

CECSA

COLLEGE OF OPHTHALMOLOGY OF
EASTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA



2022/23
Annual Report



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Executive Summary

Introduction

The College of Ophthalmology of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (COECSA) has continued to implement various programmes, and foster mutually beneficial partnerships aimed at improving the number and quality of eye care workers in ECSA region.

We are implementing activities under the three (3) main pillars namely;

1. Education and Accreditation
2. Scientific and Research
3. Business, Membership and Professional support

The activities are all tailored towards attainment of our four (4) key long-term strategic objectives, as follows;

Objective 1: To improve the number of skilled and motivated eye health workers

Objective 2: To promote and disseminate evidence-based knowledge, standards and guidelines of practice in eye health

Objective 3: To provide leadership, strengthen strategic partnerships and promote advocacy in eye health

Objective 4: To be a strong and sustainable organization able to efficiently and effectively deliver its programmes

In the 2022/23 reporting period, we have scaled up our activities following reduction the COVID-19 restrictions and incidences.

Report Highlights

Education and Accreditation: Through the Accreditation Sub-Committee, we successfully conducted final accreditation evaluation visits to the United Bulawayo Hospitals (UBH), in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH), Eldoret, Kenya.

We further developed and administered the first ever COECSA Online written Exams, in addition to the Fellowship exit examination. 116 Written Exams were administered, while 44 candidates sat the Fellowship Exam.

In the period under review, we also commenced work towards development of two new superspecialty curricula namely, Orbits & Oculoplastic and Cornea & Anterior Segment. Further, under the TTT programme, we trained 110 faculty and examiners.

Scientific and Research: The 9th COECSA Scientific Congress was successfully held in Lilongwe, Malawi in September 2022, and brought together 374 delegates.

In the reporting period, we have also consistently published our JOECSA Journal, which is a peer-reviewed scientific journal that publishes research papers contributing towards new knowledge in eye care, prevention of blindness and poverty eradication efforts relevant to Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA).

Membership and Professional Support: After a successful sitting of the 2021 and 2022 Fellowship Exams, the College admitted 34 new fellows at a colourful graduation ceremony that was held in September 2022 at the Bingu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe, Malawi.

Partnerships: We have continued to work with and foster various partnerships towards achieving our College agenda. Key among our partners in the reporting period include Pyott Foundation, Ophthalmology Foundation, Sightsavers and HCP Cureblindness.

Finance: The planned 2022/23 COECSA programme expenditure has significantly increased, due to increased activity implementation following the reduction in COVID-19 restrictions. The annual expenditure has increased from around USD250,00.00 during COVID, to now around USD450,897.90.

Gratitude: We are grateful to our partners, members, and all our stakeholders for the continued support. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Enjoy reading our Annual Report.



The COECSA Accreditation Team undertaking a guided tour of the United Bulawayo Hospitals (UBH) in Zimbabwe.

Enhancing The Quality & Quantity of Ophthalmologists In ECSA

COECSA has continued to foster mutually beneficial partnerships aimed at improving the number and quality of eye care workers in ECSA region. One way the College is doing this is through accreditation of training institutions for provision of Residency and Superspecialty training in ophthalmology.

In this regard, the College, through the Accreditation Sub-Committee chaired by Dr. Fredrick Korir, in partnership with the Medical Councils, in particular the Dental Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (MDPCZ), and Kenya, successfully conducted final accreditation evaluation visit to the United Bulawayo Hospitals (UBH), in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH), Eldoret, Kenya.

The visits presented an opportunity to assess the suitability and readiness of the institutions to conduct Residency training in line with COECSA guidelines and standards. This is also part of the drive towards standardizing ophthalmic training and practice in the region.

UBH and MTRH will now join Rwanda International Institute of Ophthalmology as COECSA accredited

Residency Training institutions. This brings the total number of fully accredited COECSA training sites to seven (7), as below:

1	Rwanda International Institute of Ophthalmology (RIIO)	Residency	Rwanda
2	United Bulawayo Hospitals (Appealed)	Residency	Zimbabwe
3	Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) - Appealed	Residency	Kenya
4	Kisii Innovate Eye Hospital (RIIO Training Site)	Residency	Kenya
5	Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH)	Pediatric & Strabismus	Kenya
6	City Eye Hospital	Vitreo Retina	Kenya
7	Tenwek Eye Hospital	Vitreo Retina	Kenya





Accreditation consultative meeting between COECSA and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) in Eldoret, Kenya.

