

Tackling health inequality and eliminating debilitating diseases

Thank you for all that you do for Sightsavers and the people we are helping. In these uncertain and often difficult times, you are saving sight, transforming people's lives, and supporting the changes we need to build a fairer, more equal world.

Everyone has the right to access quality, affordable health care, where and when they need it. But for half the world's population, it's out of reach. Vision, the most dominant of our senses, is vital at every turn of our lives, yet globally, the number of people in need of eye care is spiralling. 90% of people affected by eye diseases live in low- and middle- income countries. Unless eye health services improve, an estimated 61 million people could be blind by 2050.



2.2 billion people have a visual impairment worldwide, half of this is preventable or treatable



Half the population worldwide are unable to access the eye care they need



£343.7 billion a year is thought to be lost in productivity because of visual impairment

With your help, we can solve the global eye health crisis

If the world's eye care needs were met, the impact on education, health and the global economy would be astounding. Investing in eye health creates a ripple effect in society. Eye health equals opportunity, allowing children to learn and adults to earn. It equals progress towards our shared goals of reducing global poverty and inequality.

The change we seek is ambitious, but achievable. Despite being one of the biggest global health problems of our time, preventable visual impairment is also one of the most solvable. Treatment for avoidable blindness is widely accepted as among the most simple, scalable, successful, and cost effective of all health interventions. Through Sightsavers' work:



Millions of people have had their sight restored through more than nine million operations for conditions including cataracts and trichiasis



Thousands of women and girls with and without disabilities now have access to inclusive eye health services



Millions of people in Africa are no longer at risk of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)

With your help, we can continue to make progress towards reducing poverty and health inequality, and work towards the elimination of debilitating diseases. In 2024, we aim to perform over **499,000** sight-saving surgeries, distribute **millions of treatments** for blinding and debilitating NTDs, and provide over **1.2 million** pairs of glasses.

Sightsavers has decades of expertise in developing long-term, sustainable solutions to help achieve universal health coverage. We've made great progress, but there's still a lot of work to do – and we can't do it without you. Please help us this year.



With her sight restored after cataract surgery, Alice and her son, Lino, smile at each other in delight.

Eyes on impact

Alice's story shows how one person's sight-saving treatment can ripple throughout an entire community.

In Malawi, life in Alice's community is not easy, and there are many hurdles she faces, not least the impact of climate change. In recent months, flooding has caused death and devastation throughout the region. She lost her house and possessions, and barely escaped with her life. But by tackling treatable eye conditions such as cataracts, it means there's one less challenge causing hardship for people like Alice.

A mobile health worker visiting the community advised Alice to visit a doctor, to see if her sight could be improved. And this is how Alice came to meet Rex Bwanausi (pictured here), who travels the Chikwawa region, where Alice lives, to help people access eye care.

Alice tells us: **"I heard about the eye specialists from my friends, I used to have difficulties seeing whenever night fell, I was failing to do anything on my own. I would sit in one place waiting for someone to cook and do everything for me."** Her son, Lino, was able to take her to Chikwawa hospital, and she was diagnosed with cataracts and referred for surgery.



Rex examines a patient at a screening

Restoring independence

Alice had two successful operations on her eyes. **"The first thing I saw after the operation was the light,"** she says. **"I told my son that I am now able to see clearly! My life has changed a lot. I can fetch water, cook, and even walk to the market."**

Alice has now become a passionate advocate for eye health encouraging everyone with eye issues to seek help. The impact on her community has been immeasurable – it goes beyond restoring sight. It has enabled adults like Alice to regain their independence, ensured children no longer miss school, and the community now dispels fears and false rumours about eye surgery.

Help empower more people like Alice to regain their livelihood and independence



A donation of **£1,000** could restore the sight of over **33 adults** – giving them the power of sight and opportunity.

Help us win the fight against NTDs

NTDs are a set of 20 infectious diseases. They affect more than 1 billion people in the poorest communities in the world and can cost economies billions every year. Our aim is to consign five¹ of these blinding and debilitating diseases to the history books.

