

# Eye health strategy

2013–2018 summary



Sightsavers

## Eye health in context

**285** million

people have a visual impairment



Low vision  
**246 million**

**39 million**  
Blind

## Inequality in numbers



**90%**

of people with visual impairments live in a developing country



**80%**

of blindness is curable or preventable



**66%**

or two-thirds of people who are blind are women

## Avoidable blindness

**20** million people are blind from untreated cataracts

**1.5** million people are blind from preventable NTDs

Sightsavers' eye health strategy 2013–2018 can be downloaded in full from [www.sightsavers.org/policy-and-research/health](http://www.sightsavers.org/policy-and-research/health)



# Sightsavers' vision and mission

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

We are an international organization working with partners in developing countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

## Programme goals

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Sightsavers' ultimate strategic aim is for governments to ensure that good quality eye care is available to all people as an integral part of wider health systems.

We believe that strong health systems aligned to clear government policy are essential to create an environment for the elimination of avoidable blindness.

Sightsavers' eye health strategy provides a clear vision of our programmatic approach to eye health for the next five years (2013–2018). It describes where we will invest resources and how we will work with a variety of stakeholders to achieve our strategic goals.



We work to encourage individuals to seek help for their eye conditions and understand the value that treatment and healthy eyes can bring

# Programme approach

Our programmatic approach is guided by the principle of affordable universal health coverage and a health system strengthening approach based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) six building blocks.

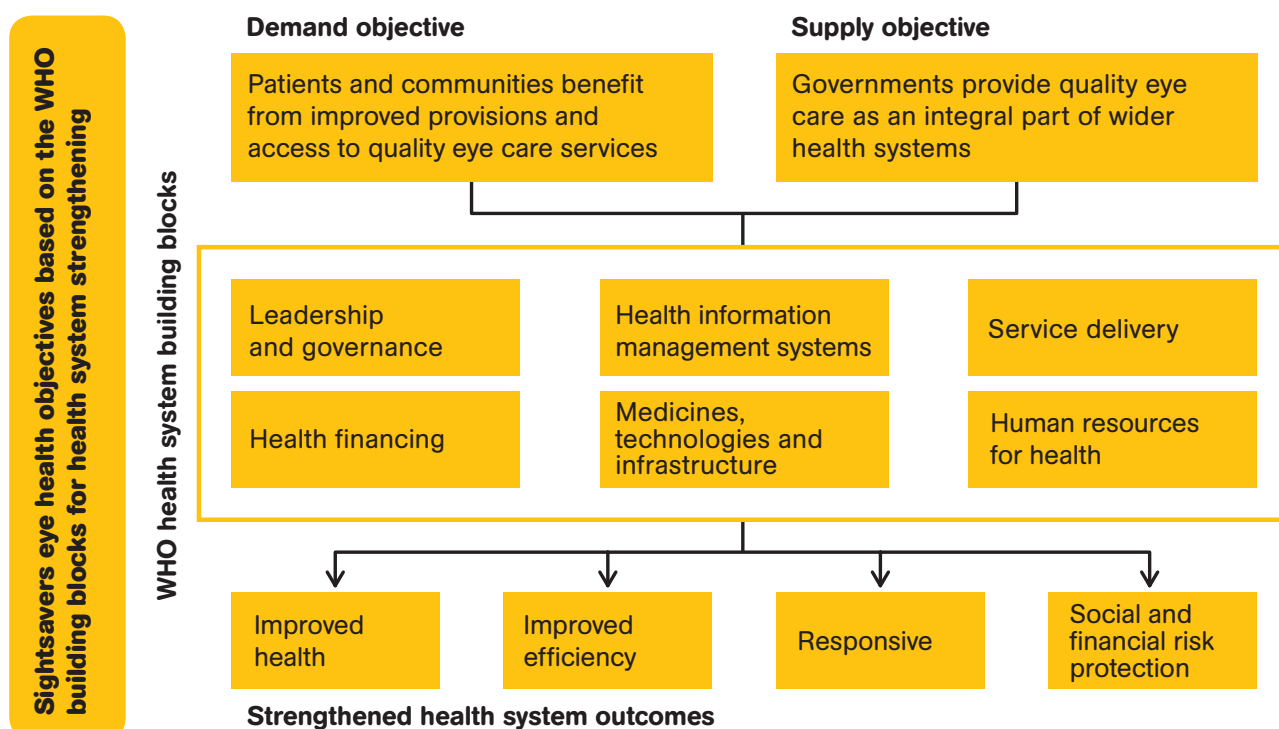
Our programmes work to address both supply and demand challenges in each national context through interventions such as training of health care workers, community sensitisation to encourage health seeking behaviour and advocating for policy change and inclusion for the most marginalised people.

