



Seva Eye Care Programs: India

Enhancing local solutions to eliminate blindness

Avoidable Blindness: Of India's 1.2 billion population, nearly 15 million are blind. **An estimated 320,000 of these 15 million are children, accounting for 20% of global child blindness.** Yet despite this high prevalence of blindness, about 80% of the blindness in India is caused by treatable or preventable causes, primarily cataract or refractive errors.

Seva has been addressing avoidable blindness in India for nearly 35 years. Through our Global Sight Network Partners, Seva is working across India to help build sustainable programs that provide high-volume, high-quality services to individuals of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Seva's work: Seva has worked closely with the Aravind Eye Care System since its inception in 1976 by one of Seva's founding board members, Dr. G. Venkataswamy. Growing from only 11 hospital beds, Aravind now serves nearly 2.5 million outpatients a year, making it the most productive eye care organization in the world.

Seva's work with Aravind and across India has evolved over the years to include a combination of funding for direct services, capacity building, staff development, management training and research. For example, Seva helped establish the Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology (LAICO) in 1992, which became the first international training facility for blindness prevention workers. With the growth of training and research facilities such as LAICO, Seva's Sight Program and the Center for Innovation in Eye Care are working to insure high-quality training and resources across India.

Seva is also dedicated to expanding patient outreach and community screenings to reach individuals in the most underserved, rural communities. These efforts have been strengthened by Seva's recent partnership with TOMS One for One, which provides free and subsidized medical treatments, prescription glasses and sight-saving surgeries to underserved communities across India.

Sustainable, market-based solutions: Seva partners, Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology (LAICO), LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), Vivekananda Mission Ashram Netra Niramay Niketan (VMANN), and Sadguru Netra Chikitsalaya (SNC) revolutionized a sustainable approach to high quality, affordable eye care through a multi-tiered payment system. With this model, fees charged to those who can afford them subsidize free or low-cost care for those who cannot. Seva's partners throughout India have emulated this model and are working to provide accessible services while maintaining financial sustainability. By investing in local human capital and capacity building, Seva hopes to strengthen the efficiency and sustainability of our partner institutions.



The Problem:

- India is home to nearly 15 million blind people
- India accounts for nearly 20% of the world's child blindness
- 80% of the blindness in India is treatable or preventable

The Solution:

Sight-restoring cataract surgery can be performed in just 15 minutes for just \$50

Seva's Goal:

Improve the efficiency, capacity and sustainability of local institutions that can impact underserved communities throughout India.

Seva provides:

- Direct funding for eye care services
- Staff training and managerial development
- Development of regional research and resource centers
- Community outreach

Partners

LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology (LAICO), Vivekananda Mission Ashram Netra Niramay Niketan (VMANN), Sadguru Netra Chikitsalaya (SNC)

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Sources: LVPEI, VMANN, LAICO, Seva Canada, CurableBlindness.org