IMPACT REPORT
July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

Since 1978
50 Million
People Served
To Our Friends in Service
A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Equitable access to health care is fundamental to a just and contributive society.

Yet, every day we bear witness to countless structural and non-structural barriers that undermine the dignity of vulnerable populations and prevent them from seeking vital services. Socio-political strife endangers those without access to safety, economic systems perpetuate inequitable resource allocation, and geographic barriers keep isolated communities stuck someplace in between – to name a few. This complex, imperfect, and often vicious system is the one non-profits, including Seva, navigate within.

Our eye care solutions are designed to thrive within and in spite of these challenging environments. How? By co-creating sustainable systems and solutions with local communities. We work with government and private partners alike, along with a committed team of staffers and a robust network of eye care institutions, to execute at the scale of a corporation and the nimbleness of a start-up. That has resulted in more than 50 million people receiving eye care services since 1978, including 3.5 million people in the last year alone.

Together, for 44 years, we have worked pointedly toward a world free of avoidable blindness. We now stand at the beginning of its end – the end of avoidable blindness in Guatemala. Our bold solution, “Guatemala Brillando,” or “Brighter Guatemala,” is positioned to eliminate avoidable blindness throughout the country in ten years and serve as a blueprint for the greater globe. This highly-vetted plan is how we engage with the work, and our partners. We reflect on our evidence, and reams of rigorously scrutinized data, to assure our scope and solutions meet the needs of communities we serve – resulting in your good being put where it will do the most.

Seva’s work, our staff, board members, and partners were recognized as the 2021 Grand Prize Recipient of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nicholas Kristof’s Holiday Impact Prize, as well as placed second to receive a portion of Peter Singer’s Berggruen Prize money through a public vote. The need in this world requires us to not rest on these laurels, and yet, such honors validate the urgency for sustainable eye care services and the critical value organizations like Seva offer in public health and development.

As you engage with this report, you’ll learn more about new diagnostic technologies we are developing, our investment in capacity-building of eye hospitals, clinics, as well as our investment in better-trained personnel. Most importantly, you will meet a few of the smiling faces whose lives are forever transformed.

On behalf of the board of trustees, an impassioned staff, and our partners worldwide - thank you for making the world brighter with your generosity.

Yours in Seva,

Kate Moynihan,
CEO/Executive Director
At least 1.1 billion people worldwide live with vision impairment that could have been prevented or treated, according to the World Health Organization. Without any significant investments, this figure will rise to 1.7 billion people by the year 2050. A life without clear vision is a life with limited independence, freedom, and opportunity. For a person in the developing world, this can be catastrophic and a threat to dignity.

Men and women who lose their sight are often unable to care for themselves or provide for their families. Children with impaired vision are forced to leave school or are often ostracized by their peers. And anyone without sight may rely on a caretaker, who also loses his or her freedom. When one person loses their sight, an entire community suffers.

With your help and expanded access to vision care, we can change that.

Restoring sight is one of the most cost-effective interventions to reduce poverty. It has an immediate and profound impact on the person who can now see, study, and earn a living. Additionally, restoring one's sight creates a powerful ripple effect on the family and community who now benefit from his or her contributions.

Since 1978, Seva has transformed lives by restoring sight in communities with little or no access to eye care. Today, Seva is a highly effective global public health nonprofit organization, working with partners in 20 countries to increase the capacity of local hospitals and develop sustainable eye care programs with long-term impact.

Thanks to your support, Seva has provided vital eye care services to more than 50 million people in the world, including more than 3.5 million people in the last year alone. Seva’s vision is a world in which no one lives with avoidable blindness. With your help, we can turn that vision into a reality during this lifetime.

A world free of avoidable blindness.
Paulina lives with her daughter and peels potatoes that are sold to restaurants. When her vision declined, she ran into several problems: once, she was nearly hit by a car because she couldn’t see, another time she fell down and fractured her hand, creating difficulties for her to work.

She visited a Seva-supported clinic, Ceprese, where she was provided with cataract surgery in both her eyes and a pair of eyeglasses. Her world was immediately put back into focus – now she’s confident walking alone and slowly returning back to work.
Because of you, 3,594,344 people received eye care services in 2021-2022. 1,817,551 were women or girls.

