Voluntary Stakeholder Review

Report on Sightsavers' contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

February 2026

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ADP	African Disability Protocol
AU	African Union
CSO	Civil society organisation
ESP	Education sector plan
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
GDS	Global Disability Summit
GPW	General programme of work
IAPB	International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
LAMP	Learning, Accountability and Monitoring Progress
MDGs	Millenium development goals
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NTDs	Neglected tropical diseases
OPD	Organisation for people with disabilities
OSGEY	Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth
RE	Refractive error
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TES	Transforming Education Summit
UHC	Universal health coverage
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VSR	Voluntary Stakeholder Review
WfWI	Women for Women International
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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Executive summary

Sightsavers' Voluntary Stakeholder Review is a new project, launched in 2024, to develop both a process and comprehensive report, articulating our contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Governments report their contribution through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and local authorities use Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). The SDG agenda envisaged that other organisations such as businesses and NGOs would also report on their contribution to the SDGs, but no systematic approach has ever been rolled out for this.

Given the substantial amount of international development funding awarded to the charity and private sectors in contracts from governments and philanthropic institutions, there is a need for greater accountability and understanding of the ways in which non-governmental actors contribute towards the SDGs. Sightsavers is aiming to fill this gap through conducting a Voluntary Stakeholder Review (VSR), to present our contribution to the SDGs in a comprehensive way and develop an approach and methodology which can be shared and used by other organisations in the sector. Particularly in the current political climate, with many countries making cuts to their international development spending and a widespread negative perception of the sector among the general public, it is important to make the case for the positive contribution made by NGOs, and the impact of working in partnership with governments, private sector and other organisations.

In 2021, Sightsavers refreshed its thematic strategies and set out organisational level indicators to measure progress towards our overall strategies, in a framework which became known as Learning, Accountability and Monitoring Progress (LAMP). In order to generate the data and content for the VSR, Sightsavers mapped the LAMP indicators to the SDGs - not just to the overall goals, but specific targets. Through linking our individual project indicators to the standardised LAMP indicators, and mapping these to the SDG targets, for the first time we have a mechanism to generate data showing the contribution made towards different SDG targets in different countries, year on year.

Following the mapping of organisational work to the SDGs, the VSR provides an overview of the ways in which our work contributes to specific SDG targets in each thematic area. To ensure that the VSR is not only a useful product but also a valuable process for the organisation, the implementation has been as inclusive as possible, inviting input from teams and country offices across Sightsavers globally. Thematic sections of the VSR report have been written by the teams most actively engaged in that thematic area.

The VSR presents Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs in each thematic area in terms of the 'Three Rs': realisation (direct contribution through service delivery); regulation (holding governments to account over their delivery of the SDGs); and representation (ensuring that people with disabilities are represented in SDG delivery and monitoring processes).

The process of conducting a VSR has proved to be a useful learning exercise for Sightsavers. The VSR reveals the breadth and scope of Sightsavers' portfolio of work, contributing to 29 SDG targets across ten SDG goals. Beyond this, the framework of the three Rs and the overlap between these categories reveals the complexity in understanding Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs: Sightsavers' capacity building of organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs) to produce shadow reports on national SDG implementation could be seen as an example of realisation, regulation and representation all at once.

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Moreover, the VSR puts a spotlight on the nature of Sightsavers' work in its contribution to the SDGs, revealing that projects are delivered in partnership, notably with governments and organisations for people with disabilities. With a wide range of examples and case studies across Africa and Asia, the VSR also shows the extent to which Sightsavers' interventions are context specific, designed in response to the particular political, social, cultural and environmental factors involved.

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Introduction and context

In 2015, when UN member states agreed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they identified a mechanism of follow-up and review called Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), for governments to report on their progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). VNRs have become an effective and widely used reporting and accountability framework, with 177 countries having presented at least one VNR to date.

A year later, the city of New York pioneered Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), adapting the VNR methodology as a new approach for local authorities to report on their progress towards SDG implementation. VLRs have been embraced by city and local authorities around the world, growing from two submissions in 2016 to 48 in 2021, and 168 VLRs completed in total.

Paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on major groups and other stakeholders to report on their contribution to implementation of the SDGs, to recognise and account for the efforts and impact of businesses, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the private and third sectors. However, no reporting mechanism has been developed, and there is no system for companies and charities to report their work on delivering the SDGs to the UN.

The purpose of this paper is to set out Sightsavers' contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, adapting the VNR and VLR approaches to pilot a Voluntary Stakeholder Review (VSR), as a new methodology for NGOs and other organisation to present the impact of their work and how it relates to the SDGs. This is not an external evaluation, but a self-assessment, intended to generate learning and to be shared across the sector, as to how the SDGs inform and relate to our programmatic work, and how our projects and processes contribute to and comply with the principles of the SDGs. Finally, the aim is to meet the demand for accountability through organisational reporting, as envisioned in 2015 and set out in paragraph 89.

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Rationale and objectives

Sightsavers launched the VSR pilot for the following reasons:

Strengthening communications on contribution to the SDGs

Sightsavers has referenced the SDGs in its programme strategy and project documentation for many years. However, there was no systematic framework or methodology in place to explain Sightsavers' specific contribution to specific SDG targets, and there was a recognition that this would be useful for our communications, campaigns and donor reporting. The VSR will help to fill this gap, providing a systematic and data-driven articulation of the contribution made not only to the overall SDG goals, but to specific SDG targets, with the capacity to show a breakdown by country and thematic area. In the case of Sightsavers, the VSR will be useful as a resource to inform our communications narrative on how we contribute towards the SDGs, for the purposes of explaining this to governments, donors, partners and other organisations.

Preparing for 2030 and beyond

As 2030 approaches, there will be an increasing demand on NGOs to demonstrate their contribution to the SDGs. In the current political climate, with cuts to international development funding being made in many countries, it is imperative that NGOs are prepared with the necessary evidence and tools to show the value they deliver. Beyond this, as from 2025, there will be an intensification of discussion as to the form the post-SDG global goals should take. As yet, there is no agreed framework for this, and no fixed structure for NGOs to be involved. However, if NGOs want to be recognised as important contributors and partners to be involved in the post-2030 debate, a framework to meaningfully present our relevance in delivering progress towards international development goals may be a useful asset.

Demonstrating accountability

Sightsavers country offices encourage governments and local authorities to engage in VNRs and VLRs and provide technical assistance to OPDs in producing shadow reports. However, we are conscious that the international development sector has failed to deliver VSRs as set out in the 2030 agenda. Conducting a VSR enables us to lead by example, strengthening the legitimacy of Sightsavers country offices in discussions on the SDGs with government and civil society partners, thereby bolstering our ability to influence policy change across all thematic areas.

Stimulating reflection and discussion

Conducting a VSR has value in itself as a process of internal reflection through the discussions and collation of the data and content of the report. Beyond this, developing a VSR has already generated conversations with other organisations. We hope that finalising and sharing the report will encourage others to take forward and share their approaches to SDG reporting, leading to mutual awareness and understanding across the sector.

We recognised that developing a VSR would provide an opportunity to grapple with challenges which not only Sightsavers, but all NGOs, have faced for many years:

- How do we distinguish between attribution and contribution in the impact of our work?

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- When presenting the data from Sightsavers' engagement in partnerships and consortia, how do we avoid double counting? If we can't avoid it, how can we meaningfully present the data?
- Given the gaps, caveats and limitations in some of our project data, how can we present it to an external audience?

It is partly because of these complexities that VSRs have not become an integral part of SDG reporting. Putting together the VSR therefore enables us to meaningfully engage in a range of ongoing discussions in the international development sector, beyond contribution to the SDGs.

As such, the objectives of the VSR are to:

1. Produce a clear and systematic presentation of how Sightsavers contributes towards the SDGs.
2. Develop a methodology for SDG reporting which can be shared and used by other NGOs in the sector.

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Methodology

Our methodology for conducting a VSR involved the following steps:

1. Integration of the SDGs into thematic strategies

In order to present a clear and systematic report on an organisation's contribution to the SDGs, it is first necessary to provide a foundational presentation on the organisation's overall objectives. While this can take different forms, the essential function is to explain the organisation's goals, beyond that of individual projects or contracts. With an organisational level strategy in place, it is then possible to identify the synergies with the SDGs. With its 17 goals and 169 targets, the SDG agenda represents the breadth of international development, across all thematic areas and sectors. As such, an organisation's objectives will often predate the SDGs and does not have to be based on the SDG agenda, but an articulation of the linkages at the strategic level provides a useful foundation for producing a VSR.

Sightsavers developed thematic strategies for eye health, NTDs, inclusive education, refractive error and social inclusion in 2018. These strategies set out explicit linkages between the organisational objectives and the SDGs. The thematic strategies were refreshed and updated in 2021, once again emphasising the connections between the strategic long-term objectives and the SDGs. As an example, the inclusive education strategy explains the linkages to SDG 4, and in particular to SDG targets 4.1 on the rights of children with disabilities to primary and secondary education, 4.2 on early childhood development and pre-primary care, and 4.3 on the rights of adults with disabilities to vocational and tertiary education. Identifying the synergies between organisational strategic goals and the SDGs is an important foundation for a VSR.

2. Development of an organisational strategic level monitoring framework

As a next step, it is useful to produce a monitoring framework, setting indicators to measure progress towards the organisational level strategic objectives. While NGOs are typically required to have project level indicators for donor reporting, these tend to be produced in a range of different formats, meeting the needs of different funders. Developing a monitoring framework at the strategic level enables an organisation to assess the cumulative impact of multiple projects and contracts over time, to generate the data showing the full overall contribution.

In 2014, Sightsavers launched a process of strategy implementation and monitoring (known as the SIM card). The purpose of the SIM card is to monitor the extent to which Sightsavers is meeting its organisational objectives on an annual basis, using indicators such as the percentage of countries where Sightsavers supports eye health, which demonstrate improved coverage of eye health services in project districts, or the percentage of countries and relevant teams actively participating in international or in-country processes to influence change in policy or planning. However, the SIM card is not designed to monitor progress at a detailed and granular level, and there was no mechanism to relate the SIM card indicators to the SDGs.

In 2021, Sightsavers undertook an organisational review and refresh of our thematic strategies on eye health, refractive error, neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), inclusive education and social inclusion. As part of this process, Sightsavers set out organisational

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level indicators to measure progress towards our overall strategies, in a framework which became known as Learning, Accountability and Monitoring Progress (LAMP). This provided an opportunity to map our organisational LAMP indicators not just to the overall SDG goals, but to specific targets. In this way, the LAMP complements the SIM card – it generates the granular data to feed into the SIM card, giving us a more detailed source of project data to relate to the SDGs.

3. Mapping the LAMP indicators to the SDGs

With an organisational level monitoring framework in place, it is then possible to map the indicators to the SDGs. Crucially, this process allows an organisation to identify not only the linkages to the overall SDGs, but to individual SDG targets. This enables a much more detailed and rigorous analysis of the specific contribution made to the SDGs, with the facility to present the differentiation by country, thematic area or other categories. As such, this process enables the mapping of project level indicators to the organisational indicators, and the organisational level indicators to SDG targets.

The table on the next page shows how the organisational indicators have been mapped to the SDG targets. As an example, a project output indicator, such as the number of cataract operations performed, is mapped to an organisational level LAMP indicator - in this case the percentage of countries which showed an increase in the cataract surgical rate, which in turn is mapped to an SDG target (in this example SDG 3.8 on access to essential healthcare services).

SDG	SDG target	LAMP indicator	Project indicator	Thematic area
3.8	Achieve universal health coverage - including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.	Percentage of countries which showed an increase in cataract surgical rate (CSR) in the project area.	Number of cataract surgeries performed.	Eye health
3.3	By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.	Percentage of countries with no districts categorised as being 10 per cent points below treatment threshold in a given year.	Number of people treated for lymphatic filariasis.	Neglected tropical diseases
4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including people with disabilities, indigenous	Percentage of children with disabilities (girls and boys) in Sightsavers-supported schools who have transitioned to the	Number of children with disabilities enrolled in school.	Inclusive education

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SDG	SDG target	LAMP indicator	Project indicator	Thematic area
	peoples and children in vulnerable situations.	next grade of education.		
8.5	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and people with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.	Percentage of projects that demonstrate increased labour force participation rates of project participants.	Number of project participants showing improvement in employment status.	Economic empowerment
17.18	By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for the least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.	Percentage of countries where Sightsavers is supporting refractive error (RE) projects which have RE indicators in the national health management information system (HMIS).	Number of RE indicators integrated in the HMIS.	Refractive error
10.3	Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome - including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.	Percentage of projects which demonstrate the levels of participation of women and men with disabilities in local development processes.	Number of women and men with disabilities participating in local councils.	Social inclusion

Beyond this, we can show the granular data - for example, that Sightsavers supported the delivery of 266,269 cataract surgeries in 2023, the breakdown by country (for example, 60,986 cataract surgeries performed in Bangladesh in 2023) and the breakdown by facility (for example, 856 cataract surgeries performed at Dristidan Eye Hospital in Gopalganj district in 2023). By comparing the data year on year and dividing it by the population in the project districts, at the organisational level using the LAMP indicator, we can show the percentage of countries which showed an increase in the cataract surgical rate. This enables us to show that the number of cataract surgeries delivered across Sightsavers' projects increased by two per cent between 2022 and 2023, with seven countries showing an increase in the cataract surgical rate in the project area.

