

Ridley Eye Foundation's Spring camp programme

BY ALISTAIR WOOD

The Ridley Eye Foundation continues its work in taking surgery to patients in remote communities living above 2000m in Nepal's Himalayas. This spring, between 28 March – 7 April 2024, we supported surgical camps in Jumla and Mugu, both in the Karnali Province in northwestern Nepal, as well as in Kalinchowk in the northeast of Bagmati Province. In 2023, our 'Seeing at the Top of the World' programme triaged a total of 5878 patients, and conducted 881 operations in the field.

Following our successful March camp in Jumla, we launched a new element of our partnership in April with Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh (NNJS), one of our two strategic partners in Nepal. To enable our partner hospitals to extend their surgical reach but reduce the logistical burden, we are partnering with NNJS to support the work of the secondary eye hospital in Jumla (2500m). This will include four camps per year focused on the four districts of Humla, Mugu, Dolpa and Jajarikot. The first two camps will take place in September / October 2024.

We have also progressed our 'Seeing Beyond Tomorrow' programme with Heidelberg University Medical School. We are planning an initial two-week visit to Heidelberg in March / April of 2025 for the medical directors of our partner hospitals. This would allow them to identify the precise ophthalmic training support that would allow them to build capacity within their own departments. The benefit would be to reduce the opportunity cost of surgeons being deployed on a camp thus reducing surgical demand at the base hospital. There is an acknowledged shortage of ophthalmic surgeons in Nepal.

“There is an acknowledged shortage of ophthalmic surgeons in Nepal”



Waiting for his mother's operation with a smile.



Post-op patients at our Jumla Camp.



Planning our 'As Far as the Eye Can See' Challenge Events programme.



Nick Bullows of Rayner volunteering on our camp at Kalinchowk.

We are continuing our 'As Far as the Eye Can See' programme with a number of challenge events in July and August in Scotland. The events range from walkathons to ultras, and will take place in Ayrshire and the Borders respectively. In addition, our logistic partner in Nepal, Real Himalaya, are organising a mountain challenge in Nepal in September to climb Mt Manaslu, an 8000m peak in north-central Nepal. There are two options: either the climb itself, or the spectacular trek to base camp.

If anybody would like more details or to take part, please contact us at events@ridleyeyefoundation.org. Equally, if you would like to volunteer with us and help us grow the charity, please contact Shirin Fenn, our volunteer coordinator at the above email.

Finally, this year marks the 75th Anniversary of the first intraocular lens (IOL) implant by Sir Harold Ridley FRS, our founder, and who himself visited Nepal on several occasions. We are running a 75th Anniversary programme of events as part of our 'As Far as the Eye Can See' programme. Please visit our website (<https://ridleyeyefoundation.org/>) for details and more information on what we do and how we do it.

AUTHOR



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