



## Saving sight and transforming lives in 2024

Thank you so much for your previous support for our work to save sight and transform lives. Your support helped Sightsavers work towards our goal of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes and where people with disabilities participate equally in society. With your generosity, we provided vital eye care, tackled neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and supported people with disabilities across Africa and South Asia. But there is still so much to be done, and our vital work has continued over the past year.

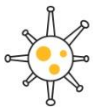
We're incredibly proud of what Sightsavers achieved in 2023. Despite working in a difficult and, at times, turbulent political and economic environments, Sightsavers delivered impressive results that saw a considerable improvement on 2022.



With our partners, we carried out nearly **10 million eye screenings** in a range of settings including screening camps, primary care clinics and schools.



We dispensed **919,647 pairs of glasses** and carried out more than **500,000 operations**, over 90% of which were to treat cataract, the highest number of cataract surgeries reported in a single year by Sightsavers projects.



We supported **12 countries** to deliver preventive medication for five NTDs. Our programs delivered more than **60 million treatments**, for blinding and disabling diseases and those affecting children's cognitive and physical development, reaching an estimated **47 million people**.



Our work supported almost **30,000 people with disabilities** to live more independently by providing training to help them understand their rights, find work and take part in society.

## A final push to tackle trachoma in Zimbabwe

After years of hard work, Zimbabwe is nearing trachoma elimination. In 2024, Sightsavers supported what could be one of the last few community-wide treatment campaigns for the active trachoma infection and sight saving surgical camps for trichiasis, the advanced painful form of the disease. The country is on the cusp of elimination and soon surveys will be carried out to determine if there is any further need for treatment.



**Belita (pictured above) was a patient in one of Sightsavers surgery camps in 2024.** Belita is a widow with six children and six grandchildren. Two years ago, she began experiencing problems with her eyes, they became sore as her eyelashes scraped her eyes causing them to weep and itch. It got worse and for the last year the pain became so unbearable, and her sight deteriorated so much she could not contribute to farming or take care of the home she shares with her daughter. Belita began to feel like a burden, which made her feel low and unhappy.

Belita visited her local hospital and health clinic, but health workers failed to identify and explain what was wrong. Only when she came to the Sightsavers surgical camp did she find out she had developed trichiasis in both eyes and was finally offered surgery. Belita will soon be free from pain and safe from further sight loss.

Belita's story is sadly not unique, we have treated many people in her condition across Zimbabwe over many years but happily, thanks to our supporters, fewer and fewer are in need of treatment.

## Supporting children with vision problems in Pakistan

---

In Pakistan, Sightsavers School Health Integrated Project (SHIP) has been identifying children in schools with eye conditions and providing eye examinations, glasses, low vision devices and surgical treatments for those who need them. Thanks to our supporters, this

project has trained schoolteachers on vision screening, provided equipment for eye health centres and prepared optometrists to deliver specialist services.

12-year-old Minahil (*pictured below*) attends a school where teachers know how to screen children and identify signs of vision loss. Minahil's vision problems were recognised, and she was referred to specialists, who prescribed glasses. When our team visited in 2024, Minahil was overjoyed to explain how her glasses will help her achieve her dreams:

"Before I got glasses, I was not able to do my work properly. Now I have my glasses I will adjust and work hard to achieve my goals. If I stop wearing my glasses, then my eye problems will get worse and may stop me from coming to school. I would lose the enjoyment I get from coming to school. These glasses will help me achieve my ambitions. I have two dreams to achieve when I grow up. One is to become a detective and if I can't achieve that goal then I will try to do something great to bring laurels to my country.

The Sightsavers team should go to every school and provide glasses to every child and solve their problems. Without eyes there is nothing - one cannot read or see anything and couldn't come to school."



## Combating neglected tropical diseases in Burkina Fasso

---

**This year in Burkina Faso we have delivered over 500,000 treatments to protect people from lymphatic filariasis (LF), a disabling neglected tropical disease. We do this by training local volunteers to distribute the treatments which are donated by pharmaceutical companies.**

People with LF often develop a permanent disability, which can leave them unable to work or care for their families and exposes them to poverty, stigma and discrimination. Sightsavers programme in Burkina Fasso supports doctors to treat men with hydrocele, a symptom of LF where the scrotum is painful and severely swollen. A simple operation can remove the swelling and help these men return to their normal lives. **To date, we have delivered over a thousand surgeries in Burkina Fasso.**

The programme is also helping to treat people with lymphedema, another complication of LF that involves swelling of the arms or legs. Patients can reduce their pain and swelling by washing the affected limb regularly, and by keeping it elevated for parts of the day. This work is supported by 'patient peer educators'; people living with LF, who provide advice to on how to take care of swollen limbs.



Patient peer educator, Batawouni (*pictured right*), is dedicated to her role: “I’m going to try to guide all of those who suffer from this ailment to go and get treatment in hospital and, above all, to show them how to look after their feet.”

The peer educators also tackle damaging superstitions surrounding LF which contribute to the stigma that many patients face and can discourage them from seeking medical help.



## Introducing inclusive education in Zambia

---



Sightsavers’ Tusambilile Chapamo (‘Let’s Learn Together’) project is working with schools in Zambia to ensure children with sight loss and other disabilities access mainstream education and learn alongside their peers.

The project is a partnership with the European Union, ZAFOD and the Zambia Ministry for Education.

So far, **460 teachers** have learnt about the benefits of inclusive education and how to support students with disabilities. The project particularly focuses on empowering young women and girls, who experience high levels of discrimination and exclusion.

One of the projects participants, Ms Chilongo (*pictured above*), has been teaching Ruth, a student with a visual impairment this year. Thanks to everything she has learned through the project, Ms Chilongo noticed Ruth couldn’t see the board well, so moved her to the front of the class. There is another child with a disability in the class called Portifer who has Down Syndrome, who she supports by encouraging play and giving him special tasks when others are reading / writing. Ms Chilongo makes sure never to isolate students with disabilities, and to help them feel at home.

**Thank you so much for supporting our vision of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes, and where people with disabilities participate equally in society. We hope you will choose to continue supporting Sightsavers. Thank you.**