

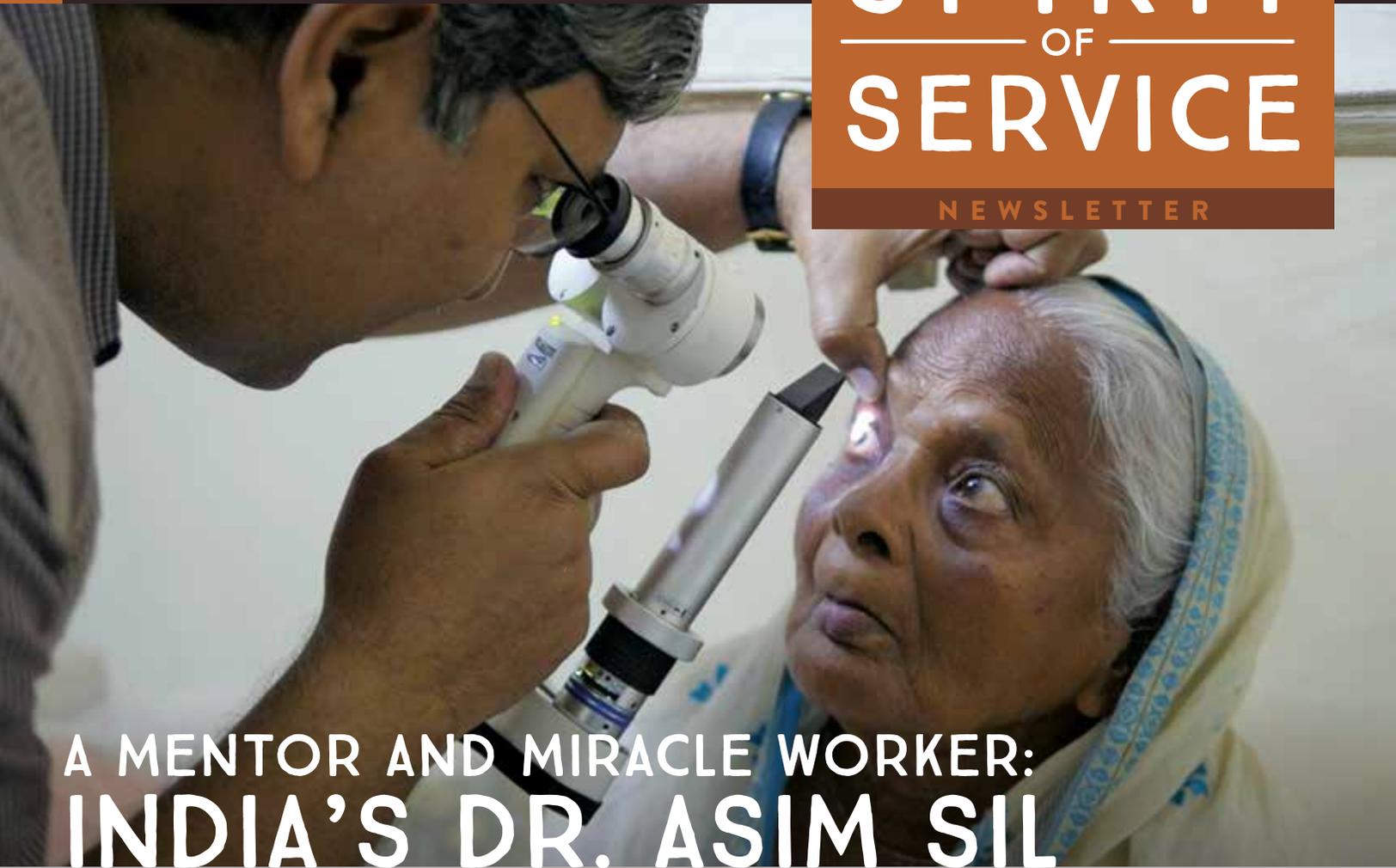
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SPIRIT OF SERVICE

NEWSLETTER



A MENTOR AND MIRACLE WORKER: INDIA'S DR. ASIM SIL

Dr. Asim Sil is a gentle, compassionate and knowledgeable eye doctor who serves as medical director for Vivekananda Mission Asram Netra Niramay Niketan (VMANNN), a hospital system operating in rural West Bengal, India. He has dedicated his life to helping others through the provision of top notch, sight-saving eye care.

