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A Bright Future
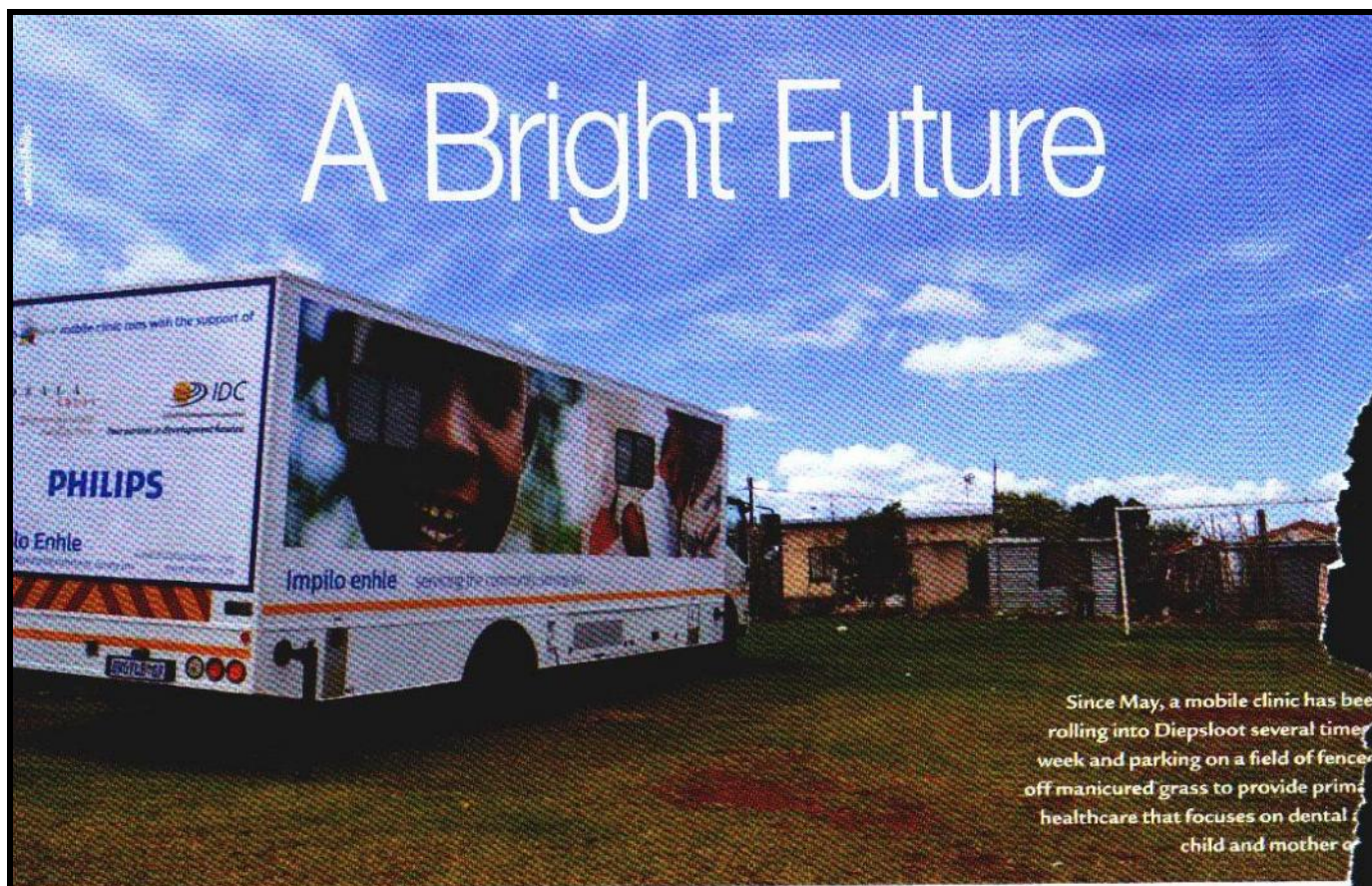
Since May, a mobile clinic has been rolling into Diepsloot several times week and parking on a field of fenced off manicured grass to provide prime healthcare that focuses on dental child and mother of

Philips aims to boost healthcare and energy-efficient lighting in Africa — from Cairo to Cape Town — in 2016 and beyond by innovating technology and working with local communities.

by Dominika Maslikowski

The fruit stands in Diepsloot are filled with watermelon and bananas, while the local grocery store has staple items like beans and laundry detergent painted in pastels on its beige walls. Women shop with their babies secured to their bosoms with bath towels, and rows of tin shacks squeeze into every available patch of bright, red earth. One of the larger ones boasts an image of Jesus -— with white skin and a red beard —painted on its side.