The COECSA Accreditation Process

The College is scheduled to call for expression of interest for the next accreditation process in quarter 3, 2023. The call for accreditation will be open to all institutions that would like to undertake training in four (4) COECSA training programmes currently available, namely Residency Training, Vitreo Retina Superspecialty Training, Glaucoma Superspecialty Training, as well as Pediatric & Strabismus Superspecialty Training.

The following process will apply to the COECSA accreditation process:

STEP 1: Application

Institution express interest for accreditation in writing to the Secretariat by completing and submitting the application pack which includes a Self-Assessment Form, Detailed relevant curriculum and an application form. Applicants are also required to submit proof of registration as a training institution.

STEP 2: Desk Review

The application is reviewed by the College Education & Accreditation Committee. All applicants are then informed of the committee's findings. If the preliminary findings do not meet accreditation standards, the applicant can take remedial action within 6 months, and continue with the same application. However, if remedial action is not completed within this period, a fresh application will have to be started.

If preliminary findings meet the threshold for accreditation, the institution is shortlisted for the next stage of the process.

STEP 3: Site Evaluation

COECSA appoints an appropriate accreditation team as per accreditation guidelines. The Accreditation Team conducts on-site assessment and submits the report to the Education & Accreditation Committee for consideration.

NOTE: The site evaluation may include a virtual process that involves submission of electronic visual materials.

STEP 4: Accreditation and Certification

The accreditation report once reviewed by the Education and Accreditation Committee is submitted to the Senate for consideration.

The final outcome after the Senate consideration, including recommendations are then communicated to the applicant.

Unfavorable applicants can reapply for a second site visit. This reapplication must be accompanied with details of how compliance recommendations have been addressed.

Should the evaluation results be favorable, the institution will be granted a provisional COECSA accreditation valid for 18 months. If during its validity, no trainee is enrolled, then the accreditation process will have to be restarted.

The full COECSA accreditation certificate valid for 5 years, will only be granted following assessment 1 year after commencement of training, and will be reviewed periodically



Some of the candidates during the June 2023 COECSA online Written Examination at Hawassa University, Ethiopia.

The COECSA Examinations, Your gateway to COECSA Fellowship

COECSA has continued to make significant strides in the development and delivery of high-quality, professionally conducted, international standard exams that assess the quality, safety and efficiency of the patient care provided by Ophthalmologists in ECSA, and beyond.

The main purpose of COECSA examinations is to examine candidates who are in training or have completed their post-graduate training in ophthalmology and wish to become fellows of COECSA, with all attendant benefits. The examination tests the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired by trainees or practicing ophthalmologists. Our exams are designed to be as relevant, objective and stringent as possible.

The exams include both Written and Clinical Fellowship Exams which ultimately lead to the award of Fellow of COECSA (FCOphth -ECSA). Further, the COECSA Exams form a complete stand-alone pathway to qualification as an Ophthalmologist, when complemented by training in an accredited facility that delivers and tracks learning as described in the COECSA Residency curriculum.

The Online Written Exams are administered in May/

June, while the Fellowship Exam in August/September. The complete examination pathway for one to become a Fellow of COECSA, is as follows;

1. Written Part 1A - Basic Sciences
2. Written Part 1B – Optics, Refraction, and Instruments
3. Written Part 2- Clinical Ophthalmology
4. Part 3 - Clinical Fellowship Exit Exam (Viva & OSCE)

The College endeavors to make the Exams affordable to the candidates, thus allow more access the exam.

The fees applicable on our exams are as follows;

- a. Written Part 1A: Basic Ophthalmic Sciences = \$120
- b. Written Part 1B: Optics and Refraction = \$80
- c. Written Part 2: Clinical Ophthalmology = \$150
- d. Part 3: Clinical Fellowship Exam (Exit) = \$ 250
- e. Written Examination Centre Admin Fee (Compulsory): \$30 per sitting.



Candidates and Examiners during the 2022 Fellowship Exam in Blantyre, Malawi

Examinations

First Ever COECSA Online Written Exams successfully Administered!

