

Why SEE International?

A Personal Perspective
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Upon completion of my ophthalmology residency, I spent a year abroad in various countries working with ophthalmologists in their clinics, on their patients, under local conditions. As a result, I concluded that existing systems of surgical eye care delivery in many countries are incapable of dealing effectively with the tremendous scope of world blindness.

As a clinical ophthalmologist, I was frustrated that there were so few opportunities to put the skills of trained clinical eye surgeons to more effective use. The problem is wide-ranging, involving not just medicine, but also organization, administration, transportation, communication, finances, logistics, and socio-political barriers. I realized that *a worldwide reservoir of trained ophthalmic surgeons wishing to help the disadvantaged blind, lacked an effective mechanism for action.*

Although many programs and organizations provide education, training, research, glasses, supplies, equipment, and medicines, too few are dedicated exclusively to restoring sight through surgery. Moreover, existing organizations tend to place demands on ophthalmic surgeons that discourage their sustained participation, throughout their lifetime. I sought an approach to combat surgically correctable world blindness that would overcome problems of time constraints, logistics, and financing and operate with continuity and social sensitivity.

Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International is that solution.

Developed and tested in the early 1970's and incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1974, Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International deploys small teams of qualified personnel recruited for short-term, sight-restoring clinics held on a recurring basis in medically underserved communities all over the world. By not disrupting their careers, the SEE strategy proved successful in enlisting volunteer ophthalmologists, nurses, and technicians for periodic participation. Moreover, brief, recurring clinics do not exhaust the facilities and resources of host countries. SEE

International's surgical expeditions have been effective in reducing the number of surgically correctable, disadvantaged blind throughout the developing world, transforming languishing lives into productive ones.

Most volunteer ophthalmologists became involved with SEE International in mid-career. In order to encourage younger ophthalmologists, SEE International developed this prototype program with George Washington University Medical Center, Department of Ophthalmology.