

# Focus

Your magazine from  Sightsavers Spring 2026



**Two nations. Another historic victory!**

Egypt and Senegal have both eliminated trachoma –  
freeing Nar and millions like her from its agonising grip

# Welcome

## Together, we're beating trachoma

Thank you for supporting crucial work to help Egypt and Senegal eliminate this painful, blinding disease

It takes teamwork to eliminate trachoma – with a network of support that reaches out to people far and wide and gives them sight-saving, life-changing treatment. You're part of that team and, thanks to your kindness, we can continue driving forward a powerful chain of protection that connects governments, health teams and communities.

Together, we help strengthen eye care services, deliver vital treatment and promote strategies such as SAFE (surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness and environmental improvements) that stop trachoma from recurring. The results are phenomenal.

Egypt and Senegal's fantastic success means that eight countries where Sightsavers works have now officially eliminated trachoma. And, as you'll see from the update opposite, other nations are nearing the day when they can proudly say "we've done it."

Step by step, we are beating this horrible disease and ending generations of needless suffering for people such as Nar in Senegal, whose story you can read on page 4. We're also reaching more children like Happy on page 6, whose childhoods have been blighted by trachoma – freeing them from pain and helping them embrace their futures.

**Trachoma is a cruel and debilitating disease. But it's no match for your kindness. So, thank you again for showing you care, and please stay with us to help more countries reach elimination.**

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My warmest wishes

*Ella Pierce*

Ella Pierce  
Global Director of Fundraising

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# Transforming lives

Today, millions of people no longer live under trachoma's shadow – and that's something to celebrate!

Of the 27 countries where Sightsavers and our partners work, eight have achieved elimination and five are getting closer. We know how to beat trachoma, and we're determined to keep going, so please stay with us on this life-changing journey.

### Eliminated trachoma

Egypt (2025)

Senegal (2025)

Pakistan (2025)

Benin (2023)

Mali (2023)

Malawi (2022)

The Gambia (2021)

Ghana (2018)

### Nearing elimination

Botswana

Guinea Bissau

Namibia

Sierra Leone

Guinea

### Working towards elimination

Burkina Faso

Kenya

Uganda

Cameroon

Mozambique

Yemen

Chad

Nigeria

Zambia

Côte d'Ivoire

South Sudan

Zimbabwe

Ethiopia

Tanzania



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## Saving sight and bringing hope

### After years of excruciating pain from trichiasis, Nar in Senegal received life-changing surgery

Sixty-five-year-old great-grandmother, Nar, is busy selling wood outside her home in Touba, Senegal. But before surgery, her days were blurred by pain and worry.

Nar was suffering from trichiasis – the advanced stage of trachoma – and her eyelashes scratched painfully against her eyes, causing constant irritation and watering.

As she struggled with her sight, Nar had to give up her business and found her lack of vision very frustrating. "It affected my family," she told us. "I used to do my business and assist my family and help them all. Now I can't do anything at all, so I can't bring any support

to them. I just stay at home, powerless." Then she remembered her sister.

**Nar's sister had previously undergone trichiasis surgery, successfully performed by Sightsavers-trained surgeon, Mr Boubacar Top. Hearing that Mr Top was in a nearby town, Nar went to see him.**

Mr Top examined Nar's eyes and told her that she too needed surgery. He then shared some exciting news. He would be visiting her village to screen the whole community for trichiasis and arrange free surgery for those who needed it – so Nar would soon have her operation. Eager to spread the word, Nar urged her friends and neighbours to come for screening.

When it was Nar's turn for surgery, Mr Top corrected her in-turned eyelids, just as he'd done for her sister. With her pain gone, Nar is now a proud advocate for surgery, encouraging others to seek treatment too.

**"Whenever I see someone suffering from it. I refer them to Mr Top. He is the one I know, he is the one who treated my sister... And also, he is the one who healed me."**

Nar



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### Delivering help where it's needed

Having trichiasis surgery has been transformational for Nar – and it's all down to teamwork

With your support, Sightsavers brings together governments, health teams, our partner NGOs, and communities to connect crucial services and reach out to people who might otherwise be missed. And just look what you've helped achieve in Senegal!