23rd June, 2023 marked another milestone in the history of COECSA, as the College administered its first ever Online Written Examinations. 14 Accredited Exam Centers that underwent rigorous preparations, from 7 countries across the Eastern Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) region hosted the exams. The 7 countries include Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Somalia. Others are Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

A total of 132 were admitted to sit for the three (3) exams on offer, as follows:

- ◆ ✓ Written Part 1A - Basic Sciences: 46 Candidates
- ◆ ✓ Written Part 1B - Optics and Refraction: 54 Candidates
- ◆ ✓ Written Part 2- Clinical Ophthalmology: 32 Candidates

Of the 132 admissions, 116 exams were successfully administered, while the difference represents candidates who were absent on exam day.



COECSA Online Exams at Kenya National Library Services, Nairobi, Kenya

One of the great successes of the exam is that it gave an opportunity to candidates from hard-to-reach areas such as Mekelle University, in Tigray, North Region of Ethiopia, to sit an international exam.



Some candidates at Mekelle University, Tigray, North Region, Ethiopia

The College would like to thank all the Centres and Exam Coordinators who volunteered to deliver the exam. The College is particularly grateful to the COECSA Exams Advisory Board (ABCE) chaired by Prof. Ciku Mathenge, who worked tirelessly to deliver the exam, and all those that contributed to the entire exam development process.

The College further extends its gratitude to all our partners who have supported this journey, especially PYOTT Foundation and Ophthalmology Foundation.

COECSA remains committed to making this annual exam sustainable, and accessible across the African continent and beyond.

For further information about COECSA Exams, please write to: exams@coecea.org



Examinations



External Examiners Prof. Jefitha Karimurio and Dr. Daniel Noran join other examiners conducting patient pre-assessments during the April, 2023 COECSA Fellowship Exams held at MUHAS, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The Clinical Fellowship Exit Exams, 44 Candidates Admitted.

Two (2) Fellowship exams were successfully administered in the period under review. The exams are preceded by a one-day training workshop for examiners followed by two full days of clinical exam. The clinical exam is comprised;

- Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) conducted to assess clinical skills and knowledge, and
- Structured VIVA to assess theoretical knowledge in ophthalmology, communication, and public eye health.

The first Fellowship exam was successfully hosted by the University of Malawi at the Lions Sight First Eye Hospital, Blantyre, Malawi from Saturday 17th to Monday 19th September 2022, with 18 candidates sitting the exam. This was a historical exam since it was the first time:

- Both COECSA Exams and Congress were hosted and run back-to-back in the same country. The exam ended on 19th in Blantyre and the Congress started on 21st September 2022 in Lilongwe. Examiners, coordinators, and candidate traveled from exam to Congress venue on 20th. This arrangement gave examiners and candidates an opportunity to attend the Congress.

- All the candidates passed the exam and graduated as COECSA Fellows during the Congress
- It was the first time candidates from a COECSA training institutions were sitting the Fellowship Exam. The candidates had finished their fellowship training at Rwanda International Institute of Ophthalmology (RIIO).

The second Fellowship exam was hosted by Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), in Tanzania from Wednesday 26th April to Friday 28th 2023. The exam was administered by 14 examiners drawn from different COECSA member countries and supervised by 2 external examiners/observers, Prof. Jefitha Karimurio (UON) and Dr. Dan Noran (RCOphth).

A total of 26 candidates were examined in Tanzania, and it was the second highest number of candidates examined prior to this exam.



Taking a break: COECSA Examiners pose for a group photo during the April, 2023 Fellowship Exams held at MUHAS in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. 26 candidates took the exam.

Curriculum Development



COECSA Curriculum Sub-Committee Chairperson, Dr. Anna Sanyiwa addressing participants during a curriculum consultative meeting held in Kenya.

Two (2) New Superspecialty Curricula Under Development

In the drive towards enhancing access, quality and standard of training in the region, COECSA has continued to develop various ophthalmic training curricula.

Under the Improving Regional Ophthalmic Education Project (IROEP), the College is in the process of further developing two (2) superspecialty ophthalmology curricula.

Thus, in the period under review, the Curriculum Sub-Committee Chaired by Dr. Anna Sanyiwa, successfully held curriculum consultative meetings with two COECSA communities of practice, namely, *Orbits & Oculoplastic Community of Practice* and *Cornea & Anterior Segment Community of Practice*.

