



Sightsavers International | **Annual Review 2007**

IRELAND

Foreword

During 2007, the World Health Organization released revised statistics on blindness that include, for the first time, people who are visually impaired simply because they do not have glasses. The revised figures reveal a staggering 314 million people worldwide are blind or visually impaired – an increase of 153 million on previous estimates. This stark figure further underlines the need for us to maximise our partnerships both within Ireland and in the countries where we are working to ensure that we improve the lives of those people and their communities who need our support most.

We pay tribute on this occasion to Frank Fell for his able Chairmanship of our Board over its crucial formative years to its position today as Ireland's leading NGO fighting blindness. Frank has retired from the Chair but continues to serve as a Director, ensuring his valued experience remains available to us all.

With your help Sightsavers International Ireland made significant progress during 2007, increasing our support to programmes by a staggering 39 per cent. Critical to our continued success is our proven ability to actively manage costs ensuring that your contributions deliver the maximum benefit to those who need it most.

After many years of lobbying, this year finally saw the introduction of the UN Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disabilities. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hailed its entry into force as a 'new dawn in the fight for the well-being of people with disabilities.' In 2008 we will continue to play a leading role in lobbying for positive change and full inclusion for people who are blind or visually impaired.

We would like to thank our supporters, partner organisations, staff and directors, without whom we could not have achieved so much in our work to save sight and change lives in some of the world's poorest countries. We look forward to the challenges of 2008 and to making the gift of sight a reality for even more people in 2008.

Pat Farrell

Chairman
Sightsavers International Ireland



John Fleming

Head of Sightsavers International
Ireland



Photo front cover: 15-year-old Matthews looks out on a bright future and a return to school after a cataract operation to restore his sight in Mufulira, Zambia
© Kerstin Hacker/Sightsavers International

sightsavers
INTERNATIONAL



Major achievements in 2007

With our colleagues in Sightsavers International worldwide, we reached out to more people than ever before in 2007.



We examined **5,651,576** people like Fatima and treated **3,590,896**



We supported **9,655** people like Richard (left) who are blind to lead independent lives by training in mobility and life skills



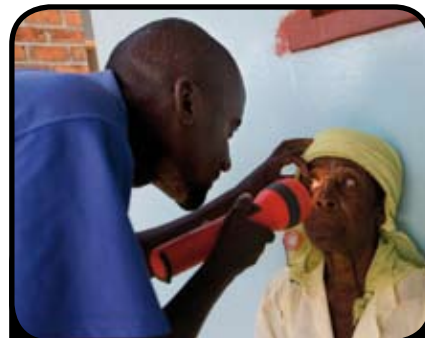
Volunteers like Joseph helped to protect **19,675,145** people against river blindness



