

# Annual Review

2013



Sightsavers

## **The challenge**

Across the world, people with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty and social discrimination. Sightsavers is committed to eliminating avoidable blindness and supporting people with visual impairments as equal members of society.

## **Key facts**

- 285 million people are visually impaired worldwide.
- 90 per cent of blindness occurs in the developing world.
- 80 per cent of blindness is avoidable.
- The biggest cause of blindness is cataract.  
The biggest cause of infectious blindness is trachoma.  
The biggest cause of visual impairment is uncorrected refractive error.

## **Key achievements for 2013**

- Examined 1.3 million people in 1,059 districts – across 19 countries – as part of the Global Trachoma Mapping Project.
- Distributed medical treatments to 103,560,852 people and provided surgical care to a further 296,319.
- Educated and equipped 210,764 primary healthcare workers and community volunteers to treat eye conditions.
- Influenced UK government with our campaign, to include people with disabilities in global development policy.

## **Our vision and mission**

Sightsavers' vision is of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes and where visually impaired people are able to participate equally in society.

We work with partners in developing countries to support eye health projects and enable access to education and training.

## A message from our Chief Executive



It has been an incredible year. In 2013, we provided eye care and support to more people than ever before – with our work on neglected tropical diseases benefiting over 100 million people alone. Our UK government-funded project to map trachoma surpassed its target, and is helping tackle the disease for 1.3 million people in 19 countries.

We're very excited about the potential expansion of this work, but this is tempered by the current outbreak of Ebola. Our projects in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea are suspended and we don't know for how long. These countries' health systems are stretched to breaking point, Ebola will impact severely on future provision.

The outbreak has underlined the importance of working with ministries of health in our project countries to ensure healthcare systems are strengthened by what we do and never weakened. It's why we trained more health workers than ever last year.

As international debate on what follows the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) gathers momentum, we have expanded our advocacy work. The MDGs left out people with disabilities; this time we're determined their voices are heard. We launched Put Us in the Picture, our campaign calling on the UK government to include people with disabilities in global development. So far, the signs are really good – government has been pushing for a new international framework that leaves no one behind.

Our Annual Review 2013 details the key areas of our work: preventing blindness, supporting equality and campaigning for change. None of this work would have been possible without our supporters, partners and staff. I would like to thank all of you.

**Dr Caroline Harper**, Chief Executive

# Preventing blindness

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**Every year, we prevent millions of people from going blind. We work with partners to carry out eye examinations, refer people for treatment and restore sight. This year we've distributed medication to 103,560,852 people through local volunteers and have funded 296,319 operations.**

## Mapping the global spread of trachoma

Trachoma is an infectious eye disease and a leading cause of avoidable blindness. Around 7.2 million people are in the advanced stages of trachoma and at immediate risk of going blind. A further 110 million people are living in areas where the disease is endemic and 210 million where it is suspected.

It's a disease caused by poverty, primarily affecting communities which don't have access to clean water, sanitation and healthcare. In these conditions, visual impairment can lead to social isolation, abuse, an unstable income and food shortage.

To tackle the disease, governments need to know more about areas where people are, or could be, affected. This is why we're working with partners to map the global spread of trachoma. By 2015, our Global Trachoma Mapping Project (GTMP) will have mapped the disease and the availability of water, sanitation and health facilities across 1,238 districts in 30 countries.

The £10.6 million UK government-funded project is the first global health survey of its kind, and will more than double available data on trachoma. Now in its second year, in 2013, the GTMP has already examined 1.3 million people in 1,059 districts across 19 countries. Using smartphone technology, more than 28 million items of data have been collected. They will be used to help governments more effectively plan how they support people affected by trachoma.



## **Supporting 4 million people in Mozambique**

In October we helped to open an eye clinic in Nampula Central Hospital in northern Mozambique. This much-needed facility serves the eye care needs of four million people in the province and is now a referral centre for more complicated eye conditions.

## **Treating more people in Africa**

Thanks to our supporters, people in Africa, affected by neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), have received over 100 million treatments from Sightsavers. This is the highest number of treatments we have ever provided for these diseases.

We are committed to positively contributing to the elimination of NTDs, as has been achieved in Ghana and The Gambia for trachoma, and parts of Uganda for river blindness.

## **Promoting sustainable eye care**

Our training has equipped 32,136 primary healthcare workers and 178,628 community volunteers from 27 countries with the skills they need to provide treatment for eye conditions. It's a fantastic boost for international efforts to eliminate avoidable blindness.

# Supporting equality

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**We provide training and resources for local staff to educate communities about visual impairment and disability. This helps reduce stigma and give people with visual impairment the support needed to live independent and fulfilling lives.**

## Promoting inclusion in Senegal

Lack of confidence in the ability of visually impaired children to learn and fears that sending children with disabilities to school will have a negative effect on a family's finances, due to reduced begging income. These were two of the concerns from parents, media representatives and community leaders that our staff addressed working with three schools in the capital Dakar.