Above: Dr. Asim examining a patient.

Though Dr. Asim is a humble man, his devotion to preventing blindness has been instrumental in creating what is today a state-of-the-art eye hospital in an isolated rural area.

Along with his team, Dr. Asim provides sustainable, comprehensive eye care to a region of over 10 million people. This past year, VMANNN provided nearly 19,000 sight-saving surgeries to people in need.

“We had found that so many children would have done better in school had they received timely interventions,” reflects Dr. Asim. Today, the hospital is the only facility in the region with a pediatric ophthalmology unit. Their Low Vision Project, in partnership with the Indian Government, is working to provide eye care to 15,000 children. The campus also includes a school for more than 6,000 students, a large number of whom have severe visual impairment.

Dr. Asim began his career studying under Seva co-founder Dr. Venkataswamy. He proudly says, “I was very fortunate to have had Dr. V as my teacher, and it was while working in Aravind that I came to learn about Seva.”

Dr. Asim followed in Dr. V's footsteps, becoming a regional leader for Seva's Global Sight Initiative.

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Top: Dr. Asim in surgery.

Above: Dr. Asim talking about mentoring.

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A Mentor and Miracle Worker

Under his stewardship, VMANNN now serves as a mentor institution working to build the capacity of a network of six mentee hospitals throughout India and Bangladesh. His team's work has resulted in a 25% increase in the number of cataract surgeries performed by mentee hospitals in his area.

This impressive achievement is helping Seva's Global Sight Initiative reach its goal of providing 1 million additional sight-saving surgeries annually by 2020. "Seva's Global Sight Initiative is a marvelous initiative for the eradication of blindness in the developing world," says Dr. Asim. "We work with partners and where we find that they could do better, we share our own experience as we work together for the common cause."

Through Seva's Global Sight Initiative, Dr. Asim has initiated a mentoring and training process with surrounding eye hospitals that show a potential to improve productivity.

With strong local expertise and awareness, Dr. Asim understands the challenges these hospitals face. "You must learn not only the skills, but also the culture," Dr. Asim explains. "The topmost priority in the selection of successful mentees is the attitude of the decision makers — are they willing to change? If they are willing to change, it is possible." Seva then serves as the catalyst, providing the targeted support and funding the mentors need to be effective.

Perhaps the most valued role that Dr. Asim plays is as an advisor. In this capacity, he provides individual counseling to mentee hospitals, focusing on critical areas for improvement. As a mentor, he draws on insights and experience from his own hospital.

Dr. Asim shares, "The more we interact the more we benefit here at our own hospital."

His philosophy is centered on the idea of service and education. Under his leadership, VMANNN has developed a robust training facility. Their Institute of Ophthalmic Training runs dozens of clinical and non-clinical programs throughout the year. "Training is the most important part of the mentorship," said Dr. Asim. He invites mentees to attend these trainings with financial support from Seva.

Dr. Asim explains that his goal is to increase the efficiency and sustainability of mentee institutions through training so that they can provide vital eye care to even more people in need throughout India and Bangladesh. Dr. Asim also regularly invites mentees to visit his hospital and observe how things operate, enabling them to adopt key practices in their own hospitals.

He gives the example, "A mentee hospital in Bangladesh was reluctant to have an optical shop, even though we recommended it. When the leader of the hospital visited us, we showed him the income from our optical shop and he immediately put one into his own hospital."

He notes that he also learns from these partnerships: "What we have learned most is the art of introspection. When you try to analyze someone else's systems you have to analyze your own." This "art of introspection" has served VMANNN well. His hospital staff have been able to look at their own systems to identify weaknesses and respond quickly to fill gaps.

Seva's Associate Director of Innovation and Sight, Heidi Chase, notes, "When I think about Dr. Asim, two characteristics come to mind — his commitment to teaching and his commitment to reaching patients in need of eye care. He still actively seeks out patients who don't have regular access to eye care, traveling for hours to make sure that all have good care. He also looks to turn every situation into a learning opportunity, whether it is for a resident learning eye surgery or a mentee hospital learning about how to determine the prevalence of a blinding eye condition in their area."

This year, Dr. Asim celebrates 20 years of service with VMANNN. The Seva team is proud to support his life's work and to celebrate his dedication to helping others.



