



SIGHT FOR ALL

Community Eye Care Support to School Going Children and Senior Citizens of Panchkhal and Kolhavi Municipalities in Nepal



Photo Credit: Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology

FINAL REPORT – 2025

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Brief Summary of Key Achievements

The Sight for All project was initiated in March 2025 with support from The SIGHT Group and Grande Social Foundation. Through collaboration with Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology (TIO) as the implementing partners, the project was established with the overarching goal to expand equitable access to essential eye care services for hard-to-reach communities across Kolhavi, Panchkhal, and Mustang. The project aims to achieve this through a combination of capacity building, school- and community-based vision screening, spectacle provision, and referral for specialized care. Initially planned for implementation from March to May 2025, the project was extended through December 2025, with Mustang added as an additional implementation district to address unmet needs in remote settings.

In Kolhavi, activities were completed by June where a total of 276 individuals were screened at community screening camps. From these screening events, 65 individuals were logged for cataract surgery, of which 41 successfully underwent surgical intervention. Vision screenings were conducted across four schools with refraction performed on 463 students, achieving of the projected target. A total of 30 students received glasses to correct refractive errors. Capacity building efforts exceeded expectations where 106 individuals, including schoolteachers, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), and Community Health Workers (CHWs), were trained in basic eye health.

In Panchkhal, implementation experienced delays due to coordination challenges between municipal authorities and Tilganga Eye Hospital, Bhaktapur. In 2025, 29 FCHVs have been trained. A total of 31 teachers were trained on basic vision screening who subsequently conducted vision screenings for 2,202 students across local schools. Referred students were assessed by the Bhaktapur team, which conducted refraction for 380 students, of whom 33 received corrective spectacles. In November, 19 healthcare workers were trained on primary eye care at panchkhal.

In Mustang, a cataract surgical camp supported by the Cure Blindness Project was conducted in May. SG-GSF initiated district-level activities by supporting municipal screenings through the provision of essential medicines, community mobilisation, and patient transportation. In November, 26 FCHVs, 19 CHWs and 21 schoolteachers were trained. Trained teachers subsequently screened 869 students from their schools. Among students who were referred to CECs 53 have received spectacles. Community screenings reached 326 individuals, of whom 66 received free reading glasses with SG support.

Background

Access to quality eye care remains a significant challenge in many parts of Nepal, particularly among school-aged children, working adults, and senior citizens in semi-urban and rural municipalities. Uncorrected refractive errors, cataracts, and other eye health problems continue to affect learning, productivity, and overall quality of life. Early detection and timely intervention are crucial to prevent avoidable blindness and improve eye health outcomes.

The project “SIGHT FOR ALL (Sabaika Lagi Drishti)” is designed to address these challenges by providing comprehensive community and school-based eye care services in Ward 1 and 2 of Panchkhal Municipality (Kavrepalanchok District), Ward 5 of Kolhavi Municipality (Bara District) and Mustang District. This initiative aims to benefit school children, adults above 40 years, and senior citizens through a combination of preventive, curative, and awareness-focused interventions.

Key interventions under the project include training school teachers, nurses, and community health workers on eye care, conducting comprehensive school health check-ups, providing spectacles to children with refractive errors, referring cases for further medical evaluation, raising community awareness, organizing community eye screenings, and facilitating cataract surgeries for those in need.

The project targets direct beneficiaries including school-aged children, adults aged 40–60, and senior citizens, with operable cataract surgeries planned. Indirect beneficiaries include families, school staff, and community health workers, contributing to a wider community impact. Supported jointly by the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology (TIO), the SIGHT Group, Grande Social Foundation (GSF), and local municipalities, the project aligns health and education interventions to improve eye health outcomes and promote inclusive access to eye care services.

Aim of project

To improve access to quality eye care services and promote eye health awareness among communities and school-aged children in Panchkhal, Kolhavi, and Mustang districts of Nepal

Objectives of the Projects

The project objectives are as below.

