

# Himalayan Cataract Project: Eradicating Avoidable Blindness Through Medical Innovation, Global Collaboration and Compassionate Capitalism

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*According to the World Health Organization, cataracts are the leading cause of vision impairment. The burden of cataracts was high among people in middle-and low-income countries. Apart from aging, malnutrition, long-term exposure to ultraviolet rays, altitude, and weather were the major causes of the high prevalence of cataracts among these people. Cataract treatment requires a surgical procedure in which the cloudy lens are removed and an intraocular lens (IOL) is implanted. This restores the patients' vision. This procedure is expensive due to the high cost of the IOLs, the required equipment, and the complexity of the surgery. Its availability is limited to a small number of secondary and tertiary care facilities in only a few countries. Sanduk Ruit from Nepal and Geoffrey Tabin from the US addressed these challenges through their non-profit organization, the Himalayan Cataract Project (HCP). Over three decades, they have restored the vision of more than 1.4 million people. HCP trained over 19,500 eye care professionals and provided basic treatment to 14.5 million people. As HCP continued to expand its operations, there was much that remained to be done. With the global burden of cataracts expected to increase further due to climate changes and global warming, HCP needs to expand rapidly to reduce blindness in middle-and low-income countries.*

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