



Thanks to your generous support Children can go back to school!

September is an exciting time of year. Children are returning to school after summer vacation. They reunite with their friends, eager to start a new grade and learn new things. This is a privilege that many of us take for granted.

For some children in developing countries, visual impairment means so much more than just living in darkness. Children who can't see are robbed of an education. They can't see to read or write, and they often can't travel to school. Opportunities for a bright future are lost. **And for so many of these children, their blindness is completely avoidable.**

Royal, who lives in the small village of Tokha in Nepal, was five years old when he started to lose his sight. According to family superstitions, it's lucky for a child to have a squint, so his vision problems weren't taken seriously and he didn't feel he could complain about his impairment. At the age of nine, his vision worsened and his parents pulled him out of school.

After two years of isolation at home, Royal was discovered by an Operation Eyesight-trained community health worker (CHW) who was doing a door-to-door survey in the village. The CHW referred Royal to our partner hospital for cataract surgery.



*Thanks to YOU, Royal is attending school and thriving!
"My one goal is to study hard and follow my dream to become an engineer!" he says.*

Top causes of avoidable blindness in children

Refractive error or low vision	Corrected using prescription eyeglasses
Cataract	Treated with surgery
Corneal scarring	Prevented through Vitamin A supplementation and measles immunizations
Retinopathy of prematurity	Prevented by providing quality neonatal care, and treated using specialized laser equipment

Royal's family was terrified of surgery, as his grandfather had lost one eye in an unsuccessful cataract surgery years before.

Knowing how important this surgery was to Royal's future, the CHW visited his parents at work and explained to them that, without treatment, Royal's vision would continue to deteriorate, and he would completely lose his vision. With some convincing and encouragement, they agreed to the operation.

Because of your generosity, Royal had cataract surgery and can now SEE again! He's thrilled to be back to school, working hard and having fun with his new friends. He's so grateful that YOU gave him back his sight!

With your continued support, these conditions can be prevented or treated. How many more children will be able to SEE because of you?

A PEEK AT OUR WORK IN KENYA

The PEEK eye screening app is changing students' lives!

Imagine if you were a teacher who had a visually impaired student pulled out of class because her parents believed witchcraft was the cause. It may seem strange, but this was Kizito's experience as a teacher in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya.

But thanks to YOU, Kizito saw his student's life change. Using PEEK (Portable Eye Examination Kit), a smartphone app that Operation Eyesight helped develop, he screened the girl and referred her to our partner hospital for diagnosis and treatment. She then received sight-restoring cataract surgery.

Before she was treated, the girl's mother was accused of causing her daughter's visual impairment by attracting bad luck into their home. Sadly, the father left shortly after.

After the girl received surgery, another teacher reached out to the father and educated him about his daughter's condition. Once he understood that it was a treatable medical condition, he returned to his family. **Kizito's student is back at school, and she has hope for her future.**



Kizito is so grateful for PEEK. Through school screenings, his students are getting the eye care they need!

"PEEK helps to manage eye conditions within the school and facilitates referrals and follow-up with affected students," explains Kizito. **"Most importantly, PEEK is creating eye health awareness and advocacy within the community."**

Your incredible impact in Trans-Nzoia

Encouraging news about the work you're supporting! A recent project evaluation from Kenya's Trans-Nzoia County had good results. Between 2016 and 2018, and in partnership with Peek Vision Foundation and Standard Chartered Bank's Seeing is Believing program, PEEK was used to **examine every student from grades one to eight in 411 schools!**

Although the project had great success identifying eye problems, not all students were brought for treatment at our partner hospitals, sometimes due to parental superstitions. This demonstrates the need for greater community outreach and stronger public eye health systems. Evaluations like this ensure that we can improve the critical work you're supporting. And of course, without you, none of this would be possible. **From us and every student in Trans-Nzoia, thank you!**

Evaluation results: 2016 - 2018



Children screened
168,730



Children identified with eye problems
6,657 (3.9 percent)



Children who went for treatment
4,585 (68.9 percent)

BECAUSE OF YOU, GIRLS CAN GO TO SCHOOL!