This allows us to show an increase in the cataract surgical rate in Bangladesh from 3,166 cataract surgeries performed per million people in 2022, to 3,224 per million in 2023. This

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indicates an improvement in the level of access to essential healthcare services and progress towards the goal of universal health coverage as defined in SDG target 3.8. However, it is important to acknowledge some limitations - this does not show that access to essential healthcare services (SDG 3.8) in Bangladesh has necessarily improved overall.

Essential healthcare includes a wide range of services, of which eye care is only one, and access to other services may have decreased in the same period. Beyond this, we cannot attribute all of the increase in the cataract surgical rate to Sightsavers – firstly, as Sightsavers works through partnerships supporting local NGOs and hospitals, and secondly does not cover all districts, supporting approximately half (60,986 of the 120,595) cataract surgeries performed in the country in 2023.

Nevertheless, the process of mapping project indicators to LAMP indicators and LAMP indicators to SDG targets allows us to identify the linkages between Sightsavers' projects and data at facility level, and how this relates to the broader SDG framework. While it is important to understand the constraints on what we can infer from the data, the mapping process remains useful in generating learning and developing a clearer picture of Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs.

Through linking our individual project indicators to the standardised LAMP indicators, and mapping these to the SDG targets, for the first time we have a mechanism to generate data showing the contribution made towards different SDG targets in different countries, year on year. We can demonstrate not just Sightsavers' general overall contribution to SDG goals (for example that Sightsavers supports health system strengthening and therefore contributes to SDG3), but we can show which specific SDG target Sightsavers contributes towards in each country, and specifically how this is achieved. The VSR draws on this data to build a rich and comprehensive picture of Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs.

The mapping of organisational indicators to the SDGs is not an exact science. Some LAMP indicators inevitably relate to multiple SDGs, both directly and indirectly, and the process raised many questions. For example, through the delivery of cataract surgeries (reported through LAMP indicator EH2.3), Sightsavers contributes to SDG 3.8 on the delivery of universal health coverage, but there is also evidence that improvements in eye care translate into increased employment and earning potential - thereby contributing to a reduction in poverty (SDG 1.1) and hunger (SDG 2.1). Similarly, the enrolment of children with disabilities in schools (reported through LAMP indicator IE1.1) contributes directly to SDG 4.5 on ensuring equal access to education. However, education has also been shown to be a factor in reducing poverty and hunger.

In order to avoid confusion and simplify the process, we mapped each LAMP indicator to the most relevant SDG target, focusing on direct rather than indirect contribution. We acknowledge the interlinkages, and Sightsavers produces extensive research showing the long-term impact of health and education on broader aspects of quality of life. However, the indirect contributions are sometimes dependent on multiple assumptions.

For example, there is evidence to show that the dispensation of spectacles (reported through LAMP indicator 2.3.3) translates into a reduction in road traffic accidents (SDG target 3.6), as corrected refractive error enables drivers to see the road and drive more safely. However, the source of our annual data may be from a refractive error project distributing spectacles to children in schools, who are too young to drive, and even assuming their long-term usage of

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spectacles, the impact on road deaths is contingent on these children becoming drivers as adults, passing their driving tests and many other factors.

Therefore, while there may be a general link between the delivery of refractive error services and reduced road deaths, we cannot be certain that the projects covered in our annual data will contribute to SDG 3.6. In order to avoid ambiguity and ensure our reporting of SDG contributions meets a more rigorous standard of data quality, our mapping focuses on direct contribution. However, our narrative explores the interlinkages in more detail to provide a comprehensive picture of Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs.

4. Defining Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs through the three Rs

With a mechanism in place to link Sightsavers' organisational indicators to the SDGs, the next step was to define and categorise the nature of Sightsavers' contribution. The VSR draws on the recommendations set out in a UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs paper by Dr Graham Long, an academic and expert on the SDGs at Newcastle University, on how civil society stakeholders can report their contribution to the implementation of the SDGs through three categories:
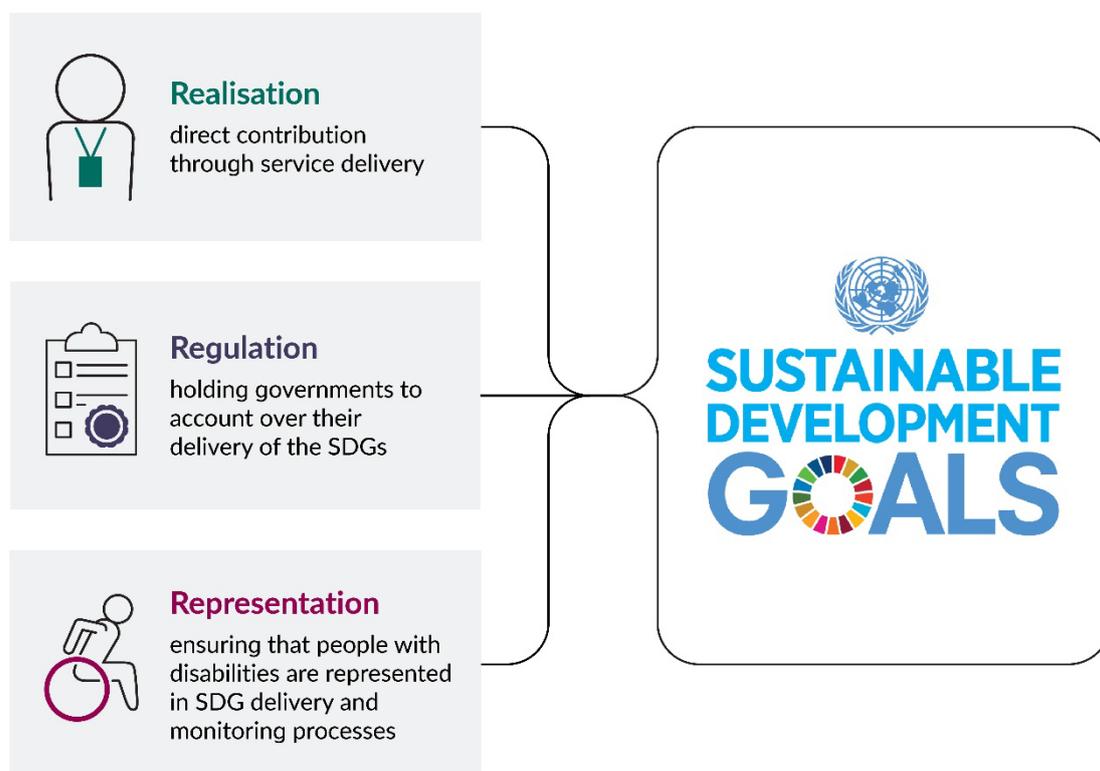

Figure 1: How civil society stakeholders can report their contribution to the implementation of the SDGs

- **Realisation**
  This refers to instances of Sightsavers' projects directly delivering the SDGs - for example a Sightsavers project delivering mass drug administration to work towards the elimination of onchocerciasis, lymphatic filariasis or other NTDs (SDG 3.3), increasing the effective cataract surgical rate (SDG 3.8) or increasing the enrolment of children with disabilities in school (SDG 4.5).

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- **Regulation**
  This refers to instances of Sightsavers holding governments to account over their delivery of the SDGs - for example through supporting the passing of the Disability Act in Kenya, which sets out criteria and standards for inclusive development against which future governments can be held.
- **Representation**
  This refers to instances of Sightsavers ensuring that people with disabilities are represented in SDG delivery and monitoring processes - for example through involving OPDs in Voluntary National Reviews assessing progress towards SDG implementation, or ensuring that the voice and needs of people with disabilities are reflected in the design of health facilities to ensure they are accessible.

These categories are not mutually exclusive, and there will be overlap. For example, Sightsavers' involvement in providing technical assistance to a Ministry of Health in setting accessibility standards for facilities would simultaneously be an example of realisation in contributing towards universal health coverage (SDG 3.8), as well as an example of representation in making sure that the needs of people with disabilities are reflected in the standards.

Sightsavers' capacity building of organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs) to produce shadow reports on national SDG implementation could be seen as an example of realisation, regulation and representation all at once. However, this framing of SDG contribution is a useful conceptual approach and provides the structure for the VSR.

5. Generating VSR content through an inclusive and participatory process

To ensure the VSR is not only a useful product but also a valuable process for the organisation, the production of a VSR was made as inclusive as possible, inviting input from teams and country offices across Sightsavers globally. Where possible, thematic sections of the VSR report have been written by the teams which are most actively engaged in that thematic area. This has increased the amount of time needed to complete the VSR and created a need for editing to ensure consistency across sections, but it has also produced a higher quality report. As a result, the level of detail varies between sections.

A central coordinating team developed templates and guidance, requesting the organisation's experts in each thematic area to explain how their work contributes to the specific SDG targets identified through the LAMP mapping process. However, while definitions of the three Rs were shared and discussed, there were inevitably some differences in the interpretation of what constitutes realisation, regulation and representation.

As a result, there are some inconsistencies - Sightsavers' provision of technical assistance in the development of inclusive policies is reported as an example of regulation in some sections, and an example of representation in others. These types of differences in interpretation are inevitable and, therefore, we took the approach of leaving the sections as they are in this regard, given that both interpretations of regulation and representation are valid and a statistical analysis of the breakdown is not the intention - as explained in the next section.

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6. Analysis and sharing of findings

The final stage of the VSR is to analyse the findings and determine how they can be used. This may take different forms, depending on how the contribution to the SDGs has been defined and categorised. Due to the overlap between the three Rs, it was not possible to conduct a statistical analysis of the extent to which the organisation's contribution varies between thematic areas in terms of realisation, regulation and representation. However, it was useful to reflect on the breadth and number of SDG targets to which Sightsavers contributes, compile a range of case studies showcasing some of the most significant examples and discuss the findings across the organisation, as presented in the reflections and conclusions section.

The VSR will be shared with other organisations, to learn from other approaches and generate discussion on how the sector as a whole can strengthen its evidence base in terms of the contribution made to the SDGs.

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VSR as a means of accountability

One of the key reasons for conducting the VSR is to strengthen the level of accountability and transparency in Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs. Sightsavers applies rigorous programme quality standards, participatory approaches, beneficiary engagement, external evaluations and audits, ensuring we are accountable to a range of stakeholders - including partner organisations, donors and beneficiaries. However, we recognise the truth in the observation of Graham Long that: "Whilst states have clear lines of accountability to their own people – reiterated in Agenda 2030 – the lines of accountability of CSOs are much less clear. CSOs are not, by their nature, clearly accountable to governments in the way that governments are accountable to their people."

While estimates as to the number of NGOs and the total funding they manage vary, and there are multiple definitions, there are several million NGOs across the world managing billions of dollars. Research from Johns Hopkins University notes that CSOs employ 4.36 per cent of the workforce across 36 countries. It is therefore problematic if there is little or no accountability as to the contribution that NGOs make towards the SDGs.

We recognise that the VSR will not by itself address the accountability gap. Beyond this, the methodology and approach will not be appropriate for all NGOs and other organisations would need to adapt it according to their specificities. However, by conducting and sharing the VSR, Sightsavers hopes to kickstart a global conversation on the role of NGOs in delivering the SDGs, and that other organisations will adapt and develop their own reporting mechanisms. Just as the number of VLR submissions grew from two in 2016 to 48 in 2021, we hope that VSR reporting will take off. If VSRs become systematised and an expected part of an NGO's reporting among governments and donor agencies, this would strengthen the level of accountability in the NGO sector.

