



seva.ca



Updated June 2023



SEVA CANADA'S VISION IS A WORLD
IN WHICH NO ONE IS NEEDLESSLY
BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED.

Since 1982
Seva & its
partners
have given
the power
of sight to
over
5 million
people



WHO IS SEVA CANADA?

Seva Canada is an international development charity that restores sight and prevents blindness in low- and middle-income countries. Since 1982, Seva donors have given over **5 million people the power of sight** through life-changing surgeries and proved eye care services to millions more including eye screenings, glasses and medicine.

We work with local partners to create sustainable eye care programs that achieve long-term change, are culturally sensitive, and reach those most in need – women, children and people living in extreme poverty and isolation.

Everything we do at Seva Canada, from training to providing supplies to conducting research and funding surgery, glasses and medicine, is for one reason: to provide communities with access to high-quality eye care that will restore sight and prevent blindness, now and in the future.





WHERE SEVA WORKS



- Benin
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Guatemala
- India
- Madagascar
- Nepal
- Tanzania
- Uganda



WHY SIGHT?

1. It's a solvable problem

An estimated **43 million people are blind** around the world, with another **295 million people** living with moderate to severe visual impairment. The good news is that **80%** of global blindness is treatable or preventable. In fact, 40% world's blindness is caused by cataracts, a reversible condition that requires a 15-minute, \$50 operation.

2. It breaks the cycle of poverty

Blindness and poor vision can keep people trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty. By restoring sight and preventing blindness, people are able to take better care of their health, contribute to their communities, and help lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

The World Bank has stated that restoring someone's sight is one of the **most cost-effective health interventions**.

3. It leads to education and opportunity

Globally, **90 million children and adolescents** are visually impaired with **2 million suffering from blindness**. Children who have trouble seeing often don't finish school or learn a trade, and will continue to live in poverty and face life-long challenges. Those who have their sight restored are given an average of 50 years of sight, allowing them to learn, play, and build brighter futures.



4. Women and girls have an equal right to sight

The majority of the world's blind are women and girls. A fact discovered by the research done by Seva Canada.

Globally, 24 million women are blind and 1.5 million girls are blind. 90% live in low- and middle income countries.

Seva Canada's community-based programs tackle the social, economic and cultural barriers that prevent women and girls from getting the care they need. As a result, women and girls are empowered to lead productive lives and reach their full potential.

- Equal Right to Sight video [here](#)
- Watch Anjana's Story [here](#)

5. There's a profound and immediate impact

Most eye care treatments change lives right away. A pair of glasses brings the world into focus. A 15-minute, \$50 cataract surgery restores sight and hope. A \$2.50 medication for eye infections prevents decades of blindness and suffering. High-quality eye care creates an immediate and lasting impact.

6. There's a ripple effect for generations, creating a better tomorrow

When you give 1 person back their sight, you give 2 people back their lives.

75% of visually impaired people need assistance with everyday living by either a child or adult. By preventing blindness and restoring vision, children can go to school, and adults can return to work. When more people are able to lead productive lives, entire communities have a chance at a better future.

THE PROBLEM

WHO IS BLIND?



43 MILLION
people worldwide
are blind



24 MILLION
women are blind

Women are 8% more likely
to be blind than men

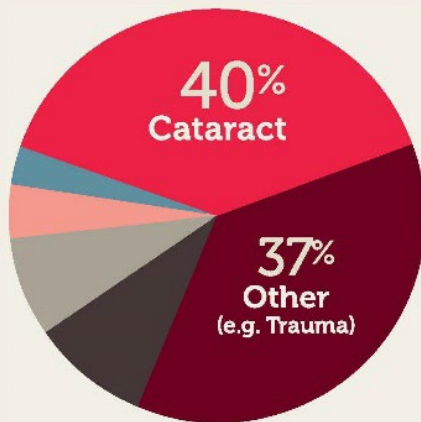


2 MILLION
children are blind

2/3 are girls

WHERE DO THEY LIVE? **90% live in low- and middle-income countries**

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?



- 9% Uncorrected refractive error
- 8% Glaucoma
- 4% Macular degeneration
- 2% Diabetic Retinopathy

WHY?



Lack of available
services



Unaware of
treatment options



Travel and
geographic barriers



Financial and social
barriers



Fear and misconception

THE SOLUTION



4 OUT OF 5 PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND DON'T
HAVE TO BE.

80% of blindness is avoidable by prevention or treatment

HOW SEVA HELPS:



Surgery

Low-cost and high-quality surgeries to cure blindness



Glasses

To correct refractive error



Medicine

To prevent blindness & treat eye disease

With surgery, glasses and medicine, **34 million** people would be able to see today.

When people can see, they are able to take better care of their health, contribute to their communities, and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.



