

The Cure for Treatable Blindness in Guatemala is Within Reach

*Funding A 10-Year National Rollout of the Visualiza
Self-Sustaining Eye Care Network*



visionforthe poor.org

Twenty five years ago, one blind man cradled in his sons' arms emerged from the Guatemalan rainforest and started a quest to cure treatable blindness. Hope for help from a promised eye care mission had fueled his journey across countless miles of wilderness.

But the mission team could only provide exams and eyeglasses, not the 10-minute cataract surgery to restore his sight. "He wasn't the only person we had to turn away that day," says Dr. Douglas Vilella. "But watching those boys carry their father back home was heart-wrenching. We vowed to somehow keep that from ever happening again."

Those early mission teams included today's lead Visualiza doctors. Deeply motivated to care for the poor, Mariano Yee, Kimberly Wiedman Yee, and Nicolás Yee were also busy building a private practice in Guatemala City. Now they faced the challenge of how to fulfill that promise made in the remote Peten region.



Peten Rainforest
13,843 sq mi
1/3 of Guatemala

How could short-term mission trips give way to a permanent solution, especially given limited government resources? This was the late 1990's in a developing country with limited government resources. A country that still spends less than \$260 per person on health care. A nation where 20 percent of all possible patients can pay for eye care, 70 percent can only pay for some, and 10 percent can't pay for any.

Turning their practice into a social service enterprise was the answer they got from MacArthur Fellow and social entrepreneur, David Green in a chance encounter at a Christian Blind Mission (CBM) workshop. Experienced in developing the Aravind Eye Care System in Madurai, India, Green linked the Yees with Raheem Rahmatullah from the International Eye Foundation (IEF) and with other non-governmental organizations, including the Seva Foundation.

The original mission organizer, Vision for the Poor, transformed into a fundraising and technical support arm. Together with the IEF, Seva, CBM and a coalition of public and private, domestic and international partners, they spent the next 25 years building, testing, and adapting a locally-controlled eye care network. Each Eye Hospital and Vision Center relies on startup donations, then funds itself within one year.

"The in-country doctors and staff have done this at great personal sacrifice and financial risk," notes long-term Visualiza donor and volunteer, Frank Fatica, D.O.

"Some of the money they could use to build their own futures helps pay for state-of-the-art eye care for some of the poorest people on earth."

The rewards from taking that risk are starting to accelerate. The 1996 Vincent Pescatore Eye Clinic - an immediate response to the rainforest challenge that was run out of a rental facility - inspired the 2001 creation of the Visualiza Eye Hospital enterprise. By 2004, the Clinic evolved into a second eye hospital, reaching self-supporting status with 37,000 patients by 2006.

Early Visualiza mobile clinics set up for patient connections, vision screenings, and eye hospital referrals evolved into four regional Vision Centers by 2016, each providing one full-time doctor and three assistants within 30 to 60 miles of a Visualiza eye hospital. Today, Visualiza employs 120 medical and administrative staff members serving over 150,000 patients - including more than 12,000 surgeries - every year, regardless of ability to pay.

CRITICAL CHALLENGES CALL FOR VISUALIZA'S NATIONAL ROLLOUT

While age-related or congenital cataracts and untreated refractive errors are the most common causes of treatable blindness in Guatemala, they are not exclusive. Undetected glaucoma; retinal detachment; macular degeneration; hypertension; tissue growth over sun-exposed eyes; traumatic accidents; and diabetic complications also steal sight from Guatemalans of all ages.

Ten-year-old Guadalupe Noemi Gomez Rojas could not recall a day without blurred or double vision, constant eye strain, and headaches. She suffered crossed eyes compounded by congenital cataracts.



Guadalupe with her mother and one of her five siblings.

There are no Vision Centers or Eye Hospitals in Guadalupe's community. She lives with her mother and



five siblings in a one-room, dirt floor house in one of Guatemala's most dangerous neighborhoods.