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Examples of SDG reporting

To our knowledge, no other third sector organisation has produced a VSR before. However, as part of our research and preparation, we have come across some other examples of presenting NGO contribution to the SDGs. The UK World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has produced an infographic, noting an example of the organisation's work relating to each of the 17 SDGs.1 Sightsavers has a similar online resource, setting out the SDGs to which our projects directly contribute, and those to which our contribution is indirect.2 World Vision has a presentation on its Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in school programme, and its contribution to SDG 4 on education and SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation.3

Women for Women International (WfWI) has developed perhaps one of the most sophisticated SDG reporting models to date, with an online dashboard in which you can filter by country and by SDG to view the contribution made by the organisation.4 This allows us to see that, for example, in 2021 in Nigeria, WfWI contributed to SDG goal 8 on decent work on economic growth, specifically to target 8.3, through delivering an economic empowerment programme for women - following which 97 per cent of women reported being employed, compared to 67 per cent at the baseline. This provides a more detailed narrative on SDG contribution, specific linkages between projects and SDG targets, and data which can be cross-examined. Sightsavers held discussions with WfWI during the research and preparatory stage for the VSR and this example provided a useful model to learn from.

Looking at the corporate sector, a range of companies provide reports on their contribution to the SDGs. In 2018, KPMG produced a guide for businesses on how to report on the SDGs, in which it claimed that 40 per cent of the world's 250 largest companies were already discussing the SDGs in their corporate reporting, with 55 per cent of reporting companies prioritising SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 3 on health and wellbeing.5

Vodafone presents an annual report on its contribution to the SDGs, identifying goals 9 and 17 as the focus areas, with its work on promoting connectivity, infrastructure, digital innovation and partnership indirectly contributing to all of the other goals. The Vodafone website allows you to select an SDG goal and view the contribution made by the company. For example, Vodafone promoted SDG 3 on health and wellbeing through providing access to digital tools and access to data for health and social care providers, as well as connectivity to emergency hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic, fitting 500 wireless alarms to beds in Madrid's largest field hospital.6 Telefonica produces an annual sustainability report, with a matrix mapping the linkages between the company's area of business, SDG goals and main

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[1] https://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/annex_c2_communications_piece_uk_example_1.pdf?_ga=2.40433835.823890794.1521812726-1138033760.1521812726

[2] www.sightsavers.org/policy-and-advocacy/global-goals/building-the-future

[3] www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WASH%20in%20schools%20learning%20brief_FINAL.pdf

[4] https://womenforwomen.org.uk/delivering-global-goals-2021

[5] https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2018/02/how-to-report-on-sdgs.pdf

[6] www.vodafone.com/sustainable-business/our-contribution-to-un-sdgs

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key performance indicators.7 Enel uses a similar approach in its annual sustainability reports8, and there are many others.

The purpose of this paper is not to criticise the efforts of other NGOs and companies in their reporting on the SDGs, nor to suggest that Sightsavers' VSR approach would be applicable in all of these cases. Reviewing these examples has been instructive in informing our approach. It is encouraging to see that there is such wide recognition of the need for SDG reporting, so many different approaches in place, and that the VSR approach is not the first attempt at SDG reporting. It suggests that there would be interest in learning from the VSR approach across the NGO and private sectors, and that VSR reporting may be embraced by other organisations in the future.

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7 file:///C:/Users/nthorne/Downloads/management-sustainability-report-2023.pdf
8 www.enel.com/content/dam/enel-com/documenti/investitori/sostenibilita/2021/sustainability-report_2021.pdf

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Working in partnership

Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs through realisation includes aspects such as the delivery of eye examinations and cataract surgeries, mass drug administration against lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis and other neglected tropical diseases, and the enrolment of children with disabilities in school. However, it is important to understand that Sightsavers' operational model is to work through partnerships, primarily with government and civil society partners in country, rather than through direct service delivery.

Sightsavers does not have cataract surgeons, community health workers or teachers on its staff. Instead, Sightsavers provides financial and technical support to ministries of health and education, covering the costs of equipment and training for surgeons, health workers and teachers, advising on how services can be made disability inclusive, sharing expertise and advocating with government partners for them to take on an increasing share of the costs.

In this way, Sightsavers takes a system strengthening approach rather than setting up a parallel system, thereby fostering government ownership of essential health and education services and the sustainable provision of services for the long term. Through securing funding from donors - including governments and philanthropic organisations - and conducting due diligence on partner organisations, Sightsavers enables government ministries in developing countries to access a level of financial and technical support which would otherwise not be available.

In this way, Sightsavers contributes to the realisation of the SDGs through working in partnership, with services delivered by government and civil society partners. As such, any quantification of Sightsavers' contribution, such as the number of beneficiaries reached, cannot be attributed exclusively to Sightsavers. In most cases, Sightsavers will be one of many partners providing support to the delivery of health and education services. Calculating a proportion of services attributable to Sightsavers, or a percentage of total funding provided by Sightsavers, would be highly complex and Sightsavers does not consistently apply such a formula.

Sightsavers' project data includes figures for activities delivered directly, such as the training of health workers 100 per cent funded by Sightsavers, as well as data on the number of refractions or surgeries at health facilities in country - where Sightsavers reports 100 per cent of the data on the basis of providing ongoing financial and technical support, while there may also be other sources of funding. Since data is reporting from partner hospitals, often directly through the DHIS2, distinguishing an accurate breakdown of figures would be very challenging. It is therefore important to understand Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs through realisation in terms of partnership.

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Sightsavers' campaign work

In addition to delivering the SDGs through its programmes, Sightsavers contributes to the 2030 agenda through its campaigns. Sightsavers' campaigns raise awareness of the challenges and injustices facing people with disabilities to influence policymakers and call for national and global action on disability rights. We collaborate with disability organisations to ensure people with disabilities are represented and involved in the decisions that affect their lives - facilitating them to make the case directly to decision-makers, including through supporting youth champions. We work at the UN and through other global forums to help shape decision-making and hold governments to account on global commitments. We also run national campaigns in countries to raise awareness about disability inclusion and achieve lasting policy change.

In Bangladesh, Sightsavers is working together with OPD partners calling for the National Disability Act of 2013 to be implemented, which will ensure disability rights are embedded into national legislation and domesticate the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Meanwhile, in Zimbabwe, Sightsavers' campaign focuses on promoting disability rights through supporting the passing of a disability law and its implementation.

Beyond this, through the #RatifyTheADP campaign, Sightsavers works in coalition with other partner organisations, advocating for governments to ratify the African Disability Protocol, a human rights treaty that addresses specific forms of discrimination affecting people with disabilities on the continent - such as harmful practices, beliefs and superstitions.

Globally, Sightsavers is working with the International Disability Alliance's Youth Committee to advance the Youth Call to Action published at the 2025 Global Disability Summit. In addition, it has called on global leaders to take account of, and include, people with disabilities in the delivery of the UN's Our Common Agenda.

Sightsavers' campaign work highlights both the strengths of the Three Rs framework, encapsulating the different aspects of Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs, as well as the way the three categories overlap and are not mutually exclusive.

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Structure of the VSR

The VSR is structured by thematic area, with each area divided into sub-sections covering the categories of realisation, regulation and representation. As such, the report provides an overview of Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs in each of the following thematic areas:

1. Neglected tropical diseases
2. Inclusive eye health and refractive error
3. Inclusive education
4. Economic empowerment
5. Citizenship and political participation
6. Inclusive health
7. Gender
8. Climate change
9. Inclusive data
10. Research

Each section will explore how Sightsavers' work contributes to the SDGs, following the same structure under the three categories of realisation, regulation and representation for ease of comparison. A range of case studies are also included to provide a more detailed assessment.

1. Neglected tropical diseases

Sightsavers' strategy on neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) highlights the importance of SDG 3 within our framework to eliminate targeted diseases to ensure healthy lives and wellbeing for everyone of all ages.

NTDs are formally recognised as a target for global action through SDG 3.3, which specifically calls nations to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases by 2030 and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases. A key impact of Sightsavers' NTD work is to contribute to stronger, integrated government owned health systems with the resources and capacity to provide universal health coverage (UHC) for NTDs. Sightsavers therefore also contributes directly to SDG 3.8, which aims to ensure everyone has access to quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines.

It should be noted that progress against NTDs is recognised to be an effective strategy to accelerate the achievement of other SDG goals, contributing to reductions in poverty and hunger through improvements in health delivering improved economic outcomes, as well as enabling children to receive an education.

Realisation

Sightsavers NTD projects have directly contributed to SDG 3.3 in the following ways:

- Elimination of trachoma as a public health problem in seven countries (Pakistan, Benin, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, The Gambia, Togo); elimination of lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem in one country (Malawi).

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- 65.9 million people no longer requiring treatment through mass drug administration for at least one NTD.

Case study: Elimination of trachoma in Pakistan

Trachoma is the world's leading infectious cause of blindness. Through support from Sightsavers and other partner organisations, trachoma was eliminated as a health problem in Pakistan in 2024. **Pakistan**'s achievement in eliminating trachoma means that around 3.7 million people in the country will no longer be at risk of contracting the disease.

Sightsavers began working alongside the government of Pakistan to beat trachoma in 2001. Since that time, Sightsavers has trained 1,767 health workers to identify trachoma cases and trained eight surgeons to carry out operations for advanced trachoma. The organisation has also helped to distribute 500,000 doses of medication to protect people from the disease and built 500 latrines to improve sanitation and hygiene for communities.

Regulation

Sightsavers' NTD programmes have held governments accountable to their delivery of the SDGs by:

- Defining and delivering an essential package of quality interventions across the full continuum of services required for elimination - including integrated mass drug administration, disease prevalence surveys, disease management and disability inclusion, environmental and vector management, and transitioning post elimination activities into primary health care.
- Expanding coverage of services to ensure they reach all who need them – 36 per cent of countries have used results of a Leave No One Behind self-assessment to improve coverage; 60 per cent of endemic implementation units (IUs) for trachoma with transition plans for managing trachomatous trichiasis surgeries; 80 per cent of countries having at least one health facility providing quality services for people with lymphedema and hydrocele services.

Representation

Sightsavers' NTD programmes have ensured that people with disabilities are represented in SDG delivery and monitoring processes by:

- Ensuring essential services reach all those who need them is a fundamental component of WHO's 2030 NTD Roadmap goals and reflective of key learning questions pursued by the NTD department, including the strengthening of primary health care and optimising coverage amongst marginalised populations.

2. Eye health and refractive error

Sightsavers' eye health and refractive error programmes focus on ensuring equitable access to sustainable, good quality eye health services and assistive products that contribute to the strengthening of health and education systems, and universal health coverage. Sightsavers' work supports inclusive and quality eye health service delivery, scale-up of effective coverage by influencing policy and financing systems for eye health, and support for

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equitable and inclusive refractive services. Restoring sight, vision correction and improving access to equitable eye health services makes an important contribution to the 2030 Agenda and cuts across many SDGs, including:

SDG 1: No poverty

SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing

SDG 4: Quality education

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

Realisation

Sightsavers' work on eye health contributes significantly to SDG 3.8 - to achieve universal health coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection by improving the quality of care and effective coverage of eye health and refractive services. Sightsavers works with governments to integrate eye health into the national health service through policies, strategies and budget allocation. Through including eye health services within national health policies and planning, this improves access for all.

Access to quality eye health services enables people to work and improved vision enhances economic productivity, increases household income and improves employment prospects. In these ways, Sightsavers' work on eye health and refractive error is instrumental in promoting economic growth, boosting productivity and earning potential that can lift people out of poverty (SDG 1 and SDG 8).

In many countries, road traffic accidents are a leading cause of death, and one of the factors which can cause road accidents is the poor eyesight of drivers. Through the Truckers programme in India, Sightsavers provides care to lorry drivers and this plays a significant role in road safety, contributing to SDG target 3.6 (to reduce the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents).

Sightsavers' school health integrated programmes (Pakistan, India, Liberia) provide comprehensive eye care for school-age children who have a visual impairment - including support to surgical interventions, rehabilitation and the provision of assistive products to allow children to continue their education and contribute to SDG 4, as good vision improves educational outcomes for all children, thus increasing school enrolment and retention rates. Through targeted interventions focusing on out-of-school children, Sightsavers' programmes contribute to ensuring that all children have access to learning and education opportunities.

Regulation

Sightsavers collaborates with local partners to strengthen and establish eye health policies, strategic plans and governance frameworks for a health system that responds to the needs of the people. We advocate at the global level to ensure eye health is integrated into UHC and broader development discussions. We have seen success with a UN General Assembly resolution that recognises the impact that eye care has on the SDGs, we have effectively advocated for eye health to be included in the Political Declarations for UHC and in the WHO's General Programme of Work. WHO is the UN agency responsible for reporting on SDG 3 and the success of the inclusion of an eye health indicator within their General

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Programme of Work (GPW) monitoring framework is a key moment for eye health within SDG3.

We have also advocated for one of the global eye health indicators to be included in the UHC monitoring framework, making a compelling case as to why the indicators serve as excellent proxy indicators for the functioning of a health system. While the indicators have not been taken on board in the UHC monitoring framework, the inclusion within the GPW monitoring indicates a recognition by WHO of the importance of eye health as part of UHC.