Each year, Seva-funded eye care programs give the **power of sight to 1 million** of the world's most marginalized people.

SEVA'S FOCUS

Sight for Women

- The majority of the world's blind are women and girls. Two out of three children suffering with treatable blindness are girls.
- In low-income countries, women and girls are far less likely to have access to eye care services because of the barriers they face. From lack of education and financial resources, to limited decision-making power, Seva Canada and our donors help women and girls overcome these barriers.
- Seva Canada supported and published the first research that identified gender inequality in the treatment of blindness in every region of the world.
- Seva, along with its partners, was also the first eye care organization to create strategies to overcome these inequities and to share them with the global eye care community.
- Girls have all the same barriers as their mothers with the added challenge of being too young to advocate for themselves.

Sight for Children

- Around the globe an estimated 2 million children live with blindness, and each year another half million will lose their sight. Most of these kids live in areas of the world where even the most basic eye care services continue to be out of reach. Seva is helping to change this reality through community-based programs and school screenings.
- Children who have their sight restored are given an average of 50 years of sight.



SEVA'S FOCUS

Training

- Sustainable eye care programs can only develop if there is training at every level of eye care – from the community outreach worker to the highly skilled ophthalmologist.
- Seva Canada funds a variety of strategic training initiatives to increase eye care knowledge in low- and middle-income settings.

Sustainability

- At Seva, we look for solutions that will last. Our ultimate goal is for each program to become financially self-sufficient and no longer rely on donations or foreign support.

This sustainable approach ensures communities are able to provide their own people with access to eye care today and tomorrow.

THE RECIPE FOR EYE CARE PROGRAM SUCCESS!



Every Seva Canada eye care program is customized to meet the specific needs of each country and community. However, the recipe for success always includes the following ingredients.

THE GENEROSITY OF SEVA CANADA DONORS!

Without you, none of this is possible!



THE COUNTRY

A place where:

Eye care is needed and national and local governments support development of accessible services.

Current services are:

Limited / Unknown / Too far away / Too expensive / Poor quality



A NATIONAL OR REGIONAL PARTNER

Who:

- Has a strong national presence and works with the implementing partner(s) to:
 - Provide administrative and clinical training
 - Source equipment and supplies
 - Develop population-based programs that provide services equitably: independent of ethnicity, sex or capacity to pay



THE IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Who:

- Is an eye hospital or eye unit with strong leadership
- Is committed to meeting their community's needs
- Sets high standards for quality
- Works effectively as a team
- Is respected by the community



DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

That:

- Actively engage with community members to find people in need of care and connects them with services
- Overcomes barriers to accessing care by providing:
 - A financial structure whereby paying patients subsidize patients too poor to pay
 - Transportation
 - Food
 - Lodging



EXPANSION OF CLINICAL SERVICES

That:

- Are high quality, high volume, and low cost
- Are financially sustainable
- Provide ongoing training
- Have up-to-date equipment, consumables and medications
- Monitors and evaluates activities to support decision-making and continuous improvement



EYE CARE FOR ALL

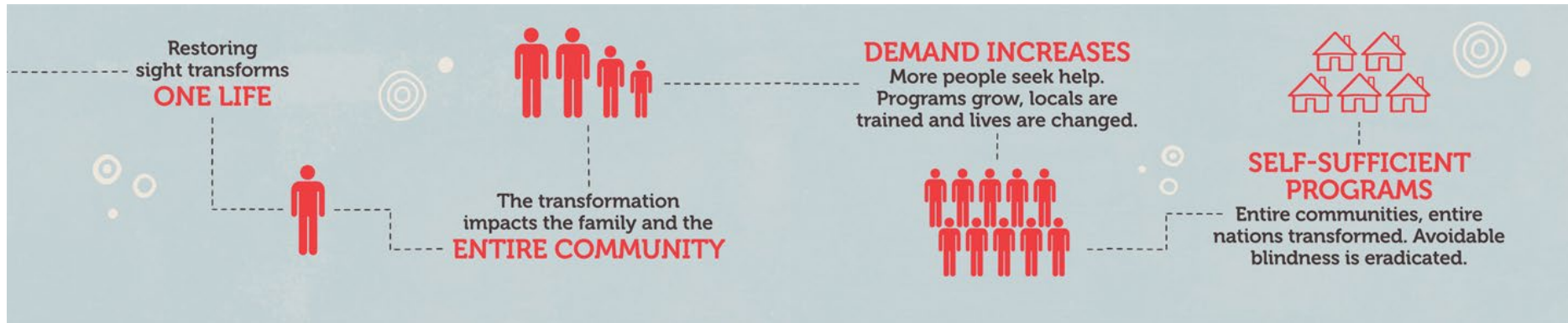
Including:

- Medicine
- Surgery
- Glasses

The power of sight for those in need today and for generations to come!