Pedro’s cataracts had forced him to withdraw from his role of a caretaker and put the responsibility of taking care of their three children (all under five years of age) on his wife. Your generosity provided a double cataract surgery that has once again allowed Pedro to be a proud husband and father, and support his family.

Guatemala, 2019
Our current areas of focus in the pipeline include:
portable, low-cost diagnostic devices;
access to affordable medications;
new telemedicine software, enabling us to reach isolated communities;
and advanced digitization of medical records.
Nepal, 2022

Bhim Kumari, a lively 78-year-old woman, lives with her sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. Her favorite activity? Growing vegetables and seeing them sprout in her kitchen garden and backyard. Unfortunately, as her vision declined, she had to pause.

You supported cataract surgeries for her (left eye in 2017 and right eye in 2019) and brought her world back into focus. We recently followed up with her. “I love gardening, and I’m able to continue even today only because I was able to treat my cataracts. I’m very delighted that I’m able to see better again. This helped me to continue what I love doing,” she shared.
OUR WORK

Building Sustainable Eye Care Systems Worldwide.

Seva builds sustainable eye care systems and empowers local communities to provide eye care for themselves. The three strategic priorities that make our vision a reality are:

Creating ACCESS

90% of people with vision impairment live in developing countries, where geographic isolation, limited health facilities, and economic stress prevent communities from seeking health services. Seva works hand-in-hand with local partners to break down these barriers and create consistent access to world-class eye care. Last year, Seva supported 687,046 cataract surgeries.

We provide partners with a suite of technology, medical supplies, and other resources necessary to carry out comprehensive vision care at low or no cost to patients. This includes life-changing cataract surgeries, medication, and eyeglasses, among other vision services. For patients whose situations prevent them from accessing care, we also secure basic transportation, food, and accommodation needs, ensuring no person is left behind. Localized outreach and awareness campaigns are simultaneously conducted in communities to create a consistent pipeline to care.

Last year, still inside the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to work with partners in India to safely conduct door-to-door eye screenings, providing eye glasses and surgery when needed. In partnership with the University of Washington, Bothell, our new mobile vision van also became operational. This van provides vital eye care services to Native reservations in Washington that have limited or no access to care. We reach people in extremely remote areas through eye camps. In Humla, Nepal, a highly isolated region where communities rely on government-transported food and resources, our team screened 218 patients and provided surgery to 111 in just one week. Seven new Vision Centers were also established in Nepal, creating access to eye care for thousands more.
Ophthalmologist Aditya Agarwal and Field Coordinator Shubham Dahiya ride on their motorbike across communities in Madhya Pradesh, India to bring eye care right up to people’s doorsteps.
Your support through our partner Fundación Visión allowed Mercedes Leguizamon, a 28-year-old single mother of three to regain her lost confidence through cataract surgery. The visible difference in her eyes made it difficult for her to find and hold jobs due to bullying and discrimination. Now, like every woman should be able to, she can show up as her whole self and live her life with dignity and joy.
Current eye care systems in developing countries are not equipped, robust, and resilient enough to meet the demand of the countries’ eye care needs. Seva alleviates the strain on eye care systems by building and strengthening the capacity of hospitals and clinics. We achieve this via a network of 100+ hospitals in low- and middle-income countries working together through our Global Sight Initiative (GSI).

GSI connects “mentor” and “mentee” institutions together, where one provides training, research, mentoring, and consultancy to the other. This is the most effective and efficient way to deliver high-quality eye care at scale. Seva rigorously trains ophthalmic support staff in management, clinical skills, community outreach, and a myriad of other roles required for a strong program. To ensure patient safety, we also implement comprehensive training and quality protocols. Last year, Seva Nepal partnered with Zamindar Eye Center on “Observe, Understand, and Change,” an intensive training for eye care personnel to learn about patient safety and quality of care. Participants used key learnings to make recommended changes within their institutions. In India, we also supported HV Desai Eye Hospital’s senior leadership with intensive planning on the financial sustainability of their programs and expansion plans to reach more patients. Through this planning process, the hospital reported an 11% increase in revenues and a 600% rise in optical sales from 2019-20. We spearheaded a new Global Medical Council, a group of medical directors brought together to discuss the specifics of eye care from their regions. Council experts are provided with mini-grants to launch innovative pilot projects that improve access to care, such as teleophthalmology in Native communities or patient education in Guatemala.
Imaculee, a farmer, was tasked with caring and providing for her five daughters and six grandkids after her husband passed away. As her vision declined, there was little she could do – she relied on help from her daughter.