The objective of the consultative meetings was to review and update the current COECSA subspecialty curriculum outline, as well as to develop the general curriculum contents for the two subspecialties. This process will ultimately culminate into the development of curricula for the two specialties.

The overall goal of the Orbits and Oculoplastic curriculum is to increase trained oculoplastic and orbital surgeons providing quality care in the region. The key learning outcomes include;

- Orbit eyelid and lacrimal clinical evaluation skills – history and examination

- Knowledge of therapeutics
- Medical knowledge

On the other hand, the goal of the Cornea and Anterior segment curriculum is to provide the best possible advanced training in diagnosis and treatment in cornea and anterior segment. The training will;

- provide trainees with additional understanding in the cornea and anterior segment condition beyond general ophthalmologist training.
- provide a local option to train in cornea
- build a pool of cornea and anterior segment specialist
- address the burden of corneal blindness (corneal from infections and trauma, complicated cataracts).
- improve training of general ophthalmologists.

The development of the two curricula is expected to conclude by December, 2023.



The Cornea & Anterior Segment Team during the curricula consultative meeting held at Lukenya Getaway, Nairobi, Kenya.

Train The Trainers



Participants and Facilitators for COECSA Question Writers TTT held at BICC, Lilongwe, Malawi in September, 2022

The main objective of the COECSA Train the Trainers (TTT) program is to enhance knowledge and strengthen the technical capacity of ophthalmic trainers to implement quality training programmes in general, and in particular the COECSA curricula and its assessments. The goal is to enhance standardization and quality of training across the region.

In the current reporting period, three (3) main COECSA TTT workshops were successfully conducted.

Basic TTT crash course

The Basic TTT crash Course was conducted on 21st September, 2023, during the COECSA Congress in Lilongwe, Malawi, in partnership with the Royal College of Ophthalmology (RCOphth). Over 30 participants attended the TTT which was co-facilitated by Dr. Melanie Corbett Wood (RCOphth) and Prof. Ciku Mathenge (COECSA TTT Lead).

The TTT covered the following key topics;

- The Training Process: Overview of standardized training and TTT
- Accreditation and Implementation of standardized training in COECSA
- The COECSA curriculum and its assessment (Work Based Assessments, portfolio evidence & Exams)
- Supporting trainees through structured supervision (ie: feedback, appraisal, conversations & reports)

Written Exam Question Writers TTT

As part of the process towards development of the COECSA written exams, two (2) exams question writers trainings were conducted in the period under review. The initial was a physical orientation that was held in Lilongwe, Malawi in September, 2022; and the second follow up training was held virtually in October, 2022.

The goal for the trainings was to enhance the knowledge and skills of COECSA Fellows and members in writing good quality questions for the exams. This is in line with the College's preference that questions for the COECSA exams come from its member institutions and Fellows, to ensure enhanced regional capacity and sustainability of the exam.

The initial physical meeting was co-facilitated by Prof. Karl Golnik and Prof. Ciku Mathenge, while the follow up virtual meeting was facilitated by Tony Green (COECSA Educationalist) supported by Nicola Quilter (COECSA Exams Consultant).

A total of 32 participants took part in the Exam Writers trainings and are contributing to the development of the COECSA written exams.



Basic TTT Crash Course Co-Facilitated by Dr. Malanie and Prof. Ciku in Lilongwe, Malawi

Train The Trainers

Clinical Fellowship Examiners TTT

COECSA is committed to constantly grow the number and skills of its examiners to deliver quality Fellowship examinations. In this regard, every year the College through the Exams Sub-Committee Chaired by Dr. Muchai Gachago, requests Training Institutions in consultation with Country Chapters to nominate members of their faculty who meet the criteria to join our team of Examiners.

The Examiners, both new and experienced, are then required to undergo intensive Train the Trainers (TTT) on management of COECSA Exams ahead of each Exam session.

The following are the qualifications for a faculty member to become a COECSA Examiner:

- a) Must be a trained, registered ophthalmologist
- b) Must be a COECSA fellow in good standing
- c) Must be a trained specialist beyond ophthalmology
- d) Required to have at least 3 years of post-training clinical experience
- e) Required to be involved in active clinical practice or research
- f) Required to be licensed to practice medicine in the state or country where the institution that has nominated them is located.

