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The Ripple Effect of Vision: A Journey from Madurai to Seva Canada



Colin and Dr. Venkataswamy

Nearly 30 years ago, while working for a UK corporation supporting volunteer programs in India, a young professional found himself in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. It was there—at Seva Canada's renowned partner, Aravind Eye Care System—that Colin Williams shared an office with none other than Aravind founder, Dr. Venkataswamy, affectionately known as Dr. V.

Since those early days, Colin has built a distinguished career as a

consultant specializing in personal and organizational development. He has worked with a wide range of high-profile clients, including Visa, Intel, and Lloyds Banking Group. In a particularly unique career chapter, Colin served as co-owner of Wrexham Football Club, where he focused on the soccer club's community-based operations and played a role in its successful sale to Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney in 2021.

While his professional path has taken him around the world and across industries, the time with Dr. V in the mid-1990s left a lasting impression.

"The questions and challenges

Dr. V posed changed my life," he reflects. Inspired by Aravind's "free and paying" model (those that can afford to pay subsidize the cost for those who cannot), Colin left the corporate world a year after his time at Aravind to start his own consulting business, dedicating 10% of both time and profits to projects supporting underserved communities—a model

he continues to honour personally. That formative experience sparked a deep, ongoing commitment to eye care and learning-based development work—a commitment that continues to this day.

Colin's most recent gift has supported Seva Canada's *Evidence in Practice* program, which helps our eye care partners improve their quality of care by fostering a culture of continuous learning. The decision to support this particular program was rooted in trust and connection: *"I'm a big believer in turning to a network of trusted friends when making decisions—and I have plenty of these in Seva."*

One of those friends is Sanil Joseph, Seva Canada Board Member and a colleague of Colin's who visited his UK business years earlier as part of a learning exchange. Sanil recognized that *Evidence in Practice* would be a perfect fit. *"It hit all my buttons,"* Colin says, *"Learning-based interventions build independence, self-reliance, and sustainable value*

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for communities. They provide the best return on investment possible."

What sealed the decision was discovering that among the key players in this initiative is Seva Canada's Program Director, Operations, Katie Judson, a former colleague: *"Knowing Katie was at the helm gave me real confidence in the program's value and impact."*

Colin's support also came with a practical twist: being based in the

UK, he could increase the value of his donation through Gift Aid—a program from the UK government that encourages philanthropy by giving an extra 25p for every £1 given. *"It was a happy confluence of personal, practical, and philosophical reasons,"* he says.

What began in a small, shared office in Madurai has rippled outward—across decades, across borders, and across lives. That ripple continues through

Colin's support of Seva Canada's work: *"Inspired by Dr. V, Aravind, and Seva, I have fully embraced the principles of 'enabling' as opposed to 'helping'."* As he puts it, *"It's about creating long-term change, rooted in knowledge and local leadership. That's the true impact of restoring sight."*

Thank you, Colin, for continuing to inspire change through your vision and generosity!



Seeing the Ripples of Your **Compassion**

Dear Seva Canada Supporters,

Thank you for your steadfast support of Seva Canada. In a world facing so much turbulence, your commitment is a grounding force—and a reminder of what truly matters.

At Seva, we are guided by simple values: **hope, dignity, and the interconnectedness of all people.**

These are not just ideals—they are living practices. And through your generosity, they come to life.

Restoring sight is more than medical care. It's an expression of compassion that creates ripple effects reaching far beyond what we can see. When someone regains their sight, they thrive, their family is uplifted, and their community grows stronger.

We see these ripples every day and I hope this newsletter highlights a few of them for you: a child receiving glasses returns to school with confidence, ready to meet life's opportunities; a manufacturing facility in India makes cataract surgery affordable worldwide; and research mentorship leads to partner-led studies that improve eye care for thousands, increase global eye health knowledge, and elevate the skills and stature of these most dedicated eye care professionals. These are stories of transformation—sparked by you.

I'm continually inspired by those who see Seva Canada as a way to bring their values into the world—simply and effectively. The power of good vision transforms lives, no matter

one's age, gender, location, income, education or faith. At its core, Seva's work is beautifully simple: to bring the gift of vision to those who need it most. This newsletter is filled with stories of impact and ripple effects—all made possible by you. Let's all continue to dream of a world free of avoidable blindness, where everyone, everywhere, enjoys all the gifts their best possible vision can bring.

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Liz Brant".

Liz Brant
Executive Director

You're Invited: Seva Canada's 43rd Annual General Meeting

We are delighted to invite you to Seva Canada's **43rd Annual General Meeting**, taking place on **Wednesday, November 5th**—and this year, we're going fully digital!

