



Combat Blindness
INTERNATIONAL

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Restoring sight. Empowering people.





Throughout 2021, Combat Blindness International and its partners continued to face the challenge of the COVID pandemic. Despite the cloud of a pandemic, our resolve, and that of our partners, to provide quality, equitable care to so many in need remained steadfast and firm. The number of patients we have served in 2021 has doubled from the previous year and that is because of the strength and determination of our partners.

For the women in a rural village in India receiving an eye screening for the first time, for the man regaining his sight after a free cataract surgery in Kenya, for the young child whose screening and glasses allows them to see the chalkboard, and for the young woman whose education and training means she can be financially independent, we are committed to opening the doors to opportunity and hope.

In 2021, Combat Blindness International forged a collaborative partnership to create the exciting new Aadya Initiative, which provides high quality, accessible eye care to reduce preventable blindness and low vision in rural regions of low-income countries, particularly for women and children. The initiative accomplishes this by training a mobile skilled workforce of women screeners, who receive fair wages and economic opportunity. The Aadya Initiative promises to revolutionize how we deliver vision screenings and eye care in remote rural areas.

We continue to be humbled by your generosity and enthusiasm for the work of Combat Blindness International. Your support impacts people's lives in transformational ways by giving the opportunity for life, work, education, family and community. Just imagine how you have changed a person's world when you give them the gift of sight.

With gratitude,

Reena Chandra Rajpal, MPH
President (ex officio) & Executive Director

Suresh Chandra, MD
Founder & Chief Visionary Officer



Our Impact So Far 1984-2021

17

Countries Where
We Have Restored Vision

2.85+ MILLION
Vision Screenings

2,121,306
Adults Screened


736,549
Children Screened

385,000+
Sight-Restoring Surgeries

575+
Women Empowered
by Technical Training

405,000+
Pairs of Glasses Distributed

\$510,000+
in Equipment and Medication
from 2005 to 2021

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Photos marked with a  were originally produced by
Deepanjali Chopra / Deepanjali Productions.*





AADYA: A GAME- CHANGING INITIATIVE



During Phase II, over 99% of those screened had never before received an eye exam.

As the COVID pandemic entered a second year, Combat Blindness International and key partners met that challenge by launching a revolutionary new effort to ensure access to quality eye care in low-income rural communities.

The Aadya Initiative brings vision screeners and mobile technology to the very doorsteps of the rural poor. By training teams of women to conduct door-to-door screenings using a custom-built smartphone screening survey, **Aadya is reaching significantly more people in less time than conventional screening efforts.** Glasses are dispensed on the spot to those who need them, while those requiring follow-up care are referred to vision centers, the regional surgical center or the main hospital in Delhi.

At the same time, it **promotes gender equity** by equipping women with training, patient skills, and jobs with decent wages.

The women earn an income from their referrals and through the sale of glasses to those who can afford them.

The impact of this initiative is significant. People in remote areas get the screenings they need, and there are more screenings and referrals in less time, compared to the old approach of using vision camps. And young women with limited opportunities are empowered with medical training, employment and income.

Over 9% of those screened were referred for follow-up care, including surgery.

The Aadya Initiative evolved through CBI's collaboration with Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) in Delhi, India, and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater chapter of Enactus, a global social entrepreneurship group. While SCEH recruits, trains and equips vision screeners, the Enactus team designed the business model enabling Aadya to be financially self-sustaining in the future.



“Building on our learnings and successes in 2021, our goal is to further optimize the Aadya Initiative, so we can reach increasing numbers of underserved people, while scaling up the program to cover larger areas and be replicated in different countries.”

Umang Mathur, MD

*Executive Director,
Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital
Delhi, India*





In a six month period, over 63,000 people were screened by the Aadya screeners.





TAKING A
STAND AGAINST
PREVENTABLE
BLINDNESS

From day one, Combat Blindness International (CBI) has been dedicated to reducing the leading cause of vision loss worldwide: cataracts. **Over 100 million experience vision loss due to cataracts, and of those, more than 17 million are blind.**¹

For the vast majority of people in low- to middle-income countries where 90% of the world's visually impaired live,² cataract surgery is too costly, or simply unavailable.

