



## **Executive Summary for Sankara Eye Foundation**

India's prevalence of curable blindness is among the highest in the world at 5.5%. Most causes of blindness are treatable and cataracts account for an estimated 5 million cases of blindness in India alone. Many barriers such as location, lack of knowledge about eye care and the expense of treatments prevent patients in rural areas from accessing eye care, leaving an enormous population without treatment options. Through its efficient and effective outreach method, Sankara Eye Foundation has been able to provide over 1 million free cataract surgeries to India's rural population and create widespread social impact.

Sankara Eye Foundation aims to eliminate curable blindness among the rural poor in India while empowering women from local communities. Through its free cataract surgery program and nurse training program, Sankara adds value to communities it serves by generating sustainable community involvement.

We assessed Sankara's Gift of Vision and Vision Care Technician programs, to understand the social impact of Sankara's activities. To assess the Gift of Vision program, we surveyed 107 patients preoperatively and 60 of the same patients one month postoperatively. To assess the Vision Care Technician program, we interviewed 30 student technicians and 75 staff technicians from 7 different Sankara hospitals. Both studies focus on program methodology and include beneficiary feedback about how Sankara impacted their lives.

The studies found that both programs were highly community driven and utilized local networks to maximize social impact. The Gift of Vision study found that cataract surgery had a positive impact on patients' physical health, outlook toward the future, and family relationships. Sankara's impact spreads beyond its beneficiaries: its social impact in the Vision Care Technician program positively influences the technicians' economic situations and interpersonal relationships.

The Gift of Vision report includes both qualitative and quantitative data collected while in the field. In addition to data analysis of the pre and postoperative surveys, the assessment includes information about the cataract surgery program, two case studies of patients representative of the survey population, and recommendations for further research.

The Vision Care Technician assessment includes qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected from interviews. Analysis focuses on the technicians' economic status, their personal investments, and the social benefits of the program.

We recommend these reports be used to further marketing and donor acquisition efforts. To better understand the full impact of Sankara programs, we recommend longer-term studies of both programs to further assess impact; these should include a more comprehensive population of beneficiaries.