Join us via **Zoom** from the comfort of your sofa, garden, or corner office as we reflect on a year of growth, impact, and exciting new partnerships.

In addition to a presentation of our financial results, we'll be sharing key highlights from the past year, including:

- The launch of our new partnership in **Peru** with *Clinica Oftalmológica Divino Niño Jesus*,
- Our exciting new initiatives underway in **India**, including both direct eye care services and partner capacity building, **and**
- The expansion of our programs in **Sub-Saharan Africa** and **Cambodia**.

We hope you'll join us to celebrate how your support has helped restore sight and transform lives around the world.

Event Details

Date: Wednesday, November 5, 2025 | **Time:** 5pm PST / 8pm EST

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87960305832>

No passcode required

Please RSVP: <https://bit.ly/2025SevaAGM>



Please Note:

Everyone is welcome to attend the AGM, however, to be considered a member of Seva Canada Society and eligible to vote at our AGM, a person must have donated a minimum of \$20 between November 15, 2024 and October 29, 2025. Any member may be nominated to the Board of Directors by submitting a letter signed by a nominator and a seconder, both of whom must be members in good standing of Seva Canada Society. Letters can be sent to the Seva Canada office to the attention of the Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee.



Love Your Eyes this World Sight Day!



Thursday, October 9th

Join eye care advocates around the world in celebrating **World Sight Day**—a global event led by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) that shines a light on the importance of eye health.

With over **1 billion people** living with preventable or treatable vision loss, this day is more than just a reminder—it's a movement. A movement to protect your vision, support your local community and the international community, and say loud and clear: **#LoveYourEyes!**



How You Can Get Involved:

1. **Book an eye exam** for yourself and your family—it's the simplest way to protect your sight.
2. **Encourage your friends, coworkers, and neighbours** to do the same. A little nudge can go a long way!
3. **Spread the word on social media!** Share facts, stories, or your own experience using the hashtags **#WorldSightDay** and **#LoveYourEyes**.
4. **Get the kids in on it!** Download free World Sight Day activities — like colouring pages and word scrambles— at seva.ca/news/world-sight-day



Easy Everyday Eye Care Tips:

- Rock those **UV-protective sunglasses**
- Enjoy a **healthy, well-balanced diet**
- Take a **break from screens** (your eyes will thank you!)

World Sight Day is about more than awareness – it is a call to action to ensure that everyone around the world has access to the power of sight.

Where Compassion Meets Precision: The Global Impact of Aurolab



Aurolab facilities in Madurai, India

At Aurolab's manufacturing facility in Madurai, India, precision and purpose fill every corner. Young women from nearby villages expertly operate advanced machinery, producing intraocular lenses (IOLs) used in cataract surgery to replace the eye's natural lens—helping restore sight around the world. It's a notable impressive example of what's possible when a bold idea is rooted in compassion and carried forward with care.

In the early 1990s, the high cost of IOLs—up to \$300 each—made cataract surgery inaccessible for millions. Together with the Canadian government's International Development Agency (CIDA), Seva Canada backed an ambitious solution: the development of a local Indian facility to produce high-quality, affordable lenses. Since then, Aurolab has enhanced that original locally-based vision to give it a truly global impact. Today, one of its lenses is implanted every nine seconds in over 160 countries— at a cost of around \$3.

Beyond IOLs, Aurolab now manufactures sutures, pharmaceuticals, and other essential ophthalmic supplies. But perhaps most striking is how the organization's values

still permeate the space. Behind the high-tech buildings on the Aurolab property lies an organic farm and, at the edge of the campus, a serene memorial to Dr. G. Venkataswamy (Dr. V), Aravind's founder. It includes a museum, library, and meditation hall—a reminder that this work is ultimately about service to humanity. Dr. V understood that restoring sight was not just a medical service, but a calling that transforms lives and communities.

This holistic approach is part of the larger vision of Aravind Eye Care System, an organization that has fundamentally transformed how eye care is delivered worldwide. From an 11-bed hospital in 1976, Aravind has grown into one of the world's largest eye care providers, proving that high-quality, high-volume, low-cost, sustainable care is possible even in resource-constrained settings. Seva Canada continues to collaborate with Aravind, including on the LEAP training program, which shares Aravind's expertise with other hospitals and eye care professionals, including Seva's existing partners.



Aurolab is a powerful example of how a single idea—supported by committed partners and carried forward by skilled, dedicated individuals—can cascade into global change. Seva Canada is proud to have been there at the beginning of this remarkable journey. Today, with nearly all our program partners relying on

Aurolab products in their sight-restoring work, it's clear that the most sustainable and prolific solutions often emerge from within the communities being served.