We partnered with the Ministry of Education to launch a pilot project making the schools more accessible. As well as offering support and information, we supplied Braille aids and adapted classrooms and toilets. This work has improved opportunities for children with disabilities in Dakar and the government is now increasing accessibility support in other schools.

## Sharing lessons from Malawi

Identifying eye health conditions as early as possible can prevent avoidable blindness. We support 10 community childcare centres in Chikhwawa – helping parents, community workers and volunteers identify disabilities and act upon them quickly.

With our local partner, the Parents of Disabled Children Association of Malawi, we've produced new guidelines on inclusion in community childcare centres. These can be used to refer children to relevant services and as training materials for volunteers and government workers. The increased awareness of best practice will build our expertise in other project areas.



A blind boy joins his sighted friends in a school in Bangladesh

## **A platform for voices to be heard in Bangladesh**

In a Dhaka slum and a rural village we are working with partners to seek out the voices of excluded people. Voices of the Marginalised is documenting the considerable challenges experienced by people with disabilities, older people and those with mental health problems.

We aim to identify overlooked development priorities and better tailor support for people with visual impairments. Results will be shared with policymakers to help us speak out effectively for those we support. The same methodology will now be used in an African project.

## **Technology for life in India**

Some of India's most advanced technologies are bringing the same opportunities enjoyed by many to the most impoverished people. Technology for Life is a project bringing devices to people with decreasing sight. Magnifying domes, screenreaders and Braille machines help children and adults with visual impairments to rehabilitate, attend school and access employment.

In Mumbai our partnership with Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged is raising awareness of disability issues. Called ProjectAccess, it has changed copyright and banking laws.

# Campaigning for change

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**We work with national governments to strengthen the way they tackle the causes of avoidable blindness. We campaign for support for all those in need, now and in the future.**

## **Launching Put Us in the Picture**

In developing countries 800 million people are excluded or marginalised because of their disability. These same people are also excluded from the UK government's international development policy.

This is why, in December 2013, we launched our Put Us in the Picture campaign, calling on the UK government to include people with disabilities in its policy and projects. More than 20,000 people have signed our petition supporting this call.

At the time of writing, a committee of cross-party MPs has released a report recommending the UK government creates a development strategy to include people with disabilities. In response, the government announced the publication of a disability framework by November 2014, setting out a commitment to move international policy and projects in the right direction.

We are working with the UK government to ensure the framework delivers change for people with disabilities in developing countries. We will continue campaigning to ensure that, whichever political party is elected in May 2015, people with disabilities remain an international development priority.

## **Influencing the development agenda beyond 2015**

In September 2015, world leaders will meet to formulate a long-term global development agenda to replace the expiring UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).





Caroline Harper, CEO (left); Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development, Lynne Featherstone (centre) and Paralympic bronze medallist 2012, Ben Quilter (right).

These eight international development goals were agreed by 189 UN member states in 2000. But they don't acknowledge people with disabilities.

Over the past year, Sightsavers has campaigned for recognition of the needs of people with disabilities in the new agenda. We have: commissioned research to highlight the need for change; supported organisations from developing countries to lobby key decision-makers; and raised awareness of the needs of people with disabilities to be fully recognised.

