



Providing Clinical Eye Care for Pediatric Patients In West Bengal, India



A student is examined during an eye screening camp at Sulani High School on August 29, 2016.

A Report to SoorAurSaptak™

March 1, 2016– June 30, 2017

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BACKGROUND

Seva Foundation (“Seva”) is a global nonprofit eye care organization that transforms lives by restoring sight and preventing blindness. Since its founding in 1978, Seva’s programs have helped nearly 4 million blind people regain their sight in more than 20 countries. Seva partners with organizations and hospitals to train local eye care providers and build self-sustaining eye care clinics that provide critical eye care to underserved communities, especially women, children, and indigenous peoples. Restoring sight has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to relieve suffering and reduce poverty, and Seva’s programs have been instrumental in making eye care available to underserved communities for nearly 40 years. Our work with pediatric ophthalmology builds on our years of experience and relies on a network of experts around the globe.

Through the Soor Aur Saptak™ Fund, Seva and its partners work to assure that Indian children with sight threatening eye health conditions receive the care they need. The Soor Aur Saptak™ Fund enables these children to receive advanced surgical care to save and/or restore their sight regardless of their family’s ability to cover the costs.

PROJECT HISTORY

In 2015, the Soor Aur Saptak™ Fund began to support children in West Bengal, India. Vivekenanda Mission Asram Netra Niramay Niketan (VMANN) has offered community-oriented eye care services to an underserved region of rural India since 1994. VMANN’s eye hospital in Chaitanyapur provides approximately 20,000 surgeries annually and offers the only pediatric ophthalmology, cornea, and glaucoma specialty services in the area. In 2014, VMANN opened a new hospital in Chandi to further meet the need for essential eye care in that part of West Bengal. With support from the Soor Aur Saptak™ Fund, Seva funded the procurement and installation of a new anesthesia machine, as well as a fund to support pediatric surgeries. Before Soor Aur Saptak™ provided the anesthesia machine, pediatric surgeries could not be performed at this new hospital. Now, every month children are able to have surgery and receive some level of sight again.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES (March 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)

Since our last narrative report, VMANN further utilized the surgical fund established in honor of Soor Aur Saptak™. From March to June, 2016, VMANN continued to provide eye care services to children at Chandi Hospital. During this period, 2,589 children received eye examinations, of which 12 received eye surgery. Over 65% of the children who received surgery suffered from some form of cataract, including congenital, lamellar, stellate, traumatic and zonular. In total, 51 pediatric surgeries were provided with the gift from the Soor Aur Saptak™ Fund in 2015.

In June 2016, the project expanded its reach by providing more comprehensive pediatric eye care through school screenings. VMANNN not only expanded its own school screening program, but also partnered with the government, who worked with VMANNN to provide screenings for children on the government's behalf across West Bengal. Although the government funds screenings, surgeries, and low-vision devices, these services are not available to all children. With support from Soor Aur Saptak™, VMANNN helped close this gap by reaching children where government services are unavailable, specifically in Purba Medinipur and Paschim Medinipur district and 20 out of 29 blocks in South 24 Parganas. VMANNN supported sight-saving services for children identified through school screenings by providing low vision devices and medical treatment as well as covering the costs of surgery and the cost of travel for attendants during surgery and medical treatment of children. Funds from Soor Aur Saptak™ allowed for more comprehensive eye care provision to more than 18,000 children who needed it.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

School screenings are a critical part of primary eye care, particularly in areas that lack a well-established eye care infrastructure. By reaching children during their school years, children with improved vision have a brighter future for many years to come. During the screenings, outreach teams can detect conditions that may arise over time and ultimately prevent long-term complications. With support from Soor Aur Saptak™, VMANNN examined 18,156 children through 47 school screening camps in West Bengal, who may not otherwise have access to crucial eye care.

Here are a few of the children that received eye surgeries supported by Soor Aur Saptak™.



RUPALI, age 6

Treated for traumatic cataract.



PRADIP, age 14

Treated for developmental cataract.



SUMANA, age 13

Treated for squint correction and membranectomy.



SATYABAN, age 15

Treated for cataract.



RUPALI, age 5

Treated for corneal tear.

This year, the Fund supported necessary eye care to children identified through school screenings as well as the cost of pediatric surgeries for families who could not afford it. Through this support, VMANN provided eye care services to 309 children. After screening the students, VMANN provided 153 spectacles, performed 149 surgeries and administered 7 medical treatments.

Of the 309 children who received care through the Fund, 44% were young girls. Over 29% of children who received surgery suffered from some form of cataract, including traumatic, congenital, developmental and other variations. The second most common diagnosis was for corneal-related conditions, including opacity, scarring, perforation and penetrating injuries. Other children were treated for conditions such as glaucoma, injury, cysts and ptosis.

LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming year, VMANN will conduct a school screening program in Purba Medinipur and South 24 Parganas Districts, as well as 10 other districts in West Bengal. This will reach 12 out of the 23 districts in West Bengal with support from the Soor Aur Saptak™ Fund. The funds raised at the February 2017 Bollywood event, which to date total \$40,769, will cover the costs of low vision devices, medical treatment, costs for pediatric surgery and travel cost of attendants during surgery and medical treatment for children. This fund will be used to cover those children who would not otherwise receive eye care. Furthermore, the funds will be used to purchase one necessary monitor for the General Anesthesia Machine at Chandi Eye Hospital. Finally, the funds will be used to begin a long-term fellowship in Pediatric Ophthalmology. In order to do this, key instruments and additional equipment will be needed for the pediatric clinic of the hospital. By offering this fellowship, more ophthalmologists will be trained in how to provide high quality, appropriate care for babies and children.

The main objectives for the coming year are to:

- 1) Provide necessary eye care to children identified through school screening who will not receive care for surgery, low vision devices, medical treatment and other essential care;
- 2) Subsidize the cost of pediatric surgeries for those families who cannot afford the expenses of required surgery for their children; and
- 3) Cover the equipment for both the anesthesia machine as well as the expansion of the pediatric clinic to provide fellowships.

On behalf of all the children served and their families, Seva Foundation and our partners, the Pediatric Departments at VMANN and LEI, we offer our sincere thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Bhide and Soor Aur Saptak™ for giving children the opportunity to see and the chance to thrive.

FINANCE REPORT

	Funds Received	Funds Distributed to Partner	Funds Utilized to support		Balance
			Pediatric Eye Care	Pediatric Surgical Fund	
Lumbini Eye Institute Pediatric Surgical Support	\$18,212	\$18,212		\$18,212	\$0
VMANN Pediatric Program 2015-16	\$18,602	\$25,000 ¹	\$20,000 – Anesthesia Machine	\$5,000	\$0 – Anesthesia Machine \$0 – Pediatric Surgical Fund
VMANN Pediatric Program 2016-17	\$27,413 ²	\$24,000	\$12,700 – School Screenings (Equipment, logistics, travel, medical treatment, spectacles) \$500 – Travel for patients	\$10,800	\$6,593 This balance will be used to continue the pediatric program in 2017.

¹Seva provided additional support in the name of the Soor Aur Saptak Fund to provide surgical support along with the support for the anesthesia machine

² More funds were raised than anticipated. The remaining \$3,413 will be rolled into FY17-18.