Outreach Support in Peru Through Partnership with **Clinica Oftalmológica Divino Niño Jesus**

Thanks to your generous support, Seva Canada has expanded its work to South America for the first time through a new partnership with Clinica Oftalmologica Divino Niño Jesus (DNJ) in Peru. DNJ is a non-profit eye care hospital system with two hospitals: one in Lima, and



Alberto D. Lazo Legua, Executive Director, DNJ with staff and patients on a recent river outreach

the other in Iquitos. Their mission is to prevent blindness and restore sight in the most vulnerable and low-income populations by offering comprehensive eye care services with quality and professionalism. Sadly, DNJ's services are needed now more than ever: the COVID-19 pandemic caused a severe recession in Peru, where nearly 30% of people now live in poverty.

Our partnership focuses on allowing DNJ to provide more services to patients who cannot afford to pay. In

Lima, our support is focused on strengthening their sub-specialty services to provide treatments and surgeries that preserve what sight patients have left after being diagnosed with degenerative eye diseases.

In Iquitos, we support outreach activities for patients living in extremely remote rural areas without regular access to eye care—some along the Amazon River, only accessible by boat. The first of these outreach activities was carried out in Tamshiyacu in April, where 121 people were screened, and 24 were brought to Iquitos by boat for surgery. This was the first time people living in the area had access to any eye health services since 2018!



We are extremely proud and grateful to support DNJ in fulfilling their mission and providing high-quality eye care to the people of Peru.

Remembering Dr. P. Namperumalsamy

Chairman Emeritus, Aravind Eye Care System 1940-2025



Dr. P. Namperumalsamy

Seva profoundly mourns the loss of Dr. P. Namperumalsamy, the beloved Chairman Emeritus of Aravind Eye Care System. His warm, welcoming, and inspirational presence will be greatly missed.

As one of the founding members of Aravind, he was also instrumental in the establishment and shaping of Seva as an organization. He led both organizations to ensure clinical excellence and to provide care with compassion to those most in need.

As an ophthalmologist, he pioneered the treatment of vitreo-retinal disorders in India and trained thousands of ophthalmologists, spreading these specialized skills across India and far beyond. He worked tirelessly to free the world of blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy.

More recently, he led Aravind to embrace research, supporting both the creation of physical infrastructure and the hiring of basic and clinical scientists. His demanding presence and kind support of new and established researchers alike have propelled Aravind into a globally respected research institution.

He leaves behind a path and a standard to inspire current and future generations around the world.



Make a Bigger Impact— **Give the Gift of Securities**

Restore Sight and Receive Valuable Tax Benefits

Did you know that donating publicly traded securities is one of the most tax-effective ways to support Seva Canada?

By giving shares directly, you can eliminate capital gains tax and receive a tax receipt for the full market value of your gift. That means more of your donation goes directly to restoring sight and transforming lives.

It's a meaningful way to give—and a smart way to save.

Contact Erika at ErikaKinast@seva.ca to learn more.

How You've Helped

Because You Gave, People Across Tanzania Can See Clearly and Live Fully



HONEY & BARRY SHERMAN *legacy foundation*

Because of your generosity—and the extraordinary support of the **Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation**—our spring campaign reached its goal. Together, we raised **\$65,000**, which was triple-matched by the Foundation to an astounding **\$260,000** in sight-saving care!

"We are thrilled to support Seva Canada and its work to expand community-based eye care around the world," said Alex Krawczyk, founder of the Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation. *"This gift builds on the legacy of my parents who were committed to advancing health equity for everyone."*

Funds raised are already at work, expanding access to eye care in Tanzania by:

- Launching new outreach programs to connect children and adults in rural areas with life-changing screenings, glasses, medicine, and surgeries.
- Supporting pediatric ophthalmology training at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) so that local residents are equipped to treat complex childhood eye conditions.
- Addressing the barriers women and girls face in accessing care—helping them reclaim their independence and their futures.

On behalf of everyone who will see a clearer, brighter future because of you—thank you!



From Blurred Vision to a Bright Future: **Prebheksya's Story**



Prebheksya studying while wearing her new glasses

Thirteen-year-old Prebheksya sat in her classroom in rural Nepal, struggling to read the blackboard, her textbooks, and even see the faces of her friends. She never spoke up. She didn't know her vision was different—she just thought everyone saw the world in a blur.

Grade 7 slipped by in a haze. Despite her best efforts, her marks suffered. However, Prebheksya was determined to do better, vowing to study harder the following year, never realizing that what she needed wasn't more effort—it was eye care.