We are making significant efforts to promote and advocate for the effective integration of eye health and refractive services, and assistive products, into national, provincial and state health and education systems and plans. We also support governments to progressively realise UHC across the countries we work in. We focus on supporting the integration of the supply chain for eye health medical supplies and assistive products into the health system. These are all key aspects captured in SDG 3.8.

We know that tackling vision impairment will only be achieved through strong global partnerships and cooperation. We are constantly nurturing and building global, regional, national and local partnerships with public, private and non-profit sectors to accelerate access to high-quality eye care services. While working closely with organisations like the WHO, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), academia, and tech companies, we support the testing of innovative approaches, generate evidence, develop technical resources and strengthen the capacity of policymakers, health and education personnel, and other stakeholders, to effectively deliver safe and high-quality eye health and refractive services for all.

Representation

In our inclusive eye health and refractive error programmes, we support governments in eye care planning and appropriate budgeting at the national, district and primary levels to ensure wider health provision across the board. All our programmes follow an inclusive approach, from design to implementation and learning.

We promote access to affordable eye health services for all by working with governments, the private sector, organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs), civil society organisations (CSOs), and others, and engaging both the demand and supply sides of eye health services. The SDG principle of 'Leave No One Behind' shaped Sightsavers' strategic shift from eye health to 'inclusive eye health' to ensure access to care for all. We promote the meaningful engagement of people with disabilities and engage and empower people to be aware of their eye health needs, thereby increasing demand for, and uptake of, eye health services.

Our programmes focus on strengthening the capacity of OPDs to advocate for, and contribute to, policies that promote equitable access to high quality, affordable eye health services and products. For example, the ongoing refractive error and assistive technology community eye health project in Zambia is implemented in partnership with the Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD), the national umbrella organisation of people with disabilities that plays a lead role in influencing policy implementation to increase coverage and membership of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIMA) for people with disabilities and advocating for improved provision of assistive products as part of the NHIMA care package.

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A key part of our global messaging in eye care services is that they need to be accessible to all. We advocate to policymakers at a global and national level for inclusive eye health services to be a part of their health system planning and budgets. We speak to decision-makers about the need for services to be inclusive and accessible - emphasising the core remit of Agenda 2030, Leave No One Behind.

3. Inclusive education

Realisation

Sightsavers advocates for a rights-based approach to education that recognises that all children with disabilities should be able to access a full course of inclusive education of good quality. Our approach is outlined in a comprehensive strategy and has been designed with the aim of meeting the aims of SDG 4 - **'Inclusive and equitable quality education and…. lifelong learning opportunities for all.'**

Sightsavers works with schools, communities, governments and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) to ensure children with disabilities can learn and play alongside their peers - from pre-school through to primary, secondary school and tertiary options. We mainstream gender-responsive and disability-inclusive education interventions. Our system-strengthening approach helps remove barriers and engages with education systems at institutional, organisational, and school and community level.

At institutional level, Sightsavers influences the strengthening of policy frameworks, education sector plans and donor commitments to promote disability-inclusive education. We work with ministries of education and other relevant ministries to develop inclusive education policies. In Sierra Leone we helped to develop a Radical Inclusion Policy and Sightsavers supported the development of inclusive education policies in Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon and Mali. We championed the development of the National Strategy for Inclusive Education in Tanzania.

At organisational level we collaborate with ministries of education and other agencies to support schools and communities to deliver disability-inclusive education. All our education projects include training and mentoring for teachers and other education service providers. In Pakistan we are working with the Federal College of Education and the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to develop an accredited, compulsory module on inclusive education for their teaching degree. In Uganda we are supporting the Ministry of Education to develop continuous professional development materials on inclusive education that are being rolled out across the whole country.

At school and community level we support the capacity development of schools and communities to provide inclusive education for children with disabilities. Working in partnership with OPDs, we develop context-specific strategies to engage with communities and civil society organisations. In Zambia we tackle stigma and discrimination in collaboration with faith leaders, traditional healers and the local police. Across our projects and responding to different contextual needs, children with disabilities in the community are identified, assessed and supported to enrol in their nearest local school. Assistive devices are provided to improve access to learning. Teachers are mentored and school governance systems are supported to understand the rights of children with disabilities. Practical low-cost

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strategies for inclusion are shared and developed. Parent support groups are established and provide a forum for the discussion of challenges, but also a focal point for developing livelihood support. In Bangladesh we supported the development of School Learning Improvement Plans, identifying strategies and funding required for school-level interventions.

Regulation

Sightsavers works to ensure donors, national governments and multilateral agencies leave no one behind in implementing SDG4. We partner with donors to strengthen their own policies in promoting equal access to quality education for learners with disabilities - for example, advising the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on their 2024 internal policy note which raised awareness of their commitments on inclusive education.

At global level, we influence the processes, policies and strategies of multilateral and bilateral agencies and donors to ensure they advance the rights of learners with disabilities. We partnered with multiple organisations to ensure disability inclusion was addressed during the 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit (TES). With the International Disability and Development Consortium, we launched a **Call to Action on Disability Inclusive Education**, endorsed by almost 200 organisations and governments. We published **statements** to influence the global narrative on education, ensuring that global promises do not forget learners with disabilities.

We participated in national consultations in Ghana, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Disability-specific commitments were made at the TES, with Kenya pledging to strengthen inclusive quality education; Liberia to improve girls' education and increase investments for children with disabilities; Mali prioritising policies, actions and funding for children with disabilities; Mozambique acknowledging the invisibility of children with disabilities and committing to improving accessibility and implementing assistive technologies; and Senegal focusing on strengthening equity in access to quality education.

At regional level, we engage with regional bodies and mechanisms, such as the African Union on their 2024 Year of Education. We advocate for the ratification of instruments such as the Africa Disability Protocol and the Marrakesh Treaty, essential for increasing the availability and affordability of alternative format materials. Our work on policy influencing has contributed to the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire.

At national level we work with ministries of education, providing technical support to encourage the inclusion of children with disabilities in education plans, strategies and commitments. We hold them to account on the implementation of commitments, such as those made at the Global Disability Summit (GDS) in 2022 and the GDS 2025.

We advise governments on the development of inclusive education policies and strategies - for example, engaging in the development of the recently published Education and Vocational Training Strategy in Cameroon and supporting the approval of the Islamabad Capital Territory Persons with Disabilities Act 2020 in Pakistan. In Cameroon, we worked with the Ministry of Secondary Education to institute 'Inclusive education' as a training subject for student teachers in general teacher training colleges.

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Sightsavers supports the development of inclusive Education Sector Plans (ESPs), working through local education groups and networks to advocate for disability inclusion. We supported inclusive ESPs in Cameroon, Malawi, Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Zambia. Sightsavers also works to influence budget allocations. In Mali, we worked with Fana Council to integrate inclusive education into the overall 2024 budget.

We contribute to strengthening education data systems. In Pakistan, we supported the government to embed disability data in the annual school census, the Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey and national population census.

Representation

Organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs) are central to our inclusive education projects, as is the participation of children and the parents or guardians of children with disabilities. Representatives of umbrella and local OPDs play a central role in the conception, design and implementation of all projects. Governance systems are established to ensure that OPDs are integral in decision-making processes, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

We value the perspective that people with disabilities can bring to a project, whilst understanding that they are not necessarily trained teachers or technicians and that roles and responsibilities for specific activities need to be carefully considered. In an early childhood project in Kenya, a member of a local OPD chaired the project steering committee with members of OPDs represented in all project working groups. OPDs led work on completing school accessibility audits, became members of school-based inclusion teams and secured roles on local government committees to represent people with disabilities.

We routinely establish parent support groups. These provide a support mechanism for parents and often include an aspect of income generation. In Zambia, parents have grown rice and from the income generated they can now buy school supplies for their children with disabilities. In Malawi, the establishment of community gardens for early childhood centres ensured that all children received a nutritious meal each day and a goat pass-on scheme provided income for the parents of children with disabilities.

We seek opportunities to involve the voices of children in our work, ensuring their contributions are given appropriate weight. Views are sought in child friendly environments. Monitoring of our projects routinely involves children in focus group discussions and key informant interviews. In Kenya, community-based participatory research allowed the project team to understand the challenges encountered by learners with disabilities in school. Children were involved in analysing data and in proposing potential solutions to the identified challenges. In an early year's project in Kenya, quantitative research around the experience of project participants included the views of parents of children with disabilities and the children themselves. Their responses were used to adapt aspects of the project.

In Pakistan, children with disabilities were included as peer researchers and respondents as part of a research study on the impact of climate change and natural disasters on education. In Sierra Leone, Zambia, Cameroon and Senegal, the establishment of 'buddy clubs' is providing a platform for children with disabilities to express their needs and to engage with their non-disabled peers in a safe and supportive space. As well as providing social games and encouraging interaction between peers, the clubs address key issues in the lives of

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children m- such as addressing stigma and discrimination and understanding the barriers they perceive in accessing learning.

In Kenya, children with disabilities are members of teams that conduct accessibility audits of their schools. This allows them to give their views on which infrastructure and environmental changes will most benefit them. In Zambia, girls are provided with hygiene kits so they can attend school throughout their menstrual cycle. Infrastructure adjustments take consideration of the needs of girls with disabilities - for example, through the provision of accessible toilets and facilities for showering.

4. Economic empowerment

Sightsavers' economic empowerment portfolio contributes to the following SDGs:

SDG 2.3
By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers. In particular, women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers - including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

SDG 4.4
By 2030, substantially increase the number of youths and adults who have relevant skills - including technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

SDG 8.3
Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and that encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

SDG 8.5
By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and people with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

SDG 8.6
By 2030, substantially reduce the proportion of youths not in employment, education or training.

SDG 8.8
Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers - including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

SDG 10.1
By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.

SDG 10.2
By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all,

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irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status.

SDG 12.6

Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

Realisation

Sightsavers' work on the economic empowerment (EE) of women and men with disabilities contributes to the realisation of SDG 8.5 through our direct project delivery in the areas of waged employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship as measured through our EE LAMP indicators. Through project delivery across 12 countries, we are supporting people with disabilities to participate in interventions that support their improved participation in the labour market. We are also indirectly supporting SDG 10.1 and 10.2 through economic empowerment of people with disabilities contributing to increased household expenditure and individual income.

Our portfolio funded by the Futuremakers by Standard Chartered Foundation is exclusively focused on youth employability and entrepreneurship. In this way, Sightsavers contributes to the target under Goal 8.6 to reduce the proportion of youths with disabilities not in education, employment or training, although it is important to note that Sightsavers uses the International Labour Organisation's definition of youth up to age 35, rather than 25 as used in the SDG indicator for goal 8.6.

Sightsavers' global labour programme, Inclusive Futures, also contributes to the realisation of Goal 8.8 to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers. The project works to support workers within the value chains of Coca Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA) and East Africa Malting Limited (EAML), subsidiaries of Diageo, to have increased confidence and understanding to exercise their labour rights. Female retailers with disabilities within the CCBA value chain, and farmers with and without disabilities growing sorghum into the EAML and East Africa Breweries Limited (EABL) supply chain, are registered into groups and affiliated to relevant trade union structures to support their collective bargaining.

For people with disabilities aspiring to start or grow their own business, Sightsavers provides entrepreneurship training, access to mentors or group support and, where possible, support or referral to access finance and wider markets. Our work with entrepreneurs directly supports Goal 8.3 in the decent job creation, entrepreneurship, formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Our IT Bridge Academy projects also support Goal 4.4 and, specifically, indicator 4.4.1 with its focus on IT skills.

Our agricultural projects provide agronomic support to farmer with disabilities, and in some cases farmers without disabilities, as indirect participants. Improved agronomic practice is provided through technical partners such as the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, or government agriculture extension officers. By supporting farmers to adopt improved farming techniques, with greater efficiencies allowing increased production yields of a higher quality, they are also supported to access better markets and increase the viability of their farming enterprises. Our agriculture projects therefore contribute to the realisation of SDG 2.3

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through the training and support to adopt improved agronomic practice, in line with sustainable agriculture.

Sightsavers supports people with disabilities seeking waged employment by providing employability training, access to mentorship and, where possible, referral to job opportunities or internships. We also work closely with the private sector to influence their commitment to disability inclusion in the workplace, promoting best practice in alignment with the International Labor Organisation resources developed or promoted through the Global Business Disability Network, including our own 'disability confidence toolkit'.

The private sector and employer community are mobilised to play an active role in our economic empowerment projects, leading initiatives such as National Business and Disability Networks, and contributing their own time and capacities to the direct work with our participants through the provision of mentorship or additional training masterclass sessions on topics such as financial literacy. All EE projects are co-delivered with OPDs and engage closely in our partnership with the private sector. In our projects with Diageo, Coca Cola Beverages Africa and Unilever we are directly working with the private sector to increase the number of people with disabilities contracted into their value chains. This approach also contributes to the realisation of SDG 17 in harnessing multi-stakeholder partnerships across private sector and civil society, and Goal 12.6 in supporting companies to adopt and report on sustainable practices.