THE IMPACT



The World Bank has stated that restoring someone's sight is one of the most cost-effective health interventions.



OUR WORK AND PARTNERS

Nepal:

- Seva Canada works through Seva Nepal, our in-country office that provides technical, program development, and managerial support to an ever-expanding network of facilities and activities that include the most remote and rural populations. The network includes 70 eye care facilities (including 2 tertiary hospitals, 10 secondary hospitals and 37 Community Eye Centres) in 27 of Nepal's 77 Districts, stretching from far western to far eastern regions.
- Seva-supported Eye Institutions now provide large training programs that produce ophthalmic professionals for many Nepal regions, including ophthalmologists, sub-specialist ophthalmologists, optometrists, orthoptists, ophthalmic assistants, and ophthalmic nurses.
- **Partner:** Seva Nepal

Cambodia:

- Seva Canada works through a strong, stable Seva Cambodia office with six full time staff.
- Seva Cambodia supports eye care programs in five provinces with a total population of 3.8 million people – about 1/4 of the country's population. The programs include Eye Units in provincial government hospitals and the non-governmental Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap as well as community outreach programs.
- Seva Canada funds are concentrated in the Banteay Meanchey Province. Seva supports surgical and community eye care programs and training for eye care professionals in Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Samlout, Pursat, Kampot and Battambang.
- **Partner:** Seva Cambodia



OUR WORK AND PARTNERS

Tanzania

- Seva support is directed towards well-established community programs in the Mara and Ngorongoro Regions in the Northwest. The programs include local microfinance groups assisting field workers to deliver eye care messages and ensure those with eye problems, particularly women and girls, utilize available services. This combination has proven particularly effective in increasing the proportion of women and girls receiving eye care, which led to the program expansion into the Mwanza Region.
- Seva provides funding for eye care and the training of eye care professionals from virtually every country in Africa at the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO)
- **Partner:** Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology ([KCCO](#))

Ethiopia:

- Seva Canada supports a community outreach program in Bahir Dar, in the Amhara Region.
- In addition to providing funds for outreach, supplies and consumables, our partner in Africa, the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology's (KCCO) staff train microfinance members to identify, promote, refer, and support people, particularly women and girls, who face barriers accessing eye care services.
- Seva Canada also supports the eye department of the government hospital in Bahir Dar, by providing funds for specialized training, surgery, glasses, and medicine.
- **Partner:** Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology ([KCCO](#))

OUR WORK AND PARTNERS

Madagascar:

- Seva Canada donors support three hospital-based eye care programs in Madagascar: Tomatave (on the central east coast), Antsirabe (in the central highlands) and Sambava (in the northeast). Each site receives funding for direct eye care service delivery, training, equipment and supplies. Community outreach at these sites, supported by Seva, is essential to ensuring that the primarily rural populations have access to care.
- In addition, Seva Canada is the primary supporter of a comprehensive pediatric program involving all the three eye care facilities, plus Ambohibao, a hospital located near the capital city of Antananarivo. Seva supports clinical services, supplies and transportation, and the training of a network of community outreach workers, called Key Informants (KIs), to find and refer children in need of eye care.
- **Partner:** Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology ([KCCO](#))

Burundi:

- The Burundi program led by Dr. Levi Kandeke, encompasses a network of Community Eye Centres (CECs) around the country and a Child Eye Health Tertiary Facility in Bujumbura, providing accessible, high-quality eye care services to thousands of Burundians each year.
- Dr. Kandeke, along with an associate ophthalmologist and nursing and administrative staff, manages a referral network for children from the CECs, essentially forming the countries entire pediatric referral system. They conduct outreach activities to ensure adults and children receive surgery and other clinical services, regardless of their ability to pay.
- **Partner:** Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology ([KCCO](#))

OUR WORK AND PARTNERS

Uganda:

- Dr. Simon Arunga leads the Uganda eye care program and has created two Community Eye Centres (CECs) in Southwestern Uganda; the first in Mbarara in 2018 and the second in Rukungiri in 2021 – both with support from Seva Canada. The CECs provide quick and easy access to quality eye screening and examination, encourage the local population to utilize eye care services, and provide eye health education.
- **Partner:** Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology ([KCCO](#))

Francophone West Africa:

- Seva Canada's two partners in West Africa, Dr. Amadou Alfa Bio in Benin and Dr. Freddy Geraud Ngabou in Congo Brazzaville, continue to strengthen their outreach programs through Community Eye Centres (CECs).
- Seva Canada continues to mentor our local partners in West Africa to improve the productivity and cost-recovery of their CECs, which provide glasses, medicine and access to surgical services, to thousands of patients each year.
- **Partner:** Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology ([KCCO](#))

