



Help Fund Cambodia's First Vision Centre Battambang Ophthalmic Care Centre



The province of Battambang in Northern Cambodia has 13 districts, 96 communes and 750 villages with a population of 1 million, 12,000 of whom are blind. The main causes of blindness in this area are cataract, uncorrected refractive errors, glaucoma, corneal scars and pterygium (skin like growth over the eye). Of these causes of blindness, 80-90% is preventable or treatable. An estimated additional 1,600 Cambodians become blind each year in Battambang, and many people from neighboring areas also come to Battambang seeking eye care services. There is an extreme shortage of health personnel and infrastructure required to combat the identified eye care problems. Prior to Seva's involvement, on average less than 1,000 people per year were receiving sight restoring surgery in Battambang.

Seva Canada is now providing support to the new Battambang Ophthalmic Care Centre (BOCC). This centre provides community outreach and education programs, surgery and follow-up for needlessly blind patients, and support and training to build the capacity of the local doctors and support staff. BOCC is a locally run institution that operates outside of the (somewhat inefficient and ineffective) government structure. In its first 6 months of operation, the BOCC team performed more surgeries than many of Cambodia's government eye clinics perform in an entire year, and alone has increased the cataract surgical rate in Battambang province from 750 to 1,900 per million per year. BOCC has been established based on the successful Aravind and Lumbini models, and is working to become financially self-sustaining over time while continuing to provide essential eye care services to the poor, underserved communities in Battambang. All activities in Cambodia are supported with cost shares from local partners, sometimes including the local government. A full-time ophthalmologist from Nepal with both hospital administration and Cambodian eye camp experience is managing the centre.



BOCC aims to provide 2,000 eye surgeries and see 8,000 outpatients in 2008/2009 with a 20% increase annually in subsequent years. Ultimately, the hope is that by the end of 10 years, the centre will be 100% locally run and financially sustainable. In the meantime, however, there are significant funding needs for community outreach, training and advocacy.

BUDGET

Training of medical & management personnel	\$14,000
3 Surgical camps	\$18,000
Community Outreach *	\$16,000
Subsidies for those too poor to pay	\$10,000
Program implementation costs	\$ 7,250
TOTAL	\$65,250

* Community health involves eye health education campaigns, eye screenings in rural communities, transportation for poor patients, children's school screening programs, eye examinations, surgical referrals and free eyeglasses to children who need them.