

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: 108,890Km² square kilometers (42,043Mi² square miles).
- » Population: 17.9 million ppl making it the most populous nation of Central America.
- » 2020 Human Development Index Ranking: 127 of 189 countries.¹

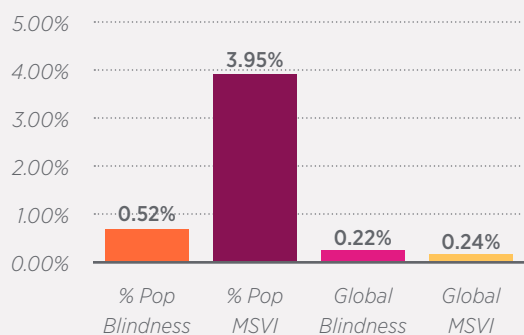
Scope of Eye Care Needs²

- » 0.52% of Guatemala's population is blind (94,000) as of 2020 compared to 0.19% in the United States.
- » 3.95% of the population have moderate to severe vision impairment or MSVI (705,755) as of 2020 compared to 2.02% in the United States.
- » Guatemala has 0.22% of global blindness & 0.24% of global MSVI.

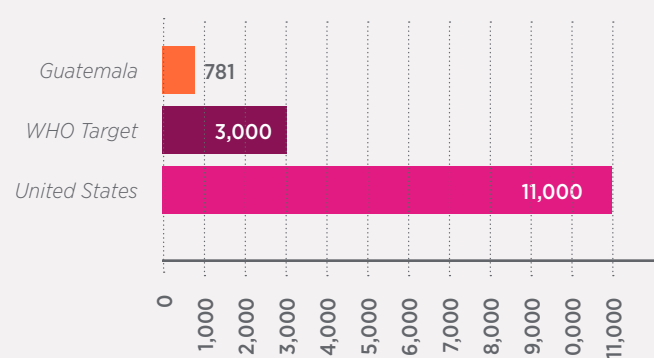
Nationwide Eye Care Response

- » Guatemala's CSR (Cataract Surgical Rate) was 781 surgeries per million in 2013 as compared to the US CSR of 11,000.
- » 19.9 Ophthalmologists per million (325/17.9M) as of 2013. US = 54.7 per million people.

EYE CARE NEEDS



CATARACT SURGICAL RATE PER MILLION PEOPLE



¹ 2020 UNDP Human Development Report: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>

² Unless otherwise noted, all statistics provided by IAPB Vision Atlas Global Vision Database.

Context

Nearly 75% of people who are blind in Guatemala suffer from preventable or curable causes. There are an estimated 2 million people with vision loss. Of these, 94,000 people are blind.

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 and one new surgical center, 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'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.

Access to Primary eye care services. Visualiza and Seva support eye care delivery through vision centers that address up to 80% of eye care needs on the spot and refer patients with more complex eye care needs to the hospital. Community promoters provide screenings and door-to-door visits in remote communities as well as distribution of educational materials and radio announcements.

Modern **Technology** for patient care is vital in supporting up to date practices implemented locally. Seva supports Visualiza's robust electronic medical record system to ensure effective follow up with patients and to alert patients of upcoming eye care needs.

Seva, in partnership with Visualiza continues to **expand the ever-growing network of partner hospitals and institutions** in the region by

determining readiness and ability of additional mentees to join the GSI network with our Guatemala partner Visualiza 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 substantial growth within its own institution as well as expansion to assist other eye care institutions in Guatemala and Central and South America.

Evaluation of performance including personnel, financial sustainability, cost recovery, outreach practices, productivity and quality/efficiency of service delivery are all assessed and tracked.

Impact of COVID-19 in Guatemala

COVID-19 continues to have a major impact on the country. Following initial closures, the government has permitted many businesses to resume operation. Throughout, Seva's partner provided emergency eye care services and, since the middle of 2020, has been able to resume routine eye care services. In light of the pandemic, Visualiza prioritized opening vision centers to provide basic eye care services in communities outside of Guatemala City. As part of its response to COVID-19, Seva made funds available to its partner in Guatemala to procure necessary protective equipment for its staff.

EYE CARE PERSONNEL

19.9



Ophthalmologists per million people



= 10 million people

Resources

[Seva in Guatemala](#)

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SPOTLIGHT ON BUILDING CAPACITY

Six ophthalmologists from the Permanente Medical Group, Northern California traveled to Guatemala City. Each doctor focused on a different specialty. Visiting doctors shadowed the local doctors, consulted on difficult cases, lectured on key developments in eye care in their specialty, and learned about the challenges and nuances that doctors in the Global South face on a day-to-day basis.

Visualiza serves patients in Guatemala City, as well as the traditionally under served rural region of Petén. Through its partnership with Seva via our Global Sight Initiative (GSI), Visualiza also serves as a “mentor hospital” to five “mentee hospitals” throughout Latin America. As a mentor hospital, Visualiza helps mentee clinics develop their community outreach, surgical, HR and hospital management skills to meet the high demand for quality eye care services.

In October 2019, doctors from Visualiza trained with their Kaiser colleagues in the United States as part of an exchange program.

IMPACT (FY 2020-2021)*

26,172

People receiving services

3,190

Cataract surgeries performed

1,518

Children receiving services

622

Children receiving surgery

1,559

Children receiving glasses

5

New vision centers funded by Seva

1.7 million

People who now have access to care

771

People receiving services at VCs

39

Community Health Promoters trained

* Numbers based on reports received.

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