



THE TEJ KOHLI & RUIT
FOUNDATION

Our Mission

Nepal





Patient following cataract surgery in Kalikot, Nepal

Foreword

27 March 2021 is an important date for the Tej Kohli & Ruit Foundation. It was the date of our first ever microsurgical outreach camp, which was held inside the Maya Devi Temple which marks the birthplace of Buddha in Lumbini, Nepal.

The outreach camp at Lumbini marked the start of our global mission to combat extreme poverty in the low-income communities of the developing world by making large scale interventions to cure blindness. We cured 312 people of blindness in three days.

By November 2022 we had screened over 173,000 patients across 91 camps in Nepal. We are creating a ripple effect that not only improves individual lives, but also empowers entire families and communities back toward a life of prosperity.

We are proud to have established our regional headquarters in Kathmandu, Nepal, which is also home to our co-Founder Dr Sanduk Ruit. Because of these special links that our NGO has with Nepal, it has been and will remain one of our key countries of focus as we work toward our target to cure at least 300,000 of cataract blindness.

Extreme poverty and needless blindness are a cause and a consequence of each other. Breaking this cycle requires medical intervention. Throughout 2023 we will be seeking to break the cycle at by curing another 25,000 people of cataract blindness in Nepal.

"We have been ambitious and successful in our work in Nepal. We have no plans to slow down our stop our journey in eradicating needless blindness."

-Tej Kohli, co-Founder, Tej Kohli & Ruit Foundation



Dr Ruit with patients following their surgery.

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Who We Are

The Tej Kohli and Ruit Foundation is an NGO co-founded by philanthropist and investor Tej Kohli and renowned eye surgeon Dr Sanduk Ruit.

Together the two men have created an organisation that has led to the creation of a lasting legacy of social and economic change in nations such as Bhutan. As of December 2022, the Tej Kohli and Ruit Foundation had cured 22,218 people of cataract blindness around the world.

A scenic view of a mountain range in Nepal. The foreground is dominated by large, grey, layered rocks. In the middle ground, there are green trees and a small structure with a blue roof. The background features a vast mountain range with snow-capped peaks under a clear blue sky. The text 'Blindness In Nepal' is overlaid on the image in white font on a dark blue background.

Blindness In Nepal



0.32% of Nepal's population suffer with some form of blindness which is significantly higher than the 0.19% of the United States.

1,230,162
people in Nepal
have a moderate to severe visual
impairment.

Throughout the whole of Nepal
there are only
8.4
ophthamologists per 1 million
people.



Group of patients waiting to have their bandages off in Doklaha

Continuing Our Journey

We began our journey in March 2021 at the birthplace of the Buddha in Lumbini. Screening and curing people on the sacred grounds was a poignant moment for our NGO.

That first camp saw us cure 312 people of needless cataract blindness. Since then we have gone onto cure 21,922 people of blindness, in Nepal alone, in less than 2 years.



Group of patients after having their bandages removed

Where We Have Been



172,649 Screened*

21,972 Cured*

We have reached out to some of the most isolated and marginalised areas of Nepal to screen and cure people of cataract blindness.

With this, we have also been able to train doctors to cure cataracts using Dr Ruit's innovative methods, creating a legacy of accessible eye health facilities to prevent and cure blindness in the future.

*In Nepal Only



Patients having their bandages removed



Jun Maya Gurang in Manang

Manang

The Manang district boasts unparalleled scenic beauty. Full of scattered villages dotted with small clusters of mud, stone and wood huts, many residents of Manang live beneath the shadow of the majestic Himalayas. 62 patients were referred to our surgical camp, each being operated on by Dr Ruit. The next day, Dr Ruit removed the eyepatches from the 62 patients – giving them all a second chance to see again.

Within the rural villages, many live a life of blindness and are either unaware of treatment or cannot access or afford surgery. The Tej Kohli & Ruit Foundation undertook an outreach in May, 2022 – screening 832 of the district's 5,645 people. Chete Gurung of Pisang, who had been living with cataracts for the past year was elated to have been cured of blindness. She could not stop smiling as she took in the beauty of the landscape that surrounded her.