Regulation

SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth contains a range of indicators which governments are obliged to report on as part of the 2030 agenda. Two of the indicators specifically refer to disability:

- **SDG indicator 8.5.1**
  Average hourly earnings of female and male employees - by occupation, age and people with disabilities.
- **SDG indicator 8.5.2**
  Unemployment rate - by sex, age and people with disabilities.

In order to be able to report on these two indicators, governments need to be able to disaggregate the figures for earnings and unemployment by disability, but in many countries there is no mechanism for doing this. Sightsavers therefore works to hold governments accountable for their SDG disability reporting commitments and supports national statistics offices in establishing the necessary systems to generate disability disaggregated data.

In Pakistan and Bangladesh, Sightsavers engaged with government stakeholders, the International Labour Organisation and business disability networks to support the integration of the Washington Group Questions on disability into the labour force survey. In 2023, both Pakistan and Bangladesh approved changes to their labour force surveys, for the first time asking questions on disability so that data can be systematically disaggregated. This data can then be used to show the extent to which earnings and the unemployment rate for people with disabilities differs from the national average, which can guide government interventions as well as reporting on the SDGs.

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Representation

Sightsavers works to ensure that people with disabilities are represented both in policy-making processes and in the policies implemented by governments and businesses. In 2024, Sightsavers supported the Bank of Ghana in reviewing the Financial Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities Directive for financial institutions in Ghana. The directive applies to financial institutions that are regulated by the Bank of Ghana. Launched in 2024, it establishes a framework for financial service providers to create policies, procedures and facilities to ensure that people with disabilities can access a range of financial products and services. Sightsavers has been a key partner in this process through providing technical assistance and involvement will continue in 2025 as part of the economic empowerment portfolio.

In many countries, policies pre-date subsequent commitments on disability standards and there is a need to revise legislation to ensure people with disabilities are adequately represented. In Tanzania, Sightsavers supported a review of the 2004 disability policy, facilitating the input from organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs) and advocating for revisions to promote compliance with the three per cent disability quota in public and private sector recruitment. This would include the insertion of an affirmative clause in job advertisements and introducing tax rebates to incentivise compliance by employers.

Various stakeholders actively participated throughout the process, ensuring the policy addresses the needs and concerns of people with disabilities across different sectors. Sightsavers supported the review process, from the initial assessment to stakeholder engagement, drafting revisions, public consultation and finalisation. Once signed, Sightsavers will advocate for the implementation of the policy to enhance the employment rights and opportunities for people with disabilities.

As part of the Futuremakers project, in 2024 Sightsavers supported the publication and dissemination of two studies on Bangladesh's Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) policy, together with the SME Foundation, Ministry of Industries and the Central Bank of Bangladesh. Building on the findings of these studies, the SME Foundation initiated the drafting of revisions to the SME policy and Sightsavers was invited to share further recommendations to strengthen the provisions for people with disabilities.

In addition to this, the Bangladesh Bank has initiated a revision of the Cottage, Small and Micro Enterprise loan policy, where Sightsavers also strongly recommended considering people with disabilities through reduced interest rates and flexible collateral and mortgage criteria for certain loans.

On 12 April 2024, the Government of Zimbabwe successfully launched the Public Service Guidelines on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Harare. The Secretary to the Service Commissions officiated at the event. Sightsavers and OPD partners met with the Department of Disability Affairs to advocate for finalising the pending guidelines. OPDs participated in the development of the guidelines. Ongoing policy influencing efforts are now focused on similar initiatives for the private sector.

Sightsavers policy influencing work in Nigeria reached another milestone with the development of an access to work scheme in 2024. Sightsavers supported the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) through an OPD partner, The All-Rights Foundation (TAF) Africa, in developing the access to work scheme, which has since been

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launched and disseminated. This provides a framework to guide private sector companies in the employment of people with disabilities, to understand and overcome the barriers, and promote their economic empowerment.

5. Citizenship and political participation

Sightsavers' Citizenship and political participation (CPP) portfolio contributes to the following SDGs:

- **10.2**
  By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all - irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- **16.7**
  Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Realisation

Sightsavers' overarching CPP objectives are aligned to SDG 10.2 as they aim to ensure that people with disabilities are participating in national and local decision-making processes and that decision-making structures, governance systems and public policies are more inclusive. Meanwhile, SDG 16.7 speaks to the core goal and objectives of our CPP work, that decision-making mechanisms are accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities - at all levels, from local councils to national policy development forums, and that people with disabilities are meaningfully participating in these mechanisms.

Sightsavers' CPP projects address the stigma and discrimination that inhibit men and women with disabilities from participating in public life. In West Africa, Sightsavers works to challenge stigma and build the awareness of people with disabilities, with a focus on women and youths, on their rights and how to participate in policymaking.

In Sierra Leone, Sightsavers worked with the Ministry of Youth Affairs to develop a CPP guide for youths with disabilities and supported the National Council of Civic Education and Democracy in introducing inclusive citizenship into the civic education curriculum. In Cameroon, Sightsavers developed a **guide on CPP for women with disabilities** and training for people with intellectual disabilities is under development with our partner organisation, Inclusion International.

Sightsavers has provided support for inclusive elections in Senegal, Cameroon and Uganda. This work includes developing accessible election information and increasing the number of people with disabilities registered to vote. In Cameroon, our work has helped to increase the number of people with disabilities who are registered to vote - from 8,000 in 2011 to 40,000 in 2022. We have supported people with disabilities to stand as candidates in elections. By the end of 2022, over 200 women and men with disabilities had been elected as local councillors, parliamentarians, senators or official representatives in Cameroon and Senegal. In Uganda in 2016, Sightsavers collaborated with the National Council for Disability to conduct a **study** to generate information on the participation of people with disabilities in electoral processes in Uganda and provide recommendations to key institutions. In Sierra

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Leone, we are working on a campaign to encourage youths with disabilities to stand as candidates on youth councils.

Sightsavers challenges stigma and raises awareness through sharing positive stories of participation, including instances of women with disabilities succeeding in securing leadership positions. Our CPP project in Ghana focuses on strengthening the capacity of women with disabilities to participate in decision-making processes and to improve the representation of women in organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs).

Regulation

We are working with governments to develop, implement and monitor policy to uphold SDGs 16.7 and 10.2. This is also linked to our work to promote that governments should uphold Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which covers participation in political and public life.

Our inclusive local development (ILD) work in Cameroon and Senegal helps people with disabilities to hold local decision makers to account. In Cameroon, the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development (MINDDEVEL) trained local councillors in all regions using our inclusive local development guide. They also established an official certification in inclusive local development. In Senegal, we worked with a network of local councillors (Union des Association d'Elus Locaux) to train councillors across the country in inclusive local development. Policy-influencing efforts are also underway in Sierra Leone with the Ministry of Youth Affairs to develop a policy of quotas for the representation of youths with disabilities in district level youth councils.

We have also promoted inclusive elections in Cameroon and Senegal through training electoral officials at polling stations on disability inclusion - including OPDs in election monitoring roles, ensuring voter education materials are accessible, conducting disability audits in polling stations and reviewing election policy for inclusion. In Pakistan we worked with the government to carry out a disability audit of Parliament House which led to accessibility adaptations. In addition, the constitution was translated into braille and accessibility features were added to the National Assembly website.

We have worked to strengthen the capacity of civil society, working with OPD networks to hold duty bearers to account. We have supported OPDs to conduct policy analysis to promote disability inclusion. In Senegal, following policy influencing by Sightsavers and our OPD partners, a network of parliamentarians was created to push for the ratification of the African Disability Protocol and the Marrakesh Treaty.

We have supported campaigns to influence disability inclusive policy, holding governments to account for their policy commitments and increasing public awareness. In a number of African countries, we are campaigning in partnership with OPDs to get the **African Disability Protocol** (ADP) ratified and implemented. Equal Zimbabwe is a coalition of more than 20 OPDs from across Zimbabwe who advocated for new disability legislation to be enacted. We are currently expanding our CPP work to focus on ADP ratification and implementation with OPD networks in east and southern Africa.

Sightsavers has conducted analysis of the OECD DAC marker on disability and is sharing the data in order to hold governments to account to their commitments on inclusive aid spending, in line with Article 32 of the CRPD. A **PowerBi dashboard** is accessible on

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Sightsavers' website, showing the proportion of eligible overseas development assistance funding which is allocated to projects which are disability and gender inclusive. Through monitoring this spend we have been able to engage with governments on the need to further mainstream disability inclusion into international development projects.

Representation

Sightsavers works closely with OPD networks to facilitate their national, regional and global level policy influencing related to CPP. Sightsavers has conducted a comprehensive **mapping of 998 OPDs** in the countries where we work to profile them and identify the main areas of work and capacity building needs. The mapping helped to understand the representation of women, youths and people with different impairments in OPDs. More in-depth assessment of OPDs' capacity was recently conducted with 37 OPDs in Zambia and will be replicated in other countries. Sightsavers has delivered OPD training on good governance in West Africa, which has improved internal representation, while training on disability legislation frameworks and influencing has built their capacity to represent people with disabilities. We have also facilitated the participation of OPDs in global processes, such as the Conference of States Parties and the UN High-Level Political Forum.

This work includes enhancing the engagement between OPD networks and government stakeholders, such as national disability committees and environmental protection agencies for inclusive climate action in Sierra Leone and Senegal. Sightsavers also builds disability representation, engaging wider civil society alliances for disability inclusion - such as through partnering with RECODH (the Cameroonian Network of Human Rights Organisations) in Cameroon to promote the rights of people with disabilities. We have also supported OPD engagement with global processes such as the development of the World Bank's Gender Strategy, where we facilitated input from OPDs and provided feedback on the draft text to ensure it included women and girls with disabilities. This then translates into the World Bank's work with governments at a national level.

Our inclusive local development (ILD) activities increase the representation of people with disabilities in inclusive development policies and practices at the local level. In Cameroon and Senegal, Sightsavers partners with the Ministries for Decentralization and Local Development to build their disability inclusion capacity. We have trained OPDs and local council members on disability inclusion in local development. We have developed and rolled out an **Inclusive Local Development guide** which was officially validated by the Ministry in Cameroon.

Case study: Revision of the electoral code in Senegal

Following many years of work on policy influencing from Sightsavers, OPDs and other partner organisations, in 2021 Senegal's electoral code was revised. Articles 69 and 80 of the code were amended to provide people with disabilities with the option of being assisted at polling stations by a person of their choice, and to address access to polling stations for people with disabilities. As a result of these amendments, regardless of where they vote, people with disabilities have the right to cast their vote at the most accessible polling station in the area and their names are added to the polling station's list of voters.

Policy change was achieved through the long-term partnerships developed between government, civil society and international development players. The revision of the electoral

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code was led by the federation of OPDs (FSAPH), representing people across the disability community and ensuring that the revised code met their needs. The Directorate for Elections and National Electoral Commission pushed forward the initiative at the government level, with Sightsavers as the leading external partner providing training on policy influencing to the FSAPH, as well as technical assistance such as conducting accessibility audits and reviewing the electoral code, in addition to financial support.

6. Inclusive health

Sightsavers' portfolio on inclusive health contributes to the following SDGs:

SDG 3.8
Achieve universal health coverage - including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

SDG 3.7
By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services - including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

SDG 3.c
Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries - especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

SDG 3.d
Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.

SDG 5.6
Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

Realisation

Sightsavers' work on inclusive health covers a wide range of aspects, focusing on the provision of technical and financial support to ensure that health facilities are made accessible for people with disabilities. As part of an ongoing Sightsavers-led inclusive family planning project in Nigeria, we are implementing targeted social and behaviour change activities at community level, creating safe spaces for women with disabilities to talk freely about key issues such as child spacing, use of contraceptives, decision-making within the household, access to healthcare and gender-based violence - thereby increasing their confidence to make free and informed sexual and reproductive health choices based on bodily autonomy.

We are also implementing interventions with religious and traditional leaders, husbands and family members of women with disabilities, to create more supportive, inclusive and enabling environments at community level. We have reached 540,000 people with disabilities with

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targeted health information through radio and digital activities. In Kaduna, we have trained over 1,500 health workers on disability inclusion and health equity for people with disabilities and sensitised many more across several countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia through our inclusive eye health projects.

