



The Pathway to Eliminating Preventable Cataract Blindness by 2045

A curable condition. A global systems challenge.

Cataract blindness is treatable, yet millions of people continue to live with cataract-related blindness and vision impairment because quality surgical care is not readily accessible around the world.

The challenge is larger than identifying patients or increasing the number of cataract procedures. Sustainable progress requires a connected system capable of identifying unaddressed needs, developing an appropriately trained surgical workforce, expanding quality surgical services at an affordable price, and ensuring patients can access those services.

The emerging global conversation around eliminating cataract-related blindness creates an opportunity to look beyond individual interventions and ask a larger question:

What must happen between now and 2045 to eliminate preventable cataract blindness?

A Global Pathway to Sustainable Cataract Care

- Identify unmet cataract need
- Build a qualified and appropriately distributed surgical workforce
- Expand high-quality training capacity
- Develop and demonstrate surgical competency
- Support transition into supervised live surgery
- Establish sustainable local surgical capacity
- Connect patients with accessible, affordable, and quality cataract care
- Increase surgical volume and effective coverage
- Progressively reduce untreated cataract blindness
- Building community confidence in local healthcare systems

Progress depends on every link in this pathway. It also requires the following conditions to make sustainable care possible: health-system infrastructure, equipment, financing, qualified instructors and mentors, regulatory support, patient referral and access, partnerships, measurement, infrastructure, and quality assurance.

No single organization controls all of these factors.



Building the Workforce is Essential

The central constraint remains the availability of appropriately trained surgical professionals. Identifying people with cataract blindness alone cannot restore sight if there are insufficient qualified professionals to treat them. Likewise, increasing the number of trainees is not sufficient unless training produces demonstrated competency and creates a pathway into supervised clinical practice.

That means workforce development must address three interconnected needs:

- **Capacity** - More institutions need the ability to develop surgical skills at the scale and rate required by their communities.
- **Competency** - Training must focus on demonstrated skills, consistency, and quality. Training programs need to utilize the latest simulation technologies to expand throughput of surgical providers at higher volumes.
- **Clinical transition** - Skills developed through education and simulation must efficiently progress into supervised live surgical experience and clinical practice.



Where Simulation Can Accelerate the Pathway

Simulation-based education can help expand the capacity to develop surgical skills while removing patient exposure and risks through the use of high-volume, during repetitive practice.

When integrated with instructor-led education, standardized curriculum, repeated practice, objective assessment and feedback, simulation training helps learners develop and demonstrate competency before progressing into supervised clinical environments.

The Pathway to Eliminating Preventable Cataract Blindness:

Education → deliberate practice and simulation → demonstrated competency → supervised clinical transition → sustainable local surgical capacity

NOT:

Simulation = more surgery

Simulation does not replace clinical education or live surgical experience. It does strengthen, scale, and accelerate the workforce-development segment of a much larger system.

A Call for Partnerships

Eliminating avoidable cataract blindness requires coordinated action across the global eye-health community. HelpMeSee partners with training institutions and eye-health organizations to expand access to instructor-led, competency-based cataract surgical training using high-fidelity simulation, standardized curricula, eLearning, assessments, and training-management systems.

Where appropriate, HelpMeSee also works with selected partners to help create pathways from simulation-based training to supervised live surgery when those opportunities are not available within a trainee's institution.

Together, we can strengthen the surgical workforce and build sustainable local capacity to bring quality cataract care within reach of more communities.

Building the Pathway Together

The Impact of Simulation-based Training:

- Accelerated surgical workforce expansion
- Reduction in surgical complications
- Expanded training capacity
- Preparation for clinical transition
- Sustainable local capacity
- Lower training cost

HelpMeSee directly supports:

- Simulation-based training
- Competency-based skills development
- Educational tools
- Institutional partnerships
- Preparation for supervised live surgical transition

The broader eye-health system must deliver:

- Accessible surgical services
- Quality patient outcomes
- Financing and infrastructure
- Effective cataract surgery coverage
- Population-level reduction in cataract blindness

A Shared Global Responsibility

Eliminating avoidable cataract blindness requires coordinated action from governments, ministries of health, hospitals, universities, training institutions, professional organizations, NGOs, funders, technology partners, local health systems and the surgical workforce itself.

The objective must be shared: build sustainable systems capable of delivering quality cataract care wherever the need exists.

HelpMeSee delivers meaningful contribution by addressing one of the most important constraints: developing the skilled surgical workforce needed to transition access of cataract care from a global ambition into local reality.

No single organization is the pathway. The pathway is what the global eye-health community builds together.

Sources

- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214109X20304897>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240121089>
- <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/call-for-public-consultation-on-the-discussion-paper--global-initiative-to-eliminate-cataract-related-blindness-and-vision-impairment>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2950253526000377>
- [https://www.aaojournal.org/article/S0161-6420\(16\)31160-5/abstract](https://www.aaojournal.org/article/S0161-6420(16)31160-5/abstract)
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-90410-4>
- https://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1303.html
- <https://doi.org/10.1111/aos.15655>

HelpMeSee

HelpMeSee.org



*"Every one of us has the opportunity
- and the obligation - to make a
difference by helping other people."*

-Albert Lee Ueltschi

Co-Founder of HelpMeSee