General

- Expand equitable access to essential eye care services

Specific:

- Build capacity for FCHVs, School Teachers and CHWs for vision screening and identify ocular abnormalities
- Create community awareness on eye health
- Support to conduct School and community-based screening program
- Provide Spectacle for refractive errors cases
- Refer cataract and other abnormal cases for further surgery and management

Key Stakeholders

i. Nepal Eye Program, Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology (NEP-TIO)

Nepal Eye Program (NEP) established in 1992 as a not-for-profit, community based, non-government organization and Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology (TIO) is an implementing body of NEP. It provides eye care services through hospital based and community settings. TIO is running three secondary level community eye hospitals in Hetauda, Bhaktapur and Nijgadh along 25 Surgical/Community eye centres and expanding eye care services with partnership of government bodies, more than 45 urban and rural eye centers across Nepal.

NEP-TIO has been implementing various community outreach programs such as community screening, Outreach Micro-Surgical Eye Clinics (OMEC), community volunteer's orientation/training, in collaborating with government and non-governmental organizations at both national and international levels. This has helped to increase the access to quality eye care services. Through both hospital and community services, NEP-TIO has provided eye care to 9.81 million people and performed over 615,000 surgeries in its 32 years of operation

ii. SIGHT Group (SG)

SIGHT Group is an informal group established by Retired staff from the United Nations and other multilateral organizations to support community eye care programs in Nepal. Around 24 members have shown interest to join this group and collaborate with other partners with Moto of “SIGHT for ALL” – “SABAIIKA LAGI DRISHTI”.

iii. Grande Social Foundation (GSF)

Grande Social Foundation was established as a non-profit making company with a broad vision to promote Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Nepal through careful understanding of social sectors, supporting their enhancement and contributing towards the holistic development of the community in the long run. The team commenced with a project to support six government schools in Panchkhal Municipality of Kavrepalanchok district. The achievements acquired to date has proven to be immensely encouraging and meaningful for the team to further aim to scale up CSR activities in Panchkhal and eventually in other districts. This has further prompted GSF to engage their attention not only in education sector, but also in other sectors such as health, environment, livelihood and income generating activities. When it comes to quality education, the majority of Nepalese people have always been hesitant about government schools.

Implementation Modality

The implementation of the project was following a structured modality: internal agreement on the proposal finalized by 16th February, followed by fundraising completion by 20th February.

A tripartite MoU between TIO, GSF, and SG will be signed by 25th February (Amended in 1 March 2025), with funds from GSF and SG transferred to TIO on the same day. Local governance bodies of Panchkhal and Kolhavi was provide advocacy and commitment, while SG and GSF led community mobilization and awareness activities. Local support, including communication, advocacy, and patient transportation, ensured by the respective stakeholders. TIO provided technical support for all community eye care interventions as outlined in the proposal and was also be responsible for monitoring, follow-up, and preparation of the final report.

Implementation Status of Planned Activities

		Kolhavi		Panchkhal		Mustang		Remarks
S. N.	Activities	Target	Achievements	Target	Achievements	Target	Achievements	
1.	Training of school teachers and school nurses	10	11	10	31	20	21	
2.	Orientation of eye care to FCHV	68	64	70	29	20	26	
3.	Training to CHWs including AHW/ANM	20	31	20	19	20	19	
4.	School health check-ups including eye care for students	650	463	650	2202	500	869	
5.	Provision of glasses for school children with refraction error	60	30	60	33	20	53	
6.	Community based eye screening	400	276	400	500+	350	326	500+ screened by CHWs
7.	Reading Glass distribution	120	53	288	0	100	66	
8.	Cataract Surgery	50	41	70	17	50	25	Medicine support
	Total							

Challenges and Mitigation Measures Taken

S.N	Challenges	Mitigation Measures
1.	Language barriers during community screenings in Kolhavi limited effective communication with beneficiaries.	Relied on accompanying patients or family members for translation and interpretation
2.	Delays in transportation arrangements for patients in Kolhavi affected surgical uptake	Limited ability to mitigate during the event. Some patients came independently.
3.	School-based activities in Panchkhal that were scheduled for April were suspended due to an extended teachers' strike.	Activities were rescheduled and implemented in May and June after schools reopened.
4.	Teacher training in Panchkhal was conducted on the day of arrival, resulting in limited preparation time.	No mitigation. Another training was scheduled over two days.
5.	Mobilizing staff for comprehensive screening camps proved difficult due to a shortage of trained eye health personnel in Mustang.	Screening camps were spread over two days to ensure quality care with a smaller team
6.	Seasonal migration and school closures during winter months affected follow-up attendance of students referred to CECs.	Referred students were followed up once schools reopen
7.	Screening and surgical camps conducted by another NGO across Panchkhal (November) reduced immediate need for additional screening and surgical activities during the reporting period.	Strengthen advance coordination with municipal authorities and partners to map interventions and avoid overlap.