NTDs are most prevalent in rural regions, poor urban areas, and conflict zones. These conditions can cause excruciating pain, reduce people's social and economic chances and, in some cases, even be fatal. Yet, they can be prevented, treated and in many cases, eliminated. Sightsavers is recognised internationally for its high-impact work and has a proven capacity to manage and deliver outcomes on large scale health programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

We work with thousands of local volunteers and have distributed more than a billion donated treatments to protect people against NTDs. We have helped to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem in several countries, including The Gambia, Ghana, Malawi, Benin, and Mali. We have also delivered two million training courses to health workers and volunteer community drug distributors. Yet despite our progress so far, there is more to be done.

Why does Sightsavers work so hard to eliminate NTDs?

Because we know it's possible, and we know the difference it makes. We've seen the incredible impact our projects have on individuals, communities, and economies.



Children in Tanzania, receiving treatment to stop the infection and spread of trachoma.

Become a part of history

With our decades of expertise, you can help reduce poverty and combat global inequality by joining us in the fight to control and eliminate five NTDs. With consistent effort we know elimination is not only possible, but within sight. **Will you play a key role in a pivotal moment in history?** Together we can prevent, treat, and eliminate NTDs in a cost-effective way. Join us to create a healthier, fairer, and more equitable society.

Your support can have huge impact

The impact of treating people with cataracts and protecting people from NTDs cannot be underestimated. By delivering treatments, we help to enable people to earn a living and support their families. With your support, we can continue to ensure that no one suffers from conditions which can be treated and prevented.

It costs just 4p to treat or protect one person against river blindness and just £90 for a child cataract surgery. **Please continue to help us this year.** Your incredible gift has the potential to help restore, save, and protect the sight of thousands of the world's most marginalised people:



£2,000 could treat or protect 5,000 families at risk from the NTD river blindness.



£4,000 could reach over 44 children who need a vital sight-saving cataract operation.



£8,000 could screen a community of over 9,000 people for a range of eye conditions.

¹ Trachoma, Onchocerciasis, Lymphatic Filariasis, Intestinal Worms and Schistosomiasis

Frontline stories: Meet ophthalmic nurse Jeremiah

Jeremiah (pictured) has been working as an ophthalmic nurse in Zimbabwe since receiving training from Sightsavers more than 20 years ago. After his grandmother went blind, he was determined to stop the same happening to other people.



In Binga, where Jeremiah works, trachoma is common in childhood, sometimes affecting children as young as three years old. Scarring from trachoma, caused when the eyelashes turn inwards and scrape against the eyeball, is often found in children over the age of 14. The advanced form of the disease, known as trichiasis, is common in patients over the age of 30, which concerns Jeremiah.

If left untreated, trichiasis can lead to blindness. But ophthalmic nurses like Jeremiah can help treat and prevent the disease by referring patients for surgery and distributing medication that protects communities.

As well as successes, there are many daily challenges in Jeremiah's work. A lack of funding and resources means a shortage of basic drugs, limited equipment for operations and not enough transportation to reach rural communities. In the future, he hopes to see basic health care available for everyone, more awareness programmes to help prevent people from going blind and additional funding partnerships that focus on eliminating trachoma.

"The support that has come from Sightsavers is invaluable. May the supporters know that they've impacted greatly on some people's lives in this part of the world."

The vital work of ophthalmic nurses like Jeremiah relies on funding from our generous supporters. Please help us train more eye health workers, distribute medication to children and families and refer those in need for sight-saving operations. **Your gift can have a huge impact.**

Help treat and protect even more communities against trachoma



We're so close to eliminating trachoma in several countries; we can't stop now. A donation of **£5,000** could **treat or protect over 500 people** against blinding trachoma.

With your continued support, a solution is in sight

Thank you for your fantastic support. We believe that with the right investment in health care, we can reduce poverty and disease, as well as improve school attendance and employment rates. Together we can create resilient health systems and make sure everyone, everywhere, can access the health care they need.

We hope you will choose to support Sightsavers this year and continue working with us to build a healthier, fairer, and more equitable society. If you have any questions or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me, **Anna Gritt**, direct on **01444 446600** or via email trusts@sightsavers.org. Thank you for your consideration.