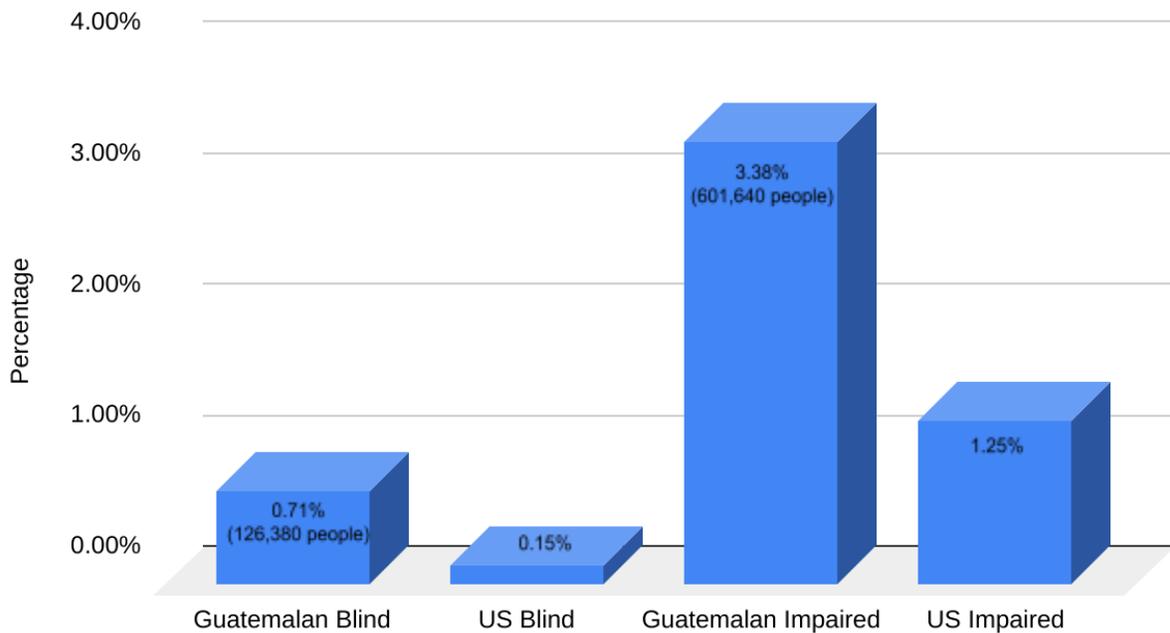
Visualiza's "Little Windows of Light " program (*the only in-country eye care outreach service screening children ages 5-15 in low-income areas and public schools*) identified Guadalupe's need and arranged for her transportation, surgeries, and eyeglasses. The program evaluated 35,000 similarly impoverished children that same year (2019), donating 1,140 pairs of eyeglasses and performing 110 surgeries at no cost.

Guadalupe and her peers are growing up fast and will need continued care. Locating a new Vision Center in her area will help meet that need. Meanwhile, she guards her precious eyeglasses in a small cardboard box that contains all of her belongings.

The Scale of Need Demands More Eye Hospitals and Vision Centers

Guatemala remains the most populated country in Central America with 17.8 million people in 2020 - on track to top 18 million in 2021. The total number of Guatemalan men, women, and children suffering blindness or moderate-to-severe visual impairment compares poorly with that of the United States.

Percentage

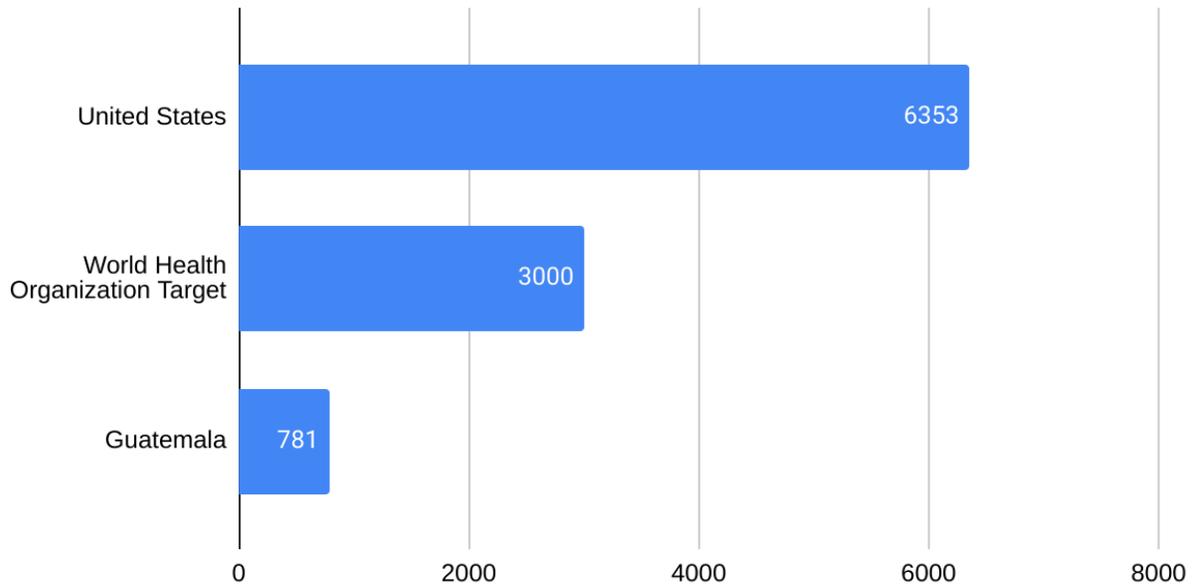


Source: International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness

Visualiza's work as the only private, self-funding, locally-controlled eye care network, combined with fee-based national hospitals and non-governmental missions, alleviates but a modest portion of this suffering. This is evident in nationwide eye care response statistics.