In the reporting period, two (2) Clinical Examiners TTIs were conducted in September, 2022 in Blantyre, Malawi and April, 2023 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, respectively.

The main objective of the trainings was to orient examiners on the purpose, structure and procedure of the COECSA Clinical Fellowship exams.

48 examiners from COECSA member countries underwent the examiners TTT. The key aspects of the training include;

- ◆ Previous exams feedback from both the COECSA exam leads and the external examiners.
- ◆ Updates on the COECSA education and accreditation program, including new developments on COECSA examinations.
- ◆ Session detailing the mechanics of the OSCE and VIVA exams, and what is expected of examiners, candidates and patients during exams.
- ◆ International perspective and developments on administration of quality clinical ophthalmology exams.



Participants in the April, 2023 Fellowship Examiners TTT held at MUHAS, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



External Examiners feedback session during the September, 2022 Fellowship Examiners TTT held in Blantyre, Malawi



A virtual presentation on the future of COECSA Exams by Prof. Ciku during the September, 2022 Fellowship Examiners TTT held in Blantyre, Malawi



Members of the Ophthalmology Society of Malawi (OSM) hosts for 2022 COECSA Congress during the congress at BICC

A Successful 9th COECSA Congress in Lilongwe, Malawi

The COECSA 2022 Annual Congress was a remarkable event that took place between 22-24th September at the prestigious *Bingu wa Mutharika International Convention Centre (BICC)* in Lilongwe, Malawi. Despite the challenging circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the congress successfully brought together 374 delegates. These individuals, passionate about ophthalmology and eye care, converged from various regions, demonstrating their commitment to advancing knowledge and sharing advancements in field, even in the face of travel and gathering restrictions.

The event was a significant milestone for the Eye health community, marking the hosting of of College clinical fellowship exams ahead of the congress program. This progressive step forward was made possible through the collective efforts of the COECSA leadership and the local organizing committee, led by the Ophthalmology Society of Malawi (OSM). The

society's dedication and meticulous planning ensured the seamless integration of clinical fellowship exams, contributing to the overall success of the clinical exams and the congress. Throughout the congress, participants engaged in a diverse range of sessions, workshops, and discussions. These covered a wide spectrum of ophthalmic specialties, cutting-edge research, and innovative clinical practices. The congress was a testament to the resilience and dedication of the eye health professionals, as they navigated the challenges of the pandemic to come together, and further shared in our mission of improving eye health.

Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, provided an ideal backdrop for this momentous occasion. Attendees were not only treated to a rich academic and scientific program but also had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the local culture and hospitality. The congress facilitated knowledge sharing, skill enhancement, and networking, fostering collaborations that are vital for the growth of ophthalmology in the Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa region.

Scientific and Research

9th COECSA Congress in Pictures



Scientific and Research

3 Research Projects Implemented!

PEEK I'M SEEN

PEEK I'M SEEN Research project is a collaborative study that seeks to strengthen health care systems in Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) through the development and validation of a hypothesis driven, agile service improvement methodology that allows local eye health system leaders to conduct high-quality, hypothesis-led studies within their programmes.

Purpose: All people have health problems prevented or treated by accessing the services they need.

The specific project objectives are:

1. Apply continuous improvement techniques to health systems using Peek alongside an operating framework which allows ethical, locally-led development.
2. Implement within programmes in Kenya, Botswana and Nepal and test a sequence of hypotheses
3. Use the results to inform a generalised, scalable implementation of the tools and framework to be deployed at scale.

Project partners: PEEK Vision, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) International Centre for Eye Health (ICEH), Wellcome Trust (UK)

Project period: 2021-2026

MODRIA

MODRIA Research study is a strategic multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional partnership that deploys innovative use of data science with medical images, for advancing clinical care and integration of data science with implementation science to promote clinical impact.

Data science holds great promise for improved health outcomes and will be key for the development and ultimate impact for African-based health solutions.

The project specific aims are as follows:

1. To integrate all partnering academic institutions, technology companies, and non-governmental organizations to advance data science for medical imaging.

2. To integrate implementation science with data science to advance clinical impact.

Project partners: NIH/Fogarty International, The Mbarara University Data Science Research Hub (MUDSReH) in Uganda, COECSA, Mbarara University of Science & Technology (MUST), and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ministries of Health

Project period: 2022-2026.



