



2024

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



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OUR MISSION

The Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI) is a non-profit organization committed through a Comprehensive Program, to prevent and cure blindness, restore sight and to rehabilitate and educate people who are blind to enable them to use their talents and abilities to live independent lives.

OUR VISION

The Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI) has a vision of a Belize where no one is needlessly blind and those who are irrevocably blind are integrated as equal members in all aspects of society.

Headquarters:

National Eye Clinic
Lions Building
Princess Margaret Drive
Belize City

Accountant:

Felix Reyes
Chartered Accountant
5760 Meighan Avenue
Belize City

Bankers:

Belize Bank Ltd
Albert & Regent Streets
Belize City

The Belize Council for the Visually Impaired is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is Registered as a Non Government Organization—Certificate No.12/02

Message from our Directors

There is no eye health without people - human resources remains a top priority for BCVI in 2024, and beyond, to enhance national coverage for those most in need.

The past year has shown us the power of people - whether it's our patients, staff, managers or donors - people drive the service at BCVI.

Our focus remains on community-based service in eye health, using a comprehensive approach to ensure everyone receives the treatment or support needed.

From our Ophthalmic Assistants offering front-line triaging to our Optometrists and Ophthalmologists restoring sight with a pair of glasses or cataract surgery, and our Rehabilitation Field Officers helping people who are blind regain their independence, we are committed to improving the lives of Belizeans .



**Training of
Optometrists,
Ophthalmologists,
Nurses and
Rehabilitation Field
Officers continues as
we aim to increase
our reach
countrywide.**

BCVI's Team

The people who make it all happen

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Executive President Joan Musa
Vice President Donovan Reneau
Secretary Alice Riveroll
Treasurer Sheena Castillo
Legal Advisor Oneyda Flores Piper

Kamela Palma
Gina Fonseca
Marshall Nunez
Carlos Dominguez
Hugo Moguel

MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT

Carla Ayres Musa - Executive Director
Mark Mitchell - IT Officer
Clifton Borland - Equipment Maintenance Officer
Carmencita Cruz - Finance Officer
Mirza Vasquez - Administrative Assistant
Carol Martinez - Custodian
Kathleen Tillett - Custodian
Kurt Burgess - Messenger/Driver

REHABILITATION

Sagrario Clarke - Coordinator
Jenine Clarke - RFO Central Region
Mya Musa - RFO Central Region

PRIMARY EYE CARE

Jacqueline Hemsley - PEC Manager
Freddy Nicholson - Programme Officer/
Senior Optometrist, BZE
Jahira Vasquez - Optometrist, BZE
Nesani Glori - Apprentice in Optometry
Michelle Young - Diagnostic Technician, BZE
Jamil Rowland - Ophthalmic Assistant, BZE
Afeini Lewis - Ophthalmic Assistant, BZE
Shareece Sabal - Ophthalmic Assistant, BMP
Elvia Bonilla - Optometrist, OW
Elia Slusher - Ophthalmic Assistant, OW
Magali Sabido - DR Grader, OW
Daniel Choc - Optometrist, PG
Luveana Bol - Ophthalmic Assistant, PG

OPTICAL LAB

Arzel Flowers - Lab Admin Officer
Rudy Cocom - Optical Technician
Alfred Borland - Optical Technician
George Berry - Optical Technician

SECONDARY EYE CARE

Dr Zoraida Diaz - Ophthalmologist
Angela Choc - Nurse in Charge & OR
Sharema McKoy - Nurse
Mara Burgess - Ophthalmic Assistant
Sr Alice Lewis - OR Scrub Nurse

Primary Eye Care

BCVI's Comprehensive Eye Care Programme includes screening and exams by Optometrists at our five clinics strategically located throughout the country. Supported by Ophthalmic Assistants, these teams also conduct outreach clinics and ensure patients receive the necessary glasses and/or treatment. Glasses are generated at BCVI's very own Optical Lab and dispensed to patients from their local BCVI clinics or in their communities if they were seen on outreach visits. Our team also conducts regular school screening sessions countrywide for early identification and intervention ensuring we are diagnosing and treating as soon as possible.