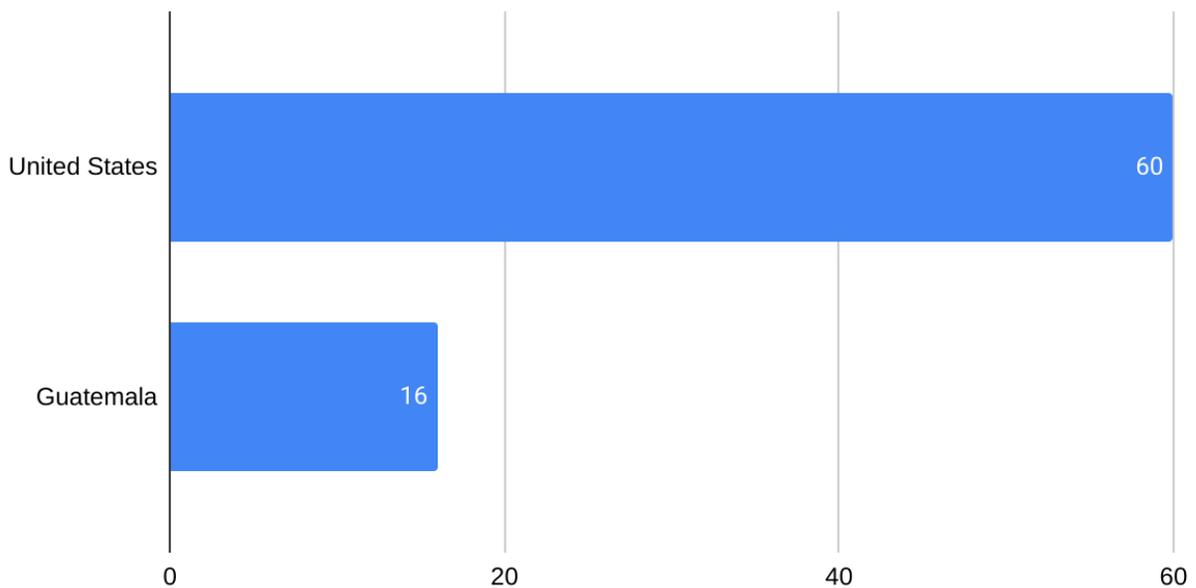
Cataract Surgical Rate Per Million People

Source: SEVA Foundation



Ophthalmologists Per Million People

Source: SEVA Foundation



Half of Guatemalans Live in Remote Locations

US Aid for International Development, the agency responsible for recently allocated US federal funding to help stem the tide of Latin American migration, states that 35% of Guatemalans (more than 6 million people) don't have access to any kind of healthcare at all.

It's not surprising that 49 percent of all 17.8 million Guatemalans live in rural areas, with 59 percent falling below the national poverty line (*\$1.90 per day equivalent, or \$694 per year*).

90 percent of all visual impairments can be cured or prevented if we can get to the people who are suffering.

Further complicating rural access to eye care are indigenous population language barriers and cultural divides. While indigenous Guatemalan people are largely of Mayan descent, there are as many as 23 recognized indigenous languages and dialects.



Top left and right: Indigenous Guatemalans at one of 200 annual Visualiza outreach eye examination locations.

Bottom right: Dedicated Visualiza donor and in-country volunteer, Nino Vaghi, helps an indigenous woman select a free pair of prescription glasses.



A Threatening New Health Indicator

This same group of indigenous people also turns out to be most susceptible to an alarming rise in the incidence of diabetes sweeping across Guatemala. It's estimated that the prevalence of type 2 diabetes doubled in Guatemala between 2003 and 2018.

A study published by Wolfgang Kopp and cited by the US National Institutes of Health states that:

“...the transition from Paleolithic nutrition to Western diets, along with lack of corresponding genetic adaptations, cause significant distortions of the fine-tuned metabolism that has evolved over millions of years.... With the increasing spread of Western diet and lifestyle worldwide, overweight and civilization diseases are also rapidly increasing in developing countries.”

Type 2 diabetes causes swelling inside the eye that can lead to vision loss or blindness if left untreated.

HOW VISUALIZA WILL MEET THESE CRITICAL CHALLENGES

Matching data analysis from more than two decades of SAP Business One record keeping with annual audits conducted by RSM Global, we developed targets each Eye Hospital and supporting Vision Center must meet to be considered self-funding.

To be specific:

- It takes 13,000 patients, 660 surgeries, 3,996 prescription sales, and 996 added medical procedures for one Visualiza Eye Hospital to be self-supporting every year.
- Likewise, 5,280 patients, 240 surgery referrals, and 3,000 prescription sales will make each Vision Center assisting those Eye Hospitals sustainable annually.

Visualiza's service delivery is modeled after Southern India's Aravind Eye Care System.

Aravind is the world's largest self-sustained social service enterprise, performing over 1 million cataract surgeries per year. A case study on Aravind's high-volume, high-efficiency, high-quality business model has been required reading for every Harvard MBA student since 1992.

Profits from the 40 percent of Aravind patients who are able to pay in full help cover costs for the remaining 60 percent of patients who are only able to make partial payments or no payments at all. Full, partial, and non-paying patients all receive the same quality of eye care.

Since adapting and scaling the Aravind model, Visualiza's two Eye Hospitals and four supporting Vision Centers now employ 200 medical and administrative staff members serving over 150,000 patients (including more than 12,000 surgeries) every year without need for further outside funding. Every aspect of Visualiza's work, from patient outcomes per doctor to process

efficiencies, patient volumes, service quality, and financial control is measured, assessed, and formally addressed every quarter to meet or exceed US and international standards.

These outcomes can be further replicated. The Visualiza team is already doing so in other Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Peru, Paraguay, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. We consult with existing operations, teaching them how to restructure their businesses and how to reduce fixed costs through scale and efficiency.