She attended a Seva-supported screening camp through our partner Clinique de l’oeil (CTSOE), where she was diagnosed with cataracts. The very next day she was provided sight-restoring surgery, along with 13 other men and women. She can now walk around without needing any assistance, and was ecstatic to meet her latest grandchild.

Burundi, 2022
We meticulously and systematically track and analyze data to inform our strategic approach – everything from the number of patients screened, their age and gender, to the conditions they present, number of post-op visits required, miles they traveled, and country-wide patterns happening in eye care (among other variables). This level of detail and scope enables us to better identify, anticipate, plan and deliver on the specific vision needs of communities.

Earlier this year, Seva published the “Economic and Social Cost of Vision Impairment and Blindness in India.” India is home to 34 million people living with blindness or severe/moderate vision impairment – our report found that this costs the country US$54.4 billion (measured at purchasing power parity) annually. Fortunately, the vast majority of vision loss cases are preventable or easily treatable. This report demonstrates that eye health is a sound investment in the grand scheme of global health, contributes to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and validates our strategic approach to ending avoidable blindness.

Our Operations Research Capacity Building Project, a joint initiative with the Indian Institute of Public Health, builds practical research skills across partners. We released three new publications this year that provide novel insight on methods to improve the delivery of vision services, including improving timely referral flow of patients with diabetic retinopathy; increasing the volume of eye screening and treatment for patients with diabetes Mellitus; and determining the effect of door-to-door intervention to increase utilization of Vision Centers.
Creating a world where everyone can see requires meticulous measurement of the impact of our work. The “Four Drivers” enable us to track the efficacy of our solutions and to stay ahead of the curve.
VISION CENTERS

Most people in rural areas do not have access to quality eye care, as hospitals and clinics are located at great distances. A Vision Center is a permanent, local establishment equipped to meet 80% of all eye care needs in a single visit, and refer patients who require more advanced care to a nearby hospital. On average, a VC will treat 3,600 patients a year, provide 360 pairs of glasses, and refer 300 patients for additional services (including 125 for surgery, the most common surgery being cataract, the leading cause of blindness globally). Depending on the region, a single VC creates immediate access to long-term eye care for 50,000 to 500,000 people.

This year, you helped establish six new VCs in Bangladesh (one more will open in December 2022), creating access to eye care for an additional 600,000 people throughout the country. With Standard Chartered Bank India, we launched our groundbreaking new initiative, “Envision”. Through this initiative we will establish 65 new VCs across India which will conduct 400,000 eye exams, distribute 67,000 pairs of eyeglasses, and perform 16,000 surgeries by 2024. These VCs collectively create access to eye care for 4 million more people in the country. Last year, a total of 30 new VCs were established across the world.
Seva supports and invests in revolutionary eye care technology that improves diagnostics, treatment, or delivery. Our innovative wide-field retinal camera, Vistaro, developed in collaboration with Remidio Innovative Solutions, is being field tested in India, Ukraine, Thailand, and Mozambique. Currently, most medical devices do not easily detect and diagnose conditions that originate at the back of the eye. This leaves a tremendous gap within the current eye care system to reach and diagnose people who need it most. Vistaro will transform how eye care clinics diagnose diseases that affect the back of the eye, including CMV Retinitis and diabetic retinopathy.

We also invest in tried-and-tested technology, such as telemedicine, digitized medical records, and medical devices, that increase effectiveness and efficiency of vision screenings, outreach initiatives, hospital flow, disease detection, and treatment of eye conditions. Working with experts, we designed features and refined algorithms to determine an individual’s refractive error using just an inexpensive tablet. This method of refraction is promising for health centers whose staff have no optometric training, radically expanding access to timely treatment.