14,957

patients seen throughout Belize in clinics and on outreach visits

6,507

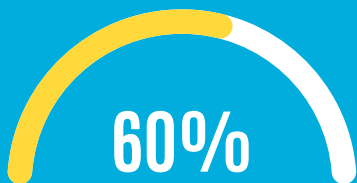
glasses and readers dispensed

2,696

referrals for further evaluation



Optometrist Daniel Choc educates students during a school screening session in Toledo



BCVI continues to see an increase in patients examined since 2020 the majority of whom (60%) are diagnosed with refractive errors.

Secondary Eye Care

Patients seen at the primary level and needing further assessment are referred to BCVIs Ophthalmologist. For more than 10 years Dr. Zoraida Diaz has examined thousands of patients throughout the country diagnosing and preparing them for surgery or providing treatment herself when needed. She retired in December leaving a huge gap in service which we will fill with help from our visiting specialists who visit monthly to examine and treat patients.

People Seen - 2,651

Patients are examined at the SEC Clinic in Belize City and District clinics by an Ophthalmologist

Cataract Surgery - 370

We are fortunate to have international volunteer surgeons providing phaco and manual cataract surgeries

Laser Treatment - 185

Patients with Glaucoma or Diabetic Retinopathy receive laser at all BCVI Clinics when Retinologists visit. They also did **21 vitrectomy surgeries.**

Pediatrics - 34

Thanks to World Pediatric Project (WPP) we are able to offer cataract and strabismus surgeries for children annually



Since 2013, Dr. Zoraida Diaz has provided essential eye care for Belizeans throughout the country examining more than 40,000 patients and helping to restore sight to thousands.

Thank you for your service Dra!

Visitors & Volunteers

January - Dr. John Ghobrial - 20 Pterygium surgeries and 11 Cataract surgeries

January and June - Joan Samuels - Rehabilitation Consultant - provided essential training for RFOs

February - Dr. Stanley Pajka - 20 Cataract Surgeries

February - Dr. Baxter McLendon - Examined patients throughout the country

February, March, April & May - Storm Eye Institute - 56 Cataract Surgeries

March - Dr. Inder Singal and Dr. Nick Ulrich examined and provided laser treatment for patients throughout the country

March, August & December - Dr. Hal Breedlove examined patients in Belize City & Dangriga

March - Benji Chandra - UK Optometrist provided training for Optometrists and examined patients

April - VOSH NC - Optometrist Group provided care for patients in Caye Caulker

April and July - Sheila Jamieson, Low Vision specialist from Canada provided training and support at Summer Camp

April - Dr. Andrew Merkur examined patients and did provided vitrectomy (7) and cataract surgeries (12) and also brought along a representative from Bausch & Lomb Canada for support with the machine

May & September - Dr. David Boes - 75 Cataract Surgeries on patients from throughout Belize

June - Dr. Nick Ulrich - examined patients with retinal problems and treated those needing laser at the SEC and District Clinics

June, October & December - Edgar Ogaldez - 180 Cataract Surgeries

August - World Pediatric Project and Dr. Courtney Kraus performed 28 surgeries (strabismus and cataract)

August - VOSH Amigos - Optometry Screening in Orange Walk

August - Dr. Zac Koshy and Dr. Lennox Webb - 15 Vitrectomy and 8 cataract surgeries

September & October - Dr. Millicent Peterseim and the team screened 1,000 students in Orange Walk

October - Dr. Mark Parsons InterVol examined PEC patients in Dangriga

October - Dr. Willie Chen - FEMH Taiwan - Ophthalmologist

November - Dr. Reed Kinderman and Dr. Jeremy Joseph - Ophthalmologists from the UK and USA operated simultaneously performing 54 cataract surgeries

December - VOSH - examined close to 500 patients in Belize City, referring more than 50 for glasses

Rehabilitation



Our 2024 Summer Camp was the highlight of the year with more than 20 families taking part. With support from our team and volunteer Sheila Jamieson we were able to tailor sessions for a wide range of children and needs including Job Placement.

