

# 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: 108,890 sq km (42,043 sq mi).
- » Population: 17.25 million ppl making it the most populous nation of Central America.
- » 2019 Human Development Index Ranking: 126 of 189 countries.<sup>1</sup>

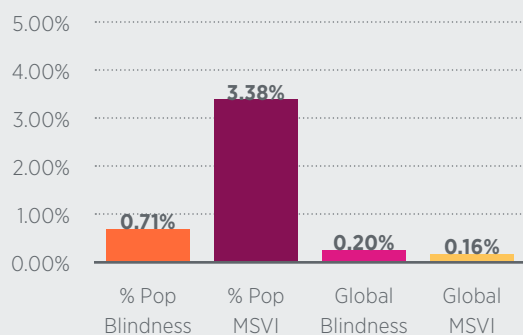
## Scope of Eye Care Needs<sup>2</sup>

- » 0.71% of Guatemala's population is blind (72,497 of ~16M) as of 2015 » Compared to 0.15% in the United States.
- » 3.38% of the population have moderate to severe vision impairment or MSVI (~354k) as of 2015 » Compared to 1.25% in the United States.
- » Guatemala has 0.2% of global blindness & 0.16% of global MSVI.

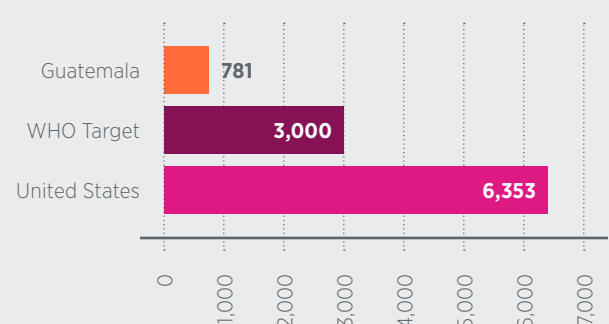
## Nationwide Eye Care Response

- » Guatemala's CSR (Cataract Surgical Rate) was 781 surgeries per million in 2013 » as compared to the US CSR of 6,353.
- » 16 Ophthalmologists per million (242/15.37 M as of 2013 » US = 60 per million people.

### VISION NEEDS



### CATARACT SURGICAL RATE PER MILLION PEOPLE



<sup>1</sup> 2019 UNDP Human Development Report: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>

<sup>2</sup> 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. At least 80,000 of Guatemala's 16 million residents are blind from cataract, which can be cured with a cost-effective, 15-minute surgery.

### 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, 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 mentees** progress including personnel, financial sustainability, cost recovery, outreach practices, productivity and quality/efficiency of service delivery are all assessed and tracked.

#### IMPACT (FY 2019-2020)\*

3,909

People receiving services

140

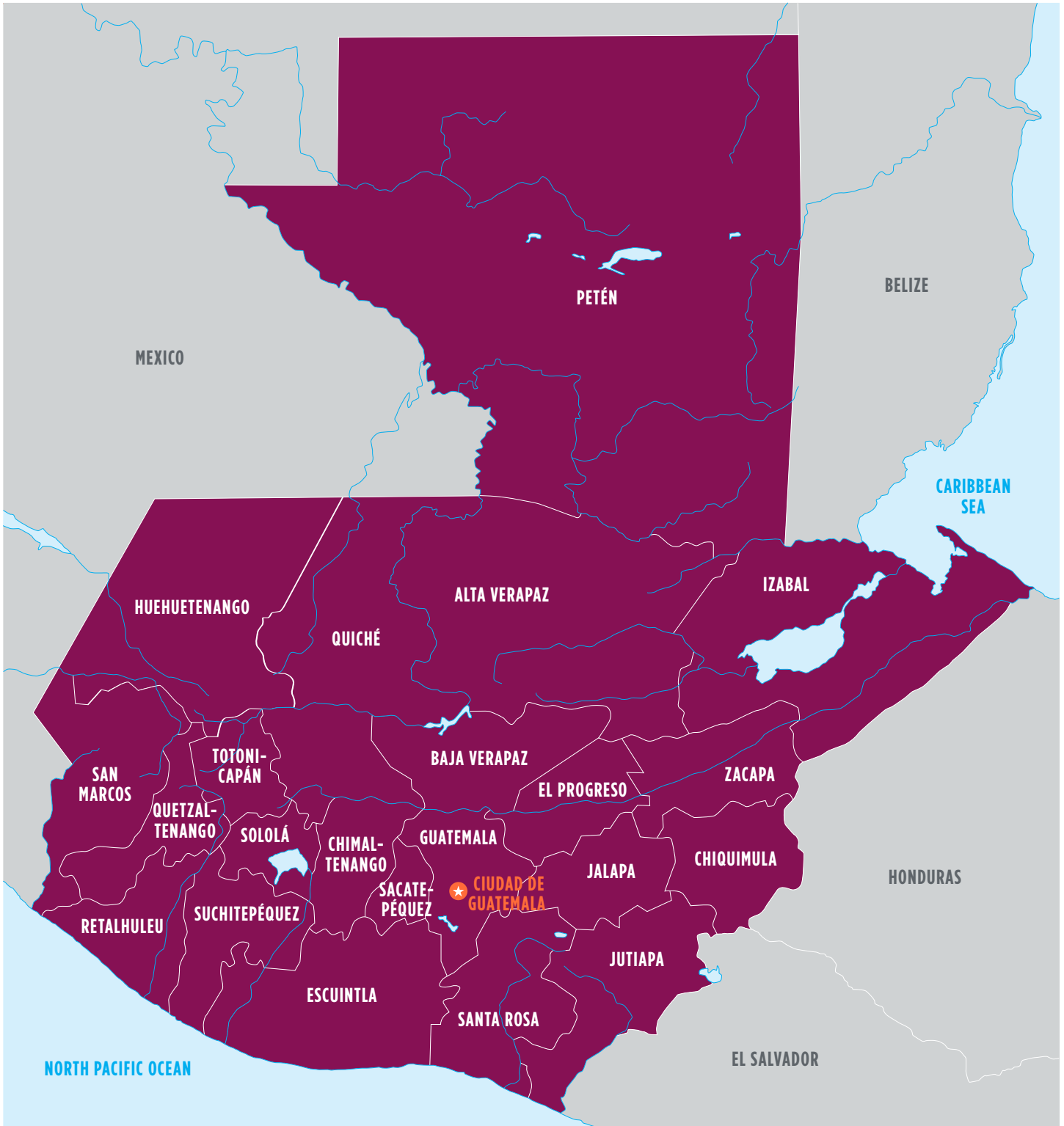
Cataract surgeries performed

### 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 and to address cash flow shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

\* Numbers based on reports received.

## GUATEMALA FACT SHEET



## Resources

[Seva in Guatemala](#)