Our primary approach is to work with or influence ministries of health at national and district level to provide or facilitate the provision of quality, affordable eye care services as part of the wider health systems. We aim to demonstrate cost-effective

approaches to providing universally available eye health services within the overall health system, which can be scaled up and replicated.

In order to ensure that our interventions are reaching the most marginalised people, our programme approach is to mainstream gender and ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities.

**Sustainability is a key focus of our programme design and we work closely with our partners to ensure interventions can be sustained after a project has ended.**



## Specific programmatic interventions

Sightsavers works in an integrated way to target conditions causing avoidable blindness. Our eye health programmes are designed to meet specific needs for the countries where we work. Interventions and approaches include:

**Cataract surgery:** Focusing on increasing quality and coverage.

**Uncorrected refractive error:** developing innovative interventions to deliver quality, equitable and cost-effective refractive error services to children and adults by using patient-centred approaches.

**Low vision:** Working to integrate low vision rehabilitation into health, educational and social inclusion services to increase the awareness among communities, health and education professionals, and governments.

**Glaucoma:** implementing and piloting public health strategies for the prevention and treatment of glaucoma.

**Child eye health:** focusing on integrating vision screening and treatment of uncorrected refractive error for children, within school health programmes, for the treatment of childhood cataracts and other leading causes of visual impairment in children.

**Diabetic retinopathy:** developing and incorporating elements of prevention and treatment of sight-threatening diabetic retinopathy through public health awareness campaigns, early detection, and referral mechanisms linked to existing diabetic and general health services.

**Neglected tropical diseases:** developing and implementing neglected tropical disease (NTD) fast track initiatives to accelerate elimination of river blindness (onchocerciasis) and trachoma in all Sightsavers-supported countries.

For further information on our approach to eye health and programmatic activities visit the Policy and Research pages on [www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org)



We support global initiatives dedicated to improving the numbers of health workers in developing countries, with an emphasis on human resources for eye health



# Evidence generation

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High quality research is essential for successful delivery of our eye health strategy and programmes. Gathering and disseminating sound research evidence is the best way of ensuring our programmes are demonstrating scalable and cost-effective approaches that are meeting the needs of the people they are designed to serve.

Research evidence is also a strong tool for advocating with governments and policymakers for improved policies and environments that lead to the elimination of avoidable

blindness, and allow people with disabilities equal opportunities for participation within society.

As an organisation we have robust monitoring and evaluations systems in place which are applied to all of our programmes. This ensures high quality learning is generated and utilised in real time.

Sightsavers' research strategy 2014-2019 sets out key objectives to guide our decisionmaking around research focuses over this strategy period.