MoDRIA-Uganda and MoDRIA-Kenya teams holding a consultative meeting at COECSA Secretariate Boardroom in March, 2023

HRH SCOPING STUDY

This is a collaborative study funded by Fred Hollows Foundation whose aim is to establish the Human Resources for Eye Health (HReH) challenges in the region (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania) that have significant implications for the rates of blindness and vision impairment.

Despite a lot of efforts by governments, private providers, training institutes, NGOs and other key eye health stakeholders across the region over many decades, the HReH challenges remain significant. The study will thus explore current HReH strengths and challenges across the countries, and contributing factors as well as the mitigating strategies.

Project partners: Fred Hollows Foundation, IAPB, London School of Hygiene & Tropical medicine (LSHTM), International Centre for Eye Health.

Project period: September 2022 -June 2023

Journal of Ophthalmology of Eastern Central and Southern Africa

(Formerly East African Journal of Ophthalmology)

JOECSA

The Journal of Ophthalmology of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (JOECSA) is the official Journal of the College of Ophthalmology of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (COECSA) with a subscribed membership of about 500.

JOECSA is an open access journal, published in English in hard and soft copy formats and is dedicated to all aspects of ophthalmology and community eye health.

The journal is a peer-reviewed scientific journal that publishes research papers contributing towards new knowledge in eye care, prevention of blindness and poverty eradication efforts relevant to Eastern, Central and Southern Africa.

JOECSA's broad objective is to produce a high quality, regular, self-sustaining, peer reviewed ophthalmic journal which will increase local and international visibility and citation of ophthalmic research from the Eastern and central African Region.

JOECSA is a fully open access journal, providing authors with a distinctive new online submission and interactive review service on its recently improved portal: <https://joezca.coecsa.org/index.php/joezca/about/submissions>

The College is grateful to the Editorial Team, who have continued to work hard to ensure consistent publication of the Journal. The Team includes;

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The board is administratively supported by the COECSA Secretariate and Ms. Mildred Niyisabga, the Journal Administrator.



Welcome to COECSA! 34 New Fellows!

After a successful sitting of the 2021 and 2022 Fellowship Exams, the College admitted 34 new fellows at a colourful graduation ceremony that was held in September 2022 at the Bingu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe, Malawi.

This was a combined graduation ceremony for the 2021 and 2022 intake. Sixteen (16) fellows were admitted from the 2021 intake, while eighteen (18) were admitted from the 2022 intake.

This was also a historical graduation ceremony as COECSA for the first time admitted fellows from the COECSA training programme under the Rwanda International Institute of Ophthalmology (RIIO). Four (4) fellows were admitted from RIIO during the ceremony. (See more under “Making a Difference” on page 17).

The new fellows were from 8 COECSA member countries, and 3 from outside the ECSA region, namely Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Zambia and Burundi. Those from other regional blocks included Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana.



Why become a Fellow of COECSA?

Being a fellow of COECSA gives you more opportunities for funding, training, mentoring, as well as networking. Other benefits of being a Fellow of COECSA can include;

- ◆ Use of post nominals i.e. FCOphth (ECSA)
- ◆ Free participation in Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions
- ◆ Eligibility to vote, and to sit on the various committees and sub-committees of the College
- ◆ Sponsorship for exchange visits and observerships to other like Colleges, including the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.
- ◆ Discounts and sponsorship for specialist training in COECSA accredited institutions
- ◆ Research support
- ◆ Discounted registration rates for the annual COECSA scientific congress and other College events
- ◆ Free access to the College scientific journal (JOECSA), curricula and other publications
- ◆ Networking opportunities enabling you to build your network both close and afar, through the various local and international events

Projects and Partnerships



COECSA Presentation at the 24th International Conference of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa (AMCOA), Sun City, South Africa

Regional Partnerships: COECSA Participation in AMCOA 2022 Conference

COECSA participated in the Association of Medical Councils of Africa (AMCOA) 24th International Conference. The conference was held from 2nd to 6th October, 2022 in Sun City, North West Province, South Africa, under the theme “The Health Workforce of the Future and its Regulation”. COECSA was represented by the Secretary General, Dr. Consity Mwale and the Education and Projects Manager, Mr. Robert Ntitima.

The College made a presentation on “Standardizing Specialist Training In ECSA Region: The COECSA Case” which was delivered under the sub-theme Reforming Training, Education and Practice for the future.