## **A new universal eye health global action plan**

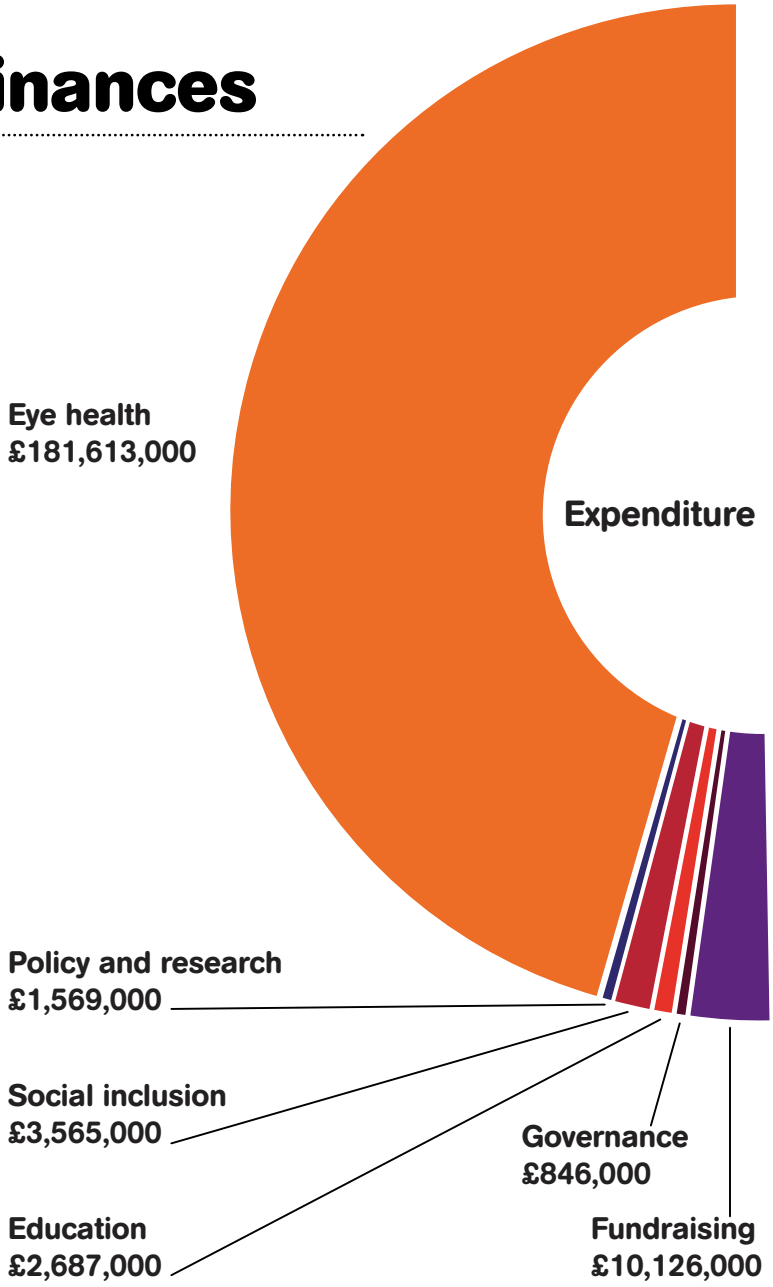
The World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a new global action plan for universal eye health this year, replacing their previous commitments to avoidable blindness.

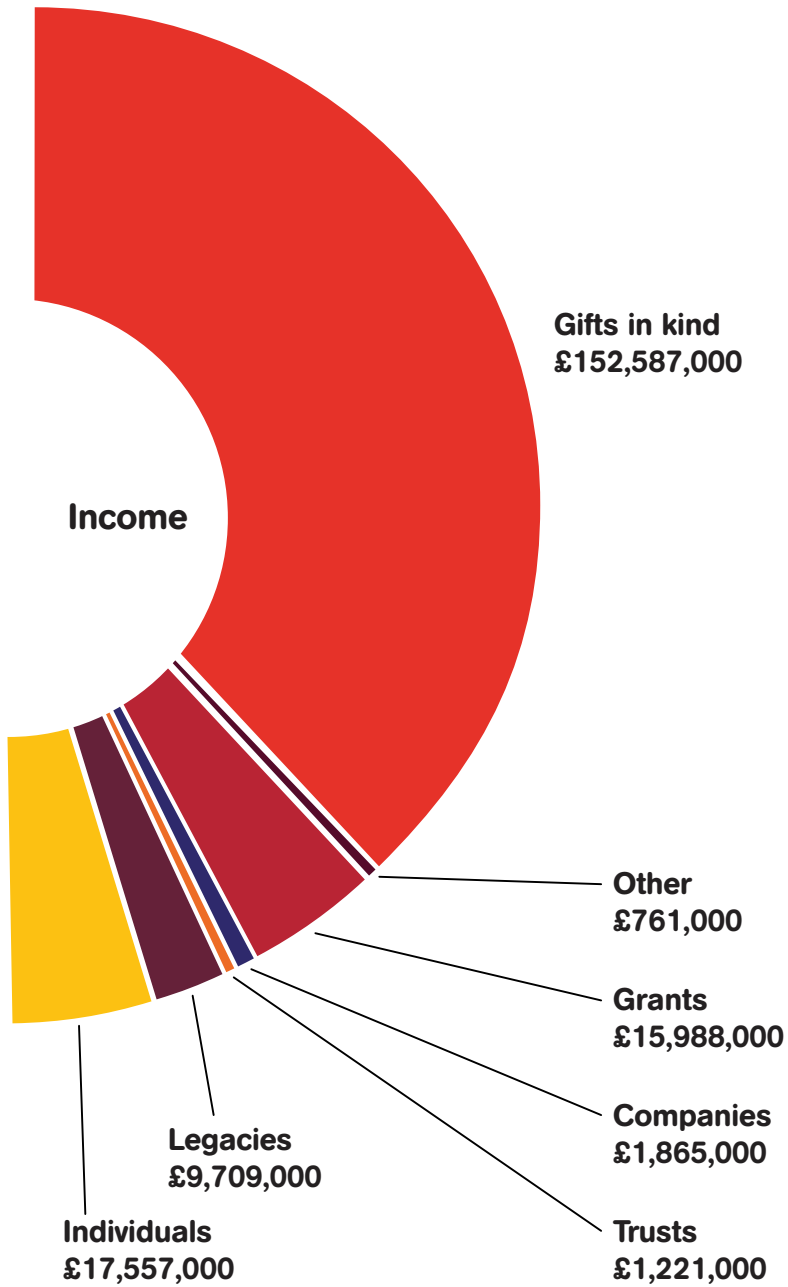
This new international framework will run to 2018. It requires national governments, WHO and international partners to work together to reduce avoidable visual impairment and improve access to rehabilitation services for visually impaired people.

