



Seva Eye Care Programs: Africa

Strengthening Local Capacity to Confront Avoidable Blindness

The Problem: Africa is home to 19% of the world's blind, yet only 11% of the world's population. VISION 2020 notes that Africans develop cataracts up to 10 years earlier than those in other parts of the world.

Cataract causes about 50% of avoidable blindness in Africa, which is often curable with a simple and cost-effective 15-minute surgery.

Despite the prevalence of avoidable blindness, eye care services in Africa are some of the most understaffed of the region's minimal health care services. Some provinces do not have access to a single trained eye care worker while existing clinics are often under-utilized. Seva is working to confront this void by supporting and strengthening eye health services throughout Africa.

A Collaborative Effort: In 2001, Seva helped establish the Kilimanjaro Center for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO). KCCO is Africa's only community ophthalmology training institution dedicated to reducing blindness. With the help of the Seva Foundation, KCCO is radically expanding its training programs, developing community service projects, and providing consulting and mentoring to local eye care programs throughout Africa. Seva also partners with Light for the World (LftW) and Lions Club International to provide accessible eye care in Eastern and Sub-Saharan Africa and in Egypt.

Seva is working closely with KCCO and the Swiss Lions Club to implement the "Ten by Ten Initiative", which began to implement comprehensive eye care services in ten East African districts in 2008.

Through direct funding for services and investment in human capital, Seva helps these organizations provide affordable and accessible eye care services as well as multi-disciplinary training for clinical and management personnel. With the recent TOMS partnership, Seva has augmented its existing support of these organizations' free and subsidized eye care services.

Fostering Education and Growth: Seva's Center for Innovation in Eye Care is strengthening the region's access to leading eye care research through KCCO. Seva is also assisting in costing exercises to help develop a formula for evaluating eye hospital costs across Africa. This research will strengthen local programming efforts by helping African eye hospitals become more efficient and financially sustainable.



The Problem:

- 50% of blindness in Africa is caused by cataracts
- 2 out of 3 blind are female
- 80% of the blindness is curable or preventable

The Solution:

Sight-restoring cataract surgery can be performed in 15 minutes and costs just \$50

Seva's Goal:

Seva aims to build the capacity and sustainability of African eye care services.

Seva provides:

- Funding for direct services
- Investment in human capital through staff development and management training
- Clinical and public health research

Seva's Partners:

- Kilimanjaro Center for Community Ophthalmology
- Light for the World
- Lions Club International

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