The King's Park Church of the Nazarene and Nazarene Highschool hosted the one-week event. Donors provided funding and in-kind support for meals, transportation and social activities which included a movie, a trip to the Belize Zoo and a day at Old Belize Beach! The educational focus remained on Braille and Math and clients were also given support in Orientation and Mobility and Cane Use.

Despite our efforts to reduce the incidence of blindness in Belize, we recorded 19 newly-blind patients ranging in ages from 10 to 87 with primary causes as Glaucoma and Diabetic Retinopathy.

We were fortunate to have had BCVI's very own Joan Samuels, retired Rehabilitation Specialist, visit from the US for several weeks throughout the year to provide essential training for our Rehabilitation Field Officers (RFOs).

Our daily work continues with a focus on children and adults who are newly blind to ensure they have the support needed to live as independently as possible.

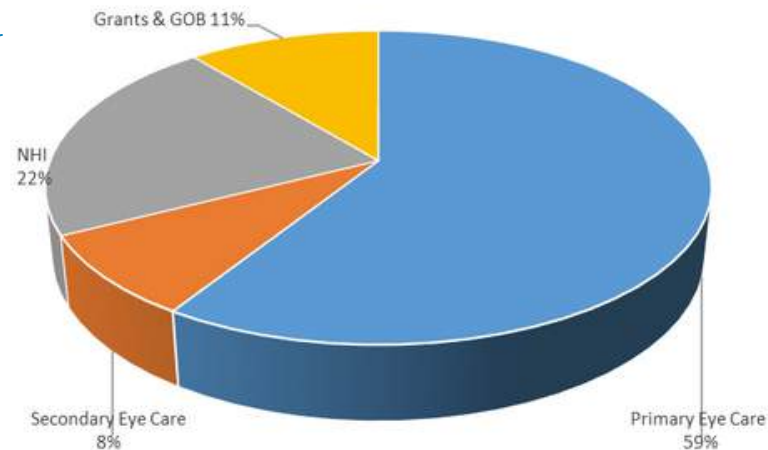


Sustainability



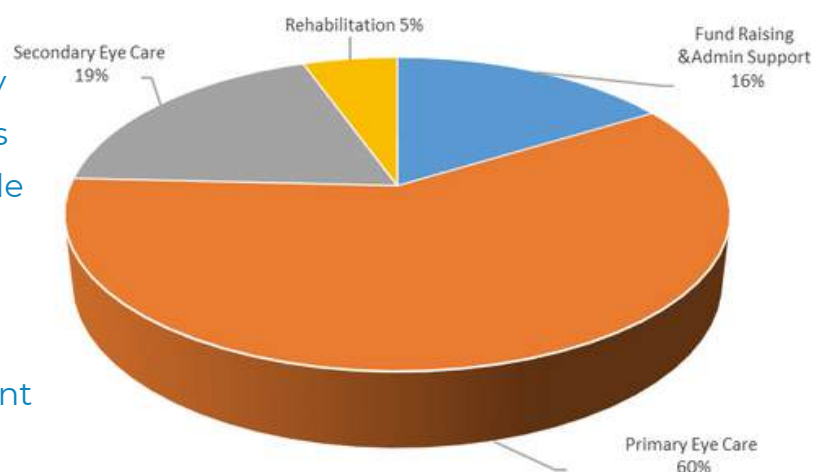
Income BZ \$1,776,322

BCVI's fees for services continue to keep us self-sustainable in covering our running costs. An increase in patient numbers and support from NHI has significantly helped our Rehabilitation Programme in which services are offered 100% free of cost to our 1400+ clients throughout Belize. Primary Eye Care glasses remains our largest source of income and also our largest expense.



Expense BZ \$1,865,856

BCVI has been fortunate to have had a decades-long partnership with US-based NGO Help The World See. They continue to source our frames, lenses and lab supplies at the lowest possible price. Despite the the changes in the global economy and new tariffs, our expenses have been manageable. However, we have noticed a significant increase in the assistance we are giving to patients through free services which totaled more than \$70,000 in 2024.