The key discussion points were COECSA’s key drivers towards standardization, which include:

- Standardization of Specialists Training Curricula that also defines standard entry and exit criteria
- Creation of Competency Assessment Tools
- Training the Trainers (TTT) to enhance training capacity for faculty and institutions
- Having one common Exam
- Defined institution Accreditation Standards and guidelines.
- Continuous training M&E, and Technical Support for quality assurance.

The College also made some recommendations/appeals to AMCOA and it’s membership as follows;

- ◇ That the Regulatory bodies will understand our training model
- ◇ That the Regulatory bodies will see the value of this

model

- ◇ That countries that have not yet embraced the collegial model of specialist training will understand its value and support it
- ◇ That the regulatory bodies could work with us to make the standardization across the Countries a possibility
- ◇ Eventually to achieve the status of one regional qualification in Ophthalmology for ECSA Region

COECSA IROEP

The Improved Regional Ophthalmic Educational Project (IROEP) for Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA), seeks to improve the number and capacity of Human Resources for Eye Health (HREH) through enhanced quality of ophthalmic education in the ECSA region.

The overall goal is to strengthen the quality of eye health education in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) region, with the following specific objectives;

- 1) Standardization & Capacity Building: To strengthen institutions’ capacity to deliver high standards of training across the ECSA region;
- 2) Exams Development & Delivery: To enhance capacity for COECSA to develop and administer high quality regional Written and Clinical Fellowship Examinations;
- 3) Training Support: To support suitable doctors and ophthalmologists to undertake training in accredited programs through scholarships and provision of training materials

The project is being funded by the Pyott Foundation through the Ophthalmology Foundation (OF).

Projects and Partnerships



COECSA Council Members and Secretariate Staff during the Council Induction and Planning meeting held at Lukenya, Nairobi, Kenya, as part of HSS

COECSA HSS Project

The *Health System Strengthening Project for the Prevention of Avoidable Blindness in ECSA Countries (HSS Project)*, is being implemented in partnership with Sightsavers and HCP Cureblindness.

The overall goal of the project is to contribute to avoidable blindness prevention through health system strengthening in eye health training and practice in ECSA.

In addressing strategic drivers that affect eye health in the region, COECSA has identified the key themes to guide its work in the short and medium terms. These include: Development of Human Resources for Health at top and middle level cadres; public policy advocacy; health research; and internal institutional capacity development. COECSA believes that intervention in these areas at strategic level will not only add value to ophthalmology, but also contribute to the development of the health sector in general.

These themes will ultimately either directly or indirectly contribute to the attainment of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The HSS project seeks to continue and sustain the gains made in the previous implementation periods, through a number of critical interventions under the partnerships, albeit at the strategic level.

The specific objectives of the HSS project include:

- To strengthen human resources for eye health through improved structures for quality training at subspecialty, postgraduate and middle levels.
- To improve evidence utilization in practice and policy planning through enhanced strategic research capacity and knowledge translation.
- To strengthen institutional leadership, governance, collaboration and coordination among training institutions and eye care professionals in ECSA.
- To engender continual quality improvement systems in training and ophthalmic practice in the region.
- To improve COECSA's capability and sustainability with functional governance and administrative systems.

Making a Difference!

Made in Rwanda: First ever COECSA graduates at RIIO!

By Janvier Murenzi
Operations Manager (RIIO)



Rwanda International Institute of Ophthalmology (RIIO) celebrated the biggest milestone of its 10 years in existence - the graduation of the first group of the "Made in Rwanda" eye specialists. The specialists were trained to the highest standards at RIIO under the College of Ophthalmology of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (COECSA). The celebrations took place on 14th October, 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The Rwanda International Institute of Ophthalmology (RIIO) was established in 2011 by two ophthalmologists living in Kigali. After many years in public service, Ass. Prof. John Nkurikiye and Prof. Cikū Mathenge, created RIIO in response to gaps in the provision of eye services in Rwanda. Their vision was to provide homegrown solutions for the delivery of eye care; deliver international level education for ophthalmic specialists and to become advocates for eye care with governments and other partners. Further, to transform Rwanda into a country where eye health is understood, good vision is valued and preserved and those with irreversible poor vision are given all the support they need to achieve their best.