In collaboration with members of the local community, we staged a total of 18 outreach screening camps, some of which had to be made after a two-day walk due to the remoteness of the district. 11 other patients of Nar Valley, who had made the long and tumultuous trek from their village, were also very happy. Having accepted blindness as their fate, they never would have thought that salvation would arrive in their village.



Patients in Bardiya

Bardiya

In June 2022, as a part of our mission to cure 300,000 to 500,000 of blindness by 2030, we set up 16 screening camps in the Bardiya District.

The district of Bardiya is located in the Lumbini Province of Nepal and is home to around 430,000 people.

During this mission, a total of 1,607 patients were screened and 76 patients were identified as living with needless cataract blindness.

It was in Bardiya that we noticed a profound gender disparity. In Motipur Village, the majority of people who attended the screening camp were women.

Of the 1,607 people who were screened, we identified 76 people living with cataract blindness. 65% of them were also women.

The Tej Kohli & Ruit Foundation has placed a large emphasis on gender inequality, especially within healthcare.

To battle this, we have set up ways to target and assist women and young girls to attend eye camps and become aware of the free treatment that we make available.



Patients waiting to have their bandages removed

Hetauda

Makwanpur District in Nepal's Bagmati Province is only a four-hour drive from the city of Kathmandu, however, in the remote hillside, there are groups who live far away from basic health care.

One of these communities is the Chepang Community of Makwanpur. Within this district is the City of Hetauda, where we staged an outreach microsurgical eye camp (OMEC) in September, 2022.

There are three reasons which can cause the high number of patients living with needless blindness in the region: accessibility, poverty and a lack of awareness.

In collaboration with Hetauda Community Eye Hospital, our Hetauda mission was organized to include 12 screening camps covering five districts - Makwanpur, Bara, Sindhuli, Rautahat and Parsa - some of the most underserved districts of the country.

Across the 12 camps, 2,822 people were screened. Among them were inmates from the Bhimphedi Correctional Facility where a total of 517 people were screened.

Of the 2,822 people who were screened, 369 people were cured of needless cataract blindness at the Hetauda Community Eye Hospital by teams led by our co-founder, Dr Sanduk Ruit.



Patients at a screening camp in Kalikot

Kalikot

One of Nepal's most underdeveloped districts is Kalikot. The people of this district are severely marginalised and live on the brink of extreme poverty.

Many of the districts municipalities are yet to be connected by road. This means that when members of the community's vision begin to impair, they will continue to live a life of needless blindness because the trip to the nearest hospital will take at least two days.

Many people do not have the financial means to travel to a hospital, let alone to pay for treatment. A journey like this is not only treacherous but would also set them back thousands of rupees.

On 6th November, one of our teams left for Kalikot from Surkhet to organize screening camps across the region.

They were joined by Manisha Baral, a local Ophthalmic Assistant who, alone, serves an area of 682 square kilometres with a population of 56,764 people.

We screened 1,108 people. Just days after, teams began work on curing those identified to be suffering from cataracts.

Overall, 152 surgeries were completed in the Raskot municipality of Kalikot meaning 152 more people are now able to live a life free of blindness.



Amarnath Simkhada in Kalikot

Amarnath

Amarnath Simkhada lived in a small house in the Kalikot District of Nepal. Out of all the districts, Kalikot is one of the poorest in Nepal, with 60% of people living below the poverty line.

Amarnath shared his home with his wife and son. Over a year ago, both parents rapidly began to lose their vision. Becoming extremely worried, their son, Dilli, began to gather all the money he could to pay for a cure. When his mother's eyesight began to deteriorate much faster than his father's, he decided that he must use the money to have her cured first.

Unfortunately, the family could not afford to get into any more debt, so his father could not be cured. This was until one of our teams visited Kalikot District and set up screening and surgical camps. Hearing of the news via local radio, Dilli decided to bring his father to the camp to have his eye sight restored.