297,392 eye operations were supported for people like Jamila

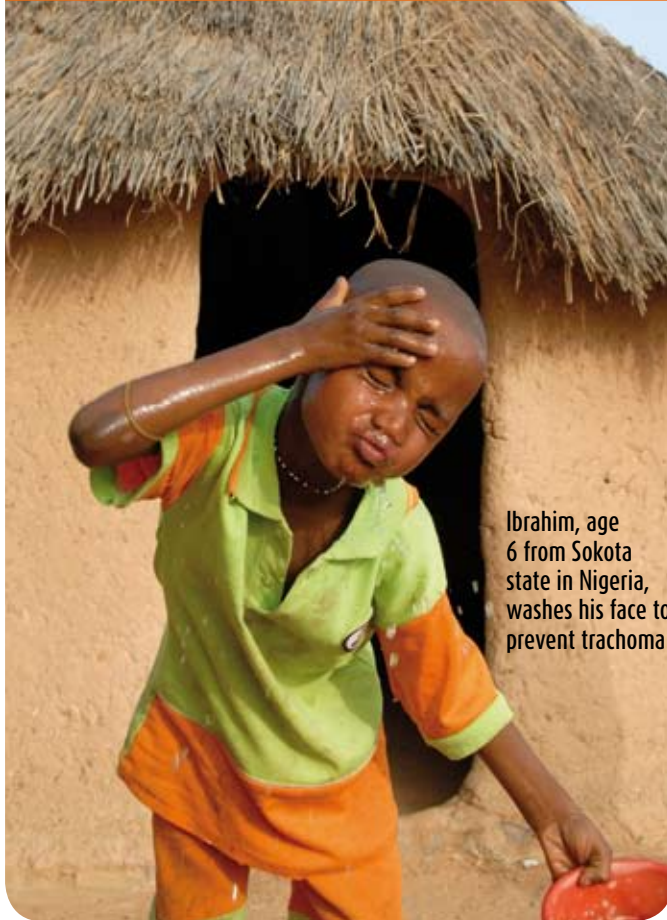


5,047 children who are blind or visually impaired like Loveness were supported to go to school



85,233 partners' staff and volunteers like Gabriel were trained

Preventing blindness



Ibrahim, age 6 from Sokoto state in Nigeria, washes his face to prevent trachoma

Preventing blindness before it occurs is a key area of Sightsavers' work. With 75 per cent of blindness preventable or curable, many millions of people are at risk from two main preventable conditions – trachoma and river blindness.

Making it SAFE

Sightsavers is part of the Global Elimination of Trachoma by 2020 programme, working alongside the World Health Organization and other voluntary organisations. Since its launch in 1998 the programme has treated more than 7 million people and reduced active trachoma in children by 50 per cent.

Sightsavers follows the SAFE strategy for treating trachoma

- **Surgery** – Sightsavers trains nurses to perform surgery for trichiasis in their community in areas where there is a shortage of ophthalmologists.
- **Antibiotics** – Sightsavers provides two types of antibiotic to treat trachoma.
- **Facial cleanliness** – Children with dirty faces may be up to two times more likely to contract the trachoma virus than those without. One of the best ways to prevent the transmission of trachoma is by encouraging face and hand washing – not easy where water is scarce.
- **Environmental hygiene** – The transmission of trachoma by flies can be tackled by reducing the number of flies people come into contact with. Sightsavers' local partners help communities to achieve this by setting up local sanitation committees.

Sadiya Sale is from Sokoto state, one of the poorest areas of Nigeria. The 25-year-old has suffered from eye infections since she was 9 years old, and didn't seek



Sadiya is examined and diagnosed with trichiasis

© Jenny Matthews/Sightsavers

treatment as she thought it wasn't unusual. She didn't know that the painful scratching sensation she was experiencing was advanced trachoma that had developed into a condition called trichiasis. Her eyelashes had turned inwards, rubbing against the cornea. If left untreated, infections can cause scarring and, eventually, blindness.

Radios are widely used by people across Africa, so our partners use them to spread the word about eye care services. Sadiya didn't know about the treatment that was available until she heard about a local community screening programme on the radio. With no public transport system in Sokoto state, Sadiya's mother paid 50 naira (about 30 cent) to hire a motorbike to take her daughter for the treatment she needed.

Sadiya had her left eye operated on and will return to have surgery on her right eye after she has fully recovered.

20 years fighting river blindness

River blindness (onchocerciasis) is caused by the black simulium fly that breeds in fast-flowing rivers.

It affects almost 20 million people in Africa and a further 100 million people are at risk. It can be prevented by a yearly dose over at least 20 years of the drug Mectizan®.

October saw the 20th anniversary of one of the world's most successful drug donation programmes. In 1987, the pharmaceutical company Merck & Co., Inc. took the historic decision to donate a tiny tablet called Mectizan® for as long as necessary in the fight to eliminate river blindness. To date more than 75 million treatments of Mectizan® have been delivered by Sightsavers and our partners. Merck remains committed to donating the tablet for as long as it is needed.

River blindness blitz in Togo

In 2007, Sightsavers and the Ministry of Health in Togo launched a public awareness campaign to tackle river blindness in areas where the disease is widespread. Discussions about the river blindness prevention drug Mectizan® were held with village chiefs, elders and opinion leaders, including awareness of side effects, the importance of whole-community participation and recruiting community Mectizan® distributors.

National and local radio broadcast messages about river blindness in French and local languages. Overall, 2,243,430 people were treated with Mectizan® in Togo.