That's why Combat Blindness International has supported free cataract screenings and surgeries as the most impactful ways to restore sight to people in these regions. Over the last 37 years, our International Cataract Program has supported **over 2.1 million adult vision screenings and over 385,000 surgeries.**

For as little as \$25, CBI provides cataract surgeries that take roughly 20 minutes, and can give someone their sight back in 24 hours. Not only is their sight restored, but people who regain their vision **generate 1,500 percent of the cost of their cataract surgery in increased productivity during the first year after their surgery.**³

For the people we serve, this means returning to work and contributing financially to one's family. It means participating in the care of one's family, home and community. It means the ability to gain new skills and thrive. It means the opportunity to pursue one's dreams.

¹ IAPB Vision Atlas, 2021
iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/causes-of-vision-loss

² IAPB Vision Atlas, 2021
iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/

³ "Blindness and Poverty in India: The Way Forward,"
Clinical & Experimental Optometry: Journal of the Australian Optometrical Association,
90, pp. 406-14; 2007.



International Cataract Program Impact in 2021

9,498
Adult Cataract
Surgeries Performed

116,550
Adult Patients Screened



RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT IN KENYA

Combat Blindness International re-established its partnership in 2021 with Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital (LSEH), a well-known comprehensive eye care institution in Nairobi, Kenya. Combat Blindness International's support for vision screenings and cataract surgeries came at a crucial time.

LSEH creatively explored new approaches to treating the underserved, mainly through its satellite facilities and local partners. As a result they were able to screen 21,761 patients and provide sight-saving cataract surgery to 999 patients in 2021



RESTORING LEAH'S VISION

As a hotel manager in Nakuru, Kenya, Leah enjoyed providing hospitality services to her guests and making them feel at home. But a cataract in her right eye made it increasingly difficult to do her job, and she had to rely on her son and daughter to run the business. Unable to afford surgery, Leah's options were limited, until she received surgery at Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital, Combat Blindness International's partner in Nairobi. With her vision and independence restored, Leah is back at work, able to see her guests' smiling faces once again.



OUR EVOLVING PARTNERSHIP WITH JMF

In 2021, Combat Blindness International continued its partnership with Jayapriya Medical Foundation (JMF), the charitable arm of Jayapriya Eye Hospital in Hubli, India.

After the successful completion of the "Mission Jyoti 1,000" initiative, a joint CBI-JMF effort providing free cataract surgeries to 1,000 people in North Karnataka, Combat Blindness International provided additional support for 1,250 free surgeries in the second half of 2021.

We look forward to further strengthening our relationship with Jayapriya Medical Foundation and continuing to provide desperately needed eye care.



“More people than ever need the strength and support of organizations like Combat Blindness International. Receiving support from CBI has allowed our hospital to say, ‘Yes!’ to one more child or adult who can be saved from preventable blindness.”

Rizwana Peerbhoy

*General Manager,
Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital
Nairobi, Kenya*





GIVING CHILDREN
A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Fighting childhood vision loss remains an urgent priority.

Around the world, there are **90 million children and adolescents living with vision loss**. Of these, **30.2 million have moderate to severe vision impairment**,⁴ and given that 80% of learning takes place visually,⁵ it is crucially important to screen and treat children at an early age. Without early intervention, they will face a lifetime of barriers and lost opportunities.

That's why Combat Blindness International has supported more than **736,000 vision screenings, over 26,500 pairs of glasses and more than 2,050 surgeries for at-risk children over the past 37 years**.

During 2021, CBI's International Pediatric Program continued to deliver quality care, including surgeries and emergency ophthalmic treatment, despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.

Combat Blindness International remains as committed as ever to giving children a brighter future through screenings, glasses, surgeries and continuing care.

We firmly believe that every child, no matter their circumstances, deserves to learn, thrive and pursue their dreams, free of visual disabilities.