For example, each Visualiza operating room has one doctor, as many as four operating tables; multiple sets of equipment; and multiple nursing teams to carry out key non-surgical tasks, like preparing the patient and administering anesthesia. This layout allows the surgeon to complete one surgery, then turn around and start another surgery immediately on the next prepared patient. One doctor can perform six to eight procedures per hour.

This is how Visualiza employs just 4% of Guatemala's ophthalmologists who manage to perform 36% of the country's total cataract surgeries.



Controlling costs while delivering quality eye care: One doctor, four patients, multiple support staff.

The Visualiza team provides high quality eye care to the people of Guatemala. As a training institute, they have also made a significant contribution in building all cadres of workforce in eye care for Guatemala and other countries in the region.

Through a mix of good business practices and compassionate patient-centered care, Visualiza is now a leading eye care provider in the country. The Visualiza team takes eye care to the rural and remote regions of the country.

Visualiza's professional and passionate eye care team works to ensure that eye care is available to all who need it. Through their inclusive care giving design, combined with their commitment to provide eye care to all, they are uniquely positioned to scale their impact in eye care in Guatemala and beyond.

*Thulasiraji Ravilla, MBA
Director - Operations
Aravind Eye Care System
Executive Director, LAICO*

Based on more than two decades of proven operational capacity and measured outcomes, we know that to fulfill our promise to provide every Guatemalan citizen with access to quality, affordable eye care requires building and staffing:

- **6 more Eye Hospitals**; and
- **30 more supporting Vision Centers** (*one full-time doctor and three assistants, located within 30 to 60 miles of a Visualiza Eye Hospital*).

We will complete this National Rollout of the Visualiza eye care model in 10 years.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Another advantage of our 25-year evolution is that we have experienced and overcome most of the obstacles we're likely to face in implementing our National Rollout. Here is what we expect, with brief explanations of actions we will take or are already taking to address them:

Implementation Obstacle	Solution
<p>Staffing & Training</p>	<p>Our current staffing for two Eye Hospitals and four Vision Centers includes: 17 ophthalmologists; 17 optometrists; 3 anesthesiologists; and 4 additional medical specialists . Our nurses, technicians, and administrators total 79 persons.</p> <p>We have an ongoing staff development and management training program supported by our partner Seva Foundation since 2006. We also work with a local university to train technicians for our and other eye care institutions.</p> <p>As with current staffing, we will employ an adequate number of internal medicine doctors; nutrition specialists; and diabetes specialists to help stem the growing diabetes crisis.</p>
<p>Procedures</p>	<p>Daily operations will need extra scrutiny when serving increasingly rural and poor areas. Consistency and efficiency in care delivery will be critical. Our formal process to improve standardization of key operations will be part of the culture of our expanded network as well.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 20px auto;"/> <p><i>We have contributed to Visualiza over a 20 year period, including funding a significant expansion of their pediatric outreach work in the Peten region. The organization delivers on what it proposes to do and has allowed the foundation to be successful in achieving its goals.</i></p>

	<p><i>We have visited Visualiza several times over that period – both in Guatemala City and in the regions – and have been impressed with the commitment and compassion shown by doctors, nurses, outreach workers and general staff to providing quality care to the poor of Guatemala.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Ken Goody Foundation Executive Dorothea Haus Ross Foundation</i></p>
<p>Accounting</p>	<p>Adding more levels of complexity to our organization will also mean expanding our accounting team. We will continue to use SAP Business One software supported by German company, SAP SE, to automate key business functions in financials, operations, and human resources. Visualiza’s financials are audited annually to international standards by RSM Global, the world’s 6th largest audit, tax, and consulting network.</p> <p>A copy of our most recent audit is available on request.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“It’s an indescribably hopeful feeling to tell people I give time and money to a ‘going concern’ that verifiably alleviates human suffering.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Nino Vaghi Nino R. Vaghi Foundation</i></p>
<p>Patient Recruitment <i>(Especially to Remote Regions)</i></p>	<p>Visualiza Outreach Coordinators carefully plan community screenings aided by software with tracking and scheduling functions. Local leaders or community decision makers are targeted and contacted in advance to help ensure community buy-in, advance promotions, facility availability, and transportation. Expanding these activities will be critical in working with indigenous populations who can be more reluctant to participate without adequate understanding and preparation.</p> <p>Visualiza staff also analyze post-outreach data to see whether the maximum number of age-appropriate persons are screened. They assess screening times and durations. Results of this analysis impact future scheduling, coordinating, and marketing.</p>

	<p>Eye chart used in examining patients who cannot read. Rather than stating the letter, they are asked to indicate the direction of the object.</p> 
<p>Anything Unanticipated?</p>	<p>It turns out we have already weathered unanticipated obstacles, too. When the COVID-19 crisis severely tested Visualiza financially, we developed supplemental income streams, like home pharmacy delivery and no-contact eyeglasses repair.</p> <p>This experience has shown us that building a private, non-bureaucratic, flexible business model builds resilience as well.</p> <hr/> <p><i>We like to think of this as one more proof that lasting, meaningful help comes from giving people tools to help themselves.</i></p>

THE IMPACT OF YOUR FINANCIAL GIFT

By the Year 2032:

- Every Guatemalan citizen will have access to affordable eye care.
- That care will be self-funded through a private, social service enterprise.
- Every new Eye Hospital and Vision Center created will sustain itself one year after opening.
- The entire network will be run by Guatemalan doctors, administrators, and support staff.
- Guatemalan vision loss (13%) will be reduced to equal that of the United States (5%).
 - We have a growing backlog of 108,083 people eligible for cataract surgery.
 - 4,469,887 Guatemalans suffer refractive errors that eyeglasses would correct.
- Providers across Latin America and the Caribbean will be replicating this success.

