

Spotlights

2019



Sightsavers



Contents

04

Opening statement

06

Spotlight on...
Neglected tropical diseases

10

Spotlight on...
Eye health

12

Spotlight on...
Inclusive Futures

14

Spotlight on...
Nigeria security

Cover image: Suraju Dayyabu, an ophthalmic nurse in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

© Sightsavers/Andrew Esiebo



Opening statement

Sightsavers has had an exceptional year in 2019 across all our programmatic areas. In this Spotlights document, which accompanies our Annual Report, we showcase some of our projects in more detail.

The year marked the closure of several high-profile neglected tropical disease projects, but Sightsavers and its partners are continuing the incredible progress made towards the prevention and

elimination of NTDs with two large-scale programmes, Ascend West and Central Africa and Accelerate.

Ascend, funded by UK aid, aims to deliver more than 400 million treatments to treat and prevent five NTDs across 13 countries. And through Accelerate, we will continue our fight towards trachoma elimination as several of our other trachoma programmes came to a close.

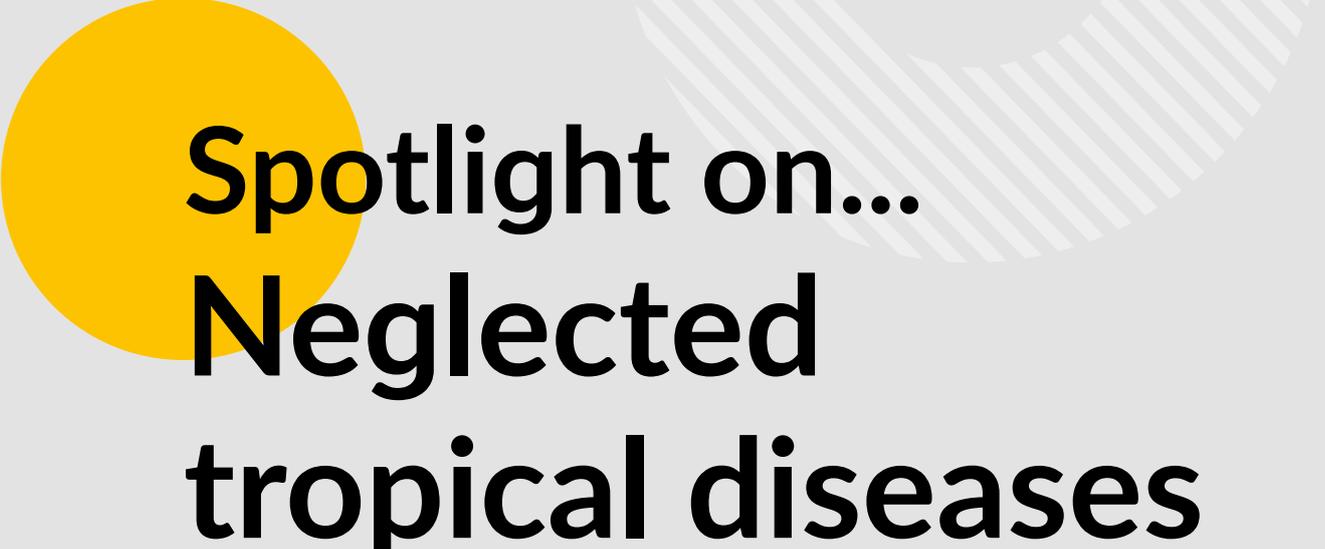


For our eye health portfolio, we highlight our work in the Sundarbans, an island region in India where 40 per cent of the population live in poverty and eye care was difficult to access. Thanks to the project, the number of blind people over the age of 50 halved.

We also showcase Inclusive Futures, which is a UK-aid funded initiative which brings together a consortium of 16 development organisations – including

Sightsavers – and private and public sector organisations. It aims to improve the lives of people with disabilities by making sure they are included in all areas of life, such as health, education and work.

We're really excited to share these insights which give you a closer look at our projects. We hope you enjoy reading them and finding out more about Sightsavers' work.



Spotlight on... Neglected tropical diseases

Image: Suraju Dayyabu, an ophthalmic nurse, screens children's eyes in Kabin Keji, Sokoto State, Nigeria.

2019 was an exceptional year for Sightsavers and partners as the journey towards controlling, protecting against and eliminating neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) from communities continued.

Ascend

DFID launched its ground-breaking disease prevention programme, Ascend, in August, with Sightsavers running one of two lots – covering West and Central Africa.

The three-year Ascend programme is Sightsavers' largest multiple disease project to date and aims to deliver more than 400 million treatments to treat five NTDs in 13 countries. Sightsavers is working closely with partners, including: the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative Foundation, Mott MacDonald and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. We are working alongside ministries of health, communities and partners such as the World Health Organization (WHO) to deliver one of the most significant integrated NTD programmes in history.

In October, our Ascend programme was presented to UK MPs at the House of Commons at an All-Party Parliamentary Group event. Andrew Murrison, minister of state for DFID, spoke about how this ambitious programme will make major strides in treating and controlling NTDs, showcasing that every person has a part to play in elimination efforts. [▶](#)



Image: Gani Dao, from Nikki region in Benin, had trachoma surgery as part of the Accelerate programme.