UPDATE:

NEPAL EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY FUND

On April 25, 2015 Nepal experienced a magnitude 7.8 earthquake and an aftershock on May 2 of magnitude 5.0. Seva responded with a call for assistance for the areas that were devastated by this natural disaster.

Supporters responded with concern and generosity. Fortunately, Seva Nepal staff and their families were physically unharmed. Together with partner hospitals, Lumbini Eye Institute and Bharatpur Eye Hospital, Seva was able to procure and distribute 11 large truckloads carrying 100,000 pounds of tents, blankets, tarps, sleeping mats, and supplies of medicine, food, and hygiene products to areas that were hardest hit by the earthquake. These supplies were some of the first to be distributed to thousands of families in remote villages in Gorkha and Dhading districts as the monsoon season was nearing.

To address longer-term recovery and rebuilding needs, Seva expanded relief efforts, partnering with trusted local and international organizations to implement a broad array of activities. These projects include developing, testing and building earthquake resilient housing and schools; providing temporary learning centers until permanent schools can be rebuilt; and the repair and reconstruction of local community institutions (schools, nunneries, dental clinic, health clinics, eye clinics, a vocational school for the disabled).

The outpouring of support was beyond our expectations. Thanks to all who responded quickly

and generously, Seva and our local partners were able to provide significant support to the people of Nepal in a time of great need.

To learn more about Seva's response to the Nepal earthquake, please visit www.seva.org/nepalearthquake.

Left: Community members of Uiya, located in the Gorkha District, gather to receive food and shelter.

Right: Truckloads of tents are distributed and set up. Photo courtesy of Seva's partner, The American Himalayan Foundation.



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"Helping out is not some special skill. We simply heed the call of that natural impulse within and follow it where it leads us."

— **RAM DASS**
Co-Founder, Seva Foundation



SEVA RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS CHAMPALIMAUD AWARD

On September 7th, Seva Foundation, Seva Canada, and our longtime partner the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO), received the prestigious 2015 Antonio Champalimaud Vision Award.

Above: Seva and KCCO staff with Champalimaud sign.

The Champalimaud Award is considered the Nobel Prize of eye care, a celebration of our contribution to the worldwide effort to eliminate preventable and treatable blindness.

This award recognizes Seva and KCCO for our work in Africa, a continent with some of the least developed eye care services in the world. It honors the trust and vision of Seva donors, large and small, who have helped to create some of the world's most innovative eye care programs.

Seva's greatest strength is to recognize and nurture potential in individuals and organizations. In 2001, two Seva advisors provided that opportunity when they moved to Moshi, Tanzania with their young family to establish KCCO. Since then, KCCO has grown to a full-time staff of eight Tanzanian public health specialists. This was possible thanks to initial and ongoing support from Seva donors like you.

Working in developing countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, Seva helps communities build locally-run programs that serve everyone in the community with affordable services. In many countries, eye centers can become partially or fully financially self-sufficient over time. Rather than simply set up treatment centers, Seva's model provides a long-term vision care solution with tools for management, leadership development and continuous improvement that help the local community provide eye care for generations to come.

We are honored to receive the Champalimaud Award and thank our dedicated and committed donors for supporting our vision.

The Champalimaud Vision Award includes a cash prize of 1 million Euros which will be shared by the three organizations. Seva intends to use the funds to strengthen our investment in eye care development worldwide.

To learn more, visit www.seva.org/champalimaud.



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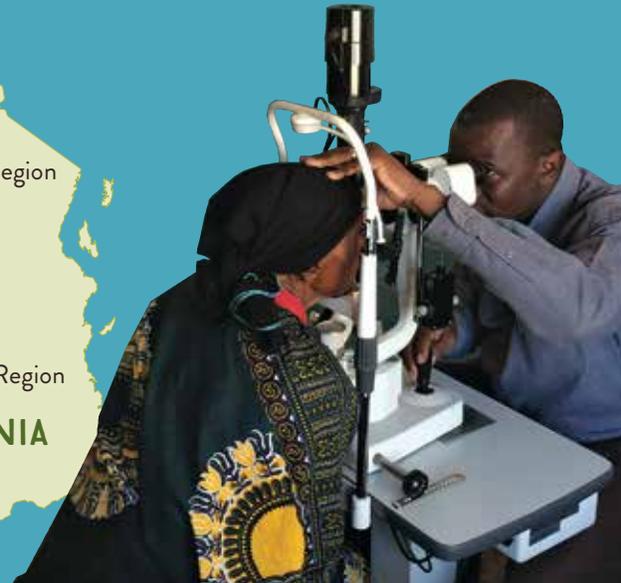
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THE DOCTOR WITH ONE MILLION PATIENTS

In the Singida Region of central Tanzania, one of the poorest in the country, a staggering 1.3 million people rely on the services of just one ophthalmologist: Dr. Ng'hungu Kuzenza.