Then a Seva-sponsored school screening run by the local Community Eye Centre changed everything. Prebheksya had her vision tested for the very first time. The problem was clear: she needed prescription glasses.

When she returned home with the news, her parents were shocked—they believed children were too young to suffer from vision problems. They had no idea their bright daughter had been navigating a world that was out of focus.

Today, Prebheksya is thriving in Grade 10. She wears her glasses every day, and her grades—and confidence—are rising.

Her parents now understand how life-changing a simple eye exam can be: *"We are truly thankful to Bijuwar Community Eye Centre and Seva for helping our daughter see clearly and succeed in her studies. Thank you!"*



Prebheksya and her family

Thanks to the power of sight and donors like you, Prebheksya is back on the path to achieving her dreams.



Building Research Skills in Eye Care: A Collaborative Effort Across India and Nepal



In low-resource settings, eye care professionals are often the ones who best understand the challenges and opportunities for improving services. However, many lack the skills and support to conduct operational research that can drive meaningful, lasting change.

To help close this gap, Seva Canada and the PRASHO Foundation have launched the **Evidence in Practice (EIP)** program. This three-year program will equip 10 eye hospitals—five in India and five in Nepal—with the skills and tools to create and use local evidence for improving care.

The program is built around seven key work areas and offers a step-by-step, hands-on learning experience.

- **Phase One:** Hospital teams learn how to design research projects, write study protocols, and submit them for ethics approval.
- **Phase Two:** Participants receive ongoing mentorship as they collect and analyze data, prepare their findings for publication, and dissemination.

What is operational research?

Operational research (OR) is the discipline of using scientific methods, mathematics, and analytical models to help make better decisions and solve complex problems.

EIP's training approach is based on proven models used by global health organizations, such as the Cooke framework. Learning takes place through in-person workshops, virtual sessions, curated online resources, and regular progress check-ins.

With its learning-by-doing approach, EIP empowers eye care teams to become self-sufficient in identifying and solving real-world challenges within their institutions. It also works to build a lasting culture of curiosity, problem-solving, and improvement.

The ultimate goal is to see more locally led research that informs policy, strengthens health systems, and improves eye health outcomes across South Asia.

School Has Started— But Millions Still Can't See the Board

This school year, give a child the gift of glasses—and the chance to thrive.



As students around the world head back to class with fresh school supplies and big dreams, **448 million children in need are missing something essential: the ability to see clearly.**

Uncorrected poor vision is the world's most widespread unaddressed disability—and one of the easiest to fix. For many children, vision problems mean falling behind in class, missing out on friendships, and feeling left out of a future full of promise.

It doesn't have to be this way.

80% of what a child learns is processed through vision, and a simple pair of prescription glasses can open up a child's world—instantly. When kids can see, they can engage, achieve, and dream bigger.

This back-to-school season, you can help change a child's life for just \$5—the cost of a single pair of sight-restoring glasses.

No child should fall behind for lack of glasses. Help them see, learn, and thrive.

Give the gift of glasses today! Just

- \$5 provides **1 child** with a pair of glasses
- \$25 provides **5 children** with prescription glasses
- \$50 helps fund a **school screening** to find kids in need of eye care
- \$100 provides **20 children** with prescription glasses



"Now I can see everything," 13-year-old Kanha Theara in Cambodia said with a bright smile. "I feel so happy and thankful. I want to say a big thank you to Seva Canada, to my teacher, and to the staff at the Community

Eye Centre. You gave me my vision back. Now, I believe my dream of becoming a teacher one day is possible."

You can help kids just like Kanha regain their futures full of endless possibilities.

Donate at seva.ca/glasses or by **filling in the enclosed form**

Become a Monthly Donor

Restore sight & prevent blindness. Every month.

Join ForSight, Seva Canada's community of monthly donors committed to providing the means, opportunity, and capacity for people in low- and middle-income countries to receive surgery, glasses and medicine, so they can build brighter futures. For more information, visit our website at seva.ca/monthly-giving or call 1-877-460-6622.

FOR SIGHT

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Donating every month makes me feel like I'm making a small difference. It's simply amazing that a 15-minute cataract procedure can change someone's life.

— Laurent P.

About Seva Canada

Vision

Seva Canada's vision is a world in which no one is needlessly blind or visually impaired.

Mission

Seva Canada's mission is to restore sight and prevent blindness in low- and middle-income countries.

Guiding Principles

We are guided by:

- Our belief in equal access to eye care for all
- Our belief that with adequate resources, all people can meet their own needs
- Our commitment to working with international partners to build local, sustainable eye care programs
- Our respect for cultural, ethnic, spiritual and other forms of diversity
- Our commitment to inform and inspire Canadians to join us in achieving our mission

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