© Sightsavers/Rey Byhre

➤ Accelerate

The Accelerate programme (funded as a result of the Audacious prize, by donors including Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Childrens Investment Fund Foundation, ELMA Foundation and Virgin Unite) expanded from 12 African countries to 14. The first sight-saving trachoma operations under the Accelerate programme took place in Benin; in July, a TV crew from BBC Africa filmed the historic moment and the show aired on TV channels in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Benin, Niger and Cameroon.

Through Accelerate, Zimbabwe undertook its largest-ever distribution of trachoma medication in 10 districts. In total, this protected 1.4 million people from trachoma in one week. This huge undertaking utilised technology to help rise to the challenge and achieve impressive results.

Four of Sightsavers' UK aid-funded programmes closed in 2019. UNITED in Nigeria, the Coordinated Approach to Community Health (CATCH), the UK Aid Match onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis programme, and the SAFE: trachoma control programme. A key learning from the programmes was that delivering integrated treatment on a large scale requires continuous adaptation.

Last year also saw The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust's Trachoma Initiative (see footnote) come to an end. Her Majesty the Queen hosted a reception for front-line workers and key staff at Buckingham Palace in the UK. ➤

The Trust was a time-limited charitable foundation, which was established in 2012 to mark and celebrate The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. In January 2020, the Trust successfully completed its programmes, including the Trachoma Initiative, and ceased operating as a grant-making organisation.

- The five-year initiative, which ran in seven commonwealth countries, was coordinated by Sightsavers on behalf of the International Coalition for Trachoma Control, distributed 26.6 million treatments and treated 102,000 patients for trichiasis. A key part of the Trachoma Initiative was making sure local healthcare providers have the skills, resources and staff to prevent trachoma in the future.

In June 2019, the WHO announced a 91 per cent reduction in trachoma, from 1.5 billion people at risk in 2002 to 142 million today. Media outlets such as The Telegraph and Global Citizen helped Sightsavers welcome the news of this huge step forward for the global efforts to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem.

Antibiotics to treat trachoma were given to nearly 300,000 people in Egypt in the country's first mass drug administration for trachoma, where more than 11 million people are believed to be at risk of the disease. This was a real milestone for public health in Egypt and, as it brought together the ministry of health, governments and other partners to make this happen, it proved that collaboration is key to overcoming challenges.

Trachoma elimination milestones were not the only NTD elimination efforts celebrated in 2019. In August, three Nigerian hotspots were declared free from river blindness. Nigeria's ministry of health announced that more than 4.2 million people have been freed from the threat of the disease in Plateau, Nasarawa and Kaduna states. This showed that elimination efforts are working and if river blindness can be removed from these hotspots, we should be able to remove it anywhere.

Charity evaluator GiveWell has, for the fourth time, named Sightsavers one of its top charities for our work to treat children for intestinal worms and schistosomiasis (a process known as deworming). GiveWell has judged Sightsavers' deworming work an outstanding opportunity for donors to make a difference with their contributions.

Sightsavers-supported eye surgeon, Samson Lokele, a travelling surgeon in Kenya, features in the Science Museum's permanent exhibition dedicated to medicine, based in London, UK. Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries, the largest medical collection in the world, opened in November 2019 and will be in place for the next 30 years. The galleries feature replicas of the surgical equipment that Samson uses to carry out eye operations in the field in remote regions.

Elimination is possible: the number of people at risk of trachoma has fallen by **91%**



Spotlight on...

Eye Health

Image: Sandhya Das, from the Sundarbans, got her independence back after receiving glasses.

Evaluation of Sundarbans project

In 2019, we evaluated the impact of our five-year eye health strengthening project in the Indian Sundarbans, a remote area of 102 islands in West Bengal, where more than 40 per cent of the population live below the poverty line.

Funded by Standard Chartered Bank, the project overhauled the region's eye care, helping to create 17 eye health centres and screening more than 450,000 children and 400,000 adults for eye problems. The project supported 32,000 life-changing cataract operations and provided more than 13,000 pairs of glasses.

Results of our impact evaluation research show that in the project period, the prevalence of blindness among people aged 50 years and above halved, from 2.4 per cent to 1.3 per cent. It means that before the project started, one in every 40 people over the age of 50 in the area was blind. By the end of the project, that number dropped to one in 80. At the end of the project, nearly 70% of people participating in the study described eye care services available to them as accessible, affordable and of good quality.

In 2019, our work in the Indian Sundarbans was independently assessed by US charity evaluator Impact Matters, which rates thousands of not-for-profit organisations working on health, poverty and welfare. To make its evaluations, Impact Matters gathers data and calculates their cost-effectiveness in terms of making the best use of resources and having the most impact on people's lives. Our achievements in the Indian Sundarbans were awarded with the maximum five out of five stars and we were named the top, most cost-effective health charity.



Spotlight on...

