

Supporting Sightsavers' work to secure a healthy future for all

Sightsavers was founded 75 years ago. Since then, they have achieved a lot with the help of supporters worldwide - protecting sight, fighting diseases and working towards a more equal world. But in the face of increasing conflict, political upheaval and economic instability, the global need for eye care is set to increase dramatically, posing a considerable challenge to health systems. Applied Photophysics is proud to be supporting them through 'The Beauty of Light' campaign to help make a difference.

Worldwide, four billion people still can't access the health care they need. The overwhelming majority are disproportionately affected marginalised groups living in low-and middle-income countries. These uncertain times threaten the vital services that provide health care to those who need it most. Without urgent action, the number of people who are blind will triple by 2050, effecting access to education and employment, reducing mobility and well-being, and increasing the need for social care, ultimately leading to higher mortality rates.

Supporting Sightsavers doesn't just change people's lives, it's helping to secure global health and prosperity for future generations.



Globally, at least 2.2 billion people have a vision impairment or blindness, 1 billion of which could have been prevented or are yet to be addressed.



At least 450 million children have a sight condition that needs treatment, with 90 million children living with some form of sight loss.



It is estimated that 40% of children are blind from eye conditions that could have been prevented or could be managed if the child had access to eye care services.

How Sightsavers continues to support people to learn, earn and thrive

In the face of many continuing challenges, supporters such as Applied Photophysics help to scale programmes to achieve meaningful change. In 2024, Sightsavers treated millions of people for eye conditions, eliminated trachoma in Pakistan and enacted the African Disability Protocol - protecting the rights of 80 million people with disabilities in African counties.

Everyone has a right to access quality, affordable health care, and our 'The Beauty of Light' campaign will support Sightsavers work towards this.

Since 1950, Sightsavers have:



Provided more than 9.25 million cataract operations to restore sight.



Dispensed over 7 million pairs of glasses.



Supported more than 342,000 people with disabilities, enabling them to go to school, find a job and take part fully in society.



Fatoumata's story shows how sight-saving treatments allow children to learn and develop.

In Mali, 8-year-old Fatoumata suffered from congenital cataracts in both eyes for years, affecting her ability to learn, and attracting negative attention and stigma from her classmates and teachers. Fatoumata's family couldn't afford the expensive examinations or surgery in Mali's hospitals, so when her mother heard about Sightsavers' free cataract surgery on the radio, she ran to tell her husband.

After a 97 km journey to the eye centre in the Ouelessebougou health district, Fatoumata was screened, and both eyes were operated on successively. Today, her brother is also waiting for his surgery to be organised in their district as Sightsavers expands its operations across the country.

Without your continued support, children like Fatoumata wouldn't be able to access sight-restoring surgery and would miss out on a healthy childhood.

Fatoumata has happily returned to school with her classmates, now able to read, write and learn as every child should. She hopes one day to help her parents out of poverty and has dreams of helping her country.

Helping others like Fatoumata

Child eye health and education are inextricably linked to poverty and inequality. Children with vision loss are up to five times less likely to be in formal education in low- and middle-income countries.

23.5 million children globally have a moderate to severe vision impairment, including nearly 1.5 million children who are blind, with short-sightedness projected to increase to more than half of the world's population by 2050. But eye-health solutions are some of the most cost-effective, and Sightsavers has the expertise and networks in place to implement them.

Bringing an end to neglected tropical diseases

Sightsavers help to treat and prevent five debilitating diseases that affect more than a billion people globally. These are known as neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and two of them are a major cause of preventable blindness around the world, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Sightsavers works with thousands of local volunteers and has distributed more than a billion donated treatments to protect people against NTDs. Sightsavers have helped to eliminate trachoma in several countries, including The Gambia, Ghana, Malawi, Benin, Mali and most recently Pakistan.

Trachoma

Trachoma is the world's leading infectious cause of blindness: there are at least 38 countries where people are at risk from the disease.

It starts as a bacterial infection that can be easily treated. But if it's not, it can cause the eyelashes to turn inwards and scrape against the eye, causing pain and, eventually, sight loss. Worldwide, it's thought that 1.5 million people are blind or visually impaired because of the disease.

Sightsavers treat the infection with antibiotics and perform operations on advanced cases to stop the eyelid turning inwards. Sightsavers also work with communities to help educate them on how to maintain good hygiene, which helps to prevent the disease from being passed from person to person.



After recovering from a sight-saving trachoma operation, 10-year-old Daizy plays happily with her friends.



Anti Solomon, a mother of seven, is assessed by a community drug distributor.

River blindness

River blindness, officially called 'onchocerciasis', is the world's second-most common infectious cause of blindness. It is a parasitic infection spread by black flies that causes severe skin irritation and itching, and it can lead to permanent blindness.

River blindness is easily treated with medication and by monitoring the spread of infected black flies.

Sightsavers have helped to train 2.7m community drug distributors to administer the correct dosage of medicine to members of their communities.



For many of the semi-nomadic population of Turkana, Kenya, trachoma has been ever-present danger throughout their lives. Often roaming in rural areas, most rarely travel within a hundred miles of a hospital or eye clinic, so treatment for trachoma and other eye conditions is difficult to access, and sight loss can seem like an inevitable part of life.

Akai (pictured above on the right) suffered immense pain and progressive sight loss from trachoma for many years. James, a community volunteer trained by Sightsavers, travels to remote areas to find people who could benefit from eye health treatment. James explained how an operation would help ease Akai's pain and how her family could get treatment to prevent blindness, even though her own sight could not be saved.

Sightsavers provided transport for Akai, her sister and two daughters to travel to a pop-up clinic with a mobile surgical team. Whilst Akai has lost her sight to trachoma, she is relieved her daughters have been able to get treatment. **"I feel happy now the pain was removed from my eyes"** she says. **"My heart is happy since my children have been treated and feel better. Nobody will be holding them up to help them walk."**

You can find out more about Sightsavers work at www.sightsavers.org and more about how Applied Photophysics are supporting their work through sales of our products here - <https://www.photophysics.com/company/news-events/sightsavers/>