⁴ *IAPB Vision Atlas, 2021*
iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/magnitude-and-projections

⁵ "Uncorrected Vision Problems, Childhood Literacy Deficits Linked," *American Optometric Association News, Clinical Eye Care, March 11, 2016. Aoa.org*



International Pediatric Program Impact in 2021

24,902
Children Screened

49
Pediatric Surgeries Performed

300
Pairs of Glasses Distributed to Children



GIVING VINOD HOPE

Life was uphill from the start for Vinod.

Born with cataracts in both eyes, his future was filled with uncertainty, including limited educational opportunities, dependence on family members, and a lifetime of poverty. Fortunately, things took a positive turn at age 2, when he received free eye surgery at Usha Kiran Eye Hospital in Mysore, India, supported by CBI.

But years later, he faced another setback: a clouding of his vision due to a fine membrane over his left eye. Once again, CBI allies made it possible for Vinod to get much-needed eyecare in 2021 at Usha Kiran, resulting in restored vision. Today he is doing well, and ready to take on all that life has to offer.



“As a couple, Mark and I have been very proud to support the life-changing work of CBI for many years. We have known Dr. Chandra and his family for over 25 years! It is truly amazing that for a donation of \$100, CBI can restore sight for 4 or 5 people through modern cataract surgery while building local medical capacity in developing countries. We strongly believe in the work and mission of CBI. A more impactful gift than sight is truly hard to imagine.”

Heidi Lucarelli, BSN • CBI Donor
*MMSD Vision & Hearing Screening Team
Substitute School Nurse*

Up to 60% of children under the age of five in low-income countries die within a year of becoming blind.⁶

⁶ "Preventing Blindness in Children: Report of WHO/IAPB Scientific Meeting," World Health Organization, Geneva, 2000.





ADDRESSING
THE EYE CARE
AND GENDER
EQUITY GAP

Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program Impact in 2021

160

Women Supported in the COP Program

405,992

Screenings Assisted by COP Graduates

59

COP Program Graduates Employed at SCEH

25,649

Surgeries Assisted by COP Graduates

In low-income countries, the severe shortage of eye care professionals is a major obstacle to providing care to those who need it the most.

It is an urgent issue particularly in India, which has the most visually impaired people in the world⁷, and yet it has only 13 ophthalmologists per million,⁸ compared to 54.7 ophthalmologists per million in the United States.⁹

Since 2014, Combat Blindness International has proudly supported training young women to become eye health technicians via the Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program (COP) at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in Delhi, India. These energetic women fulfill a variety of roles, including ophthalmic nursing assistants, vision technicians, medical record administrators and patient counselors. In the process, they significantly

reduce ophthalmologists' workloads, increase the hospitals capacity to screen and treat patients and provide a more personal experience for the patient.

At same time, CBI's support for this innovative program empowers young women with skills, employment, and a path to career advancement that typically is unavailable to them.

Delivering Care at a Critical Time

160 new students joined the COP Program in 2021, despite restrictions and challenges related to the COVID pandemic.

"Our students once again performed the role of 'Pandemic Warriors,'" says Sunita Arora, head of paramedic training at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital.

In addition to their usual tasks, COP Program students and graduates monitored incoming patients for COVID symptoms, conducted rapid antigen tests, and assisted with triaged patient care.

At a crucial time when SCEH's staff and resources were stretched to the limit by the pandemic, COP students and graduates ensured that all patients received the quality care they deserve.

⁷ IAPB Vision Atlas, 2021
iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/magnitude-and-projections/countries

⁸ IAPB Vision Atlas, 2021
iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/magnitude-and-projections/countries/india

⁹ IAPB Vision Atlas, 2021
iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/magnitude-and-projections/countries/united-states-of-america



GAINING CONFIDENCE, MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Enrolling in the Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program has been a transformative experience for Arti (pictured), a young woman from a farming family in rural India. The oldest of three children, she originally wanted to become a teacher. But the allure of acquiring ophthalmic technical skills, earning decent wages and broadening her career options attracted her to the COP Program.