But What Does All of This Really Mean?



Source: SEVA Foundation

50% of all blindness is caused by cataracts that could be removed in 10 minutes.

**Unlike most financial gifts you give,
you must think of this gift in terms of generations:**

The Present

This living generation of Guatemalan grandmothers and grandfathers who yearn to see family again - or for the first time. Mothers and fathers idled in

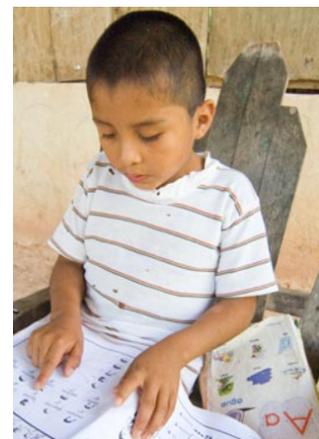


their prime by darkness, hungry for work to feed, clothe, house, and educate their children. Children bursting with hopes and dreams about what they will see and do in this world. Subtle meanings, shared understandings, and depths of love powerful enough to bind families and heal communities that can only be conveyed through one's countenance.

The Future

The next generations, freed from the burdens of unnecessary visual impairments and blindness. New Guatemalan business and civic leaders, artists, healers, scientists, and inventors, whose achievements might only be possible because they can see.

The echo of success as the Visualiza example of self-reliance and resilience is replicated: Your financial vote of confidence that Latin American and Caribbean countries can build critical infrastructure and opportunity.



FINANCIAL GIFT OPPORTUNITIES

ITEM	COST (US\$)
Lead Gift Secured and Used to Develop National Rollout Plan	247,500
Special Thanks to the ROBERT J. FRISBY FOUNDATION	
Increase Capacity of Visualiza Eye Hospital in the Central Region, Guatemala City, and add 3 new Vision Centers in Escuintla, Barberena, and Sanarate.	5,950,760
Build new Eye Hospitals and Vision Centers (5 new Eye Hospitals, 1 converted Eye Hospital, and 27 new Vision Centers) - shown below by region	
Western Region (2 new Eye Hospitals, 1 converted Eye Hospital, and 11 new Vision Centers)	15,666,368
Eye Hospital in Huehuetenango with six Vision Centers (La Mesilla, Soloma, San Antonio Huista, La Libertad, Barillas, and Cuilco)	7,809,294
Conversion of Vision Center in Quetzaltenango into a Eye Hospital with one new Vision Center (Coatepeque)	1,031,620
Eye Hospital in Quiche with four Vision Centers (Joyabaj, Nebaj, Ixcán, Pachalum)	6,825,454
Eastern Region (2 new Eye Hospitals, 11 new Vision Centers)	15,126,668
Eye Hospital in Morales, Izabal with five Vision Centers (Puerto Barrios, El Estor, San Felipe, Amates, and Chiquimula)	7,317,374
Eye Hospital in Jutiapa with six Vision Centers (Ipala, Monjas, Jalpatagua, El Adelanto, Moyuta, and Quezaltepeque)	7,809,294
Northern Region (1 new Eye Hospital, 5 new Vision Centers)	7,317,374
Eye Hospital in Cobán with five Vision Centers (Purulha, Tactic, Santa Cruz, Salama, and Fray Bartolome de las casas)	
Training to all Eye Hospitals and Vision Centers	1,220,000
Technology for all Eye Hospitals and Vision Centers	5,555,000
Optical Lab in Each New Eye Hospital	1,250,000
Expanded Work with other Latin American and Caribbean Countries	1,650,000
BUDGET TOTAL	53,983,670

These eight Eye Hospital locations (5 new, 2 existing, 1 Vision Center conversion), working with 34 supporting Vision Centers, will provide comprehensive eye care services to all of Guatemala.

In partnership with Vision for the Poor, the International Eye Foundation (IEF), SEVA Foundation, Christian Blind Mission (CBM), the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), and Vision 2020: The Right to Sight

New design for current Guatemala City Eye Hospital expansion.

Naming Opportunities Available

**FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS
OR TO MAKE YOUR IMMEDIATE OR PLANNED FINANCIAL GIFT:**

Douglas J. Villella, O.D.
(814) 823-4486
doug@visionforthe poor.org

Executive Director
Vision for the Poor | 431 Shawnee Drive | Erie, PA 16505

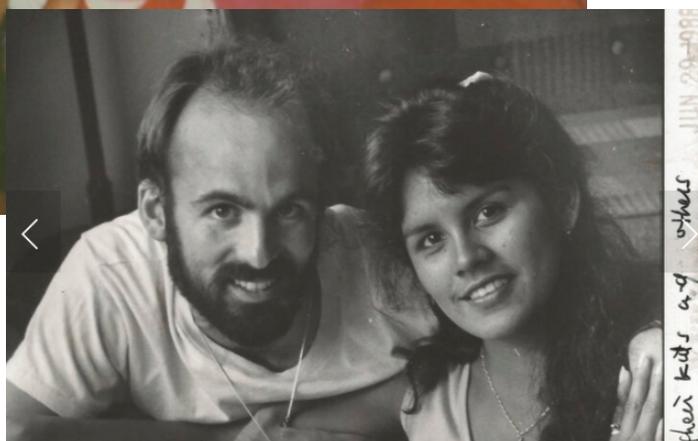
Vision for the Poor is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization registered in the United States that acts as a fundraising and technical assistance partner for Visualiza.