**We're determined to keep going until trachoma is eliminated from every country**

where Sightsavers works. With you beside us, we know we'll do it. So, let's keep up the momentum!

**"Personally, I express my gratitude to Sightsavers and congratulate them from the beginning to the end as they have contributed a lot alongside the Ministry of Health."**

Mr Boubacar Top

### Senegal successes since 2012 include...



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# The chance to see and thrive

When a child who's had trachoma can learn, play and have fun again, the impact of your support shines through

Every gift you give to Sightsavers touches another person's life – and makes a life-changing connection. When that person is a child with trachoma, the connection is even more special, because you help turn their pain and sadness into relief, happiness and hope for the future.



In Uganda, Sightsavers' Programme Officer, Jamespeter Akol, has witnessed the power of this remarkable connection first hand – visiting children like Happy before and after their trachoma treatment.

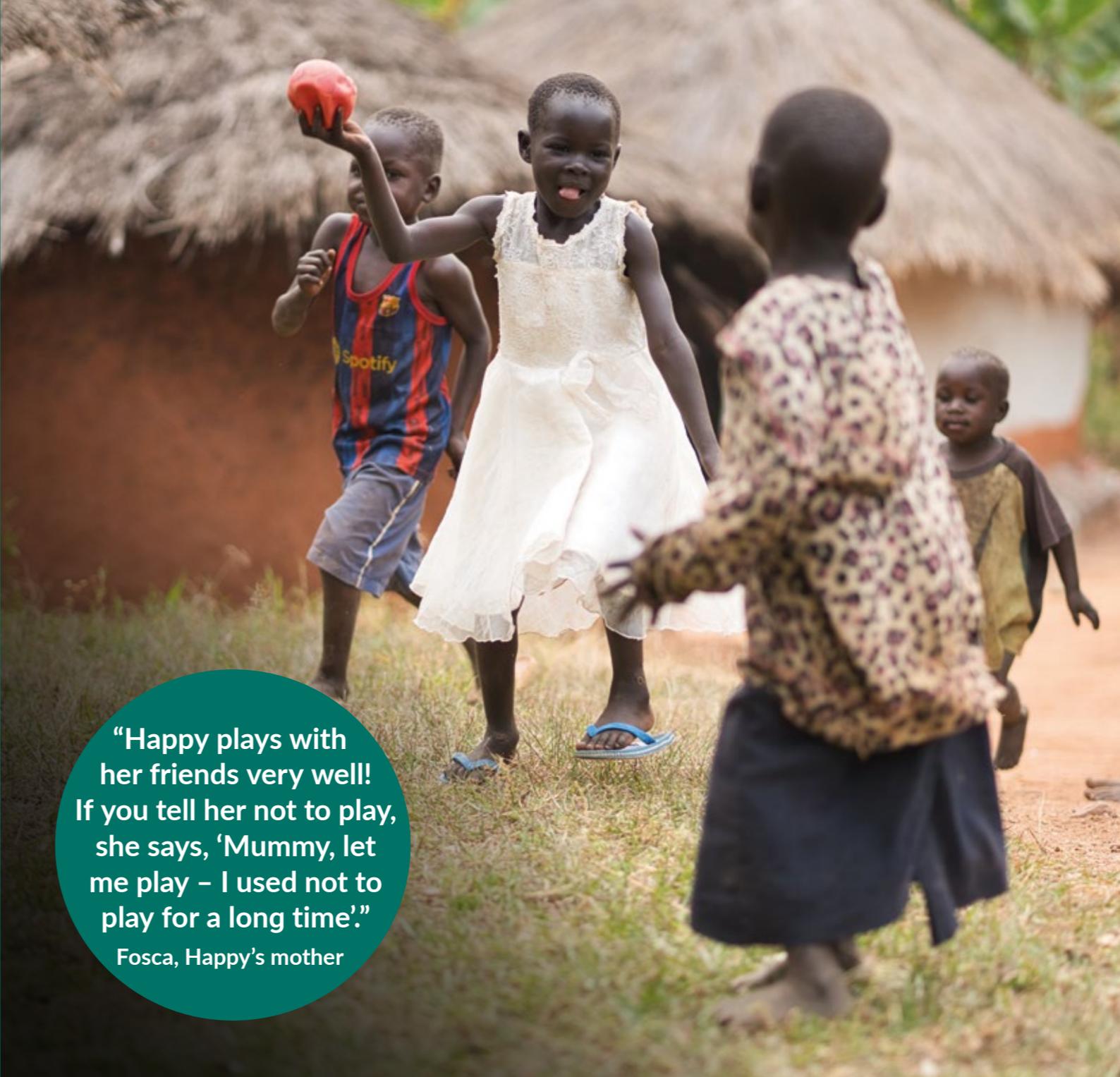
"For me, revisiting the children and seeing how they're looking now, seeing them looking happy, is so fulfilling," Jamespeter told us. "It helps us appreciate that even when we travel on bad roads to deliver our programmes, it's not in vain. A life somewhere else is transforming, and somebody somewhere is gaining a future they had lost."