Adda Gania, 55, used to be the best fisherman in Nakong village in Ghana. Since losing his sight to river blindness 15 years ago, he now relies on his children to lead him to the river to fish. Worried about providing for his children, he has no choice but to continue to fish as best he can.



Restoring sight

Cataract is the clouding of the eye's lens – the part of the eye responsible for focusing light and producing clear, sharp images. It is the world's leading cause of blindness, accounting for 39 per cent of blindness worldwide. In the developing world, cataract can affect adults and children.

Anuj lives with his parents and five brothers and sisters in Goyana village in Uttar Pradesh, India. When he was five Anuj developed a high fever and, ever since, his vision had deteriorated. When he started school at the age of six, he found it difficult to concentrate on his studies and his performance was poor. With the family struggling to manage two meals a day, Anuj's education was the chance of a better future for the whole family.

'I was thinking that my only hope was my elder son and if he will not do well then what will happen?' says Anuj's mother.

As his sight worsened, Anuj became more and more isolated.

'I became confined in my home most of the time. It was my mother who used to support me. I was unable to read and write and play with my friends... It was a situation of despair and helplessness and it has made each and everybody in my family in stress.'

One day during a Sightsavers' supported screening programme at his school, Anuj was identified as having

bilateral cataract. He was brought to the NSPB-Modinagar hospital 35km away for the surgery.

Remembering the moment after the operation when he realised he could see, Anuj said:

‘I could see the objects around me clearly and I was surprised. Being an elder brother of the family I can now also guide my younger brothers and sisters. My sight restoration has given the confidence to my mother that she can manage the family with my support. My ambition is to become an eye doctor.’

It is estimated that 18 million people around the world are completely blind from bilateral cataract (VISION 2020).

There is no single cause of cataract. Sightsavers is raising awareness of the risk factors that seem to have an impact and providing treatment where possible.

Working with our partners in 2007, Sightsavers helped to carry out 244,909 cataract operations. This simple surgery to replace the cloudy lens with a new plastic one takes just 20 minutes to restore someone’s sight.

Curing cataract worldwide

This year, working with our colleagues in Sightsavers International around the world we made a number of steps to cure cataract including:

- supporting the Rotary Netra Eye Hospital in India in providing eye care to those living in inaccessible rural areas in south India through the fully equipped hospital train Lifeline Express; and
- supporting outreach work in Guinea Conakry, which enabled staff of the Labe Regional Eye Care Centre and the Mamou Regional Eye Unit to conduct more than 900 cataract operations and almost 6,500 other eye care treatments.