Amarnath had his eyes checked and was sent for surgery right away. The following day, he opened his eyes and could see once again. He now plans to return to his cattle and earn a good living for his family.



Dechen Wangmo and relatives celebrating after her cure.



Rupkeuda Rokaya in Kalikot

Rupkeuda

In the Kalikot District of Nepal sits a small village that was isolated and cut off from the rest of the world. This was the home of Rupkeuda Rokaya.

Neither Rupkeuda nor her community had access to any healthcare or the means to travel to the nearest hospital. After suffering from sight loss for a long time, Rupkeuda had given up on life. She had reached the point where she would no longer ask her son for help as she felt too much of a burden. She missed the life that she used to have when she could see.

It had become more and more difficult for Rupkeuda, however, her son heard about an eye screening camp coming to their village and ensured that he took his mother to have her eyes tested.

It was found that her sight loss was due to cataracts and that she would have to undergo surgery. The mother and son began to worry about how they would pay for the surgery but were informed that it would be completely free.

Relieved by this, Rupkeuda went on to have her surgery and was cured of her blindness for good.



Rupkeuda Rokaya in Kalikot



Dr Ruit with patients after removal of patches

Our Socio-economic Impact

Women make up **64.5%** of the world's visually impaired and **1 in 4** women are at risk of sight loss compared with just **1 in 8** men

RNIB

Curing untreated cataract blindness in low-middle income nations has been proved to improve an individuals economic activity by up to **1500%**

The Lancet

40% of children are blind from eye conditions that are easily prevented & could be managed if the child had access to eye care services

The Lancet

Blindness and poverty are inextricably linked. Poverty is a cause of blindness and blindness is also a cause of poverty. Poverty and blindness also perpetuate other socio-economic issues such as gender inequality, a lack of education, unemployment and an increase in social stigma.



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Read more on our blog at <https://tejkohlrunitfoundation.medium.com/>
and on our website www.tejkohlrunit.com



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Tej Kohli & Ruit Foundation



Ophthalmologic assistant in Bardiya, Nepal

Our #2030InSight Mission

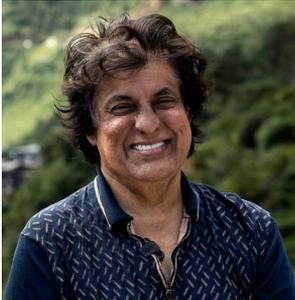
We are targeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending extreme poverty, by making large-scale surgical interventions to cure blindness in the developing world.

We have already screened hundreds of thousands of people in the developing world and we have cured tens of thousands of people of cataract blindness. All treatments are given completely free.

The Tej Kohli & Ruit Foundation is determined to continue to take treatments and cures into remote and disenfranchised communities throughout the developing world. By 2030 we plan to have cured between 300,000 and 500,000 of cataract blindness.

Our Team

Our Founders



Mr Tej Kohli

Tej Kohli is an investor and philanthropist with a long track record of helping those in need.

For nearly two decades he has supported grassroots projects to rebuild and improve disenfranchised and underserved communities. He is today best known for his large-scale projects to combat extreme poverty in the developing world by curing blindness.



Dr Sanduk Ruit

Dr Sanduk Ruit is an ophthalmologist and eye surgeon who has become known as the 'God of Sight' thanks to his lifelong efforts to cure untreated blindness in the most impoverished and remote communities of the developing world. He is a recipient of awards including the Isa Award For Services To Humanity; The Ramon Magsaysay Award and Asian Of The Year.

Our Honorary Patron



Sir Ranulph Fiennes

Widely regarded as the world's greatest living explorer, Sir Ranulph Fiennes's prolific career exploring some of the most remote and inhospitable places on the planet is aligned with our work taking treatment into some of the most remote and inaccessible communities in the developing world. We are proud to have Sir Ranulph as our Honorary Patron.



Patients before screening camp in Solukhumbu.



Patient after his surgery with Dr Ruit and Tej Kohli



Patient after surgery in Nepal.



Dr Ruit with patients after their bandages have been removed.

#2030InSight



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OR
NOT
TO
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