The Vision for the Poor board of directors works in partnership with three Visualiza representatives (Ophthalmologists and Visualiza co-founders, Mariano Yee, MD and Nicolás Yee, MD, and Visualiza Administrator, Juan Francisco Yee Melgar) and two technical advisors (Aravind Eye Hospital and the Seva Foundation).

Dedicated to the Memory of Vincent Pescatore



Vincent and Zulena Pescatore with family and as a young couple



Dear Vincent,

We are proud to dedicate to your memory our National Plan for comprehensive eye care across Guatemala.

The plane crash that took your life in 1996 at age 35 on your way to build a second orphanage in neighboring Honduras left us heartbroken. But we have kept that promise we made to each other in the rainforest - to somehow find a way to cure all preventable blindness in Guatemala.

Our humble thanks for your first call to Vision for the Poor that brought us all together, opened our eyes to immeasurable suffering, inspired the creation of Visualiza, and set us on this path. We are almost there!

The following testimonials belong to you as much as they do to us:

Partner & Donor Testimonials

Visualiza is an indispensable partner of Seva's efforts to increase access to eye care throughout Latin America. For over 15 years we have worked together. Time after time, they have proven their heroic dedication to the people of Guatemala.

Their strategy emphasizes world class science combined with fostering trust among the communities they serve. Their grassroots model aligns perfectly with our values as an organization.

Their results speak for themselves: Visualiza's eye care system serves more than 4 million Guatemalans, and performs 36% of all cataract surgeries in the country.

If any organization can bring access to vision care to everyone in Guatemala in 10 years, it's Visualiza. We intend to do all we can to help them.



*Kate Moynihan
Executive Director
Seva Foundation*

The Visualiza team provides high quality eye care to the people of Guatemala. As a training institute, they have also made a significant contribution in building all cadres of workforce in eye care for Guatemala and other countries in the region.

Through a mix of good business practices and compassionate patient-centred care, Visualiza is now a leading eye care provider in the country. The Visualiza team takes eye care to the rural and remote regions of the country.

Their professional and passionate eye care team who work to ensure that eye care is available to all who need it. Through their inclusive care giving design, combined with their commitment to provide eye care to all, they are uniquely positioned to scale their impact in eye care in Guatemala and beyond.

*Thulasiraji Ravilla, MBA
Director - Operations
Aravind Eye Care System
Executive Director, LAICO*

Christian Blind Mission has partnered with Visualiza to reduce preventable blindness in the Petén region for many years and more recently also in the surroundings of Guatemala City.

We praise Visualiza's efforts to improve access to eye health services to persons with disabilities in marginalized areas of the country.

*Francisco Borrero
Project Consultant
Christian Blind Mission (CBM)*

I met the Yee brothers, Mariano and Nicolás, in 2001 at a Sustainability in Eye Care workshop I taught in Costa Rica. I liked their spirit a lot and felt they would be great to work with to develop sustainable and equitable eye care in Guatemala.

We met again in Guatemala in 2002 and we did a 10-day planning session where we came up with a plan to combine their private practice in Guatemala City with their public health eye hospital in the El Peten region.

That work commenced shortly thereafter with support from International Eye Foundation, the Seva Foundation, and Doug Vilella, Executive Director of Vision for the Poor. This established what has become Guatemala's largest eye care program and one of the largest in Latin America.

Visualiza has done tremendous work to reach tens of thousands of Guatemalans in the country's lower economic strata every year with accessible, affordable, and high quality eye care services, especially sight-restoring cataract surgery. I feel honored to have worked with Visualiza from the beginning and very much look forward to being a part of their journey as they grow to address the problem of blindness and visual disability in Guatemala and beyond.

*David Green
Social Entrepreneur
David Green Consulting*

Usually, when one thinks of a business partner, one thinks of commitments, deadlines, and a cordial relationship. For us at the Instituto Mexicano de Oftalmología IAP (IMO), when we consider our relationship with Visualiza, we think about so much more. For instance, we think of your steadfast support and the crucial knowledge you have shared with us when we have requested training for our administrative, medical, and paramedic personnel in visual health. We appreciate Visualiza's far-reaching experience in these areas, which has helped our people to learn so much.

We also think of Visualiza's outstanding competence and level of organization as a shining example of how to successfully maintain close attention to patients in its daily work and through the expansion of its services in its hospitals and provincial centers. We admire Visualiza's creativity in finding multiple ways to provide comprehensive care for the people of Guatemala and also of Mexico. But above all, we think of Visualiza as an organization with a great heart, constantly implementing a range of initiatives to ensure that it can always serve one more patient.