© Sando Moore/Sightsavers International

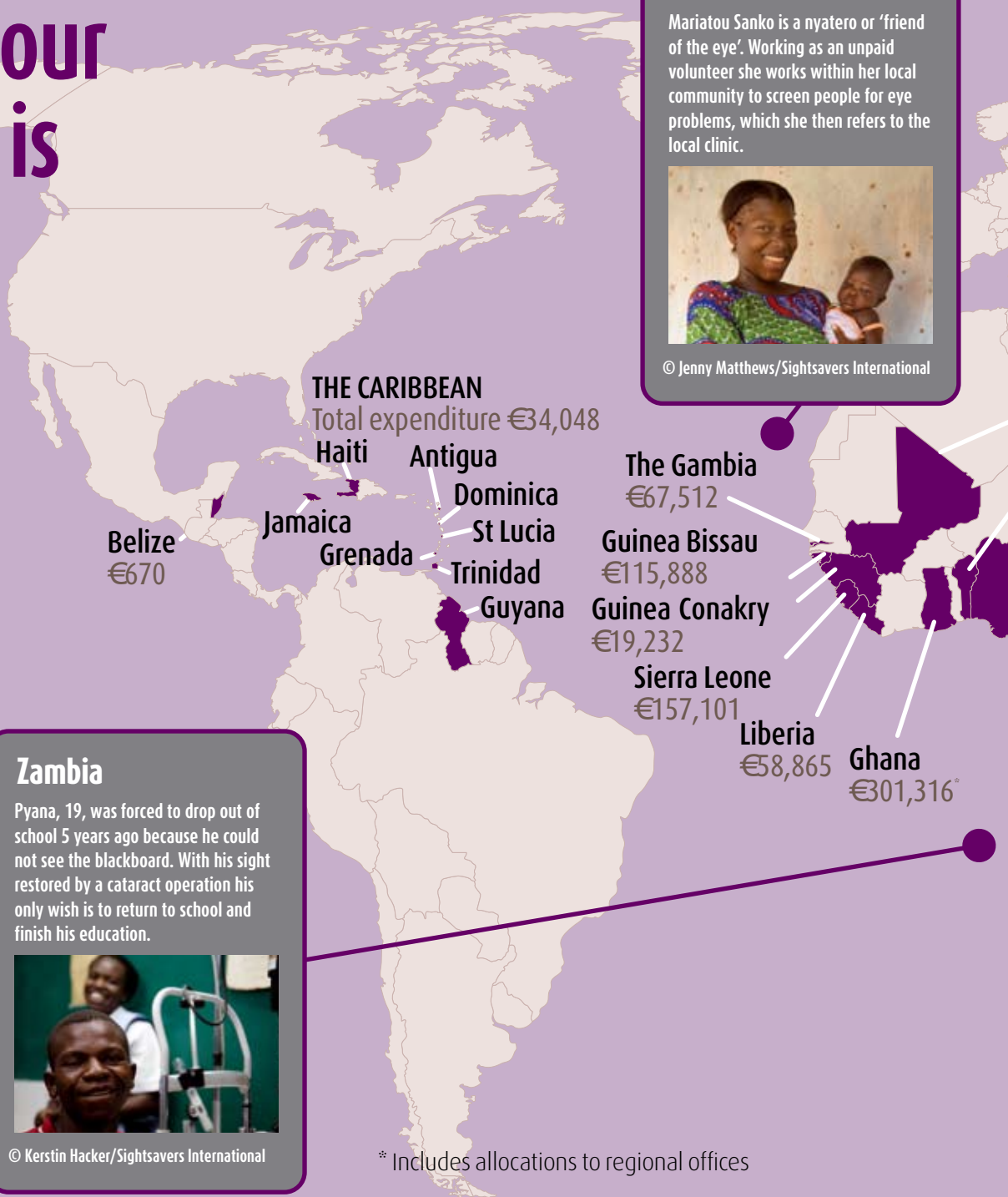


Juah Weah, 90, has her eyes examined

New eye care plan for Liberia

Sightsavers worked closely with the Liberian government in 2007 to make the country’s primary eye care services part of the national health care plan. With our support, an ophthalmic team started training officers in charge of health facilities across the country, helping them identify and cure basic eye problems, and to refer people with conditions such as cataract to hospital. The first eye camp in south-east Liberia – the most poorly served area in terms of eye care and all other health facilities – resulted in a total of 242 operations, 225 of which were for cataract. The camp also enabled valuable collaboration between eye care workers in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone.

Where our money is spent



The Gambia

Mariatou Sanko is a nyatero or 'friend of the eye'. Working as an unpaid volunteer she works within her local community to screen people for eye problems, which she then refers to the local clinic.