Every year, we put out a Call for Ideas to identify innovative technology-based solutions that improve eye care delivery. Through this, our partner Shroff’s Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) developed a mobile app that captures patients’ clinical information during door-to-door screenings and in 50 Vision Centers. This app integrates with the hospital’s web platform for immediate patient referral. It has since been used by 250 community health volunteers and screened more than 1 million people in India. We are currently working to scale up this technology to other partners and organizations for use.
We are innovating and pushing boundaries to deliver a portable, easy-to-use, low-cost retinal camera to diagnose systemic infectious eye diseases such as CMV retinitis.
4-year-old Everly struggled to focus or complete her schoolwork – her mom became worried. Through our partner Oklahoma City Indian, she was diagnosed with hyperopia, a condition where one eye becomes weaker over time if not treated. Your support provided Everly with the care necessary and put her life back into focus.
Globally, 90 million children and adolescents live with some form of vision impairment. Without sight, a child may miss educational opportunities, experience social isolation, and face barriers to employment later on in life. These children are the future, and timely intervention is of utmost urgency.

Our programs provide comprehensive eye care and treatment for children, from screening and early identification of eye care needs to referral, provision of care, and long-term follow-up. We strategically embed ourselves in schools and local community networks to meet children where they are. In Nepal, our Youth Led Outreach Program held 25 school screenings, 10 school and community awareness campaigns, and created a robust media campaign including reports, manuals, podcasts, webinars, jingles, children’s books, mural paintings, promotion on social media, etc. to highlight the importance of eye health for children in remote communities. The YLOP team also organized 3 door-to-door screenings when schools were closed during the pandemic. School screenings that were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic have also resumed in India and other countries with enforced safety protocols.
Demand for eye care services outpaces the supply of eye care professionals. 68% of countries are home to only 5% of the world’s ophthalmologists, mostly concentrated in major cities. This leaves millions behind without critical access to vision services. We invest in and strengthen the global eye care workforce, with an emphasis on hiring underrepresented women.

With your support, we hire and train ophthalmologists, ophthalmic support staff, and community outreach workers directly from the communities they serve. This increases the number of skilled personnel available, strengthens the local economy, and ensures patients are met with culturally adept care. Support staff is equipped to address basic eye health conditions and refer patients who require more complex care, like surgery, to ophthalmologists. This is more cost-effective than training ophthalmologists directly, and thousands of jobs have been created through the process.

Last year we launched Eyexcel - our “training the trainers” program in Latin America for 64 partners, imparting practical skills on how to train hospital staff to provide quality eye care. Our online e-learning platform, InSight, is regularly updated with new self-paced courses (70 at present) that provide competency-based training lessons and exercises for all eye care workers on various subjects that aim to deliver integrated, people-centered eye care. Our new AIDS Eye Initiative Online Course offers access to training resources specially designed for HIV-TB clinicians. This course will launch later this year to 30 clinicians in Mozambique and Ukraine, providing the latest skills and knowledge to help reduce mortality/blindness through early diagnosis and improved management of CMV retinitis and disseminated Tuberculosis.

This year, you made it possible to provide training to 1,523 doctors and ophthalmic support staff. This increased capacity within hospitals and clinics ensures the longevity of eye care services, even after our direct involvement has ended.
Ophthalmic Assistant trainees and trainer at our partner hospital Divino Niño Jesús in Lima, Peru.

Peru, 2022
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

We believe breakthrough eye care solutions can come from anywhere. Through our “Call for Ideas,” we identify and support innovative, technology-based solutions that improve eye care delivery. Meet two of our finalists this year from India:

LV Prasad Eye Institute, India:
Assessment of corneal epithelial integrity using white light imaging of the corneal surface

The ocular surface is susceptible to damage from dry eye disease, trauma, and infection, among other causes. Current methods for diagnosing ocular surface disorders are imprecise and require trained professionals or equipment largely unavailable in developing countries. LVPEI developed a smartphone-based system that provides an objective measure of corneal health by projecting a pattern onto the surface of the eye and the resulting reflections. This portable imaging and evaluation technology expands access to timely diagnostic services for hard-to-reach communities.

