

# Guatemala Fact Sheet

**SEVA'S WORK AT A GLANCE:** In country since 2006 | Partner: 1



## Country Overview

- » Located in Central America, bordered by the Pacific Ocean, the Caribbean, Mexico, Honduras, Belize, and El Salvador.
- » Size: 108,890 sq km (42,043 sq mi).
- » Population: 17.25 million ppl making it the most populous nation of Central America.
- » 2016 Human Development Index Ranking: 125 of 188 countries.

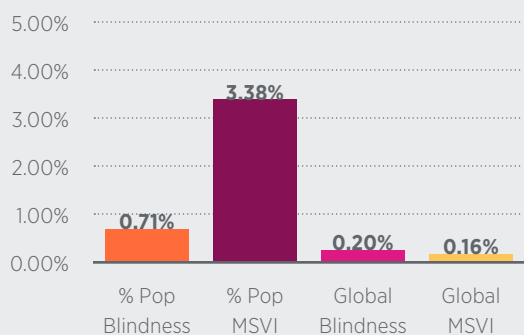
## Scope of Eye Care Needs

- » 0.71% of Guatemala's population is blind (72,497 of ~16M) as of 2015 » Compared to 0.15% in the United States.
- » 3.38% of the population have moderate to severe vision impairment or MSVI (~354k) as of 2015 » Compared to 1.25% in the United States.
- » Guatemala has 0.2% of global blindness & 0.16% of global MSVI.

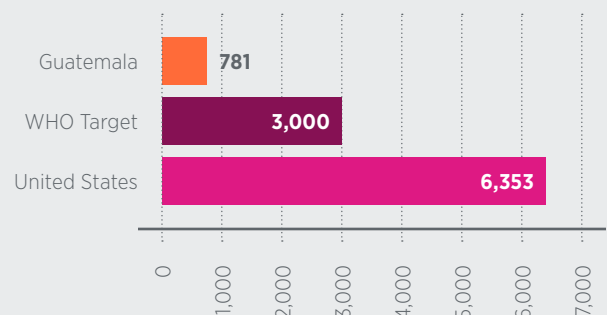
## Nationwide Eye Care Response

- » Guatemala's CSR (Cataract Surgical Rate) was 781 surgeries per million in 2013 » as compared to the US CSR of 6,353.
- » 16 Ophthalmologists per million (242/15.37 M as of 2013 » US = 60 per million people.

### VISION NEEDS



### CATARACT SURGICAL RATE PER MILLION PEOPLE



### Context

Guatemala has experienced continued reformation of the entirety of their state run infrastructure since 1996, when a 36 year long civil war finally came to a close. And though the Constitution states that every citizen has the universal right to health care<sup>1</sup>, the current health care system faces significant challenges due to limited government resources.

There's been significant migration since the early 2000's of rural populations moving to the most populous urban center in Central America, Guatemala City.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, it makes sense that Guatemala City contains 80% of the country's working doctors. However, rural communities as a result, lack accessible eye care services. Nearly 75% of people who are blind in Guatemala suffer from preventable or curable causes. At least 80,000 of Guatemala's 16 million residents are blind from cataract, which can be cured with a cost- effective, 15-minute surgery.

By assessing Guatemala's **Burden of Blindness**, we are able to reveal that the country is on its way to addressing their challenges of blindness and moderate to severe visual impairment (MSVI). With a population of 16.34 million, Guatemala has only 0.2% of global blindness.

**Countrywide services** continue to be built out and reformed in attempts at alleviating the current burden. Existing and new infrastructure including hospitals and health centers as well as the professionals who staff these locations and other remote programs throughout the country are pivotal in providing Guatemalan's with the care they need and deserve. Additionally, tracking the populations receiving cataract surgeries, offers helpful information to better serve those requiring care out of a total 16.34 million Guatemalan's.

### Seva's Approach in Guatemala

**Seva's main partner** in Guatemala since 2006 is **Visualiza Clínica Médica Oftalmológica**, known simply as Visualiza. Founded in 1997, the hospital has a unique community-oriented low cost and free service system. They provide private care alongside free vision services for their low-income patients.

With two hospitals, Visualiza is able to work in both Guatemala City as well as in the rural, northern region of the country, called the Peten. Although Visualiza employs only 2% of the nation's ophthalmologists, the organization performs over 20% of all cataract surgeries in the country.

Seva provides direct support for Visualiza's cataract surgeries, eyeglasses, medical treatments, as well as community outreach and school screenings. These programs drastically help reduce avoidable blindness across Guatemala and restore sight to some of the country's most vulnerable populations, including women and children in rural communities. Through the Global Sight Initiative (GSI), Visualiza serves as a mentor to five mentee hospitals in Latin America.

Seva's approach to addressing eye health needs in Guatemala prioritize three key strategies; **Access** to universal eye care, building **Capacity** of personnel and infrastructure as well as **Evidence**-based interventions and advocacy. These primary strategies are otherwise referred to as ACE, thoughtfully incorporated into all Seva partnership programs from delivery to post care assessment.

**Primary eye care services** offer adult outpatient services and eye camps (exams, medical treatment, glasses, surgeries, transport) through key partner hospitals and vision centers in the five provinces our partners cover. Community outreach activities include screenings and door-to-door visits in remote communities as well as distribution of educational materials and radio PSAs.

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<sup>1</sup> Pena, Christine (2013). "Improving Access to Health Care Services through the Expansion of Coverage Program (PEC): The Case of Guatemala". UNICO Studies Series (19) <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/967411468039876158/pdf/750010NWP0Box30ge0Program0GUATEMALA.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Guatemala: metropolitan areas". World Gazetteer. Archived from the original on 2013-01-05.

## GUATEMALA FACT SHEET

Modern **Technology** for patient care is vital in supporting up to date practices implemented locally. By purchasing clinical equipment for partner hospitals, Seva and our partners ensure an increase in availability of quality services for the Guatemalan population.

Seva, in partnership with Visualiza continues to **expand the ever-growing network of partner hospitals and institutions** in the country by determining readiness and ability of additional mentees to join the GSI network with our Guatemala partner Visualiza or Peru partners, Divino Niño Jesús (DNJ), acting as the mentor. By establishing

the first Eyexcel Training Program for Latin America, our Guatemalan partner was able to adapt training practices for Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOPs). As a result, Visualiza has achieved substantive growth within its own institution as well as expansion to assist other eye care institutions in Guatemala and Central and South America.

**Evaluation of mentees** progress including personnel, financial sustainability, cost recovery, outreach practices, productivity and quality/efficiency of service delivery are all assessed and tracked. And finally, **attendance at professional meetings to disseminate program findings** is key in Seva addressing eye health needs in Guatemala.

### IMPACT (FY17-18)

2

Clinics (Guatemala City & Peten)

3,559

Patients seen

384

Surgeries  
(58% women & girls)

17

Non-clinicians  
trained (12 women)

## Resources

[Seva in Guatemala](#)