© Jenny Matthews/Sightsavers International

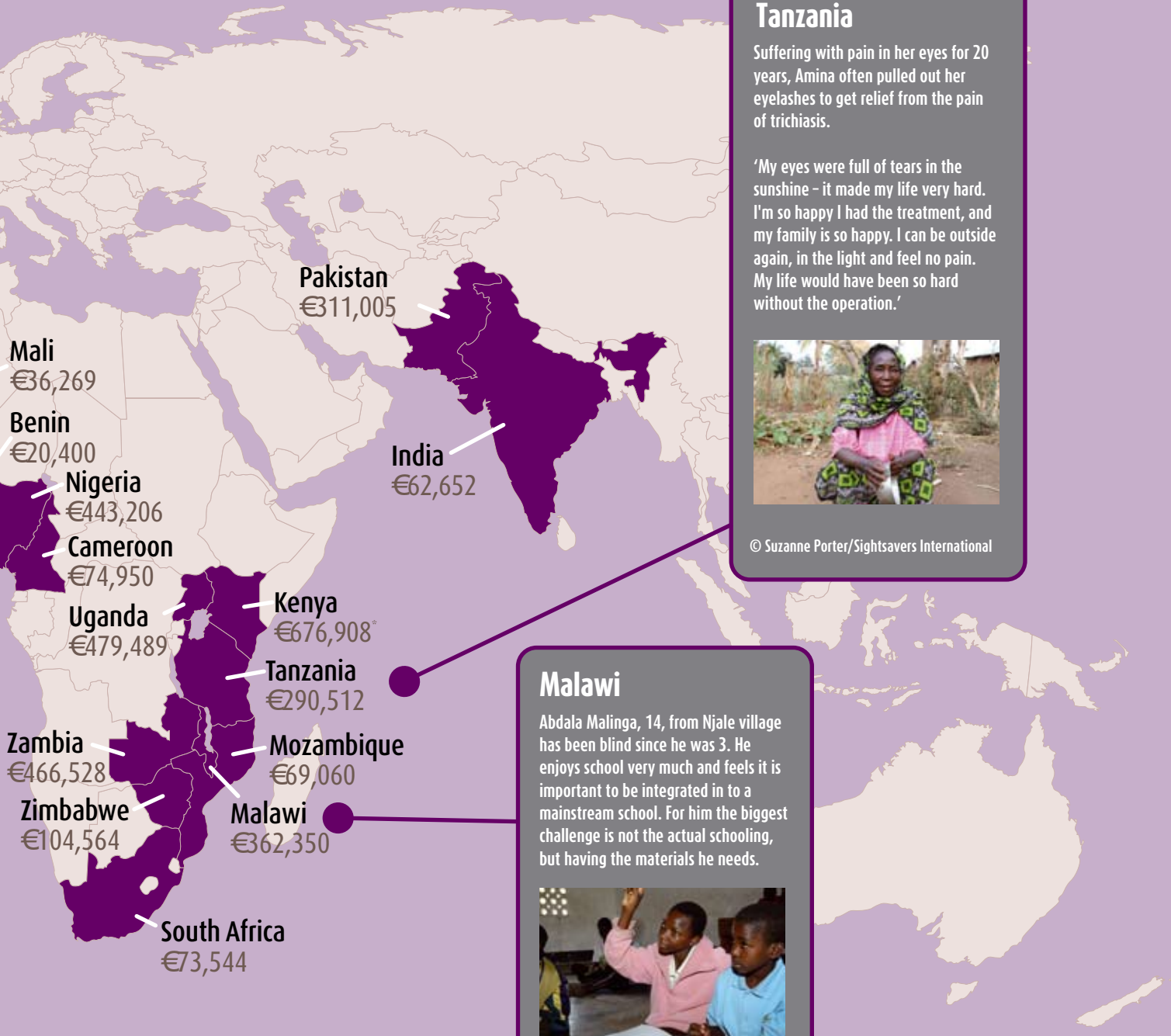
Zambia

Pyana, 19, was forced to drop out of school 5 years ago because he could not see the blackboard. With his sight restored by a cataract operation his only wish is to return to school and finish his education.



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* Includes allocations to regional offices



Tanzania

Suffering with pain in her eyes for 20 years, Amina often pulled out her eyelashes to get relief from the pain of trichiasis.

'My eyes were full of tears in the sunshine - it made my life very hard. I'm so happy I had the treatment, and my family is so happy. I can be outside again, in the light and feel no pain. My life would have been so hard without the operation.'



© Suzanne Porter/Sightsavers International

Malawi

Abdala Malinga, 14, from Njale village has been blind since he was 3. He enjoys school very much and feels it is important to be integrated in to a mainstream school. For him the biggest challenge is not the actual schooling, but having the materials he needs.



© Jenny Matthews/Sightsavers International

Changing the future through the gift of education

Daniel happily joins in with his classmates in Mano School



This year 72 million children – one-third of whom have a disability – around the world are missing out on an education.¹ The vast majority of children who are blind or have low vision do not receive any kind of formal schooling.

