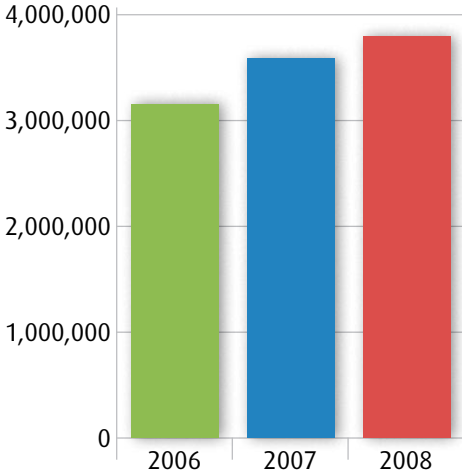


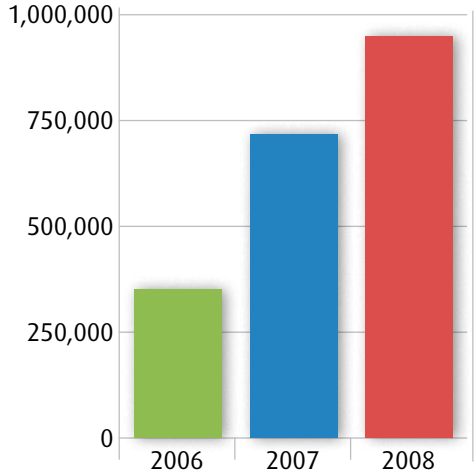
# Growing our work

In 2008, with our colleagues in Sightsavers International and our partners, we reached a record number of people.\*

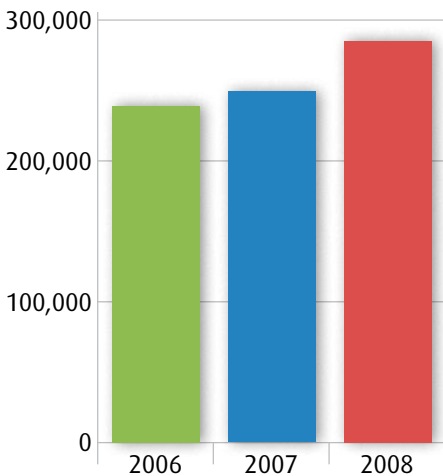
## Number of people treated for eye conditions



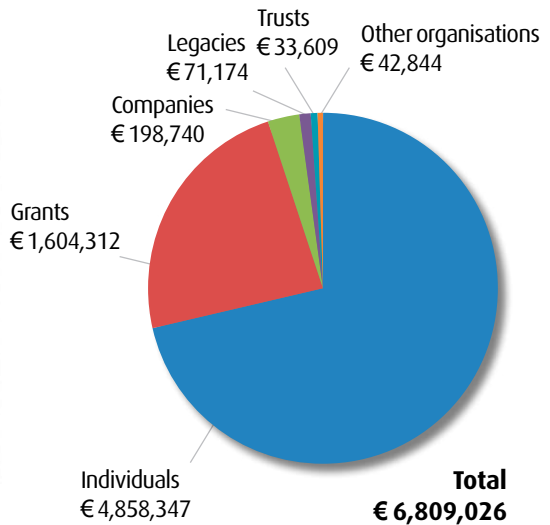
## Number of people treated for trachoma



## Number of cataract operations performed



## Income 2008



\* Figures for numbers treated are for all Sightsavers International Programmes

# Major achievements

Last year **22,120,259** people were protected against river blindness

We examined **5,721,684** people and treated **3,776,008**

We trained **73,608** primary eye care workers, **3,591** rehabilitation workers and **1,559** classroom teachers were trained in how to support children who are blind or have low vision

We supported **8,670** people who are blind to lead independent lives by providing training in mobility, orientation and life skills

**18-year-old Amos Sirari, who has low vision, taking part in the long jump at the Kenyan Annual National Games and Sports for people with disabilities**



**sightsavers**  
INTERNATIONAL

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Samina, Lady health supervisor © Jamsheed Masud/Sightsavers

# Highlights of 2008

**sightsavers**  
INTERNATIONAL

# Foreword

## From our Patron

**It gives me great pleasure to send warm greetings to all the staff and supporters of Sightsavers International.** I know that Sightsavers International and its partners have been working to alleviate sight impairment in many countries in the developing world during the last year. It is very gratifying to see such determined and effective efforts being made in the international fight against blindness.

Irish people have shown great generosity in their support of Sightsavers and its local partners in helping, within their own communities, blind and visually impaired people, especially the poor of the developing world, who so often are forced to live on the margins of society.

This review tells the story of blind twins Michael and Ronald from Uganda, who are being supported by Sightsavers to get the education that all children deserve, but which, unfortunately, many children with disabilities are denied. What Sightsavers achieves in the developing world would not be possible without the wonderful support of thousands of people, businesses and community groups around the country.