Diepsloot, a slum north of Johannesburg, has been called one of South Africa's most dangerous neighborhoods. It's home to an estimated 350,000 people, many of whom are unemployed and often live without plumbing or electricity.

Since May, a mobile clinic has been rolling into the township several times a week and parking on a field of fenced-off manicured grass to provide primary healthcare that focuses on dental and child and mother care. Philips teamed up with a local NGO for this pilot mobile clinic that serves around 850 people a month. Officials hope it will become a model that's repeated throughout the continent, where many live in areas without easy access to a hospital.

Visit the clinic on wheels in Diepsloot and you're likely to be greeted by dozens of children who run up to newcomers yelling with delight and surrounding them in a group hug. Their mothers wait in the shade

on plastic chairs for one of the staff of the clinic to examine them. Projects like these are crucial, Philips officials say, to help the poor in a country where some 50 percent of healthcare spending goes to just 16 percent of the population.

Part of Philips' strategy for the continent is to offer solutions for areas that don't have access to electricity. That means mobile clinics, but also equipment that's lightweight and portable, including an ultrasound system that operates like a tablet at a quarter of the price of a full-sized system. For women in semi-urban and rural Africa who often die from preventable complications at childbirth, this basic technology is crucial for detecting critical conditions.

Launched two years ago, the VISIQ ultrasound system has a user-friendly interface that includes icons for options. The patients' results can be stored, and then sent to a hospital hundreds of kilometers away.

Philips is currently treating the clinic in Diepsloot as a pilot project, but Egypt could very well be next. The company has a strong presence in Egypt and now hopes to impact more rural communities where, like in South Africa, many live cut off from electricity and far away from a hospital. Philips in Egypt has already conducted a screening program that included mobile mammography screenings, says JJ van Dongen, CEO Philips Africa, Senior Vice President. The program helped officials get an idea about Egypt's needs. "Some of the programs we'd like to start are about how we impact more rural communities. In the sub-Sahara it's very specific, but how do we adapt that to an Egyptian type of need?," van Dongen said in an interview in Johannesburg. "The mammography screening and cervical cancer screening that was occurring was part of that, because the needs of Egypt are very different from the needs of Kenya, Algeria or Morocco, or any other country."

Philips has a strong presence in Egypt's healthcare sector, van Dongen notes, with a team of some 150 people headquartered in Cairo and previous projects that have included equipping large hospitals, building new hospitals and upgrading existent facilities. Like in South Africa, the key is to improve efficiency and provide healthcare to countries where there's an increased need for services. "We're very strong in healthcare in Egypt and we want to build on that. The key thing for us is going beyond just providing equipment. It's also understanding how we can help to get more efficiency," van Dongen says. "We've worked on certain projects with the government to improve the efficiency and the workflow of patients and the use of nurses on site. It's advisory consultancy services as well as to improve efficiency. We call it Philips healthcare transformation services,
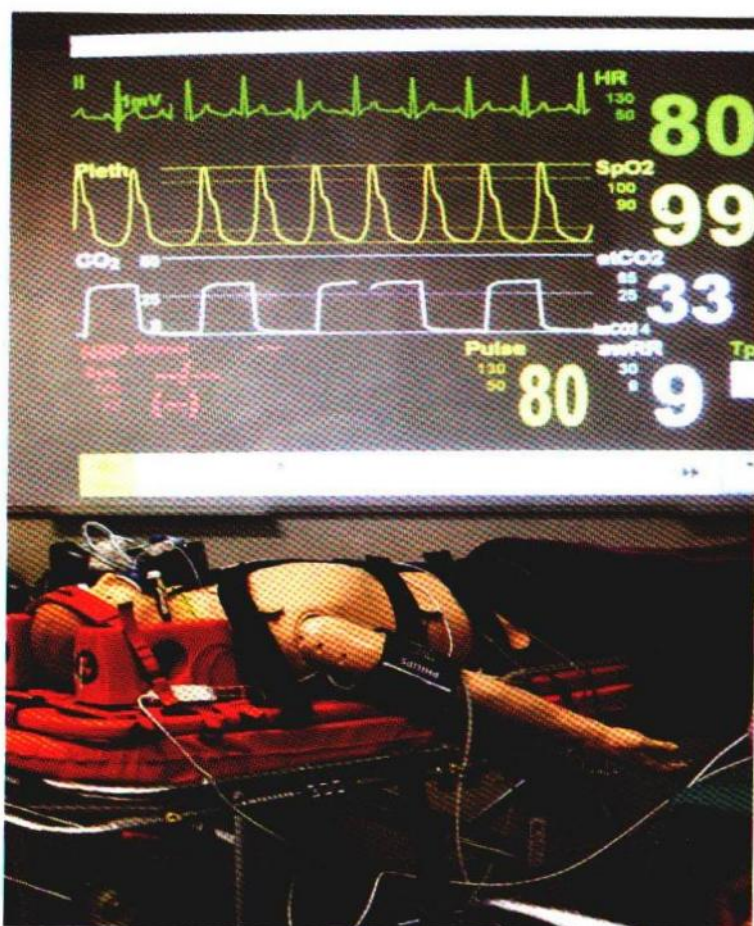
and that's about when a patient walks into a hospital, how do they work? How are they impacted? And how do you make it efficient so the level of care is very high and the flow of patients is very efficient?"