Aravind Eye Hospital, India:
The incidence of retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), testing of low-cost camera

Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) - an eye disease that affects many premature babies and a common cause of vision loss among children - has been rising in India and other low- and middle-income countries over the last two decades. To address the growing need for ROP screening services, AECS explored the role of artificial intelligence-assisted ROP screening on existing low-cost camera systems. This enables health systems to implement the AI-assisted telemedicine with minimal capital investment.

Over a 2-year period, simulated ROP screenings using this technology yielded a 99% sensitivity and 62% specificity for treatment-related ROP. Implementation of this system would have reduced the number of required tele-readings by 61%, saving physicians time to focus on patients with more complex conditions.
PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

Grameen Health Services

Seva’s first partner in Bangladesh in 2006 was Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus. Through his Grameen Health Care Services (GHS), we have established four hospitals in Bogra, Barisal, Thakurgaon, and Satkhira districts, creating access to eye care in rural communities. This year, with GHS, we established four new Vision Centers across the country (2 more VCs were established in Bangladesh in partnership with Quasem Foundation), creating access for 600,000 people. The seventh VC will open in December 2022.

To announce these new VCs, in March 2022, we hosted a virtual conversation with Professor Muhammad Yunus. The recording is available to view on our YouTube channel.

Now, we have four [eye hospitals]. Our staff is so excited that they are planning for eight total eye care hospitals...All we need is training. Training is the thing that’s missing for us, and we’re very grateful to Seva for providing that. And then, you gave the idea of Vision Centers – I love that idea! You can bring eye care close to people by doing that.”

- Professor Muhammad Yunus
Our groundbreaking solution, “Guatemala Mas Brillante,” or “Brighter Guatemala,” is the first-of-its-kind plan to systematically eliminate avoidable blindness in Guatemala within the next 10 years. This blueprint, when scaled across the world, will make equitable eye care accessible to everyone on the planet.

Back-of-the-eye conditions are growing as a cause of vision impairment worldwide, yet diagnosis and treatment for them lags far behind solutions for conditions in the front of the eye. Seva is pioneering in this space through our innovative wide-field retinal camera, Vistaro. This camera will transform how clinics diagnose and detect conditions at the back of the eye, including CMV Retinitis and diabetic retinopathy.

Seva’s Vision Centers (VC) provide eye care for up to 80% of a local community’s needs. For VCs with a high demand of patients that need surgery, we plan to upgrade these centers to include operating theaters. Our ecosystem of eye care solutions is designed to meet and thrive in the most isolated of areas. By supporting vision impairment, we can support the freedom and independence of communities worldwide.
India, 2022

We met Somwati and her husband Mevalal during a door-to-door eye screening in Madhya Pradesh, India. Both of them lived with cataracts, and as daily wage brick kiln laborers, sight was paramount to their line of work and livelihood.

At our request, Somwati visited Barhi Vision Center, and then with other patients, traveled to our partner SNC for a sight-restoring cataract surgery. She returned home two days later with clear sight and a pair of eyeglasses. Now that Somwati’s sight is back, Mevalal will also visit SNC for his cataract surgery while she goes back to work.

Somwati and Mevalal’s bond for their family and each other is unbreakable. Their grandson, Vinay, fondly calls them “Didi-Bhaiya” (Brother-Sister) – they’ll now be able to watch him grow for years to come.

“Khoob acho dikh roh hai sab, pehli sab dhundhlo dikhat”
“I see everything clearly now, I have no problems at all. Earlier everything looked smokey and blurry.”
Your support helped Seva provide life-changing eye care services to more than 3.5 million people this year. On their behalf, thank you from the bottom of our hearts! We look forward to working with you in the years to come, as we strive to create a world free of avoidable blindness.

If you want to learn more about a specific area of Seva’s work, please contact us at give@seva.org. We are happy to provide you with additional information. On behalf of the Seva family, our partners, and everyone we serve around the world, thank you for your continued commitment and generous support!