All of the above just barely summarizes what an outstanding organization Visualiza is, and how much it means for the IMO to have you as a colleague and ally for over 10 years and to look forward to a bright future together.

*Dr. Ellery Marino López Star
President of the Board
Instituto Mexicano de Oftalmología IAP*

Giving to Visualiza is one of the best per dollar returns on a charitable donation you can find. But then having known Vincent Pescatore, the founder of Guatemala's Farm of the Child orphanage who garnered our gifts as well and inspired the Visualiza mission, I'm not surprised at the talent and tenacity his magnetism and charisma attracted.

From the time of our first gift to fund the early Vincent Pescatore Eye Clinic in the Peten rainforest to our most recent gift that made planning and presentation of the Visualiza National Rollout possible, we have watched our commitment to the suffering poor of Guatemala expand in ways even we could not envision.

My father started our foundation to reduce suffering among the world's poorest people. Visualiza does precisely that, and in a way that also creates dignity and fosters hope for the larger Latin American region.

We are proud to be and to remain among Visualiza's most faithful supporters.

*Mike Frisby
Robert J. Frisby Foundation*

I first became aware of Visualiza through my friendship with Dr. Doug Villela, an optometrist in our home community of Erie, Pennsylvania and his work with Vision for the Poor. It has been many years since I first learned about Visualiza's work and its commitment to improving sight for the poor who have limited access to healthcare and vision services.

My interest as a donor was initially motivated by Doug's enthusiasm and commitment to his work and efforts. Over the years, however, my interest has grown deeper as I follow Visualiza's success in providing quality care that is both professional and culturally-relevant.

In February, 2019 I had the great privilege to accompany Doug and his team on a trip to Guatemala. What I experienced was both personally moving and profound. Visualiza's network of quality eye care facilities and healthcare professionals was truly awe-inspiring. As we moved throughout outlying neighborhoods of Guatemala City setting up screening clinics, I was continually amazed at the need and patience from those willing to stand in line for hours to receive services, not only for themselves but also for their children. Everyone was treated with great care and compassion. Furthermore, I witnessed first-hand how Visualiza's treatment could literally change a person's life prospects by outfitting them with appropriate glasses or more-involved procedures like cataract surgery.

I believe Visualiza not only has the organizational capacity to bring their grand 10-year plan to fruition, but also feel confident that the individuals involved promote their work with the highest level of professionalism, integrity, compassion, and enthusiasm. As a donor, I have absolutely no doubt that my financial commitment is supporting Visualiza's mission and helping to grow the exponential reach of their work. I can speak first-hand from my visit that every dollar donated will be applied to its highest and most efficient purpose as well as create opportunities and enhanced life prospects for the neediest Guatemalans.

Simply stated, Visualiza is an amazing organization doing incredible work and I support their impressive plan 110%. I whole-heartedly will continue supporting their work as best I can now and in the future.

*Amy Cuzzola-Kern, PhD
Kern Family Foundation*

In addition to operating a state of the art eye care hospital and surgical facility, Visualiza's leadership is passionate about their commitment to providing eye-care for the poor. Their striving for medical excellence is matched by their commitment to provide the same level of quality care to both poor and private patients alike.

Visualiza has the experience and high reputation in both advanced medical care and equitable and inclusive social service. They've developed a funding and an operating model

that allows them to deliver on both missions and have continually expanded their reach in low-income communities, including impressive gains in pediatric outreach and care. They are also creative innovators – as seen in the mobile clinics deployed to regions, and the structure of identifying patients and providing appropriate care at local, regional and national locations based on acuity of care required.

We have contributed to Visualiza over a 20 year period, including funding a significant expansion of their pediatric outreach work in the Peten region. The organization delivers on what it proposes to do and has allowed the foundation to be successful in achieving its goals. We have visited Visualiza several times of that period – both in Guatemala City and in the regions – and have been impressed with the commitment and compassion shown by doctors, nurses, outreach workers and general staff to providing quality care to the poor of Guatemala.

*Ken Goody
Foundation Executive
Dorothea Haus Ross Foundation*

I have known and have financially supported the good work of Drs. Doug Vilella, Mariano Yee, and Nico Yee, Vision for the Poor, and Visualiza for over 30 years. I remember being elated to find that Vincent Pescatore was the original inspiration for this amazing social service enterprise: One of my sisters had adopted three children from Vincent and Zulena Pescatore's Farm of the Child Guatemalan orphanage.

In the year 2000, Dr. Vilella and I joined a team of volunteers and trekked to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa to raise funds to build an eye clinic in Guatemala. A few years later, I responded to one of the many mission trip invitations Visualiza had offered to me and other benefactors to see with our own eyes the work they are doing in Guatemala and other countries to give the precious gift of sight to millions of people young and old.

I visited the very Eye Hospital that many benefactors and I helped to build. I put on hospital scrubs, went into the operating room and witnessed several cataract surgeries which literally restored the sight and gave back their former lives to men and women who cried tears of joy in the post-op recovery room.

I will continue to support Visualiza and I encourage anyone reading this to do what you can to help. Your sacrificial gifts dramatically improve the lives of countless people who need our help.