Initially, she was somewhat apprehensive when working with patients. But her confidence grew, especially after she gained more experience performing vision screenings in rural villages through the Aadya Initiative. She currently is learning to become a Medical Record and Information technician and is excited about making a difference in others' lives.

*"I never thought I could
be self-reliant, but
now I can fly!"*

COP Technician

*Dr. Shroff's Charity
Eye Hospital,
Delhi, India*





“It is humbling to be part of a program that lifts these young women and gives them so much confidence. They are building their professional skills, but they are also gaining self-reliance, financial independence and an identity as a healthcare professional. For many, this is the first time that they see a future for themselves, a future that they drive.”

Sunita Arora

*Head Trainer,
Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program
Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital,
Delhi, India*



ACTIVE PROJECTS

- 1 India
- 2 Kenya
- 3 United States

PREVIOUS PROJECTS

- 4 Angola
- 5 Botswana
- 6 Brazil
- 7 Gambia
- 8 Haiti
- 9 Lebanon
- 10 Mali
- 11 Myanmar
- 12 Namibia
- 13 Nigeria
- 14 Paraguay
- 15 Philippines
- 16 South Africa
- 17 Vietnam



Our Impact in 2021

THE AMERICAS

Madison Metropolitan School District Vision Project
Madison, Wis., USA

3,753 Pediatric Screenings

Right to Sight Clinic
Madison, Wis., USA

121 Screenings

AFRICA

Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital
Nairobi, Kenya

21,761 Screenings

999 Eye Surgeries

1,446 Pairs of Glasses Distributed

ASIA

Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital
Delhi, India

Rampur Surgical Center

14,691 Screenings

2,429 Eye Surgeries

3,187 Pairs of Glasses Distributed

COP Program

160 Scholarships for

Ophthalmic Paramedic Training

The Aadya Initiative

28,551 Screenings

58 Eye Surgeries

479 Pairs of Glasses Distributed

37 Years of Vision Around the World



Jayapriya Medical Foundation

Karnataka, India

4,436 Screenings
1,881 Eye Surgeries

L.V. Prasad Eye Institute

Bijayananda Patnaik Eye Center

Keonjhar, India

17,439 Screenings
804 Eye Surgeries

Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra

Bihar, India

12,084 Screenings
808 Eye Surgeries
Intraocular Lenses Donated

Shri Jalaram Arogya Seva Trust Hospital

Meghraj, India

28,135 Screenings
2,519 Eye Surgeries
Intraocular Lenses Donated

Usha Kiran Eye Hospital

Mysore, India

10,492 Pediatric Screenings
49 Pediatric Eye Surgeries
271 Pairs of Glasses Distributed



Laminar - 2

2015
10/10/15
10/10/15
10/10/15
10/10/15

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INNOVATIVE
SOLUTIONS

ARAVIND EYE CARE SYSTEM



INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

Early on, we realized that reducing the cost of cataract surgery lenses was crucial to fighting blindness in low-income areas. In 1992, our innovative investment in Aurolab, in Madurai, India, lowered the cost of high-quality cataract surgery lenses from hundreds of dollars to just 2-3 dollars each.

Among the many things that set Combat Blindness International apart is our ability to develop outside-the-box solutions to the ongoing challenges of preventable blindness. While we deliver critical vision screenings, surgeries and eye care that directly impacts thousands of lives each year, we also are committed to tackling root causes through technology, partnerships and innovation.

SUPPORT FOR CATARACT SURGERY LENSES

In 2021, CBI donated thousands of cataract lenses to Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra, which supports Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Eye Hospital in Gaya, India, and also to Shri Jalaram Arogya Seva Trust Hospital in Meghraj, India. These high-quality lenses were manufactured at Aurolab, a CBI-supported manufacturing facility that offers them to nongovernmental organizations at cost, for just a few dollars each.