Without the chance to learn, children who are blind or visually impaired can be caught in a cycle of illiteracy and poverty that ensures they will remain as some of the most vulnerable people in the world for the rest of their lives. The far-reaching effects of missing out on an education can be seen in the fact that the global literacy rate for adults with a disability is 3 per cent – and only 1 per cent for women with a disability.²

Sightsavers is working hard to change that picture. As part of the Irish Coalition for the Global Campaign for Education we are working to ensure that the goal to get all primary school children into school by 2015 becomes a reality rather than just a dream.

Daniel Mulungushi, eight years old is from Mufulira in Zambia. Daniel's parents heard about Sightsavers' partner because a neighbour had their cataract operated on and they wanted to see if Daniel's sight could be restored. Unfortunately, they were told that he is irreversibly blind from glaucoma. This is a hereditary condition and, if not detected early enough, cannot be repaired. His parents did not think it was worth the expense of sending him to school as they did not believe he could learn like other children because he is blind. After a lot of convincing, his parents agreed to let him attend Mano Primary School.

Now in Grade 1, he learns with one other child who is blind and sighted pupils. Daniel likes playing football and is learning Braille. He is finding it difficult but can already read a little. He is very happy to be in school. For him the chance to learn will transform his life and he is already full of plans for the future.

1 UNESCO, Global Monitoring Report 2008

2 UNDP

Angeline Akai is blind. She qualified as a teacher after attending both an integrated school and college. She is now a community-based rehabilitation worker in Nairobi while she looks for teaching work

‘If I hadn’t gone to Kilimani Primary School (supported by Sightsavers) things would have been difficult, since I come from a financially needy family and I wouldn’t have been able to afford the special learning equipment that was provided free there. Inclusive education changed my life, because it made me mix with able bodied people and helped me be independent – if I had gone to a special school it would have been hard to socialise and I would have had low self-esteem. Blind people are left behind on issues like HIV, because there is no information in Braille. There are no jobs for the disabled, and most jobs are advertised in print, so by the time you find out about the job it’s past the closing date. Blind children face stigma, financial constraints, lack of adequate learning facilities and equipment. Children cannot overcome these challenges alone – they need support and assistance from their families, school, government and NGOs.’

‘I would teach parents that blindness is not a curse, just the way it is. I tell them that I’ve not reached the full heights of my potential but I’ve moved very far, and their child can go further than me.’





The Ronald Ross Drama Group plays to a rapt audience

Working in partnership for change

Forty-five million people in the world are blind. When you include the 153 million people who are visually impaired because of a lack of access to glasses, you are looking at a staggering 314 million people worldwide who are blind or visually impaired. Effective partnerships are the key to helping us reach as many people as possible.

We work through local partner organisations to directly implement projects and these partners range from government ministries of health and education to community-based non-governmental organisations.

In the Copperbelt province of Zambia, Sightsavers has created an innovative partnership with the Ronald Ross Eye Hospital. During 2007, Sightsavers had the chance to visit the mining town of Mufulira and see firsthand how the partnership, under the leadership of Dominic Mwale, is changing the future for eye care in the surrounding communities. Dominic and his team use local volunteers, traditional healers and a drama group to bring eyecare to rural areas in Mufulira. Dominic's dedication is respected by colleagues and the community, with Comfrey, one of the performers in the drama group saying that:

'Not everyone sacrifices to do that kind of work.'

Lobbying for change

Sightsavers also works with partners to influence policy makers around the world to combat avoidable blindness and encourage the social inclusion of people who are blind or visually impaired. At an international level, Sightsavers is a key member of the VISION 2020 coalition which



Children from St Mark's Community School in Tallaght ask then Minister Lenihan to act on education

© Global Campaign for Education

includes the World Health Organization and the major eye care non-governmental organisations.

In Ireland, Sightsavers has become a strong partner in two key coalitions – the Dóchas Disability and International Development Working Group, which Sightsavers chairs, and the Irish Coalition of the Global Campaign for Education. Such partnerships are a key vehicle for us to promote awareness and advocate for the social inclusion of visually impaired people through tackling the large percentages of children who are blind and not in school. In 2007 the Global Campaign for Education coordinated children, parents, teachers and campaigners in over 100 countries to Join Up for education rights. Human and paper chains were made to represent the millions of children still missing out on an education.