Visualiza has been at the forefront of this work for decades. They have the experience, the knowledge, the teams in place, and most of all, the desire to virtually eradicate preventable blindness in all of Guatemala in the next 10 years. It is an ambitious, amazing, and awesome goal and I could not be happier to encourage them in achieving this goal and to ask you to help them.

God bless the good men and women of Visualiza, the people they will help, and you, who make it possible!

*Bishop Joseph L. Coffey
Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA*

As an entrepreneur, I appreciate how true it is that success is built with hard work, personal sacrifice, and strong partnering skills. The Visualiza team has invested over 20 years creating, field-testing, scaling up, and running a now proven self-sustaining model of eye care.

Along the way, Visualiza attracted financial investments and technical support from international organizations and foundations, non-governmental entities, civic services, governmental representatives, private businesses, and dedicated individual donors. They leveraged these partnerships to extend model testing and implementation into countries across Latin America and the Caribbean.

I believe Visualiza's example will lead to the expansion of other medical care services across the developing world as well. It's success is certainly a critical player in the current struggle to help Latin Americans build infrastructure and opportunity.

It's an indescribably hopeful feeling to tell people I give time and money to a "going concern" that verifiably alleviates human suffering. This Visualiza expansion will succeed: I will be a part of that.

*Nino Vaghi
Nino R. Vaghi Foundation*

The evolution from biannual mission trips to different villages and towns to the current sustainable and permanent eye care facilities is one of the most impressive projects that I have ever witnessed. Knowing that each dollar donated goes directly to the eye care needs of the region and the country is why I originally donated and why I continue to donate to Visualiza through Vision for the Poor. Past performance would predict success with the 10-year expansion program and again is impetus for continued support.

Frank Villa, O.D.

Having run a number of "mission" trips to Guatemala in the 1990's, I experienced first hand the extreme need for all forms of eyecare, especially in the Quiche'. Remarkably, Mariano Yee (while still doing his residency) worked with our ophthalmologist during one of our clinics.

When I learned that Visualiza was forming to provide a sustainable, long term solution to eye care in Guatemala, I realized my efforts should be focused on supporting this project through the Vision for the Poor organization.

I have always appreciated their low-pressure approach to fund-raising (I call them), low overhead and lack of a fundraising bureaucracy. I prefer that my donations go to the project at hand.

Randy Minard, O.D.

As a volunteer ophthalmologist with Visualiza's early medical missions, I was overwhelmed by the number of Guatemalan people suffering near and total blindness unnecessarily. Everywhere you went there was no access to basic medical care. No hope of getting prescription glasses, much less a simple 10-minute cataract surgery that could literally restore their sight.

I was deeply moved by this team's determination to turn medical missions reaching a few thousand people into a sustainable, self-funding, locally-controlled operation reaching millions. It seemed so daunting, but there was no question that it was the only serious way to eliminate treatable blindness in a developing country with that scale of medical distress.

Every donation I give gets multiplied because it helps put something permanent and self-sustaining in place. I am confident that Visualiza will complete this expansion plan in Guatemala.

Frank Fatica, D.O.

Visualiza has been a true "game changer" in the manner that vision care is provided in Central America. Beginning in 1995, we traveled to Guatemala to provide eye care, glasses and medication to the poor in remote areas of the country via small volunteer clinics.

Decades later Visualiza has free standing, self sustaining clinics that will continue into perpetuity. The model has evolved to a very cost efficient and productive means of helping tens of thousands of people on a regular and reliable basis. This has been accomplished through the leadership of Visualiza and the cooperation of an amazing team on the ground. They have created the framework and foundation to provide sight-saving services to large populations in a very cost-effective manner.

I feel strongly that supporting Visualiza via donations is an extremely good way to put compassionate money to work. Helping everyone have the opportunity to see will allow for a better opportunity for people to lift them from poverty through education and the ability to work and become a more productive member of society. Your contributions are truly appreciated and will be put to good use to help make the world a better place.

Robert Prazer, O.D.

I support Visualiza for two reasons: what it does, and how it does it. First, the good it does is concrete, tangible, and lasting. Second, how the contributions are spent is clear and direct.

Correcting vision can be life-changing. It dramatically improves the quality of life for both the individual and their family members. It allows the individual to be better able to actively participate in society.

My visit to Guatemala and to Visualiza's eye hospital and rural vision centers made it clear where contributions go and how they are used. The facilities are built to serve and although lacking the high-tech sophistication of United States medical facilities, they are efficient and focused on maximizing the available resources to provide the most services to the most people with what they have. The staff are compassionate and dedicated.

The need for the services Visualiza provides is widespread, and to the extent of its available resources, Visualiza has demonstrated its ability to meet this need. I have watched Visualiza expand its ability to serve while staying true to its self-sustaining model, and have every reason to believe it can achieve its goal of offering eye care services throughout Guatemala.

*Dan Pastore, Esq., CEO
FishUSA.com*

My wife and I have been longtime substantial donors to Visualiza. At one point we even visited their headquarters in Guatemala.

We found their facilities to be first rate and ever improving. Their outreach programs are well established. Most importantly, their founders and staff are extremely dedicated, caring, and forward looking.

We would encourage others to support Visualiza and their plans. Such a worthwhile cause!

*Kent & Mary Taylor
Longtime Donors*