GIVING OTHERS VISION IN SAHARANPUR

Our forward-looking collaboration with Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in 2007 to create a surgical center serving the rural poor is still transforming lives. In 2021, 2,429 surgeries and 14,691 vision screenings were provided to those in need at the center, located in the Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, India. Saroj (pictured) was one of those who received life-changing cataract surgery after being screened at the center. Our 2021 support for a new ophthalmic microscope will benefit future patients at the center.



OUR GROWING IMPACT IN KEONJHAR

Created in 2018 through our innovative partnership with L.V. Prasad Eye Institute and the Jack DeLoss Taylor Charitable Trust, the Bijayananda Patnaik Eye Center in Keonjhar, India, continues to have a positive impact. In 2021, the center provided 17,439 vision screenings and 804 surgeries. Janaki (pictured) was among those whose sight was restored in June, after she received cataract surgery. Today, she is happily self-sufficient and able to continue earning a living.





Because you cared, 141,463 people received eye care in 2021.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIALS

INCOME

Individuals	\$260,077
Gifts-in-Kind	\$90,913
Grants	\$195,520
Investments	\$74,585
Special Events	\$63,606
Total Income	\$684,701

TOTAL NET ASSETS
\$968,847

EXPENSES

Program Services	
<i>Cataract Program</i>	\$177,423
<i>Pediatric Eye Care</i>	\$63,661
<i>Personnel Training</i>	\$182,704
Program Services Subtotal	\$423,788
Fundraising	\$176,469
Management & General	\$107,479
Total Expenses	\$707,736





CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY

For 37 years, Combat Blindness International has focused on bringing quality eye care to the most vulnerable around the world.

And you have supported us every step of the way, giving literally millions of people equitable access to vision screenings, glasses, surgeries and more, regardless of who they are, where they live, or how much they earn.

With your ongoing commitment, we can continue giving hope to people in low-income areas needlessly suffering from vision loss.

Thanks to you, we will continue to strengthen our adult cataract and pediatric initiatives in India and Africa, while expanding into new regions. We plan to empower even more women with valuable skills and a career path through the Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program. And we're excited about building on the success of our exciting new Aadya Initiative, which aims to expand the reach and scale of CBI's efforts in rural regions.

It is because of you that we are able to give so many the gift of sight, enabling them to continue working, going to school and contributing to their communities.

We are deeply grateful for your generosity and your continued support.





AMY MURRAY: WHY I JOINED CBI



Fifteen years ago my naïve view of the world changed. Even as an adult, I foolishly believed that everyone’s basic needs were met until I accompanied Combat Blindness International and its founder, Dr. Suresh Chandra, to India.

While I anticipated my journey to India to be a humbling, educational and an eye-opening experience, I did

not expect the degree to which I would be affected and how that experience would change my perception of humanity. Seeing firsthand the extraordinary need for medical care, specifically eye care, exposed that there is so much more we could be doing as a nation, through the companies we work for, but most importantly, as individuals.

My time in India with CBI was primarily spent in the free clinics of the large eye hospitals. I witnessed grandparents who were able to see the smiles on their children’s and grandchildren’s faces for the first time in years after receiving sight restoring cataract surgery. However, in contrast there were times where fighting back tears of heartache was nearly impossible, like when I looked into the eyes of a child who faced a lifetime of little-to-no vision in one eye from a simple corneal ulcer. If that had been diagnosed and treated timely, it would have healed without scarring.

This is why I’ve continued to support Combat Blindness International through financial contributions over the years and why I did not hesitate to join their Board of Directors.

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Combat Blindness
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Combat Blindness International
PO Box 5332
Madison, WI 53705

www.combatblindness.org
info@combatblindness.org

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- Become a monthly donor
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- Have your employer match your donation
- Attend World Sight Day

For more details, visit
combatblindness.org or email
us at info@combatblindness.org

Save the Date

CBI BIRTHDAY ONLINE CHALLENGE

Monday, June 27 –
Tuesday, June 28, 2022

CBI WORLD SIGHT DAY EVENT

Thursday, Oct. 13, 2022

For updates, visit combatblindness.org
in the future.

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