Before surgery, six-year-old Happy was in constant agony from advanced trachoma and depended entirely on her mother, Fosca – who had to leave her job at a local restaurant to give Happy full-time care. Thankfully, surgery relieved Happy's pain, so she could have fun and do things for herself.

"Seeing the children happy, seeing them playing around, being able to mix with others – and parents telling you their kids can now go to school – that's very good," says Jamespeter. "Because when a child depends entirely on a parent, the family suffers. But when a child regains independence, the whole family transforms. Now, Happy's mother can go to work again, knowing her daughter is safe. That alone is a very, very important transformation."



Before surgery, Happy could hardly bear to open her eyes



**"Happy plays with her friends very well! If you tell her not to play, she says, 'Mummy, let me play – I used not to play for a long time'."**

Fosca, Happy's mother

## Help more children like Happy

Stories such as Happy's show the powerful, lasting difference your kind gifts make to the families we reach. Please, if you can, give an extra gift today, so we can find and treat more children with trachoma.



Photos: © Sightsavers/Jason Mulikita

# A bright new era

## In Zambia, you're helping children like Luyando see clearly – and supporting lasting eye care for rural communities

Many people living in remote, rural areas of Zambia have found it hard to access basic eye care. While government-run services are free or heavily subsidised, people on lower incomes can still struggle to afford medical care and the additional costs of travelling to their nearest hospital.

As a result, entire generations have missed out on essential eye care – leaving adults unable to work and children unable to attend school and learn. But thankfully, things are changing.

With Zambia's Ministry of Health and other partners, we're helping to build a community-centred cycle of eye care that reaches even the most isolated villages. It covers everything

from diagnosis through to cataract surgery – with food and travel costs included for children needing hospital treatment.

**Support starts with Sightsavers-trained community case finders who screen people in their homes.** They then send a list of patients to the nearest hospital, alerting the eye care team that help is needed.

**Next, the eye care team travels to the community, where they set up a mobile eye camp.** Further eye screenings are carried out, free glasses provided and adult cataract surgeries performed. Children with cataracts are referred for hospital treatment, as their surgery requires general, not local anaesthetic.

With her vision clouded by cataracts, Luyando couldn't see the blackboard



Today, following surgery Luyando (here and below right) is embracing life

**Equally important is the team's work to dispel fears and misconceptions.** Many people are hesitant about surgery. By explaining how cataracts develop and how effective treatment can be, the team helps build trust and confidence.

**Meanwhile, more parents can take their children to hospital for surgery.** Crucially, they can also bring them back for any follow-up treatment. This is especially important for children with bilateral cataracts who may require two separate operations.

**With their sight saved, adults can focus on working and providing for their families, helping Zambia to build a stronger economy. And children like Luyando can return to school, play with their friends, and go on to participate fully in society.**

## Luyando's life transformed

Born with cataracts in both eyes, Luyando struggled before surgery and fell behind at school. But just look at her now!