Looking Forward

Human Resources remain our focus for 2025 both in training existing staff members and identifying new potential members to support our comprehensive national eye health service.

We look forward to welcoming Dr Kiria Mayen to BCVI's team in late 2025! Kiria received a scholarship from Dr Inder Singal's Adarsh Charitable Foundation. This allowed her to further her skills by specializing in Ophthalmology. With Kiria's return, Belize will have its first local surgical Ophthalmologist in years, dedicated to serving those most in need throughout the country.

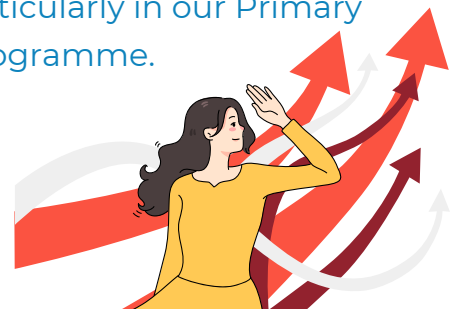
Continued support and training from our international specialists will further strengthen BCVI's services through treatment for blinding conditions such as Cataract, Glaucoma and Diabetic Retinopathy.

BCVI is also thrilled to welcome Randy Williams back in July of 2025. Randy has been studying Optometry in Guatemala after years of service to our patients in Toledo. Upon his return he will be stationed at our clinic in Belmopan where we are certain his passion for eye care and community-based services will significantly impact the people of Cayo!

Rehabilitation Specialist Joan Samuels will return in 2025 to support further training for the field officers in the programme and ensure they are able to meet the needs of the children and adults who are irreversibly blind. We are also fortunate to have the opportunity for cross-training with ProCiegos in Guatemala, a national organization dedicated to supporting people who are blind.

In order to strengthen our services we will partner with volunteers in the US, Taiwan and the UK to upgrade our equipment, particularly in our Primary Clinics and the Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme.

Training for existing staff will continue with a focus on frontline personnel who triage and manage patient flow on a daily basis.



Acknowledgements



Ministry of Health and Wellness
Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Technology

National Health Insurance (NHI)

Lions Clubs of Belize

Dr David Boes

Tom Angell

Dr Baxter McLendon

Adarsh Charitable Trust

Dr Inder Singal

Appliance World Ltd.

Artic Cold Ltd.

Atlantic Bank Ltd.

Belize Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Belize Global Services Ltd. / Aerodispatch

Belize Mills Ltd.

Belize Port Authority

Belize Red Cross

Belize Social Security Board

Belize Telemedia Ltd.

Belize Tourism Board

Belize Traders Ltd

Belize ZOO

Biltmore Plaza Hotel

Belize Defence Force

Bowen & Bowen

Bradley's Import

Belize Foam Factory

Brother's Habet Ltd.

Btalco Group of Companies

Calypso Train Ride

Cambranes

Caribbean Chicken

Caribbean Motors

Caribbean Sprinter

Corozal Free Zone

Tutsi Ideal

Universal Custom Brokers

Zeta Corporation

Isis Yesenia

Bird's Isle Restaurant

Development Finance Corporation

Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan)

Fabrigas Belize Ltd.

Fultec Systems

Grace Kennedy Ltd

Habet & Habet Ltd/ Special Events

Heritage Bank Ltd.

Image Factory Foundation

James Brodie & Co. Ltd.

La Popular Bakery

Madisco Company

Marie Sharp's Fine Food Ltd.

Maya Island Air

McNab Visual

Medina's Construction

Musa & Balderamos LLP.

National Institute of Culture and History

Office of the Prime Minister

Old Belize

Premier Charters & Tours

Price Premier Products Ltd.

Princess Hotel/Ramada Belize City

RF&G Insurance

Sagikor

Save - U Supermarket

Simon Quan & Co. Ltd.

Slingshot Signs Co. Ltd.

Southside Meats

Stationary House Ltd.

The Great House

Design Depot

Three Star's Quality Chicken

Tropic Air

**We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to
reduce avoidable blindness in Belize and
support those who are irreversibly blind**

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