As Patron of Sightsavers



International I would like to thank you for saving the sight and changing the lives of so many men, women and children like Michael and Ronald, who without your support, would have faced a very different future.

*Mary McAleese*

**Mary McAleese,  
President of Ireland**

# Trachoma

*Sarwar plays an important role in spreading the word about good hygiene and sanitation*



**Sarwar Kausar, 22, has a very important job – she is a Lady Health Worker in the village of Killa Virkan in Pakistan.** She travels from house to house to identify eye diseases like trachoma, as well as general health problems such as hepatitis and dysentery. She will then refer cases that need treatment to the local health centre. Sarwar also plays an important role in spreading the word about the importance of hygiene and sanitation.

“The training I had from Sightsavers partner COAVS (College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences) helped me to understand how we can prevent the spread of eye diseases and infections by practising

good hygiene and keeping the environment clean,” she explains.

Trachoma is one such infection, found in hot dusty places, such as the rubbish lined streets of Sarwar’s village. However, COAVS worked closely with Sarwar and the rest of the village to install indoor latrines to dispose of waste, and help people understand the importance of keeping their village clean, and the streets free from litter.

Sightsavers promotes the **SAFE** strategy to tackle trachoma: **S**urgery, **A**ntibiotics, **F**ace Washing, **E**nvironmental Hygiene and spreading the word about the F and E elements of this simply wouldn’t be possible without people like Sarwar.



# River blindness

*New evidence suggests that it is possible to get rid of the disease for good*



Tony Adamson/Sightsavers

**Approximately 140 million people in Africa are at risk from river blindness, a disease caused by the bite of the black fly that breeds in fast flowing rivers.** For a long time experts believed that river blindness could be successfully kept under control, but not totally eliminated, through taking a yearly dose of Mectizan®. However, new evidence suggests that this method means it is possible to actually get rid of the disease for good and break its transmission, therefore reducing the need for continued treatment. Elimination of transmission will take time and effort, but, if successful, will result in the number of people blinded by the disease being dramatically reduced. Sightsavers, with

our partners, will be at the forefront of this fight in the coming years. Last year we supported the training of 20,137 community volunteers to distribute the drug, and over 22 million people were successfully protected. Efforts to eliminate river blindness were stepped up in Togo in 2008, where the first ever cross-border meeting with Ghana took place to discuss synchronising the distribution of Mectizan® along the borders of the two countries, in order to achieve better coverage in light of the population movement in these areas.

In Benin the first in-depth review took place between stakeholders such as Sightsavers, who were able to swap experience and expertise.



# Education

*Attitudes within the community have changed enormously*



**Ronald and Michael are identical twins that are often hard to tell apart. They have been blind since the age of one due to cancer of the eye.**

The news that the children would never be able to see again led the family to split, leaving their mother as their sole carer, isolated within the community. Sightsavers works with its partners to change such negative perceptions of blindness and disability by supporting sensitisation campaigns on radio and within communities, and by training community support workers.

The boys were lucky as they were discovered early, and in 2007, the Mobility and Orientation Assistants (MORA) provided training for the boys,

and counselling for their mother. Ronald and Michael's mobility skills grew quickly and they were soon able to move around without a guide.

They are now in Primary Level Three (First Class) at St Theresa's Bujuni Primary School. The school has been supported to renovate a resource centre and has been equipped with Braille kits, and Ronald and Michael are learning pre-Braille skills.

Attitudes within the community have changed enormously, and their father has returned to the home. There are now a number of children with disabilities enrolled at the school.



# Cataract

*'I am so thankful to the Bangladesh Childhood Cataract Campaign and Sightsavers' said Beauty, Rekha's mum. 'Now my daughter can see again and has a good future.'*



**At only three years of age, Rekha Moni already loves the camera. In a ward full of children treated at Islamia Eye Hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh, she stands out with her bright smile and friendly wave.**

Rekha had lost the sight in one eye because of a traumatic cataract. Rekha's mum, Beauty, explains that Rekha had been playing with friends when she had been accidentally poked with some wire in the eye. About six or seven months ago, Beauty had noticed that Rekha seemed to be losing her sight in that eye.

Rekha's father works hard as a carpenter to support his family, but does not earn enough to be able to

afford treatment for Rekha's eye. Rekha's mother worried, that as a girl, losing the sight in one eye would mean that she would not be able to go to school, socialise or get married and have a family of her own. She also worried that the problem could be transmitted to the other eye, leaving her beautiful daughter completely blind. Luckily they live close to Islamia Eye Hospital and had heard about Sightsavers' Bangladesh Childhood Cataract Campaign, which seeks to treat all children with cataract.

Much to her parents relief, Rekha's blindness was curable with a 20-minute, life-changing cataract operation.