"I can stitch, plant seeds, play around with my friends and do everything," said a beaming Luyando. "I like doing some house chores when I am at home, like sweeping and washing plates. I also like playing netball and dancing."

It's so good to see Luyando doing so well. But her life today is a far cry from when we first met her, as her mother, Martha, recalls. "She could not walk to school alone, she could not write in class, she couldn't wash plates or go to the market. I was scared to let her cross the road. But she's crossing it now!"

With her sight saved, Luyando has big plans for the future – and now she can seize every opportunity. "I want to be educated, and when I complete my studies, I want to become a doctor so that I can help people in the similar situation that I was in."



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In 2022, Sightsavers launched the campaign #RatifyTheADP and worked with our partners to call on African governments to pass the legislation.

## Inspiring positive change

### You're supporting inclusivity programmes for women with disabilities, led by champions like Ramatu

Last year, the African Disability Protocol became legally binding, protecting the rights of more than 80 million people across the continent. And in Kaduna State, Nigeria, exceptional people like Ramatu (pictured above centre) are leading the way.

Ramatu, who was born with a disability, is a widow and mother of three. She now shares her own life experiences – including how she's dealt with challenges and barriers – to help other women claim their rights to healthcare services, particularly family planning.

Through the Sightsavers-supported Inclusive Futures programme, Ramatu runs free workshops. Sessions include discussing

the barriers women with disabilities face in accessing sexual health and family planning services, including contraception.

Some women don't know that family planning services are available. Others are too shy to go or can face critical reactions from family members. And a lack of ramps, braille signs and other aids in healthcare buildings can be another barrier to women with disabilities. Ramatu encourages them to set personal goals, voice their needs and stay strong.

### Finding their voices

Ramatu's workshops go beyond information sharing – they spark open conversations about

relationships and self-worth. The women learn how to talk to their husbands about family planning, explore different contraceptive methods and access the services they need. Already, Ramatu is witnessing a 'ripple effect'.

"I was happy to see that some of the issues affecting women with disabilities started coming out," said Ramatu, talking about that day's session. "Based on what the participants brought out, I picked an issue which I will advocate on tomorrow.



"One lady told me that since the training, she's discussed family planning with her married daughter. Others have started visiting family healthcare services. My hope is for inclusiveness. To see that women with disability are equal with other people in the community."

**"I've become an advocate of the voiceless women. Of women with disabilities."**

Ramatu

# Leave a gift that changes lives

By remembering Sightsavers in your will you can help more children like Lydia to see, learn and thrive

Thirteen-year-old Lydia loves going to school. But her poor eyesight meant she struggled to keep up. "I couldn't see to play games, to do my assignments, and even on the board when my teacher wrote notes," she told us.



Lydia felt bad about falling behind and relied on her friends to help her. She told her mother she was struggling, but the family was unable to afford to pay for an eye test or glasses.

**Thankfully, there were kind and generous sight-savers like you.**

With your support, we're taking crucial eye care into classrooms through our schools-based SHIP programme.

In Liberia, where Lydia lives, SHIP trains teachers to screen students for conditions such as cataracts and refractive error and provides free treatment – from glasses to cataract operations.

When Lydia received her glasses, she saw the board clearly for the very first time. "Because I have the glasses, I can see good now, so it's easier," she said, smiling.

Your support means the world to children like Lydia. And leaving a gift to Sightsavers in your will can ensure more children get the help they need to enjoy a brighter future.

When you've taken care of your loved ones. Please consider Sightsavers. Your legacy can help change lives for generations to come.

## Get your free will guide now

Gifts in wills ensure we can keep working to help save sight, tackle painful blinding diseases and uphold the rights of people with disabilities – making a huge difference to the people we reach.



Visit [www.sightsavers.org/legacy](http://www.sightsavers.org/legacy) to download the guide or call **01444 446 600** and we'll post one to you. And thank you for your wonderful kindness and support.