

dollars go further abroad

Geoff Tabin, 53

ORGANIZATION:

himalayan cataract project (cureblindness.org)

Tabin's life was transformed when he saw a team of Dutch physicians in Nepal cut into a local blind woman's eye. "At that time in Nepal, it was accepted that their eyes turned white from cataracts and then they waited to die," says Tabin, who was there to climb Mount Everest. "Seeing this woman restored to sight was incredible." In 1995, Tabin, along with Nepalese doctor Sanduk Ruit, started the Himalayan Cataract Project (HCP) in Kathmandu. In addition to facilitating the mass production

of inexpensive lenses used in cataract surgery—the same procedure that costs thousands in the U.S. can be done by HCP for \$20 in Nepal—Tabin and Ruit have trained more than 100 local surgeons. Now, after 15 years and hundreds of thousands of eye surgeries, Tabin is looking to bring the same high-quality, low-cost treatments to sub-Saharan Africa. His goal: to eliminate preventable blindness, a condition that afflicts some 45 million people worldwide. "I still receive great satisfaction from standing on top of a mountain, but it's pretty minimal compared with watching a patient regain their sight," he says. "I can't think of anything I'd rather do." —RYAN KROGH

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