IMPACT EVALUATION STUDY REPORT

Stepping Stones I Care Project in Huabo Lixing Hang Primary School - Jiwang Campus

Background

The I Care Project arose from Stepping Stones' English teaching volunteers observing that eye problems among their migrant students – some of them serious – were going untreated.

Around 20% of primary school students need glasses, but for a variety of socio-economic reasons, only a very small minority of their parents will provide them with glasses. Eye problems such as squint (1.3% of primary school students) and "lazy eye" (2-4% of primary schools students) are as common in migrant populations as the rest. These conditions are easily treated through basic exercises and routine surgery, but if neglected, they can severely affect the quality of the children's life and education, and can lead to major future damage to the children's vision.

To respond, the I Care Project provides free eye testing to children attending schools for migrants in Shanghai. Free treatment is also provided as required, such as the provision of glasses and/or the conduct of simple eye operations. Additionally, the project also raises awareness of eye care issues among students, parents and teachers at the migrant schools to increase the buy-in and support from students, their parents and the school, ensuring the intervention's sustainability.

Recently, Stepping Stones has brought the I Care Project to the Huabo Lixing Hang Primary School - Jiwang Campus (HLH1). Stepping Stones has a Class Teaching Program in the said school. HLH1 is located in the Jiwang Township of Minhang District, with 1,670 students distributed in 28 classes. Through the project, Stepping Stones was able to channel donations from sponsors to help children in need of corrective eye interventions. After a routine eye test had been conducted by health authorities, Stepping Stones took students that required additional interventions to their partner Eye Hospital, Ai'er Hospital. As a result, 289 students were given glasses during from December 17th to 20th and free corrective surgeries were conducted for 3 students.

Method, Scope and Limitations

On the 8th and 15th of March 2013, Stepping Stones took around 40 volunteers to HLH1 to deliver the eye care training to the students. . The training included four statements pertaining to eye care knowledge, which the students had to identify as either true or false. The number of students with correct (answering 'false' to each of the questions) and incorrect (answering 'true' to each of the questions) responses to each of the statements were documented per class. The four statements are the following:

1. If you can't see the blackboard clearly, the best solution is to squint your eyes and try harder to look at the board.

2. If you wear glasses, you will become dependent on them and your eyesight will get worse.
3. Wearing glasses make you look ugly, and if you feel this way then just don't wear your glasses.
4. Children don't need to wear glasses, they should wait until they grow up and their eyes have stopped changing to wear glasses.

Two months later, on May 23rd, the same four statements were given to the same students. It was thus possible to compare the number of correct and incorrect responses from the same students to the same questions over time, representing the change in the children's knowledge on eye care, generating the findings of this report.

Only the responses from students that gave a valid response in both March 2013 and May 2013 were included in the analysis of each question. As such, the class without responses in March 2013 (i.e. Class 4 of Grade 3) was taken out of the data set.

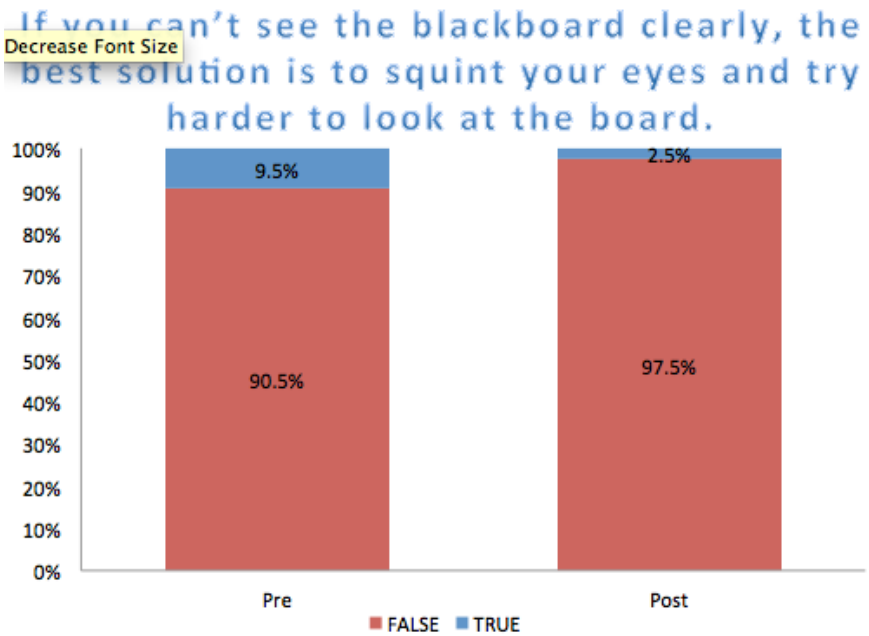
The summary of the valid responses from March 2013 and May 2013 is as follows:

	March 2013	May 2013
Grade 1	401	395
Grade 2	434	430
Grade 3	333	331
Grade 4	177	243
Grade 5	190	198
TOTAL	1,535	1,597

Highlights

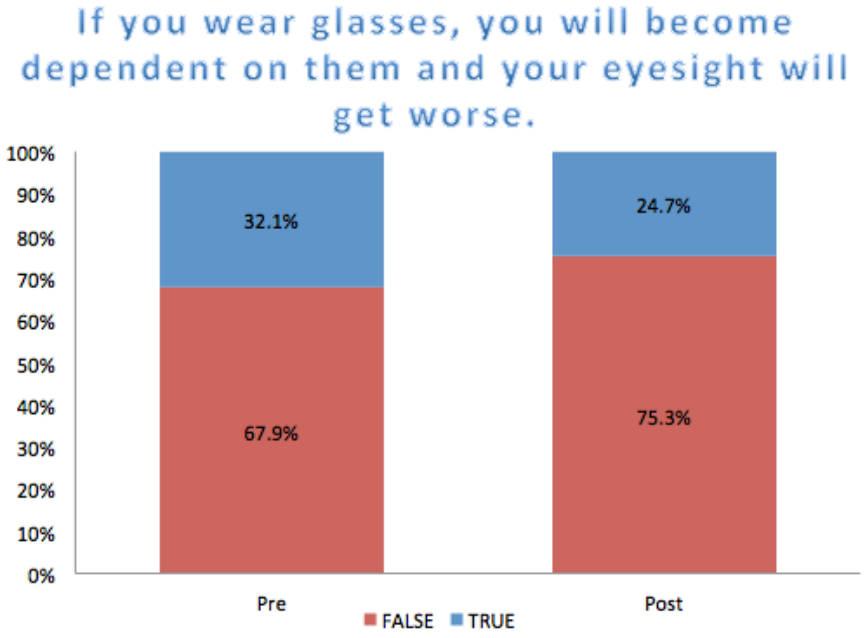
1. The percentage of students who correctly identified the statement "If you can't see the blackboard clearly, the best solution is to squint your eyes and try harder to look at the board." as false rose from by 7.7% after the eye care training, from 90.5% to 97.5% (Table 1).

Table 1



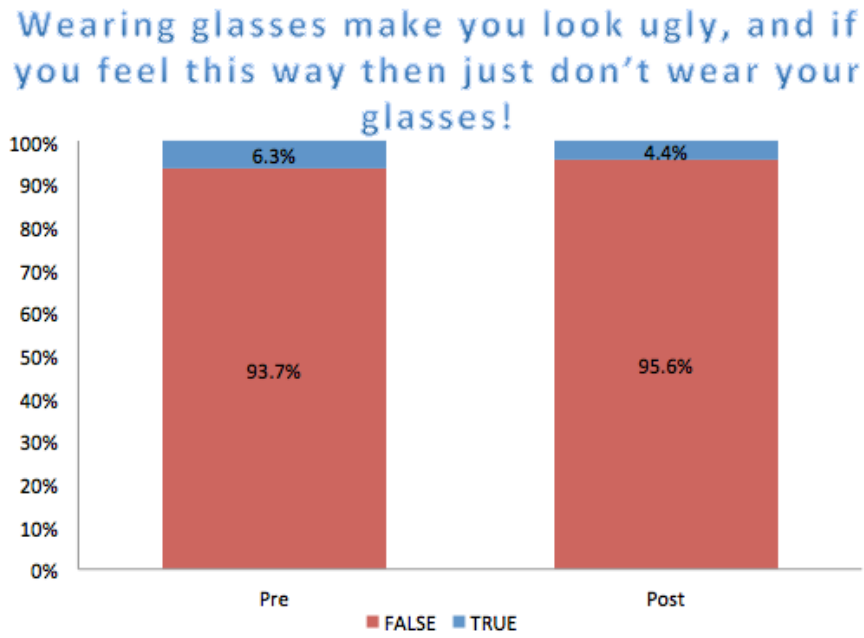
2. The percentage of students with the correct answer to the statement “If you wear glasses, you will become dependent on them and your eyesight will get worse.” increased from 67.9% to 75.3%, posting a 10.9% increase (Table 2).