OUR WORK AND PARTNERS

India:

- Seva's partner in India, the Aravind Eye Care System, is a world leader in high-quality, high-volume, sustainable, community-oriented eye care. Its innovative financial structure allows fees from paying patients to subsidize services for poor patients. Aravind's creative cross-funding model is the standard in all Seva-supported programs.
- Seva trains eye care providers from all of its partner countries at the world's largest eye care provider, Aravind Eye Care System, and brings eye care to the rural poor.
- **Partner:** [Aravind Eye Care System](#)

Egypt:

- Egypt possesses the technical and human resource capacity to restore the sight of its residents who are blind, many of whom are women. However, due to inadequate awareness, access and acceptance, available eye care services are under utilized, even when they're free.
- Seva supports community ophthalmology for the rural poor in the Menia governorate
- **Partner:** Nourseen Foundation

Guatemala

- Seva works with its partner, Visualiza Eye Care System to deliver pediatric and adult eye care programs and ensures that the poor receive treatment they need and deserve.
- **Partner:** [Visualiza Eye Care System](#)



SEVA IN ACTION – ANJANA

ANJANA CLINGS TO HER MOTHER'S SKIRT AS THEY WALK ALONG THE DIRT ROAD OF THEIR REMOTE VILLAGE.

Anjana, a little girl in southern Nepal, was born blind. Her world is dark.

Anjana's parents worry about her constantly. *"Traditional healers, superstitions, we have tried everything,"* her father explains. *"She can recognize us - but only by feeling and listening."*

A neighbour told them to take Anjana to the hospital, but they knew they couldn't afford it. He urged them to try. *"He told us the hospital could help us with the cost."*

On the way to the hospital, Anjana's mother worries, *"What will happen to Anjana?"* she asks her husband. *"She will be able to see. That is all that matters,"* is his reply.

The doctor examines Anjana and explains that she was born with cataracts. He also says that he can help her see. And that's exactly what he does.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Anjana received life-changing cataract surgery free of charge.

"Now she can see, she can read and write. She has a future!" - Anjana's father.



Watch Anjana's story at
<https://www.seva.ca/video/anjanas-story>

SEVA IN ACTION — RAM BAHADUR PANDEY

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NEPAL, RAM'S WIFE GUIDED HIM STEP BY STEP.

When Ram Bahadur was young, he had two eyes and perfect vision. Things started to go very wrong when he lost his left eye in an accident. The traditional healers he visited were unable to provide the care that would have saved his eye, and he could not afford a doctor. Then, as he aged, he developed a cataract in his only remaining eye, robbing him entirely of his vision and independence.

His wife cared for him faithfully, leading him by the hand, guiding him to his food, taking him to the washroom and looking after all of his needs. She brought him to a Seva eye camp in the hope of restoring his sight. You could see on her face the heavy burden she carried.

Ram received cataract surgery. The following day, Ram's eye patch was removed and he was able to see his wife's face. Within minutes, he stood up and began walking around on his own, heading over to the eye chart.

While his was a quiet happiness, his wife was clearly thrilled. Her ecstatic smile showed how relieved and happy she was that both of them had regained their independence and dignity. She told us that she was so happy that she would not have to lead him everywhere including to the washroom!



SEVA IN ACTION – LIN SEOUTH

FOR LIN SEOUTH, COOKING FOR HER CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WAS DANGEROUS.

Four months ago, Lin Seouth began to steadily lose her vision, her everyday tasks becoming harder and harder. She started cooking by taste because she kept confusing salt and sugar.

She began to constantly burn her hands. Her children stepped in and forced her to stop before she injured herself severely. Lin has four children as well as grandchildren to care for her, but during the harvest season they are in the fields and she is left alone, unable to provide for them or fend for herself.

Lin's son-in-law heard about Seva's work and brought her to an eye screening where Lin was diagnosed with cataracts. Lin was terrified of the cataract surgery as she had never had any type of operation before.

Lin was transported to the eye hospital by Seva. After her surgery and bandage removal, she was so excited to be able to see everything again. When she returned home she couldn't believe how much her grandchildren had grown since she last saw them clearly. Grateful that she won't miss any more moments in their lives, Lin held back tears as she thanked all the Seva Canada donors who gave her back her sight.



CONTACT US

Deanne Berman
Marketing and Communications Director
communications@seva.ca

Seva Canada
100 – 2000 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC, V6J 2G2
T: 604-713-6622 or toll-free 1-877-460-6622
C: 778-318-7661 W: seva.ca
Registered charity: #13072 4941 RR0001



Follow us:

 facebook.com/seva.canada

 [@SevaCanada](https://twitter.com/SevaCanada)

 [@SevaCanada](https://instagram.com/SevaCanada)

