

Nepal Fact Sheet

SEVA'S WORK AT A GLANCE: In country since 1978 | Partners: 21

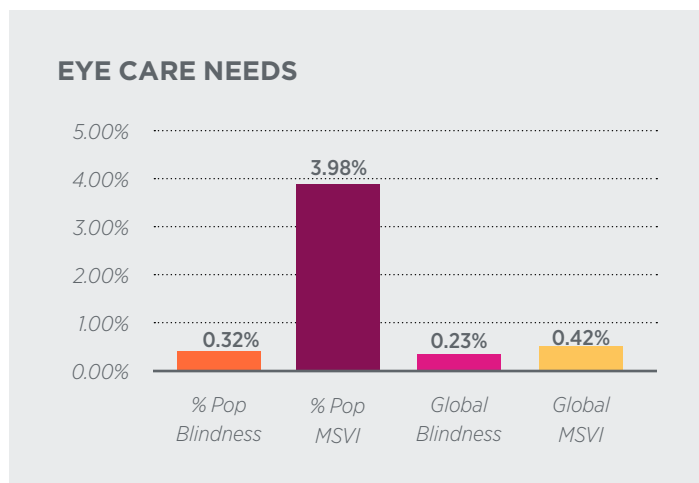


Country Overview

- » Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia. Predominantly located in the Himalayas it also includes parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain
- » Nepal spans 56,956 square miles
- » Population: 30.55 Million
- » 2023-2024 Human Development Index Ranking: 146 of 193 countries¹

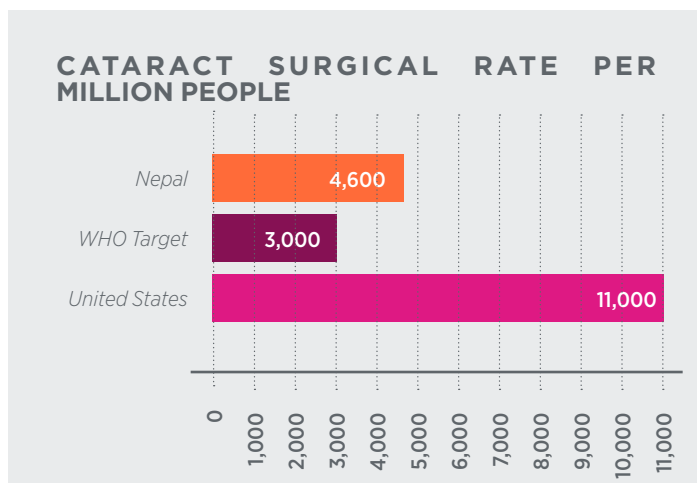
Scope of Eye Care Needs²

- » 0.32% of Nepal's population is blind, as compared to 0.19% in the United States.
- » 3.98% of the population has moderate to severe vision impairment or MSVI, as compared to 2.02% in the United States.
- » 0.23% of global blindness
- » 0.42% of global MSVI



Nationwide Eye Care Response³

- » Nepal's Cataract Surgical Rate (CSR) was 4,600 surgeries per million in 2019, as compared to the US CSR of 11,000
- » 10.2 Ophthalmologists per million people in 2018 (308 total)
- » 15.6 Optometrists per million people in 2018 (470 total)
- » 31.6 allied ophthalmic personnel per million in 2018 (950 total)



¹ UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2024. Human Development Report 2023-24: Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world. New York.

² Unless otherwise noted, all country sight statistics from IAPB Vision Atlas: <https://www.iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/>

³ Sapkota YD. Human Resources for eye health in South Asia. Community Eye Health. 2018;31(102):S1-S2. PMID: 30220813; PMCID: PMC6134467.

Context

Nepal has undergone tremendous transformation in eye health care provision and delivery since the Nepal Blindness Survey of 1981. The prevalence of blindness of 0.84% in 1981 was reduced by 60% to 0.35% as per the RAAB survey in 2010. In 2019-2020, another RAAB survey was conducted and as expected, presented a lower figure of prevalence of blindness in the country. The eye health service, which was limited in 1981 to one eye department in a general hospital and 7 ophthalmologists, has reached a total of 340 ophthalmologist in the country along with the development of mid-level eye health workers, ophthalmic assistants, and optometrists in huge numbers.

In spite of this large transition, there is a large population that does not have access to quality assured and affordable eye health care, mostly due to geographic and information inaccessibility. As per the 2021 Census data, 33.8% of the Nepalese population lives in rugged terrain in rural municipalities. There is still a large gap between the actual number of service providers and the desired number. Seva has created a network of eye care providers in 36 districts out of a total of 77 districts in the country. The services provided through this wide network target the most vulnerable populations including women, children and hard to access rural communities. Seva is providing its services to the hard to reach areas through a total of **61 Vision Centers** across all 7 provinces.

Seva has been instrumental in strengthening the capacity of partners who are operating at secondary level and tertiary level care. This support includes continuing medical education, professional trainings, and surgical equipment and supplies, all of which serve to increase the quality of patient care. By equipping our partners with the tools they need to provide quality and efficient services, Seva helps build locally run eye care programs that are gradually self-sustaining and contextual with the need. In the year 2023-2024, 1.2 million eye examinations and nearly 87 thousand eye surgeries were performed in Nepal through Seva's partners. Seva expresses gratitude to the donors who made this possible.

Nepal has 0.23% of global blindness. For a country with nearly 30 million people, this is a fairly manageable rate compared to the US. However, we can still see the relative disproportion.