The then Minister for Development Cooperation endorsed the Action Week in May at St Mark's Community School in Tallaght. He was presented with a letter from students requesting increased support for education in developing countries.

With the links between poverty and disability becoming ever clearer,¹ the strategic importance of these partnerships will increase as Sightsavers plays a part in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

1 The World Bank estimates that 20 per cent of the world's poorest people have a disability.



Robert, one of Sightsavers' partners, examines Mastad's eye at the Katondwe Mission Hospital in rural Zambia

© Sightsavers International

Working with Irish Aid

This year we continued our successful partnership with Irish Aid on a number of crucial projects. In many developing countries one of the biggest limitations to accessing healthcare is the lack of trained staff. At the basis of our positive partnership with Irish Aid is a shared understanding that effective health care initiatives and systems must be built in partnership with communities if they are to be sustainable. In 2007, a number of projects funded by Irish Aid set out to enhance the human resource capacity of local health systems, including the following projects in Sierra Leone and Zambia.

In Sierra Leone the recently-ended civil war saw massive infrastructure destruction and the halting of river blindness prevention work – which is highly endemic in many parts of the country. Our provincial eyecare project funded by Irish Aid incorporates the promotion of good eye health, the prevention of blindness through early intervention and referrals from the community, and the reversal of blindness through an accessible treatment system in three provinces suffering from a lack of accessible health care. The programme also aims to ensure that anyone who is irreversibly blind can access suitable educational or community-based rehabilitation support.

In Zambia, Irish Aid is supporting a project at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka which aims to provide quality, accessible comprehensive eye care services for an estimated population of nearly 3 million. The project is working to mainstream eye care into the primary health care service delivery system at the community and district levels and is also developing surgical eye care outreach programmes in remote rural underserved communities in Central and Southern provinces.

We look forward to building on the positive partnership with Irish Aid in 2008.

Summary financial statements*

Income and expenditure

	2007	2006
	€	€
Incoming resources		
Donations	5,354,000	4,697,000
Legacies	196,000	48,000
Grants	507,000	562,000
Total incoming resources	6,057,000	5,307,000
Resources expended		
Charitable expenditure	4,355,000	3,136,000
Costs of generating funds	1,663,000	1,712,000
Governance costs	4,000	12,000
Total resources expended	6,022,000	4,860,000
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	35,000	447,000
Opening reserves	502,000	55,000
Closing reserves	537,000	502,000
Represented by		
General funds	38,000	20,000
Restricted funds	499,000	482,000

*Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand

Directors' statement

These summary financial statements represent a summary of the statement of financial activities from the unqualified audited financial statements, which were approved on 24 April 2008. Copies of the financial statements which have been submitted to the Companies Registration Office can be obtained from Sightsavers International (Ireland).

Independent auditors' report to the members of Sightsavers International (Ireland) for the year ended 31 December 2007

We have examined the summary financial statements of Sightsavers International (Ireland) (comprising the summary statement of financial activities and the reserves section of the balance sheet).

We draw your attention to paragraph 2 of the Independent Auditor's Report on the financial statements in which we stated 'This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 193 of the Companies Act 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.'

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

The directors are responsible for preparing the financial statements of the company including the summary financial statements.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on whether or not the figures have been properly extracted from the financial statements on which we have reported to the members on 24 April 2008 with an unqualified opinion.

Basis of opinion

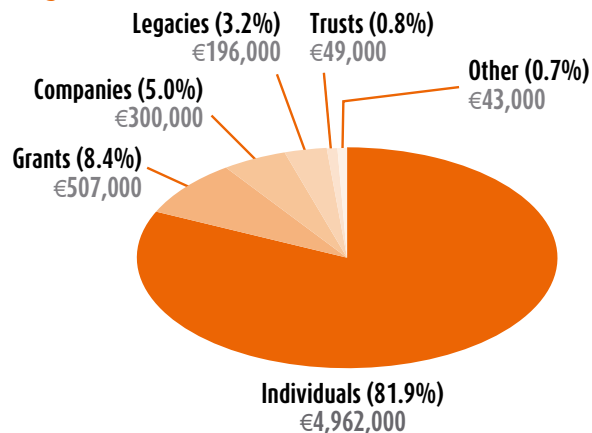
We checked each figure in the summary financial statements to the financial statements and confirmed that the figures were properly extracted from the financial statements.