As part of the Women's Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) programme, we are working with partners in West and Central Africa to mainstream disability inclusion in sexual and reproductive health and rights interventions. We have produced technical resources, such as training packages for health workers on informed consent and safeguarding for people with disabilities from marginalised constituencies and provided technical assistance to government and private partners to include women with disabilities in healthcare services. WISH 1, which ended in March 2024, achieved 15.5 million couple-years of protection and provided family planning services to over 6.3 million people - an estimated 5.1 per cent of whom were people with disabilities.

In recent years we have conducted accessibility audits of over 80 health facilities across nine countries, completing priority accessibility renovations across many of them.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we adapted our ASCEND programme (originally focusing on neglected tropical diseases) and incorporated accessibility and disability inclusion in the delivery of COVID-19 social and behaviour change activities, reaching over 137 million people across 11 countries in West and Central Africa.

Regulation

Sightsavers works with organisations of people with disabilities across many countries, building their technical and policy influencing capacity to advance disability inclusion in the health sector.

- In Nigeria, policy influencing led by OPDs through our inclusive family project led to the domestication in Kaduna State of the National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for Persons with Disabilities.
- Sightsavers participated in reviews of the national health strategic plan in Zambia, national eye health strategies in Tanzania and Zambia, and the national community health strategy in Malawi to advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- In Bangladesh, joint policy influencing work with OPDs on district eye care planning sensitised district government health officials on the 2013 Disability Act and influenced them to include OPDs and women with disabilities in their programmes and planning at the district level.
- In Uganda, policy influencing work on data disaggregation led to new data collection policies - ensuring that entry points are explored to capture disability data as part of existing health management information systems.

At global level, we have engaged closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure that provisions for people with disabilities are included in the work of the WHO Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Commission, the WHO's Fourteenth General Programme of Work, and World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions. These include WHA resolutions on climate change and health, and on social participation for universal health coverage, health and wellbeing. We have also engaged in high-level meetings on health at the UN General Assembly to influence political declarations on universal health coverage and on pandemic

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prevention, preparedness and response, to strengthen member states' commitments on disability inclusive health.

We have worked very closely with the WHO to develop a series of global resources aimed at promoting disability inclusion in the health sector, including the global report on health equity for people with disabilities and the related disability inclusion guide for action, as well as the WHO-International Telecommunication Union (ITU) global standard for accessibility of telehealth services. We are currently working closely with the WHO and ministries of health and other partners in Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Tanzania to implement the disability inclusion guide for action and incorporate health equity for people with disabilities in health system strengthening efforts.

Sightsavers has engaged very actively as a relevant stakeholder in the pandemic treaty negotiations, specifically to improve the definition of 'persons in vulnerable situations' and other articles in the treaty concerned with equity within countries. As a result, agreed language in the draft treaty includes several important mentions of people in vulnerable situations with a broadened definition that will better include people with disabilities in key areas of pandemic prevention, preparedness and response - including access to quality routine essential health care services, public health and social measures. This includes social protection, mental health and psychosocial support, and full respect for non-discrimination.

Representation

Sightsavers' work is guided by a set of six principles aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities and their representative organisations are meaningfully engaged throughout our work. Sightsavers ensures that people with disabilities are represented in the design and delivery of inclusive health projects and facilitates the representation of speakers with disabilities at international events so that their voices are heard.

In Nigeria, we have created a steering committee which is comprised of representatives from OPD and government partners, and which oversees the governance of our inclusive family planning project.

In November 2022, through our Inclusive Futures brand, we hosted a session at the International Conference on Family Planning in Thailand, focused on 'promoting equitable access for people with disabilities to family planning services to achieve universal health coverage', and featured the President of the Network of Women with Disabilities in Nigeria as a speaker.

In June 2023, we co-hosted an official virtual side event to the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD, titled 'Advancing health equity and disability inclusive sexual and reproductive health and rights in Africa and Asia'. The event featured speakers from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Government of Bangladesh and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, as well as OPD representatives from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

In July 2023, Sightsavers sent a delegation to the Women Deliver conference in Rwanda. Sightsavers' booth, which was the only one in the entire conference focusing on the inclusion of women with disabilities, featured the stories and pictures of women with disabilities from

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different countries - including Abia Akram, a disability activist from Pakistan who is also a Sightsavers trustee.

Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Sightsavers' global advocacy manager from Ghana, is also the elected chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2023. This is a vital link between Sightsavers and the CRPD, enabling Sightsavers to promote the disability rights agenda at an international level. Ms Fefoame spoke at a plenary session on accountability of gender commitments at the Women Deliver conference, along with Malala and other high-level speakers. Through our Inclusive Futures initiative, we also supported two women OPD leaders from Kenya to attend the conference.

As part of the Global Forum for Adolescents, organised by the Partnership for Maternal Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) in 2023, Sightsavers supported the engagement of one of our OPD partners in a panel discussion focusing on the inclusion of adolescents and young people with disabilities, along with representatives from UNICEF and the UN Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth (OSGEY).

In Cote d'Ivoire, we have supported representatives of four national OPD umbrella organisations to participate in a multi-stakeholder process with the Ministry of Health to develop a new national action plan for disability inclusion in the health sector.

At the World Health Summit 2024 in Berlin, we co-hosted with WHO and other partners a session on health equity for people with disabilities and featured the Executive Director of Deaf Women Aloud Initiative, an OPD led by and for deaf women in Nigeria - along with the Deputy Executive Director of the International Disability Alliance and the WHO Assistant Director-General for Universal Health Coverage, Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases.

In October 2024 we co-led with WHO and other partners a parallel session at the Global Health Practitioner Conference in Kenya, ensuring speaking slots for one of our OPD partners from Nigeria and an academic with disability from Kenya - along with representatives of WHO Cote d'Ivoire and the Tanzania Ministry of Health.

7. Gender

Sightsavers' work on gender contributes to the following SDGs:

SDG 5.2
Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

SDG 5.6
Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action, including the outcome documents of their review conferences.

SDG 5.c
Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

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Realisation

Sightsavers is committed to improving the availability, accessibility and quality of support services for people who have experienced gender-based violence. This is because women and girls with disabilities face a higher risk of gender-based violence (GBV), yet they are often prevented from receiving support due to inaccessible services. In addition, while disability-inclusive policies exist for GBV services, implementation is often lacking.

Case Study: Tackling gender-based violence in Uganda

Sightsavers held a workshop in Uganda in May 2023 that brought together participants from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise to address the gaps in GBV service provision for women with disabilities. The workshop was informed by preliminary interviews with GBV stakeholders and women with disabilities that asserted interest in disability-inclusive services.

Our commitment to improving GBV services for women with disabilities was the workshop's core objective. We wanted to ensure that women with disabilities were in the driving seat, as they're best placed to determine their priorities. We also embraced a participatory format, emphasising inclusion, equal partnership, transparency, shared power, responsibility, empowerment and cooperation among the workshop attendees.

The workshop was made up of 13 stakeholder groups that ranged from women with various disabilities to law enforcement, community leaders and health care providers. The workshop discussions focused on understanding the different stakeholders' roles in supporting people who report GBV, the range of services available and the possibilities for joined-up working.

Sightsavers identified the gaps and barriers for women with disabilities in accessing GBV services, as well as the potential solutions and ways to improve access to these services for women with disabilities. Despite all the information that exists on referral mechanisms, the lack of information and knowledge about the GBV referral process and service provision among women with disabilities was a key priority.

The key findings of the workshop were: the lack of trust in sharing information with service providers, communication gaps such as the lack of sign language interpreters, or a lack of advocacy and awareness programmes, meaning that women with disabilities weren't aware that these services existed or where to find them. Accessibility was also raised as a significant challenge, given that the environments where service providers are located are often inaccessible for wheelchair users.

After the workshop, Sightsavers produced two guides to help organisations develop disability-inclusive strategies for tackling GBV. Sightsavers presented its workshop outcomes at the Sexual Violence and Research Initiative Conference in Cape Town in October 2024.

Sightsavers delivered a training of trainers (ToT) workshop on gender-based violence for ten women with different impairments in Uganda in October 2024. This included producing a ToT manual and accessible handouts in Easy Read format for women with intellectual disabilities. The next stage is to cascade the training to more women with disabilities in Uganda.

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Regulation

At the global level, Sightsavers engages with international processes to ensure women and girls with disabilities are included in government pledges on gender equality. This has included the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Generation Equality Forum, Women Deliver and Beijing+30. For example, we have been engaging with UN Women and member states to ensure that the implementation and reporting of Generation Equality commitments by governments includes women and girls with disabilities.

Sightsavers has developed a database of OPDs in all the countries where we have social inclusion programmes. As part of the mapping process, we interviewed women with disabilities to find out about the barriers and enablers to their participation, decision-making, leadership and gender related issues. We have produced an internal report with recommendations on how to strengthen our engagement with organisations of women with disabilities.

At the regional level, we are currently engaging with the regional steering committees, civil society consultations and ministerial meetings on the Beijing+30 process to ensure women and girls with disabilities are included in the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

At national level, we work with women with disabilities and their representative organisations to build their influencing capacity to engage effectively with policy processes and planning at local and national level. We have also included a separate section on gender in all our long-term advocacy plans to ensure a gender focus and support our country offices in embedding gender into their policy influencing planning and programming.

As part of an EU-supported project in India, we carried out **gender assessments** of OPDs in five states, using the **Disability Inclusive Scorecard (DISC) Tool**. This led to greater awareness on the importance for the voices of women with disabilities to be heard within OPDs. This resulted in the formation of gender committees, which enabled women OPD members to discuss and highlight key gender issues that were not previously spoken of and to call for a greater number of women in leadership roles within each OPD. As a result, their knowledge, confidence and involvement in policy influencing with local decision-makers has increased and some women in these OPDs are now aspiring to political posts and standing as candidates at the local Gram Panchayat level. This process has allowed women within OPDs to advocate for their rights, monitor SDG implementation and improve access to government schemes.

We also developed a **study paper** called 'Rising Voices' which included the voices of 15 women with disabilities from the Indian states of Jharkhand, Odisha and Rajasthan as part of the Building Partnerships project. This highlighted the critical role of women with disabilities in the implementation of the SDGs, and development cooperation more broadly. The stories the women tell highlight the struggles and challenges they face in four key areas - violence, education, health and employment.

We are also developing a VNR Engagement Guide to strengthen the participation of women with disabilities. This will be based on best practices and case studies from the countries that we work in.

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Representation

Our approach is to work with the disability movement to ensure that the rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully considered within the disability movement and disability policies and processes. Additionally, to work with the gender movement to ensure that the rights of women and girls with disabilities are considered within broader policies and processes on gender.

We continue to work within the disability movement to ensure that the rights and needs of women with disabilities are prioritised. For example, Sightsavers supports the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to mainstream gender into its work and organises side events focused on gender at the Conference of State Parties (COSP). Sightsavers has also supported collaboration between the CRPD and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee. This work is crucial to ensuring that women with disabilities are fully included in the global disability rights frameworks.

As gender is a cross-cutting theme of the UN Secretary General's Common Agenda, Sightsavers has been engaging to ensure that this takes an intersectional approach and includes women and girls with disabilities. For example, Sightsavers organised events such as the 'Nothing Without Us' side event at the ECOSOC Youth Forum in April 2024. This event underscored the importance of involving youths, particularly girls with disabilities, in decision-making processes. In June 2024, at the 17th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP17), Sightsavers called on world leaders to prioritise gender and disability inclusion at the Summit of the Future. We advocated for strong commitments in the Pact for the Future, ensuring that gender and disability rights are central to global development discussions.

8. Climate change

Sightsavers' work on climate change contributes to the following SDGs:

SDG target 13.1
Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related disasters.

SDG target 13.2
Integrate climate change measures into policies and planning.

SDG target 13.3
Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change.

SDG target 13.4
Implement the UN Framework convention on climate change.

SDG target 13.5
Promote mechanisms to raise capacity for planning and management.

Realisation

Sightsavers' work contributes to SDGs 13.1 and 13.5 through designing climate change initiatives within our projects and to SDG 13.3 through organisational capacity development.

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Within our programme portfolio, we have eye health projects addressing climate change in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Pakistan. These projects are developing learning and resources that can be used to shape future work in climate change mitigation and adaptation across our portfolio. We are measuring the impact of climate action initiatives based on greenhouse gas emissions and costing analysis in Sierra Leone, demonstrating decreased carbon emissions and cost savings over time.

We are supporting mechanisms for planning (SDG 13.5) through a collaboration between our NTD work and the Walker Institute in Malawi, aiming to provide a comprehensive fine resolution picture of the effects of climate change on the epidemiology of NTDs. We are building knowledge and capacity to meet climate change (SDG 13.3) through several mechanisms, including engaging with country-based staff to identify needs and drafting recommendations breaking down perceived needs into subject areas, who training should be aimed at and how it should be delivered.

