



Seva Foundation

Seva is a global nonprofit eye care organization. Their mission is to transform lives and strengthen communities by restoring sight and preventing blindness. Seva works with underserved communities in more than 26 countries across Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

[Donate to Seva](#)

Founded

1978

Active in

20+

countries

Restored vision to over

5M

people

Provided eye care services to over

44M

people

US\$50

average cost of cataract surgery

Other ways to donate

We recommend that gifts up to \$1,000 be made online by credit card. If you are giving more than \$1,000, please consider one of these alternatives.

[Cheque](#)

Bank Transfer

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Bequests

The problem: preventable blindness and vision impairment

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people worldwide are living with preventable vision impairment – something that disproportionately affects the global poor. [1] Nearly 89% of those affected live in the developing world, where a combination of malnutrition, poor water quality, lack of sanitation, and inadequate healthcare and health education conspires to spread diseases that damage vision and impede access to treatment. [2]

Visual impairment further entrenches people in poverty and can be deadly for sufferers: a high proportion of blind children die within a few years of losing sight, either from the underlying disease or due to the inability of their impoverished families to care for them. [3]

“More than 1 billion people worldwide are living with vision impairment because they do not get the care they need for conditions like short and farsightedness, glaucoma, and cataract.”

—World Health Organization

The solution: low-cost cataract surgeries and vision procedures

About 90% of the world’s visual impairment could be prevented or cured – in many cases through inexpensive medication or surgery. [4] Take cataracts for example: they are one of the leading causes of blindness globally, and restorative surgery costs only around \$50 in the developing world. [5].[6] It’s one of the most cost-effective of all public health interventions. [7]

How Seva works

Seva’s vision is a world free of avoidable blindness. They partner with existing local programs and institutions through The Global Sight Initiative (GSI) to provide a range of vision care and blindness prevention procedures. In addition to community outreach and education programs focused on nutrition, hygiene, eye injury prevention, and awareness of local eye care services, Seva also provides free or low-cost eye exams, glasses, medical treatment, and surgery to those who cannot afford to pay the full cost of procedures.



GSI, Seva's partnership program, enables doctors, paraprofessionals, and hospital staff worldwide to provide vision care services that their communities need – as opposed to relying on volunteer doctors from other countries. "Mentor" institutions provide training and consultancy services to "mentee" hospitals around the world to foster effective and efficient management systems and equip local staff with the tools they need to provide comprehensive care.

What makes Seva so effective

Cost-effectiveness

Cataract surgery costs as little as US\$50 in developing countries. [8] Seva also helped launch a manufacturer of quality intraocular lenses that cost only US\$5 (compared to US\$100–150 typical market price). [9]

Scalability

In 2019-2020 alone, Seva provided eye care services to 2,873,427 people of which 1,424,439 are women. Seva also trained 128 Doctors, 146 Ophthalmic support staff and 2,776 Community Health

Promoters.



Access to remote communities

Seva establishes vision centers in remote areas, and supports mobile teams of doctors and staff to provide education, screening, and surgeries to those unable to travel to established medical facilities.



Sustainability

Through GSI, mentor hospitals partner with mentee hospitals to foster effective and efficient management systems and equip local staff to provide comprehensive care in their communities.

Seva's accountability

Seva makes all annual reports available on their website. [\[10\]](#) They've also been rigorously vetted by Focusing Philanthropy, which awarded them grant money to fund vital surgeries and vision work in the developing world. [\[11\]](#)

Recognition for Seva

In 2015, Seva received the prestigious Champalimaud Award for its contribution to eliminating preventable and treatable blindness around the world. [\[12\]](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

How much do individuals pay for their eye care?

Seva's comprehensive approach expands community programs and provides free or low-cost eye exams, surgery, prescription glasses, and medical treatment to those who cannot afford the cost of services.

Which populations are most at risk for vision impairment?

Developing countries account for nearly 89% of the world's cases of blindness and vision impairment. [\[13\]](#) Within this low-income countries, Seva and their partners reach three particularly at-risk populations.

Without treatment, almost everyone with cataract becomes blind, so **those over 50** are very vulnerable.

An estimated 1.4 million **children** live with blindness around the world and another 19 million are visually impaired. [14] Most of these children live in areas of the world where even the most basic eye care services continue to be out of reach.

More than half of people living with blindness and visual impairment are **women and girls**. [15] In developing countries, women and girls are far less likely to have access to eye care services because of the barriers like lack of education, lack of financial resources, and limited decision-making power.

Why does eye disease correlate with poverty?

Malnutrition, inadequate healthcare, lack of education, poor water quality, and sanitation often lead to a high incidence of eye disease and preventable blindness in the developing world. These vision conditions can exacerbate the cycle of poverty and blindness.

Why does The Life You Can Save recommend Seva?

Cataract surgery to reverse preventable blindness is one of the most cost-effective of all public health interventions. We learned about Seva from Focusing Philanthropy, a highly regarded foundation that is mission- and value-aligned. Focusing Philanthropy has undertaken significant due diligence on Seva, including multiple site visits.

Is my donation tax-deductible?

You are currently on The Life You Can Save Australia's website. The Life You Can Save Australia Limited (ABN 90 623 716 370) is a Public Benevolent Institution endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient by the Australian Taxation Office.

Donations of A\$2 or more made on this site are tax-deductible in Australia.

For information about tax-effective giving in other countries, please visit our [Tax Deductibility page](#).

Sources

All photos and videos courtesy of Seva

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- [2] International Council of Ophthalmology,
[Latest Projections on Global Blindness and Low Vision Published](#)
- [3] World Health Organization bulletin,
[Childhood blindness in the context of VISION 2020—the right to sight.](#)
- [4] World Health Organization, [WHO launches first World report on vision](#)
- [5] World Health Organization, [World report on vision](#)
- [6–8] GiveWell intervention report, [Cataract Surgery](#)
- [9] Aurolab, [Genesis & Supporters](#)
- [10] [Seva website](#)
- [11] Focusing Philanthropy, [Transforming lives through site-restoring surgery](#)
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- [13] International Council of Ophthalmology,
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- [14] Survey of Ophthalmology,
[Interventions to improve functioning, participation, and quality of life in children with visual impairment: a systematic review](#)
- [15] IAPB Vision Atlas, [GBVI – Global Disaggregation of Numbers for Gender and Age](#)