An incredibly committed eye doctor, Dr. Kuzenza works tirelessly to treat eye injuries, remove cataracts, and save the eyesight of people in need. But he is aware that a large number of people in his region, particularly those who are blind in very rural and remote areas, are unable to afford the journey to his clinic.

“The majority of people in our region are living hand to mouth through basic subsistence farming, and would have to travel as far as 100 miles to reach our hospital,” explains Dr. Kuzenza “The next closest hospital with an eye unit is nearly 200 miles away.”

Through Seva’s Global Sight Initiative, and in partnership with the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO), Dr. Kuzenza’s eye unit is the third regional hospital that Seva supports in Tanzania. This approach is all part of a concerted effort to provide comprehensive eye care services to as many Tanzanians as possible.

Thanks to Seva’s support, Dr. Kuzenza and his staff are now developing a robust outreach program. One day a week, KCCO-trained outreach workers travel to remote parts of the region to conduct eye screenings and seek out patients who are blind from cataract and other treatable conditions.

“We are motivated to reach those patients in rural areas who cannot come to the hospital by themselves,” says Dr. Kuzenza. In the past, “we had not been able to conduct outreach activities due to lack of funding. With Seva’s support, this is now possible and many more people will be reached to receive treatment.”

KCCO Tanzania Director, Edson Elish, adds, “Singida hospital has a very limited budget compared to the need. With Seva’s support, the people of Singida, especially those living in remote and hard to reach areas, will be able to access affordable eye care

services at their door steps. The outreach team from Singida Regional Hospital will visit rural areas to offer complete eye care services, including provision of glasses and sight-saving surgeries to those in need.” Mr. Elish goes on to note, “Seva will also support staff training, capacity building, medicines, equipment, and transportation for staff and patients. The end result will be an improved well-being for the population.”

“Restoring sight to those we serve is what motivates us. People come to the hospital who have not been able to see for two to ten years. We do a simple cataract surgery and the next day that person is able to see,” remarks Dr. Kuzenza. “Seeing all the patients who have come a long way from remote villages leaving the hospital happy and satisfied is the most important thing for us.”

Learn more about this work by visiting www.seva.org/tanzania.

Top left: Map of Tanzania with Seva-supported regions highlighted.

Top right: Dr. Kuzenza examining a patient.

SEVA GEAR

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Above: Nikolas and all his awards.

Right: Nikolas running the Kazbegi Marathon in the country of Georgia.



RUN, NIKOLAS, RUN!

12-year-old Nikolas Toocheck has launched his very own philanthropic campaign called “Running the World for Children,” to raise money to help kids in need.

Nikolas’s first incredible goal was to raise funds for charity by running a marathon on all seven continents. This seventh grade student from Pennsylvania quickly became the youngest person to achieve such a feat.

As if that couldn’t be topped, this budding philanthropist is now running a marathon in all 50 U.S. states. This time, Nikolas’s campaign is focused on raising awareness and financial support for Seva and our pediatric programs that prevent blindness and restore sight to children in need. He’s off to a great start, already having finished his seventeenth marathon in the U.S. over the summer.

So what is motivating young Nikolas to take on these incredible feats? He proudly answers that his father Daniel, who is also a marathon runner, is his inspiration. Nikolas has been running with his father since he was nine years old. His father is also an eye doctor, who regularly travels the world volunteering for organizations like Seva and providing vital sight-saving eye care to people in need.

Nikolas’s father travels with him every step of the way, describing his son as a “high energy individual,” who truly is the “young Forrest Gump.”