Regulation

Sightsavers contributes to SDG 13.2 through developing policy messages. These include national level analysis - for example, in Kenya to support the development of the 'See me, hear me' programme. We have conducted an analysis in Sierra Leone as part of the A Better World programme and started a larger piece of analysis on climate and disability across the countries within this programme. This policy analysis will investigate the extent climate change legislation includes provisions for people with disabilities.

We have engaged on processes relating to climate change, feeding into a World Health Assembly resolution on climate and health which was passed in May 2024. Sightsavers successfully focused on enabling a reference to disability disaggregated data.

Representation

In Kenya, we have developed a new project to amplify the voices of people (especially women and girls) with disabilities, 'Hear me, see me' - in partnership with Lensational and Gifted Community Centre (GCC), a youth-led OPD based in Kibera informal settlement. The goal is to pilot the use of photography as a tool to amplify and empower young women with diverse impairments to become more visible in climate discourse.

In Malawi, we are supporting the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) to ensure its communications around disasters are inclusive and accessible. Beyond this, in Senegal, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cameroon, Sightsavers is exploring opportunities for organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs) to engage in consultations on the development of new climate change policies or revisions to existing legislation.

9. Inclusive data

At Sightsavers, inclusive data means collecting, analysing and using disability, sex and age disaggregated data while also bringing in other dimensions - such as geography, wealth and poverty, where relevant and valuable. In keeping with the principle of 'Leave No One Behind', many SDG targets have indicators stipulating a breakdown by gender and disability, to ensure that progress towards goals in health and education are made not just at an aggregate national level, but also among the most vulnerable groups.

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The only way to monitor and verify progress among all subsections of the population is to collect and analyse disaggregated data. Inclusive data is therefore a crucial part of Sightsavers' work and contributes to SDG target 17.18 - disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. However, through strengthening systems for the systematic collection, analysis and usage of disability disaggregated data, Sightsavers' work on inclusive data also indirectly contributes to the delivery of SDGs 3 and 4 through making essential health and education services accessible to all.

Realisation

Sightsavers is a founding member and champion of the Inclusive Data Charter (IDC), launched in 2018. The aim of the initiative is to promote the collection and usage of inclusive data to ensure that women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups are counted and that disaggregated data is made available to inform policymaking. Governments and NGOs are encouraged to become IDC champions, to abide by the principles of the charter and develop an action plan, outlining the measures that will be taken to strengthen the collection and usage of inclusive data.

As part of programmes funded by Irish Aid and implemented by Sightsavers in Cameroon, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal since 2017, we have used the Inclusive Data Charter (IDC) to build awareness and understanding of the importance of collecting and using disaggregated data. This data helps identify barriers and issues faced by people with disabilities and other marginalised groups, leading to improved decision-making and action at local and national levels.

In response to Sightsavers' policy influencing efforts, the governments of Senegal, Sierra Leone and Cameroon have joined the IDC network and committed to improving the availability and use of timely and reliable disability-disaggregated data. We are adopting a localisation approach in these countries, ensuring that decentralised local authorities have the knowledge and capacity to implement disability-inclusive local development practices informed by quality disaggregated data.

As a founding member and champion of the IDC, Sightsavers has its own IDC action plan which was updated in 2024. As part of our commitment to promote inclusion in data systems and practice, we provide technical and financial support to IDC champion governments and agencies to develop, implement and monitor their own inclusive data action plans. In collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD), the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) and other partners, we have supported the development of national inclusive data action plans in Sierra Leone, Senegal and Cameroon. These action plans aim to improve the availability and use of disability-disaggregated data to advance national inclusive education (SDG 4) and social inclusion (SDG 10) policies.

Through our IDC work, we have fostered collaboration between government partners and civil society organisations, including organisations of people with disabilities, to address challenges with the availability and use of disability-disaggregated data to inform inclusive policies. In Senegal, for example, the Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (CONGAD) collaborated with the National Statistical Agency and the Ministry of Planning to develop a national IDC action plan focused on strengthening SDG localisation through collaboration with local, regional and national stakeholders.

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Under the ABW programme, Sightsavers is building the capacity of local councils to develop data collection tools and systems to assess the participation of people with disabilities in local development processes. This includes 27 local councils and three youth councils across Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Senegal. For inclusive education, specifically linking to SDG 4, Sightsavers and its partners have supported the government of Pakistan in integrating disability-disaggregated data into the annual school census using the Washington Group Questions.

In 2023, Sightsavers documented and published an impact story on how inclusive data collection has improved access to services for communities in Nkoteng, Cameroon. The Irish Aid grant also supported the strategic engagement of the Government of Senegal at the 2023 Festival de Datos hosted by the GPSDD, enabling them to share learnings and collaborate with others in the data for development community. This engagement has helped Senegal implement its IDC action plan in collaboration with civil society and representatives of marginalised groups.

Regulation

A key part of Sightsavers' policy influencing work on data is to promote development of systems for the collection of disability disaggregated data. We advocate for the Washington Group Short Set Questions to be included in national censuses to ensure that national level data is collected on people with disabilities. We advocate with national statistical offices for disability sensitisation training and capacity building for analysis and use of the data collected.

We have seen successes in countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia, with census reports for the first time producing national level statistics on the number of people with disabilities, which can then be used by governments in their planning and allocation of resources. We continue to advocate for the data to be used to inform policies to ensure that people with disabilities can access services and participate equitably in daily life. We are supporting government partners and organisations of people with disabilities in Cameroon and Liberia to identify gaps and opportunities for improving inclusion in national statistical laws and systems.

Sightsavers also advocates for Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to report on progress towards achieving the SDGs, to leave no one behind, and asks governments to report on people with disabilities and their access to essential services and participation in daily life. In Pakistan we have worked with the government to ensure their latest VNR is inclusive of people with disabilities by having an inclusive SDG data platform.

Given our long-standing links with ministries of health throughout our work on eye health and neglected tropical diseases, we have advocated for data that is collected within the health system to be inclusive. This is key to assessing if people with disabilities are accessing healthcare. We have seen the data management system in Senegal incorporate age, gender and disability disaggregation for key eye health indicators. Disability disaggregation has been incorporated into the Health Management Information System (HMIS) in Uganda and we have seen the Washington Group Questions integrated into the health reporting system in Sierra Leone.

Education systems are not always inclusive for children with disabilities. To advocate for the system to change, data on children with disabilities in, or not in, education is critical.

Sightsavers has worked with ministries of education to ensure that data collection on education is inclusive. In Senegal, disability data is being collected in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and we continue to work with the ministry to improve the quality of data collection and use.

Representation

Through the Inclusive Data Charter initiative in Cameroon, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone, we are enhancing the representation and effective participation of people with disabilities in national dialogues. This is focused on the availability and use of national statistics for improved policy implementation. It includes supporting OPDs in participating in technical working groups that develop national inclusive data charter action plans, as well as effectively participating in the implementation, monitoring and review of these plans.

Moreover, Sightsavers engages with governments on Labour Force Surveys (LFS), primary household surveys conducted in many countries designed with the objective of producing official national statistics on the labour force, employment and unemployment for monitoring and planning purposes. Sightsavers advocates for the LFS to collect data on the participation of people with disabilities in the labour force. We have seen successes in Pakistan and Bangladesh and are having ongoing conversations about the need for inclusive labour force surveys with several national statistics offices.

10. Research

Sightsavers conducts extensive research, with the aim of generating evidence to inform the delivery of programmes and transform lives in Africa and Asia, across all thematic areas. Our in-house research team is comprised of 25 people based around the world, with skills ranging from epidemiology and economics to community-based participatory research. Our research activities also involve many more people across the organisation. In 2017, Sightsavers was awarded Independent Research Organisation (IRO) status, making us one of a few international non-governmental organisations to hold this status in the UK.

Research is an integral part of Sightsavers' work, providing the necessary evidence to inform project design and strategy. Distinguishing the contribution of Sightsavers' research work towards the SDGs in terms of realisation, regulation and representation is complex. A study on the extent to which children with disabilities are able to access education may be used to guide the delivery of a Sightsavers project or development of an Education Sector Plan (realisation); it may be used by civil society organisations to hold a government to account in meeting its commitments on education for all (regulation); and it could be used to strengthen the role of organisations for people with disabilities in monitoring the delivery of education services for children with disabilities (representation). The same research piece may be used for multiple purposes and may contribute to the SDGs in different ways.

As such, the distinction between the categories of realisation, regulation and representation are arguably less clear for research than other aspects of Sightsavers' work. Therefore, while in the interests of consistency, the following section uses the same framework of the Three Rs to present the contribution of Sightsavers' research work to the SDGs. It is important to recognise the overlaps and potential to use research for multiple purposes.

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Sightsavers' research directly contributes to the following SDG targets:

SDG 3.2

By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1000 live births and under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1000 live births.

SDG 3.3

By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases, and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other communicable diseases.

SDG 3.8

Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services, and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

SDG 3.c

Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in the least developed countries and small island developing States.

SDG 4.1

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

SDG 4.2

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

SDG 4.5

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

SDG 8.5

Full employment and decent work with equal pay: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and people with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

SDG 10.2

By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all - irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

Realisation

Sightsavers' neglected tropical disease (NTD) research portfolio supports global and national efforts to eliminate five priority diseases - trachoma, onchocerciasis, lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis and intestinal worms, thus contributing to SDG 3.3. Epidemiological and entomological studies supported by Sightsavers have direct impacts on disease elimination, as they pinpoint locations for treatment and life-changing support, and facilitate global and national investments to support the delivery of these interventions at scale.

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Sightsavers led some of the largest disease mapping exercises for trachoma and onchocerciasis, providing critical evidence for programme planning and resource mobilisation. As countries advance on their journey towards disease elimination, we support them with the development of novel tools for monitoring their progress and in strengthening their systems for post-elimination surveillance and morbidity management.

However, the elimination of NTDs is not an easy task. Emerging patterns of disease transmission, health system gaps and global disruptors - such as climate change, pandemics and conflicts - have been highlighted as critical issues on the pathway towards NTD elimination. Our research helps to investigate such issues in greater detail and identify areas and population subgroups, where current treatment strategies may not be sufficient and programmes need to be enhanced with additional or alternative interventions.

A number of our studies focused specifically on strategies to reach 'hard to reach populations', adhering to the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda 'Leave No One Behind'. Our research helped to identify effective strategies to reach nomadic and mobile populations, address cross-border challenges and reduce gender inequalities. In addition, building on the successes of our NTD elimination programmes, we explore opportunities for using NTD delivery platforms for other public health interventions - for example, reducing infant and under-five mortality, directly contributing to SDG 3.2.

Driven by our mission to eliminate avoidable blindness, Sightsavers' research has directly contributed to generating data for monitoring countries' progress towards universal eye health coverage and achieving SDG 3.8. In the past decade, we supported 25 national and sub-national visual impairment surveys, which provide vital information for developing national eye health programmes and improving the quality of eye care. The surveys also generate data on effective cataract coverage, a World Health Assembly endorsed indicator to monitor countries' progress towards UHC.

In many countries, these epidemiological studies have been supplemented by eye health system assessments which identify strengths and weaknesses of eye care services and guide government decisions on priorities for health system strengthening and resource mobilisation. Our early work on the methodology for eye health system assessments influenced the Eye Care Situational Analysis Tool (ECSAT) developed by the WHO and used widely by ministries of health.

The lack of human resources for eye health is one the key challenges faced by health systems in many low income countries, impeding their progress towards UHC. Our operational research on primary eye care, task shifting and multisectoral partnerships for eye health evaluated different national initiatives to address this gap and provided ministries of health with critical information to support their workforce development and training initiatives, thus contributing to SDG target 3c.

In support of SDG target 4.2, we have generated essential evidence about the presence of children with disabilities in mainstream, public sector early childhood development and education settings, and evaluated the effectiveness of disability inclusion interventions intended to enhance children's early learning and developmental outcomes.

Cost analysis is crucial as it helps allocate resources efficiently and supports planning and scaling up of effective inclusive education systems, ensuring equal access to education for all students. Sightsavers has conducted research to better understand the costs of making

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schools inclusive for children with disabilities, thus contributing to SDG targets 4.1, 4.2 and 4.5.

Regulation

Through its research work, Sightsavers has piloted approaches to measuring and disaggregating project data by disability in a number of contexts. This has allowed us to monitor how people with disabilities access and benefit from the interventions we implement compared with people without disabilities, and identify where inequalities and inequities may exist. Through statistical multivariate analysis of quantitative data, as well as nuanced analysis of qualitative data, we have explored where intersectional disadvantage occurs, particularly looking at how disability intersects with gender, age, and poverty in the context of access to health services, the labour market and education.

