coordinated through outreach teams and digital tracking systems to improve referral completion, treatment adherence, and visual outcomes, while enabling data-driven decision-making and quality improvement.

Targeted community engagement and behavior change communication strategies will promote early care-seeking behavior and improve awareness of eye health. Gender-responsive strategies will be integrated throughout implementation to address barriers faced by women through targeted mobilisation to the camps.

### 3. Progress Report

During this interim reporting period we are pleased to note that the project is on track. We focused on project initiation, strategic alignment with partners, and establishment of a foundation for effective implementation. Key accomplishments included completion of the project orientation visits, finalisation of the implementation framework, workflows for the digital data management system, and initiation of essential IT procurement. These milestones have positioned the project to transition from the planning and system-development stage to the phased implementation beginning February 2026.

#### Quarter 1: July – September 2025

1. **Project Initiation and Technology Planning:** A project kick-off visit was conducted with our partner hospital (Aravind) in late July 2025, formally launching the initiative and establishing a shared understanding of project objectives, deliverables, timelines, and roles. The visit enabled partners to assess technology requirements and define the workflow for the proposed digital outreach system. A high-level software development roadmap was developed to guide subsequent system design and integration activities.
2. **Orientation with Aravind Eye Hospital, Pondicherry (28–31 August 2025):** An orientation visit to Aravind Eye Hospital, Pondicherry ensured partner alignment and clarified institutional roles within the tech-enabled outreach model. The engagement deepened the understanding of operational requirements and reinforced collaboration towards implementation readiness.
3. **Finalisation of Implementation Framework:** The project team finalised a comprehensive implementation framework outlining the phased rollout strategy, and defined roles and responsibilities. Standardised workflows and clinical protocols were developed to ensure consistency across screening, referral, diagnosis, and follow-up processes. A detailed 12-month activity plan was also prepared to guide operational execution during the first year.
4. **Software Requirements Definition:** Structured collaboration between the Orbis Program Technology Team and Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai, resulted in development of the detailed system requirement specifications. This included defining data architecture, user interface components, and integration pathways with AI-enabled platforms, laying the technical foundation for the digital outreach solution.

## Quarter 2: October – December 2025

1. **Validation of Implementation Framework:** During this period, the implementation framework was reviewed and finalised in consultation with the teams of Aravind Eye Hospital, Pondicherry and Madurai. This ensured institutional alignment on the phased rollout plan and operational workflows prior to field deployment.
2. **Digital Data Management System Development:** Significant progress was achieved in developing the Digital Data Management System for the novel outreach camps. Core master data structures were completed to enable standardised data capture across implementation sites. Key modules, including patient registration, dashboard analytics, and waiting area display interfaces reached integration readiness, marking an important milestone toward operational deployment.
3. **Procurement of IT Equipment and Screening Kits:** Procurement processes were initiated for essential IT equipment and portable screening devices required for field implementation. These include laptops, tablets, and supporting hardware necessary to operationalise digital workflows during outreach camps. These investments ensure infrastructure readiness to support novel camp implementation beginning in February 2026.

## January 2026

1. **Project Orientation and Annual Planning:** Orientation of the new Project Manager was done on the project strategy and budget. Preparation of the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) for 2026 has been completed. Planning for training on the new data management system, SOP (standard operating procedures\_ implementation, camp planning, and IEC (Information Education and Communication materials) activities for novel outreach was completed.
2. **Outreach and Operational Readiness:** Novel outreach camp planning was completed, with the finalisation of the location for the first camp. Additionally, locations for other camps have been identified. IEC materials were received and prepared for use in camps to support referrals and counselling. Operational checklists were developed to ensure smooth camp setup and service flow.
3. **Software Development and Coordination:** Phase one of the software is on track and was delivered towards the end of January. Planning for the dry run was completed before the final rollout. Regular coordination and feedback sessions were undertaken with the software development team.