# Policy and advocacy

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**We recognise that our work in eye health will only be truly sustainable if we are also able to change the policies and practices of the wider health system.**

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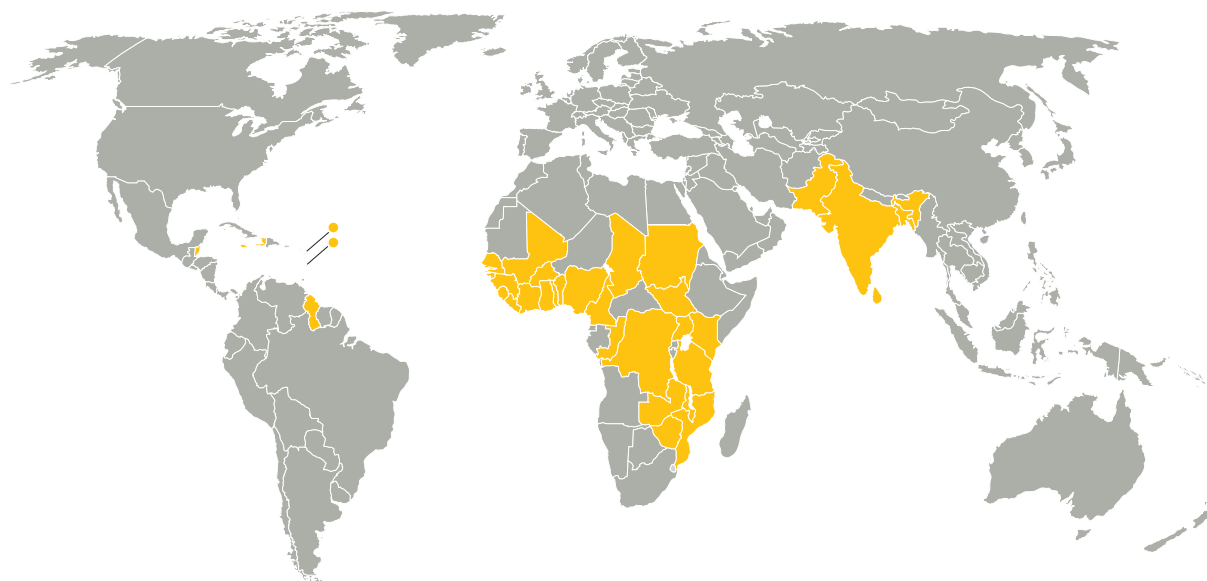
Our global advocacy strategy focuses on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the WHO Global Action Plan on Universal Eye Health. We work to ensure that regional and international policy frameworks promote equitable access to eye health, and that international development policies in the UK and other countries effectively promote health system strengthening and universal access.

Informed by research findings, programme evidence and policy analysis, Sightsavers engages

with governments, and other stakeholders, to ensure that their plans, policies and legislation effectively integrates eye health within stronger health systems in order that our impact is national and not confined to the project area.

Our eye health programmes focus on key cross-cutting themes, including: gender, disability, sustainability, system strengthening, and training and capacity building

# Where we work\*



● Countries where we currently have active eye health projects

## Country specific interventions include:

Bangladesh	●	●	●	●
Benin	●	●	●	●
Burkina Faso	●	●	●	●
Cameroon	●	●	●	●
Caribbean	●	●	●	●
Chad	●	●	●	●
Congo	●	●	●	●
Côte d'Ivoire	●	●	●	●
Democratic Republic of the Congo	●	●	●	●
Ghana	●	●	●	●
Guinea Bissau	●	●	●	●
Guinea Conakry	●	●	●	●
India	●	●	●	●
Kenya	●	●	●	●
Liberia	●	●	●	●
Malawi	●	●	●	●
Mali	●	●	●	●
Mozambique	●	●	●	●
Nigeria	●	●	●	●
Pakistan	●	●	●	●
Senegal	●	●	●	●
Sierra Leone	●	●	●	●
South Sudan	●	●	●	●
Sri Lanka	●	●	●	●
Sudan	●	●	●	●
Tanzania	●	●	●	●
The Gambia	●	●	●	●
Togo	●	●	●	●
Uganda	●	●	●	●
Zambia	●	●	●	●
Zimbabwe	●	●	●	●

- Cataract
- Onchocerciasis
- Trachoma
- Uncorrected refractive error
- Health worker training

\* Sightsavers programming is continually evolving to best support demand and supply objectives. For the latest description visit [www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org)



# 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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