Inclusive Futures



Inclusive employment

Inclusive Futures is a disability-inclusive development initiative working to improve the long-term wellbeing and inclusion of people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries, ensuring all children and adults with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to access education, health and work opportunities. Spanning two programmes in seven countries over six years, Inclusive Futures is unprecedented in its scope and scale. Funded by UK aid, it brings together 16 development organisations, the public and private sector, working with and for people with disabilities and the groups that represent them. In Inclusive Futures, together with our consortia partners, we are delivering a range of inclusive employment projects.

In Nigeria, we're working with the Chartered Institute of Personnel Managers, supporting human resource expert members to mentor disabled jobseekers into employment, providing educationally qualified job seekers with skills to search, apply and interview for job opportunities. More than one-third of the first cohort of jobseekers are now either in full-time employment or internships, and we're looking to replicate the model in other countries. In Kenya, we're working with the Diageo subsidiary company East Africa Breweries Limited on disability inclusion in its core business as well as its supply and distribution chains. ➤



Image: MD Jahangir Alam, project coordinator of Access Bangladesh Foundation, working at his office.

- The 'Grain to Glass' partnership focuses initially on the inclusion of farmers with disabilities in the company's contract farming system and then progressively focuses on inclusion along the value chain. In addition, we're supporting micro-enterprises owned by people with disabilities in Kenya to improve their business practices by enhancing their performance to deliver contracts to specification, time, and budget. The business development support they have access to is combined with specific initiatives targeting companies and the public sector to procure and sell via these micro-enterprises. In future, these inclusive business models will also be tested with households of deafblind people, and in a refugee context.

In Bangladesh, we're building upon the successful STAR model, which focuses on supporting poor and extremely poor youths, who have dropped out of school and are not in training or employment. The on-the-job training model increases labour market participation by 22.6 per cent, total time devoted to earning activities by 59 per cent, and individual earnings by 44 per cent – representing an average six-fold income increase for young people supported in the programme.

Within Inclusive Futures the STAR programme will achieve a numerical and proportional increase (from 7 per cent to 15 percent of the cohort) in participating youths with disabilities, and a diversification of the impairment groups served including deafblind youths. Implemented with full involvement of disabled people's organisations, we will also advocate for adoption of the model by other mainstream skill providers. A randomised control trial, undertaken by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, will generate rigorous evidence.



Spotlight on...

Nigeria Security

Throughout 2017-2018, Sightsavers recorded a significant uptick in serious security incidents within the areas it operates in central, southern and northern Nigeria. Although Sightsavers staff were not involved in the incidents, largely down to operational planning and risk assessment, the incidents were indicative of a wider deterioration in the security environment. Interethnic clashes over resources and cattle, road banditry and most prominently, kidnapping had become commonplace, particularly in the central states of Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina - all key operating areas for Sightsavers. The Abuja-Kaduna Expressway, an important link between the capital Abuja with its international airport and the Sightsavers country office in Kaduna city, was a particular concern. Abductions along the road had jumped in number, causing serious concern for the security of staff transiting along the key corridor.

Despite the change in security environment, Sightsavers' capability in Nigeria has been growing. NTD operations in particular have been scaling up in northern states and national and overseas staff were visiting field locations more frequently. The application of the country security plan, although workable, was being managed by staff who held other responsibilities and was not receiving the attention it required. ➤

- The change in threat level was also challenging for staff members without a security background to manage and coordinate. As a result, in early 2019, a country safety and security officer (CSSO) was appointed. Reporting to the head of global security, the CSSO was to be stationed within the Nigeria country office. Primarily this role was to take ownership of the country security plan, provide tactical information and advice to the country team and the central resilience team and test and adapt Sightsavers' security and incident management SOPs. Training and development of tactical risk assessment capabilities were supplementary responsibilities.

In the 12 months since David joined, the following achievements and improvements have been noted:

- Increased the network of sources of information available to the Nigeria country office team, providing more real-time updates.
- Enhanced the domestic movements and field visit assessments through analysis down to local government area level. More detailed information allows more flexibility in planning activities, meaning teams can choose alternative locations if there is instability in a specific local government area and updates can be provided more specifically to teams travelling on the ground.
- Conducted site reviews for the country team, reviewing hotels and state-level offices, coordinating driver training and equipment.
- Built capacity of partner organisations, providing guidance on security processes and compliance for smaller partner NGOs, particularly those working in higher-risk environments such as Borno state.
- Undertook local training of staff members and identified opportunities for further training of programme teams.
- Facilitated international visitors.

Despite the situation along the Abuja-Kaduna road deteriorating, the presence of a dedicated security staff member has allowed for alternative options to be explored (for example, domestic air travel to Kaduna via Lagos) as well as routes to major cities using domestic flights (for example, Abeokuta).



Image: A vehicle drives along a road in Sokoto, Nigeria, as part of our trachoma screening project. Many people with trachoma live in hard-to-reach, remote communities.

We work with partners in low and middle income countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities

www.sightsavers.org

 **SightsaversUK**

 **@Sightsavers**

 **@sightsavers**

 **SightsaversTV**

Bumpers Way
Bumpers Farm
Chippenham
SN14 6NG
UK

+44 (0)1444 446 600

info@sightsavers.org

 **Sightsavers**

Registered charity numbers 207544 and SC038110