*Project Meeting and Orientation at Aravind Eye Hospital, Pondicherry*

## 4. Targets Achieved

The table below details all project outputs and their planned timings, with each project year split into two halves. This is included as a reminder from the proposal. As you'll see, the first six months were focused on project set-up and systems development; the expectations for live outreach camps and patient access were scheduled for the subsequent phases of implementation.

	Year One (Jul '25 – Jun '26)			Year Two (Jul '26 – Jun '27)			Year Three (Jul '27 – Jun '28)			Total
	H1	H2	Total	H1	H2	Total	H1	H2	Total	
# Months	6	6	<b>12</b>	6	6	<b>12</b>	6	6	<b>12</b>	<b>36</b>
# Camps per month	-	5		10	10		15	15		-
# Total Camps	-	30	<b>30</b>	60	60	<b>120</b>	90	90	<b>180</b>	<b>330</b>
# Screenings	-	9,000	<b>9,000</b>	18,000	18,000	<b>36,000</b>	27,500	27,500	<b>55,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
# Patients Advised for Cataract Surgery	-	3,600	<b>3,600</b>	7,200	7,200	<b>14,400</b>	11,000	11,000	<b>22,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>
# Patient Accepted for Cataract Surgery	-	3,240	<b>3,240</b>	6,480	6,480	<b>12,960</b>	9,900	9,900	<b>19,800</b>	<b>36,000</b>
# Cataract Surgeries conducted	-	3,110	<b>3,110</b>	6,221	6,221	<b>12,442</b>	9,504	9,504	<b>19,008</b>	<b>34,560</b>
# Prescribed and Provided Eyeglasses	-	2,250	<b>2,250</b>	4,500	4,500	<b>9,000</b>	6,875	6,875	<b>13,750</b>	<b>25,000</b>
# Patients followed-up Post-Operatively at 1 Month	-	2,799	<b>2,799</b>	5,599	5,599	<b>11,198</b>	8,554	8,554	<b>17,107</b>	<b>31,104</b>

## 5. Challenges faced and how they were addressed

This period focused on the initial set-up and implementation phase, no significant challenges were encountered. Processes, systems and structures were established as planned, with any minor issues resolved through standard project management and team coordination.

## 6. Learning and areas to be strengthened

As the project has primarily been in its set-up phase, there are limited learnings to report at this stage. As delivery progresses and activity increases, further insights will be captured to inform continuous improvement and strengthen future implementation.

## 7. Summary

This interim reporting period has focused on laying the foundations for successful delivery of the project. As the first six months represented the set-up phase, strong progress has been made in establishing key systems, building effective partnerships, and putting in place the operational framework needed to support delivery. Close collaboration with our partners has enabled the development of a clear and robust approach, alongside the design and initial build of the digital data management system and procurement of essential equipment.

The project is now entering an exciting new stage, with all key elements in place to begin delivering activities on the ground. With this strong foundation established, we are well-positioned to move into the next phase and begin reaching communities with improved access to eye care, ensuring the project delivers meaningful and lasting impact.

Thanks to the support from the KM Foundation, this project will make a tangible difference in eight districts of Tamil Nadu. By enabling people to access eye screenings, receive timely cataract surgeries, and recover sight, you are helping adults regain the ability to work and contribute to their families and local economies. This initiative has the potential to be a real catalyst for change, improving lives and creating opportunities for sustainable growth. We will continue to closely monitor progress, learn from each stage, and aim to develop a model that can be scaled in the future to reach even more communities in need.

As discussed, it would be our pleasure to welcome you to visit the project in June this year, which we understand is your preferred time to travel due to other commitments. We look forward to working with you to progress and finalise a project visit plan, ensuring you can see firsthand the impact your support is enabling. Thank you to Kumar and all at the KM Foundation for supporting this scalable project.

Kindest Regards

**Mandy Pope**

**Head of Major Gifts**

Email: [mpope@orbis.org.uk](mailto:mpope@orbis.org.uk)