At the University of Johannesburg, boosting efficiency means training South Africa's next generation of nurses and doctors to handle high-stress emergency rooms and learn to operate the latest equipment. The bustling university, full of rolling green lawns and an entrance painted bright orange, ranks in the top 4 percent of world universities. But Professor Andre Swart, the dean of Health Sciences, is blunt: if it hadn't been for Philips, the university wouldn't have been able to afford all that equipment, or its state-of-the-art simulation lab.

The simulation lab, inaugurated in September 2014, carries a price tag of some 30 million South African Rands (LE 16.8 million) and includes lifelike

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mannequins in a facility designed to replicate medical emergency settings. It's the only one of its type on the continent, and attracts students from around the world. And while partnerships like this one between the university and Philips are common in the West, Swart says it's still a strange concept to many in Africa, who are hesitant about such deals. Universities should be more open to such arrangements, Swart says, especially in the current financial climate where it's difficult to find funding. Philips, a company that made a name for itself with its TVs and audio systems, is now increasingly known for health and well-being technology. Today, healthcare accounts for some 45 percent of revenues while lighting accounts for 32 percent. Officials say they see Africa's growing need for healthcare as the population ages, and also the rising demand for energy-efficient solutions in quickly growing cities.

That means replacing energy-draining street lamps with more energy-efficient technology, but also using lighting in unexpected ways. When there are street fights or incidents, for example, Philips technology can detect the crowds and increased movement. It then shines a brighter spotlight on that area, which can diffuse possible disasters by calming people down because they feel they're being watched when the light gets brighter. Lighting can also be used to beautify land-

marks and boost commerce and tourism, officials say.

Half of a city's energy bill goes to lighting, says Thierry Boulanger, CEO Philips Lighting Africa. When Nairobi, Kenya switched most of its lighting to LED, it not only reduced its energy bills by 40 to 70 percent, but also lowered crime rates and boosted the economy by raising workers' productivity, Boulanger says. LED systems create safer, more efficient and more appealing urban environments, he adds.

In Cairo, Philips has already rolled out one project to apply its solar-powered LED street lighting to a community near the AUC campus in New Cairo. The initiative, which aims to minimize carbon dioxide emissions, improve energy efficiency and promote sustainability, saw Emaar Misr partner with Philips to apply the lighting in Mivida, an 860-acre community.

"Philips has developed a breakthrough in solar-powered LED road lighting which offers reliable, efficient and cost-effective lighting solutions," said Philips GM Tamer Abu El Ghar in 2013, when Emaar Misr appointed Philips to supply the streetlights. "It's very exciting to have the opportunity to apply our expertise in renewable and sustainable energy technologies toward such a unique development which will revolutionize the way future residential developments are constructed." et

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