Opinion

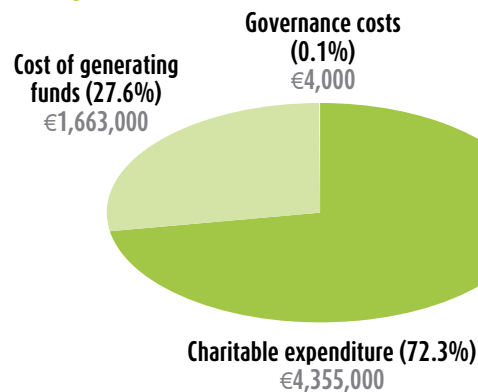
In our opinion the figures in the summary financial statements have been properly extracted from the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 December 2007.


Deloitte & Touche
Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors, Dublin
24 April 2008

Incoming resources



Resources expended





Thanks to our supporters, mothers like Therisa Midbi from Zanzibar can take their children to have their eyes checked, ensuring that any eye problems can be detected and treated before it is too late.

There are many ways in which you can support Sightsavers' work. Together, we can continue to save sight and change lives.

Make a donation

If you would like to make a donation to Sightsavers you can give online at www.sightsavers.ie, call 1850 50 20 20 with your laser or credit card or pop a cheque or postal order in the mail and send it to: Sightsavers International, FREEPOST, 70 Georges Street Upper, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin.

Remember Sightsavers in your Will

Leaving a legacy to Sightsavers has the potential to change lives forever by helping someone see again or even helping someone get an education. However big or small your gift, you'll know it will help to save sight and change lives in some of the world's poorest countries. To request a free guide to making or changing your Will, including information about leaving a legacy to Sightsavers, please call us on 01 663 7666 or email info@sightsavers.ie

Give the Gift of Sight

Gift of Sight is a great opportunity to buy your friends and loved ones a fantastic gift which has a huge impact on someone's life in the developing world. When you buy a gift, we will send you a greeting card, together with a voucher explaining in more detail the gift you have chosen. You can then send it directly to the person you are buying the gift for with a personalised message of your choice. The full range of gifts is available to order online at www.giftofsight.ie.

How you can help

Thank you

The staff, management and governing authority of Sightsavers Ireland wish to extend appreciation to all our supporters and Irish Aid for making it possible for us to fund our work overseas to prevent, treat and cure the causes of blindness and to provide rehabilitation and educational support for blind and low vision adults and children. In 2007, Sightsavers Ireland raised over €6 million, allowing us to increase funding to our programmes by 39 per cent from 2006.

- The Book Centres, Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford and Barker & Jones, Naas
- Mr D Spratt
- The Irish Catholic
- Staff of Novum Overseas Ltd
- Christy Butler at Dublin Bus
- Christy O'Toole and friends for the Sightsavers Christmas Swim
- Pat Reid and the Emigrant Bar, Athy
- Avoca Capital
- Bewley Foundation
- Irish Aid
- Miriam O'Callaghan
- Felipe Contepomi

Patron

President of Ireland, Mary McAleese

Directors

Chairman: Mr Pat Farrell

Mr John Bines

Mr Frank Fell

Mr Fintan Glynn

Mr Michael Murphy

About Sightsavers

Sightsavers is the country's leading NGO combating blindness in the developing world. Sightsavers' vision is of a world where no-one is needlessly blind.

We work with partner organisations in the poorest and least-served communities to help establish and support permanent activities that prevent and cure blindness, restore sight and provide help for people who will never see.

For further information about Sightsavers, or to contact our regional offices, please visit our website www.sightsavers.ie

Sightsavers International

70 Georges St Upper

Dun Laoghaire

Co Dublin

Tel: 01 663 7666

Fax: 01 230 0092

Email: info@sightsavers.ie

Charity Number: CHY15437

Donation hotline (24/7)

1850 50 20 20

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