



# Seva Nepal Sight Program

Eliminating Blindness by Expanding Access to Eye Care

**Needless Blindness:** *More than 80% of the blindness in Nepal is either preventable or curable, but the vast majority of people in Nepal do not have access to quality, affordable eye care.* Seva works in 17 of Nepal's 75 districts to bring essential eye care services to Nepal's most vulnerable populations, including **women, children, and rural communities.**



Since 1978, Seva has worked with partners in Nepal to develop a network of eye care providers and services. Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh (Nepal's Society for Comprehensive Eye Care) is a key partner in this work.

**Expanding Access to Eye Care:** The establishment of Primary Eye Care Centers (PECCs) is an effective way to increase access to eye care for remote, rural populations in Nepal. Women and girls are especially likely to seek care if it is close to home. Nearly 90% of eye problems can be treated at a PECC, and patients who need further care, such as cataract surgery, can be referred to the nearest hospital. Eye camps and outreach activities also broaden the reach of the PECCs with which Seva works.

**Reaching Women and Children:** Seva is committed to providing equitable patient care with a **special focus on outreach to women and children.** In 2006, Seva and local partner LEI initiated a comprehensive pediatric eye care program. Children in rural communities receive eye screening and health education and, when necessary, eyeglasses and surgical treatment to prevent blindness and restore sight. By providing quality eye care, Seva is helping to secure opportunities for education and meaningful work for children and their caretakers.

*Seva partners conduct one-third of all eye surgeries in the country.*

*To date, LEI has served 3 million outpatients and conducted over 350,000 eye surgeries.*

**Improving Quality of Care:** Another important partner, the Lumbini Eye Institute (LEI), which Seva helped establish in 1993, is one of the most successful models of quality, high-volume eye care in a developing country. Today, Seva's support to LEI provides continuing medical education, professional training, and surgical equipment and supplies, all of which serve to increase the quality of patient care.

**Sustainable Solutions:** Seva's proven model of sustainable development is based on a simple formula: roughly one-third of patients subsidize the cost of the two-thirds who cannot afford eye care services. The PECCs generate income from the sale of eyeglasses and medications and invest these funds in staff salaries and clinic operating costs.

**Partnerships:** *LEI, NNJS, Bharatpur Eye Hospital, Lions Lacoul Eye Hospital, Palpa, Geta Eye Hospital, PECCs in Taplejung, Pyuthan, Doti, Dhankuta, Tehrathum, Darchula, Achham, Sankhuwasava, Nawalparasi, Kapilvastu, Gulmi, Arghakhachi, and Bajhang*

## The Problem:

- 200,000 blind out of 27 million population in Nepal
- Leading cause of blindness is cataract
- 2 of 3 blind are female

## The Solution:

*Sight-restoring cataract surgery can be performed in 15 minutes and costs only \$50.*

## Seva's Goal:

To build the capacity of local eye care personnel to prevent blindness and provide sight-restoring surgeries.

## Seva Nepal provides:

- Comprehensive eye care services for children, women, the elderly, and rural communities
- Medical and management training
- Surgical equipment and supplies
- Community outreach
- Clinic operating costs

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Source: Shechan A et al. Population Survey and Program Evaluation of the Eye Care Services in Nepal Narayani & Lumbini 2006.

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