Sightsavers will use this framework to influence ministries of health. It's a powerful resource for monitoring the performance of national governments against international standards.

# Our finances

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# Our plans

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Over the last year, we developed two key strategies that we are using to benchmark our work. We are conscious of the need to be sympathetic to local contexts and encourage national governments and local communities to uphold the rights of people with disabilities.

## Eye health strategy 2013-2018

Sightsavers works with a number of national governments in developing countries to improve eye health and healthcare systems. We need to work with them to strengthen political determination and achieve universal eye health. But, we will only support healthcare projects in a country if they are:

- Relevant** Sympathetic to different cultural, socio-economic and political contexts, and complementary to services that are already working effectively,
- Accessible** Contributing to improving evidence about cost-effective solutions to health care services,
- Scalable** Demonstrative that services for people with visual impairments can be integrated into broader health services,
- Sustainable** Encouraging communities to get involved with eye health projects,
- Enabling** Building capacity to influence the way things are done and lead to universal eye health.

## Education strategy 2013-2018

Sightsavers builds inclusive education projects so that people with disabilities can participate in all areas of life. These projects must be:

- Accessible** Both physically and financially for young people with disabilities,
- Equitable** Inclusive of young people with disabilities, irrespective of gender, language, socio-economic background, or any other characteristic,
- Appropriate** Meeting the diverse, complex and evolving needs of students with disabilities,
- Continual** Extending from early childhood through primary and on to secondary education, so that there's consistent educational support.

## 2014 and beyond

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in the world but it doesn't need to be. A Million Miracles will be launched in 2014, with the aim of raising £30 million (€36 million) to carry out one million sight-restoring operations by 2018.

We will also develop benchmarking strategies on social inclusion, global advocacy, research and fundraising.

# Thank you

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Our thanks go to everyone who helped Sightsavers achieve so much in 2013. In particular, we would like to recognise the contributions of:

## **Institutions**

Department for International Development; European Union; Jersey Overseas Aid Committee; Irish AID; Isle of Man Overseas Aid Committee; Scottish Government; USAID.

## **Trusts and foundations**

AG Leventis Foundation; Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in Great Britain & Ireland; Baxter International Foundation; Bernard Lewis Family Charitable Trust; Brian Mercer Charitable Trust; Children's Investment Fund Foundation; Comic Relief; Conrad N. Hilton Foundation; The END Fund; Four Acre Trust; Fred Hollows Foundation; IZUMI Foundation; Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa; The OPEC Fund for International Development; The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust; The Ranworth Trust; The Shirin Sultan Dossa Foundation; Stavros Niarchos Foundation; Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust, Zochonis Charitable Trust.

## **Corporate partners**

Ace & Tate; Afren; African Petroleum Corporation; Brewers; GDF Suez; Paperchase; Polaroid Eyewear; Robert Bion & Co; Standard Chartered Bank; Tomlinsons; Vitol Foundation; Western Union.

## **Individuals**

Ben Brodie; Derek and Elizabeth Joseph; Greg Nasmyth; Mr H Bourn; Mr Jayu Shah and friends of Harambee Water Project; Dr and Mrs Mark Scott; Stephen Walsh and Jill Gallagher. We would also like to express our gratitude for supporters who leave us a gift in their Will.

# How you can help

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By supporting our work, you can make a massive difference to the life of someone who has a visual impairment.

## Spread the word

Clicking 'like', 'share' or 'retweet' might not seem like much, but it helps to raise awareness about avoidable blindness. You can help let people know that there is a solution and boost international efforts to eliminate needless causes of visual impairment.

You can find us here:  Sightsavers  @Sightsavers

## Donate

A small donation can make a big difference. Every pound you donate to Sightsavers goes to support someone living with a visual impairment wherever the need is greatest. You could help someone save their sight or regain their independence.

- £10** could pay for a Braille book so that a child who is blind can be included in mainstream education, study alongside their sighted classmates and find their way out of poverty.
- £15** could train one rehabilitation worker to teach blind people how to find their way around their home and village so they can be more independent.
- £30** could pay for a cataract operation, restoring the sight of someone who thought they might never see again.

Please visit [www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org)  
to donate and help save someone's sight today



# Sightsavers

**We work with partners in developing countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.**

**[www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org)**

You can help spread the word about our work

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