

# THE NEW HEROES

## STUDENT VIDEO HANDOUT

### **Aurolab featuring Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy (“Dr. V”) and David Green**

“Giving sight and the capacity to take care of children.”  
--Dr. V

Dr. V is an ophthalmologist living in Southern India. Instead of retiring at 65, he mortgaged his home to open his own hospital to perform free or low-cost cataract surgery on Indians who would remain blind without it. In his first year, Dr. V performed 5,000 such surgeries, an enormous accomplishment. But then onto the scene came a young American named David Green. Green noticed that the number of surgeries Dr. V could perform was limited by the fact that lenses cost \$150 a pair. Performing what he calls “forensic business investigation,” Green discovered that the actual cost of making the lenses was just \$10 a pair. And so he convinced Dr. V that they should open their own lens factory, called Aurolab, in India. They now make their own lenses and sell them for about \$4 a pair.

1. Why is being blind in Southern India a kind of “death sentence”?
2. What do you think it means to conduct a “forensic business investigation?” What products or businesses would you investigate?
3. Why do western companies charge so much when lenses only really cost \$10 to make? Dr. V and David Green operate a very successful, lucrative business and only charge around \$4. What do you think of these two kinds of business models?
4. What does Dr. V say his real goal is?
5. How did McDonald’s restaurants inspire Dr. V?
6. What does Dr. V do with the profits from his hospital? Why?
7. What does Dr. V mean by the phrase “thinking makes it so”?
8. In your own words, define “compassionate capitalism.”