Seva's Approach in Nepal

The focus is in community involvement and partnership. Seva's approach to addressing eye health needs in Nepal prioritize three key strategies; **Access** to universal eye care, building **Capacity** of personnel and infrastructure as well as **Evidence**-based inter-ventions and advocacy. Seva programs in Nepal are designed to address the gaps in service provision and access. Responding to the need of a population in areas served by our partners, we work in different models in different catchment populations.

The Vision Centers are the first point of contact in the community for eye care services, and are providing the community eye care in Nepal. They serve as primary service providers catering to almost 80% of conditions requiring care. Seva supported the establishment of the first Vision Center in Nepal.

Secondary level care and tertiary level care are needed to provide cataract surgeries and sub-specialty services to the population. Seva's support has strengthened the human resources as well as systems and equipment provision, thus increasing the scope and quality of services from these centers. Seva, with our partners, provide trainings for doctors in ophthalmology sub-specialties, Allied Ophthalmic personnel in clinical and administrative skills, as well as teachers for visual acuity measurement. The quality of cataract surgeries, evaluation of personnel and the effectiveness of service delivery are all tracked. Attendance at professional conferences and meetings allows our partners to share program findings with a broader community of specialists.

The outreach activities supported by Seva include not only community screenings, but also focus on imparting basic eye health education to the Female Community Health Volunteers, teachers, and opinion leaders in the community. This has increased the cultural acceptance to eye care provided in the community by the community, as they feel empowered.

Seva's initial and continued support focused on creating accessible and affordable care to the population has further been expanded to include quality assurance to services. The added emphasis on quality of care includes surgical quality, staff empowerment, patient satisfaction, patient empowerment, community empowerment and accreditations.

Seva developed Champions of Quality in our partner hospitals, who lead the quality committees, train their colleagues and juniors, work to prevent adverse events in hospitals and take corrective and preventive action if they occur.

Seva's Management Development Program has trained the partners of Nepal too. Though less in numbers, the participants are taking cautious, planned steps to implement what they have learned from the program. We expect a lot of cross learning from this program in years to come.

Seva's support encompasses promotive, preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative care in the eye health care sphere of Nepal.

The backbone of Nepal's eye care in the community are the ophthalmic assistants, who are mid-level eye care professionals. The content and quality of their training is pivotal to the care provision in the community. Seva has, through the Eyexcel program, successfully created 3 books for their training program.

Modern **Technology** for patient care is vital in supporting up-to-date practices implemented locally. By purchasing clinical equipment for partner hospitals, Seva and our partners ensure an increase in availability of quality services for the Nepali population. Seva has successfully piloted tele-consultation in two hospitals with its remote Vision Centers. By focusing on Hospital Management Systems such as training, tracking and evaluations, hospitals and local communities alike are more equipped to build out their capacity and more effectively serve their populations. Seva Nepal is also involved in developing National Eye Health Strategies led by the Ministry of Health in Nepal.

Seva's Presence in Nepal

Seva supports eye care services in all 7 provinces of the country, 6 out of 7 provinces of Nepal:

The **Lumbini Province** has a total of sixteen eye care facilities including one center of excellence, three secondary eye care hospitals, one surgical center, three District Eye Care Centers and eight Vision Centers (VCs).

The central south of Nepal has 4 districts from **Bagmati and Madhesh Province** and one district from **Gandaki Province**. There is a network of three eye hospitals with VCs in each district.

The **Koshi Province** includes Seva's work in the eastern region which consists of five eye care facilities supported by Seva Nepal.

Seva works closely with their partner in the Kailali district of **Sudur Paschim Province** to provide eye care services in nine remote districts throughout the far western region. Their partner has been instrumental in strengthening eye care services in this province. Seva's support through outreach activities has been critical in providing the necessary eye care services to this particularly disenfranchised population.

Seva has also started working in the **Karnali Province** with the provincial government, supporting the training of personnel in the department of ophthalmology.

Primary eye care services are provided through VCs and outreach eye camps, which offer exams, medical treatment, glasses, surgeries and transportation. In 2023-2024, 51% of the patients seen at eye camps in Nepal were female. Similarly, 79% of all patients seen at hospitals or VCs were female or children.

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IMPACT (FY 2023-2024)*

1,216,165

People receiving services

87,386

Cataract surgeries performed

269,431

Children screened

2,016

Children receiving surgery

24,627

Children receiving glasses

14

New VCs funded through Seva

937,866

People who now have access to care

32,397

People receiving services at VCs

3,289

Community Health Promoters trained

148

Administrators trained

115

Doctors trained

551

AOPS trained

50

Hospital teams participated in Seva Led Trainings

177

People participated in Seva Led Trainings

5

Seva Led Trainings including 1 Eyexcel, 1 Management Development Program, and 3 Quality Workshops

EYE CARE PERSONNEL

10.2



Ophthalmologists per million people

15.6



Optometrists per million people

31.6



Ophthalmic personnel per million people

= 1 million people

SPOTLIGHT ON INCREASING ACCESS

One of Seva's partners established three rural Vision Centers (VCs) in the high mountains. These VCs delivered primary eye care services at the community level and were able to establish a comprehensive system to enable referral to a higher-level hospital. Recently, one of the VCs were upgraded to a surgical center. Seva's partner procured mobile equipment to allow them to offer services to more patients in surrounding districts and provide essential surgeries to people living in these remote communities.

* Numbers based on reports received.

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