Over the past decade, RIIO has achieved several milestones, among them the creation of the RIIO School of Ophthalmology which is the first training program for ophthalmologist's in Rwanda, in 2017 .

The RIIO School of Ophthalmology which is accredited by COECSA and the Rwanda Medical and Dental Council, admitted the first group of 4 doctors to be trained in 2018, and today has trainees from Burundi,

Kenya, DRC and Rwanda.

Before this, every ophthalmologist in Rwanda had been trained outside the country and returned with very different levels of competence. The request from the MOH was to deliver a program that produces ophthalmologists who can hit the ground running after qualification, and who could be retained in Rwanda after training instead of remaining in other countries.

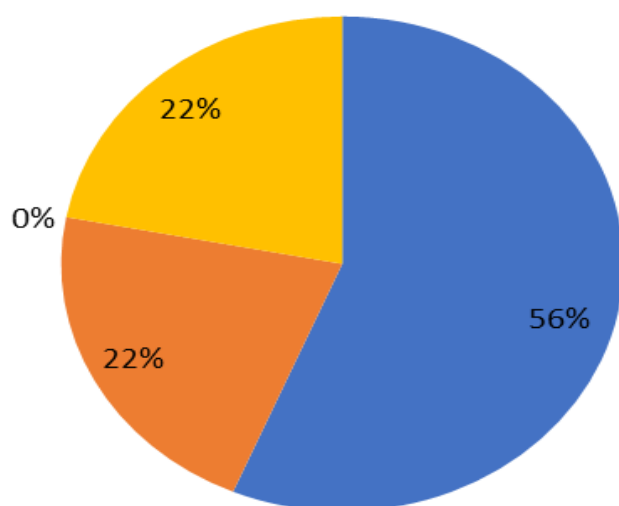
The first four doctors passed all the required international exams on their first attempt, and have now completed certification based on competencies required by COECSA. They have since graduated from the RIIO School of Ophthalmology as Eye Specialists, becoming the first ever COECSA trained Specialists and Fellows - The first "Made in Rwanda" eye specialists!

RIIO appreciates all partners and the Ministry of Health (Rwanda) for the support that has made this possible.





2022-23 Planned Expenditure



- Objective 1: Human Resource Development for Eye Health
- Objective 2: Promote evidence based policy & practice and Research
- Objective 3: Leadership & HREH Advocacy
- Objective 4: Develop a strong & sustainable Organisation

Programme Expenditure

The planned 2022/23 COECSA programme expenditure has significantly increased, due to the resumption in normal programme implementation following the reduction in COVID-19 restrictions, that had greatly hampered the implementation of some College programmes and project activities in the last reporting period.

The average annual expenditure during the COVID Pandemic had greatly reduced to only about USD250,00.00. It has now almost doubled to around USD450,897.90.

Of the planned 2022/23 expenditure, 56% is going towards *Human Resource Development* compared to 32% in the previous reporting period.

Allocation towards *Promotion of evidence based policy and Practice Research*, has also increased from 12% the previous year to 22%.

Moreover, planned expenditure on *Organisation Strengthening* is also at 22% during the reporting period, while the College does not envisage major expenditures under *advocacy activities*.

Sustainability

The College programmes are anchored on the COECSA strategic framework while collaborating with the existing Ministry of Health structures, and other stakeholders to enhance investment in eye health workforce training, technological advancement and other health system strengthening initiatives.

The College has also continued to work with national, regional and international partners to strengthen leadership capacities of eye-health educators and practitioners to respond to emerging educational and training challenges affecting ophthalmic practice.

It is further strengthening the Young Ophthalmologists Leadership Development Program as a key driver in the generation of a pool of ophthalmic professionals in the region. This involves training and mentorship program aimed at increasing and retaining the pool of young eye health professionals.

Moreover, working with other partners in health and eye care in particular, COECSA advocates for increased resource allocation for eye care, adherence to international commitments that the countries have made including Universal Health Coverage, WHO HRH Action Plan, Abuja Declaration on Health Financing and Algiers Declaration on Research Financing, among others that affect eye care. It is believed that with adherence to these global commitments Eye Health will be adequately planned for and resourced.

Finally, the development and utilization of virtual methodologies for training, examinations and other programmes are key for sustainable implementation even with unforeseen challenges such as COVID restrictions.



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