As active as he is, Nikolas still finds time to be a kid, especially on the marathon course. Enjoying both road and trail running, Nikolas often strays off the beaten path when he’s training — literally! He can’t run in a straight line, even when there is some form of pathway. If you’re behind him, you can watch him kicking rocks and grass, jumping in the occasional stream, and in winter, climbing up the largest snow mound. His favorite running weather are the extremes; snow or sleet, rain or over one hundred degrees, of course!

According to Nikolas, the worse the weather, the more fun the workout. He can’t wait for his chance to run in hail but his mother has informed him that he’ll be wearing a helmet when the time comes!

Nikolas doesn’t just race for the love of it, he runs to raise funds to help others. Nikolas explains that his catch phrase is, “You don’t have to be big to make a difference!”

“Just thinking about the kids out there that can’t see, I just couldn’t imagine not being able to see. I really hope that I can help change that for a lot of kids.”

Seva’s Director of Development, Julie Nestingen, notes, “It is wonderful to see the focus and commitment Nikolas has for making a difference in the world and he sets a beautiful example for other young people to realize that they ‘don’t have to be big to make a difference.’ Seva is honored to have this level of commitment from our supporters – regardless of age – Nikolas is breaking records at many levels.”

In addition to breaking records, Nikolas has been receiving distinguished honors for his volunteer efforts, recently being named a 2014 Prudential Spirit of Community Award Honoree and 2015 Jefferson Awards Foundation GlobeChanger.

An estimated 500,000 children become blind each year. With proper access to eye care, an astounding 80% of overall visual impairment can be prevented or cured. Campaigns like Nikolas’s are helping Seva to build sustainable pediatric eye care programs that are saving the eyesight of children in need around the globe.

Join us in supporting Nikolas’s campaign by visiting www.seva.org/nikolas.



WENDY'S STORY

It started as a typical hot, dusty morning in Melchor de Mencos, a small town in the Peten region of Guatemala near the border of Belize. As the morning progressed, the town became crowded with people streaming in from miles around. Some came by bus, others on motorcycles, bicycles and on foot. Filled with hope, they had come to attend a Seva-sponsored outreach screening camp organized by our longtime local partner Visualiza.

Top left: Wendy waiting for surgery.

Inset: Wendy receives eye care at the Visualiza eye clinic in Guatemala.

Word traveled quickly that the outreach team had returned, offering free care to anyone with an eye problem. Over two days, 700 people waited patiently to have their eyes examined at the temporary clinic that had been set up in the center of town.

The first morning, the line spilled out of the front door. Many sought refuge from the unrelenting sun beneath umbrellas. A nervous mother brought her nine-year-old daughter Wendy, hoping the doctors could restore sight to her blind eye. Five years ago, Wendy had lost vision in her eye after accidentally being bumped in the head while playing with friends.

Making their way through the series of exam stations, Wendy and her mother learned that Visualiza's ophthalmologists might be able to help her see again by operating on her eye. The doctors informed them that a cataract that had formed after the injury was causing her vision loss.

Wendy was scheduled for surgery, which would take place the next morning at Visualiza's outreach clinic. Transportation was arranged for Wendy and her mother, along with all of the other patients who had been identified as requiring sight-restoring surgery. Of the 25 patients who boarded the clinic's bus, Wendy was the only child.

The next morning, dressed in a hospital gown, Wendy bravely sat with the adult patients as she waited to be called in for surgery.

Twenty-four hours later, after a successful surgery, the eye patch was removed and Wendy slowly opened her eyes. For the first few days, Wendy's vision was a little blurry. But after being fitted with a pair of prescription glasses, Wendy's follow-up exam showed that her vision had come back nicely and the surgery had been a great success! With vision restored, Wendy can now see clearly and is excited to be returning to school. Thanks to Seva donors, Wendy's future is bright and full of potential.

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2015 VOLUME 2

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ABOUT SEVA

Seva is a Sanskrit word meaning service to others.

Since 1978, Seva has been working to prevent blindness and restore sight worldwide.

Seva is a leading innovator in the delivery of cost effective, culturally-informed eye care services for many of the world's most vulnerable – including women, children, and indigenous peoples.

We work to build the capacity of underserved communities to provide comprehensive high-quality eye care that is accessible by all.

Seva's programs are made possible by the generosity of donors and volunteers inspired by the spirit of service.

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“Seva has given so much help to so many thousands of people for so many years – such a wonderful example of love in action.”

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