This evidence helps civil society organisations to hold governments to account and advocate for the development of more effective interventions targeting the most disadvantaged groups. Sightsavers has also piloted approaches to measuring relative and absolute wealth to assess and address socioeconomic disparities within our target populations and providing insights into the distribution of wealth within a community.

Our work on education data disaggregation and disability-inclusive education management information systems (EMIS) supports governments in monitoring and understanding the extent to which their educational systems are including children with disabilities, a key requirement for reducing the educational inequalities often faced by these children. Our work on the disability inclusive assessment of early learning and development also supports governments and educational stakeholders in ensuring that measurement of early learning and development outcomes includes data on children with disabilities.

Representation

Sightsavers' research work focuses on the extent to which people with disabilities and other marginalised groups are included or excluded from essential services, identifying the barriers and assessing the effectiveness of interventions. Sightsavers ensures that the voices of people with disabilities are heard in surveys and data collection processes, and equips organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs) with evidence showing the gaps in government service provision - thereby empowering OPDs to play a stronger role in the monitoring of progress towards the SDGs, for example through Voluntary National Reviews. The use of qualitative and participatory methodologies in our NTD and eye health research ensures that the voices of patients and communities are heard and integrated in decision-making and intervention design.

Sightsavers' research contributes to SDG target 4.1 by providing evidence on how to ensure the meaningful inclusion of girls and boys in primary and secondary education. Our use of participatory and disability-inclusive methods generates insights into the experiences of children with disabilities, and those of their families and teachers, providing guidance to policymakers and ministries on how to most effectively support the full educational participation and learning of children with diverse disabilities and needs. While some of our research uses gender as an explicit lens, all of our education research considers variations in the educational experiences or outcomes of boys and girls. As a result, our work also contributes to SDG target 4.5.

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We have conducted research exploring how people with disabilities engage in the labour market in different contexts. We have also engaged participatory and peer-research approaches to elevate the voices of young people with disabilities to understand their livelihood aspirations and the challenges they face in realising them.

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Reflections and conclusions

1. Sightsavers contributes to a wide range of SDG goals and targets

Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs covers a wide range of goals and targets, beyond those we explicitly state as central to our programme strategy.9 Examples come from our work on eye health and refractive error, where the contribution notes the impact of this work in areas such as poverty reduction and education. Our work on climate change is not distinct from the work on reducing inequalities, and the relationship between education and economic empowerment is made several times.

This is two-way, because we recognise the importance of other areas in our success - for example, we accept that food security is critical to education outcomes and, although we have some interventions, this is not a major focus of our work (across all three Rs). None of this is new but calls into question the way in which we often present our work as related to one goal or another. When this is explored, the story we tell ourselves about our work is about the interlinkages between the goals and targets.

Key questions:

- How can we better capture and communicate these complex SDG interconnections in our reporting?
- Do we want to review our assumptions behind the statements in the programme strategy on how our work relates to the SDGs?

2. How to make use of the data collected for the VSR

The VSR has involved an organisation-wide effort to consider how Sightsavers' work contributes towards the SDGs in terms of realisation, regulation and representation. Initially we had considered the possibility of conducting an analysis of the data collected, to show the extent to which Sightsavers' work in each thematic area relates to each of the Three Rs, with a view to interrogating the data to establish why, for example, there may be a greater focus on realisation in the eye health portfolio but a greater focus on representation in the economic empowerment portfolio.

However, we reached the conclusion that this would not be a useful analysis for a number of reasons. Firstly, while the VSR is extensive, it doesn't contain a list of every aspect of Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs across all thematic areas and in all 23 countries where we have programmes, as this would make the report too long, and because the definition of contribution is not rigid and therefore inevitably contains a measure of subjectivity. As a result, we could establish that the education portfolio contains more examples of contribution to the SDGs through regulation than the NTD portfolio, but this could simply be because the NTD section is not exhaustive. Secondly, as has been emphasised throughout the VSR, the Three Rs are not mutually exclusive and the categorisation can therefore not be done on a binary basis. Therefore, the VSR is a valuable learning process, but the findings do not lend themselves to a statistical analysis.

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9 Sightsavers' Programme Strategy claims that we: add high positive impact to SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10; contribute to and are influenced by SDGs 2, 6, 11, 16, and 17; and are impacted by SDGs 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

Key questions:

- How can we make best use of the content generated through the VSR?

3. Sightsavers will often articulate an SDG means of implementation as a target

Sightsavers does not necessarily make the distinction between means and ends in the same way as the SDGs do. Indeed, that distinction is often hard to make given the interrelated nature of the SDGs. For example, a lot of contributions highlighted learning as a central outcome of what we do; or have highlighted multi-stakeholder partnerships as an outcome of our work (target 17.17) with the expectation that this will increase the opportunity for people with disabilities to get into work (as covered in target 8.5).

This way of approaching means of implementation as outcomes complicates the conceptual framework we have tried to apply to this review - that of realisation, representation and regulation. It is clear that these are not distinct categories - they are useful for helping frame the discussion, but they relate to one another significantly in the work that Sightsavers does. A lot of our programmatic work is about voice and participation, and about changing policies, systems and institutions. This makes it hard to be too distinct in defining specific work to the categories. For example, in inclusive SRHR we see success in terms of giving people with disabilities a say over healthcare and an ability to make informed and independent decisions based on what is important to them.

This approach brings the Three Rs together and the means and ends are related - people have access to SRHR services because they have choice and they have choice because the policy and legal framework reflects their right to have choice. In our work on data we are clear on the need for the democratisation of data. This is not just about better decision-making, but also about accountability and representation. Another example comes from our work at the global level on policy, where changes are both seen as a success in terms of realisation and regulation.

We lack the language to be able to describe these complex outcomes in the terminology of the SDGs. Similarly, we appear to underplay this role in our communications, which are more focused on the SDG targets. There is an oversimplification of the distinction between means of implementation and other targets in the 2030 Agenda, which is a challenge for an organisation like Sightsavers. Our role is to see voice and participation as ends in themselves, even if we also have strong strategic alignment with some SDG targets (for example, ending NTDs). This analysis does not suggest there is a hierarchy of outcome, but there is a difference between them - one important difference being that, when a clear SDG target is reached (such as when NTDs are ended as public health concerns), this will fundamentally change the approach we take to that issue (in the NTD case, moving towards surveillance), whereas voice and participation will always be a constant focus.

Key questions:

- Does Sightsavers see itself as an organisation that facilitates means of implementation and, if so, how would we communicate this approach in a way that does not underplay its importance?

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4. We describe what we do in terms of partnership

Everything described in the contributions comes from the partnerships we have developed - from large global institutions, governments, organisations of people with disabilities and individuals. Partnerships are not simply a means of implementation (although they are that), but something consistently seen as success across the input we have received.

For example, in CPP we see the partnerships that facilitate participation in democratic processes as being a key function of our work. In economic empowerment, we see partnerships with private sector organisations as a key focus of our work. Across our disability rights work, we see partnerships with OPDs as central to what we do. In eye health we see partnerships with health system actors (governments, hospitals, training centres, etc) as how we achieve our programmatic outcomes. Furthermore, partnerships are critical to our research agenda and our policy influencing.

The focus on strengthening systems as a strategic objective means there is balance needed between how we articulate success - our theory of change is that systems change leads to sustained impact on lives, but we talk about success in terms of both systems change and individual impact interchangeably (as discussed in point two).

Key questions:

- If we see ourselves as an organisation that facilitates partnerships for sustainable development, how would that change how we act?
- How do our partners see our work in relation to the SDGs?
- Can we communicate better about ourselves as an organisation that facilitates and develops partnerships for sustainable development? How can our monitoring systems be used to do this more effectively and could SDG language be used to articulate the nuances of partnerships more clearly?

5. Leave no one behind is an important lens for our work across our thematic areas

Leaving no one behind is not just a catchphrase for Sightsavers, it's a strategic imperative. In all the contributions there is clearly a focused effort to make it meaningful. For example, much of the learning we say we intend to do is focused on whether we are reaching those furthest behind with our interventions - it comes across strongly in our research work. Much of our work on data is not just about better decision-making but about empowering people who have been left behind.

We consistently articulate our work in terms of rights - alongside the SDGs, rights frameworks provide normative pillars for our work. This is clearly about leaving no one behind, but the language is different and creates a lack of clarity. This leads to the question of whether we talk enough about how they relate to one another.

The contributions recognise that our work in partnership is about empowerment - this includes being a knowledge broker, but is also about our work on SDG 16 (which is not referred to very much but clearly underpins our work across the thematic areas). It is also about our recognition of power dynamics as not just part of the context of our work, but about the changes we want to make.

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This section from the SI input explains it clearly and could apply across the board:

> Sightsavers' coalition-building efforts address normative debates on how to democratise policymaking. By prioritising local contexts and marginalised voices, Sightsavers' work counters the risks of a top-down approach...This reflects the principle that the co-production of policy requires valuing diverse knowledge systems, rather than relying solely on traditional hierarchies of evidence.

One of the key aspects of this is that we see leave no one behind as an a priori principle – it is a value we support, want to defend and is aligned with our rights-based perspective. However, this is not a universally accepted principle, which is not something that is well reflected in the contributions and raises the question of whether we should devote more resources to defending it as a principle (alongside putting it into practice). Our work on inclusive data, for example, could be more confident in describing outcomes as about promoting the principles of leave no one behind, alongside the more practical questions of how data is used in decision-making.

Key questions:

- Are there opportunities for us to better illustrate the broader importance on focusing on leaving no one behind?
- Are we good enough at explaining why leaving no one behind is an important principle? Do we engage in the fight for values?

6. Innovation and learning

Almost all the contributions identified innovation and learning as an important part of our contribution to the SDGs. This is seen as underpinning our contribution across all three Rs. Innovation and learning are not just seen as important elements of what we do, but a central reason for our work and existence. Because of the nature of Sightsavers, we see our role within the partnerships we have to promote and test new approaches to known problems. This is often to generate evidence about what makes interventions most effective and, in particular, what helps reach those furthest behind.

According to the contributions, the approach we take is not just about generating evidence, but about how to get evidence to be used. In this, partnerships are again central to our theory of change - we develop partnerships as an effective tool for the dissemination of innovation, learning and evidence.

In the contributions, innovation often emerges in fascinating and interconnected ways. What is particularly interesting is how different types of innovation build upon each other to create lasting change. Examples of this include the 'Hear me see me' project on disaster risk reduction in Kenya, and its use of partnership with local OPDs to pilot photography as a tool to amplify and empower young women with diverse impairments to become more visible in policy making.

The contributions also outline how technical innovations in disease mapping, combined with new approaches to community engagement, are presently transforming how health systems work. This suggests that successful innovation goes beyond new tools or approaches – but, rather, is creating environments where different types of innovation can reinforce each other and lead to lasting change.

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Key questions:

- How can we better support and scale different types of innovation to accelerate efforts in achieving SDG goals and targets?
- How can we better communicate how innovation is a function of our work and a key contribution to SDG implementation?

7. Our work is deeply embedded in its context

The contextual nature of SDG implementation is well reflected in the 2030 Agenda. The contributions outline how meaningful change requires working within existing systems rather than trying to impose universal solutions, which can often be a tempting approach towards programme delivery.

Our gender work in Uganda particularly illustrates this approach. Rather than implementing a standardised GBV support program, the team carefully mapped local power structures and brought together 13 different groups - from law enforcement to community leaders. Similarly, in Nigeria, the decision to work through religious and traditional leaders and family members for inclusive support programmes shows deep understanding that sustainable change happens through trusted community channels.

In our NTD work, the contribution outlines how success in eliminating diseases like trachoma across six countries was not achieved through a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, programmes adapted to local disease patterns, health system capacities and even environmental factors like climate change impacts.

What emerges is a picture of contextual adaptation, not as a secondary consideration but as fundamental to achieving sustainable change. This necessitates understanding local power dynamics, system capacities, cultural frameworks and political environments - then thoughtfully modifying approaches to work within these realities while still driving progress toward the SDGs.

Key questions:

- Are there mechanisms in place that allow communication of success within their context?

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Recommendations

- Once the VSR process has been completed and assessed, it would be useful to determine whether or how best to repeat the process in future. A VSR could be conducted every three years, or it may make sense to repeat the exercise in 2030 to coincide with the end of SDGs.
- Review the LAMP indicators to make sure they fully reflect the scope of Sightsavers' work. The VSR revealed that in some areas, such as economic empowerment, the LAMP indicators do not represent the full extent of Sightsavers' work and there are aspects of Sightsavers' contribution to the SDGs which are not reflected in the LAMP.
- The VSR should be shared with other NGOs in the sector to start a discussion on SDG reporting. It would be useful to obtain feedback, understand how other NGOs may need to adapt the methodology to suit their contexts and learn from any other initiatives undertaken by other organisations.

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

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