Table 2



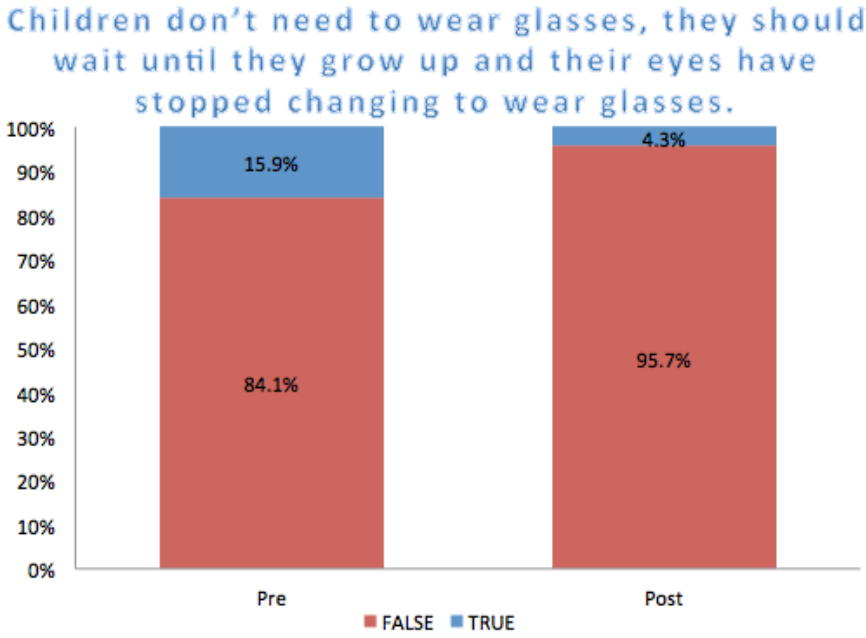
3. As for the statement “Wearing glasses looks ugly, and if you feel this way then just don’t wear glasses”, the percentage of the students who have correctly identified the statement as false was already high in March 2013, at 93.7%. This increased even more to 95.6% in May 2013 (Table 3).

Table 3



4. The item that registered the most dramatic change is the statement " Children don't need to wear glasses, they should wait until they grow up and their eyes have stopped changing to wear glasses." In March 2013, 84.1% of the students produced the correct answer, and regarded the statement as false. The percentage of the students with the correct answer increased by 13.8% to 95.7% (Table 4).

Table 4



Implications for Further Study

Given the consistent increase of correct answers to all the statements, there is reason to believe that the eye care training component of the I Care Project has positively impacted the eye care knowledge of the students.

For succeeding conducts of similar impact evaluation studies, the statements can be refined further to avoid confusion, ensuring that statements are either entirely true or false. Additionally, the statements can be stated differently and their sequence can be altered during the follow-up survey, in order to determine whether the students have understood the essence of the statements, rather than merely parroting back the correct answers. In relation, it is worth checking whether a longer interval can be arranged between the eye care training and the time the follow-up survey is conducted, to test the students' long-term retention of the knowledge.

Other than measuring the difference in the eye care knowledge of the students, the other components related to the impact of Project I Care must also be measured. For instance, the number of the students that were prescribed glasses and are wearing their glasses can be counted at different times. The impact of wearing glasses and/or the corrective surgeries on the children's education can also be measured, checking whether there are significant changes in the grades of the children before and after the relevant corrective eye intervention.