Stakeholder Consultation

- In Kolhavi, a regional eye health workshop was held in March with participation from TIO, Shivam Pharmaceutical, Sahaj Foundation Nepal, and officials from five local municipalities. Stakeholders identified cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and uncorrected refractive errors as priority issues and agreed on practical steps to improve service delivery.

- Feedback collected during community screening and surgical events highlighted the need for having a longer promotion run prior to events and to provide services with wider geographic coverage.
- Initial coordination meetings in Panchkhal were followed by limited engagement due to the teachers' strikes throughout April and fiscal year-end constraints in June.
- Municipal authorities were actively involved and provided partial financial subsidies during the screening camps enabling opportunities for continued collaboration on providing integrated eye health services.

Lessons Learned

Kolhavi -

- Transport logistics need active follow-up, even with written agreements
- Language support is essential. Local translators or bilingual team members should be included in field teams if possible
- Delayed promotion results in low attendance at camps

Panchkhal -

- Regular coordination with municipal actors is necessary to maintain momentum of planned activities
- The April teachers' strike caused full program suspension. Future activity calendars should include contingency weeks and alternate delivery modes in case of similar disruptions
- Conducting trainings immediately after travel limits preparation time; scheduling at least one preparation day before training is recommended.

Mustang –

- Continuous coordination with municipal authorities is essential to mitigate implementation delays caused by scheduling conflicts with other health programs.

Human Interest Story

Story -1

- “I can see that there is a person standing in front of me, but I cannot make out their face to recognise them.”
- Like many elderly people, Tugar Chaudhary (56 years old) had come to accept living with blurry vision. In Nepal, 1.05% of the population above the age of 50 lives with some form of visual impairment, with untreated cataracts responsible for about 83% of such cases.
- To address this, Sight Group and Grande Social Foundation have partnered up with the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology to bring cataract surgical services directly to underserved communities. TIO has a long history of providing eye health care, including but not limited to conducting screenings and Outreach Microsurgical Eye Camps (OMEC), in remote areas of Nepal.
- The Terai belt experiences a particularly high prevalence of cataracts, and many people in this region face significant challenges in accessing treatment due to factors like distance, cost, and lack of awareness. In response, screening camps were held in March of 2025 in Kolhavi Municipality followed by an OMEC at the Nijgadh Tilganga Community Eye Hospital, which is part of the NEP-TIO network. There, 42 patients received cataract surgery with the help of SG-GSF, offering them a chance to regain their sight and improve their quality of life.
- Chaudhary, 56, was unaware of the cause of his vision loss and he only discovered he had cataracts when the SG-GSF supported screening camp came to his municipality. After getting his vision checked, he was able to undergo free cataract surgery, within his own municipality, within just a week of his diagnosis, preventing the need to travel long distances.
- Like Chaudhary, many other patients, some of whom had been living with impaired vision for up to five years, were able to experience relief and see clearly again, feeling as though they were finally able to "see the light" once more. Patients shared that the process, from screening to surgery, was simple and efficient, expressing how seamless it was and how comfortable they were made to feel throughout.
- One of the biggest benefits of the screening camps is that patients can receive treatment at an earlier stage, before their vision worsens further. As MP Achyut Manili, who was present during the OMEC events in Nijgadh, shared: “These screenings help catch eye problems early, allowing for cataracts to be treated before it becomes more serious.” He emphasised how grateful he was for the positive impact of the screenings and expressed a desire to expand existing programs to address childhood eye health issues as well.



- For Dr. Mohan Krishna Shrestha, Outreach Manager at TIO, and Mr. Deepak Subedi, Acting In-Charge at Nijgadh Tilganga Community Eye Hospital (NTCEH), the process begins long before patients even arrive at the surgical camp. As Dr. Shrestha explained, the team at TIO sets a target for the number of patients to be screened and surgeries to be performed, then chooses screening sites in areas where underserved communities can be best reached. For this particular mixed-partner camp, a target of 500 patients was set. Mr. Subedi then oversaw the logistics, negotiating with municipalities and ward offices to facilitate the screening and surgical camps across Bara district.
- Dr Hari Banskota on behalf of Sight Group highlighted the importance of community screening involving local health staff as a part of primary eye care in line with Nepal Government's Eye Policy and Strategy. He expressed his continuous support for community and school based primary eye care and cataract surgery to needy people.
- With the support of SG-GSF, Mr. Subedi was able to expand eye-health efforts beyond treatment, focusing also on health promotion by training community health workers within Kolhavi on how to identify and treat basic eye health issues. He also shared upcoming plans to target eye health issues in children by extending screening activities into schools across Chandrapur, Kolhavi, and Sarlahi Municipalities with the aim to serve even more communities in need across the district.

Story -2

- Sonam Wandi Gurung (8/M) is a student studying at Dhaulagiri Boarding School, where he had been facing difficulty seeing clearly, especially while reading from the board in the classroom.
- In November, a basic eye care teacher training on school eye health was conducted with the support of Sight Group, in close collaboration with the local government and the school, and was jointly organized by the Nepal Eye Program, Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, and Community Eye Centre Mustang to strengthen school-level eye care services.
- Following this training, the trained teachers actively conducted vision screening in 26 November 2025, during which a total of 16 students were screened, demonstrating the practical application of the skills gained from the training.
- During this screening process, Sonam was identified with refractive errors, which had been affecting his learning and classroom participation.
- He was then referred to the eye care center, where he received a proper examination and was provided with free spectacles.
- After regularly using the spectacles, his vision improved significantly, enabling him to see clearly both in the classroom and during his studies.
- With improved vision, Sonam became more confident, more attentive in class, and actively engaged in learning activities.
- As a result, his academic performance improved, contributing to a better quality of education and overall learning experience.



Conclusion

In conclusion, the “SIGHT FOR ALL (**Sabaika Lagi Drishti**)” project has demonstrated a meaningful contribution to improving access to essential eye care services across Kolhavi, Panchkhal, and Mustang districts through strong collaboration among partners and local stakeholders. Despite implementation challenges such as coordination delays, staffing limitations, and contextual barriers, the project successfully delivered key interventions including capacity building, large-scale school and community screenings, spectacle distribution, and cataract surgeries. The integration of school-based approaches and community outreach not only enhanced early detection and treatment of eye conditions but also strengthened local capacity for sustained eye health promotion. Overall, the project highlights the effectiveness of coordinated, community-centered strategies in addressing avoidable visual impairment and provides a strong foundation for future scale-up and sustainability.

Annexures

Financial Contribution

Description-Event	Total Contribution	Sight Group Contribution	NEP-TIO Contribution
Fund Received (3 times)		584,000.00	
Community Screening	113,567.05		
School Screening	112,210.00		
Training	358,222.95		
Cataract Surgery	631,400.00		
Monitoring/Reporting	25,000.00		
Grand Total	1,240,400.00	584,000.00	656,400.00
Site	Total Contribution	Sight Group Contribution	NEP-TIO Contribution
Kolhavi	534,533.00	190,000.00	344,533.00
Lete	413,334.00	200,000.00	213,334.00
Panchkhal	292,533.00	194,000.00	98,533.00
Grand Total	1,240,400.00	584,000.00	656,400.00

Fund Received

03- March 2025	1,90,000
23-May 2025.....	1,94,000
03-July 2025.....	2,00,000
Total.....	.5,84,000

Expenditure Contribution

Grandi Social Foundation	1,94,000
Sight Group.....	3,90,000
NEP-TIO	6,56,400
Total.....	12,40,400

Photographs

Kohlavi – Community Screening



1. Comprehensive Screenings conducted in Mustang





FCHV Training at Panchkhal



Teachers Training at Panchkhal:



Health Worker Training at Mustang



Health Worker Training at Mustang



Community Screening at Lete- Mustang



School Screening at Lete- Mustang

The End