YOU restored this little girl's hope for the future!



Hellen's life was transformed through the gift of cataract surgery.

Twelve-year-old Hellen from Kenya was struggling so much at school that she eventually dropped out. What was the point if she could hardly see to keep up with her studies? At home, she couldn't help her mother pick up groceries from nearby shops because she couldn't see to walk alone.

"I depended on my siblings to do my chores, and my mother thought I was being lazy. She didn't understand my problem," says a frustrated Hellen.

As her vision deteriorated, Hellen not only stopped studying – she stopped playing with other kids her age. **But thanks to YOU, there was hope.**

Hellen's life changed the day her teacher screened her eyes at school and referred her to our partner hospital for treatment. Hellen was diagnosed with bilateral cataract and received sight-restoring surgery as well as a pair of prescription eyeglasses.

"Since the operation, my life has taken another turn," says Hellen happily. **"With my sight back, I've made new friends, and I'm confident in my future. I'm grateful for the support I received. Without it, I would still be at home."**

All she needed was eyeglasses

Imagine your child was struggling at school, and that for three long years, neither she nor her teachers could tell you why.

That's what happened to Jennifer, a 17-year-old studying in Mfantseman District, Ghana. She struggled to see clearly and started to sit at the front of the class, but her vision kept worsening. She relied on other students to tell her what the teacher wrote, but she never complained.

It wasn't until an optometrist from our partner Saltpond Government Hospital held an eye screening at her school that Jennifer was diagnosed with nearsightedness. Now after receiving an eye exam and a pair of prescription eyeglasses, she can see clearly, even from the back of the classroom, and her teacher reports that she's more active in class. **Every day, your support is helping kids like Jennifer. Thank you!**



Jennifer loves her new eyeglasses, and she's hopeful that she'll excel in school now that she can see well.

YOUR generosity allows Rita to work in her community!



Rita educating community members on eye health during one of her daily visits.

Your support changes lives in so many ways. In addition to identifying students with low vision with the help of teachers, we're also able to reach entire communities through a network of community health workers, like Rita from Nepal.

For 35-year-old Rita, being a community health worker is the realization of her dream to make positive changes in a male-dominated society. Her work starts at the base hospital where all community health workers meet weekly to develop a work plan.

Give the **Gift of Sight** this holiday season

Our team is busy preparing our holiday Gift of Sight campaign. You can donate in honour of a friend or loved one and give the Gift of Sight to someone in need – it's two gifts in one! Watch your postal mailbox or email for more details coming soon. Thanks in advance for your support.

Following the meeting, Rita visits the communities six days a week, visiting 10 to 15 families a day.

By 9 a.m., Rita is in the field conducting door-to-door surveys. At each household, she introduces herself, her job and the hospital. Next, she tests the eyesight of each family member and refers those with low vision to the hospital. If someone isn't available, she visits them again until everyone in the village receives a free eye exam. **Each day, she identifies six or seven people with visual impairments, and she continues to follow up with each patient until they've received treatment.**

Rita also organizes information sessions in the communities to educate people about eye health and general health topics such as nutrition and immunization, reaching about 20 to 40 people with each session. After a long day of work, she heads home, where she spends her evenings preparing dinner, helping her son with his studies, and talking with her husband, who works outside of the country.



Rita with one of the patients she's helped receive eye care.

"The first 10 communities that were declared avoidable blindness-free in Nepal were from my residential area. I consider that my biggest achievement as a community health worker," Rita says proudly.

"There are many challenges and barriers that people here face. I believe that a male-dominated society is the most challenging," she explains. **"I want to thank our generous donors for their support, which has helped a woman like me to get a reputable job, support my family and work for my community.** This opportunity has changed my life and made me an example in my village."

Thanks to YOU, girls in Zambia continue to go to school!

Without readily-available water and sanitation facilities, many girls drop out of school, leaving a bright future behind. That's why "a school with clean water and sanitary facilities is a girl-friendly school," says Marrian, head teacher at Mweela School in Zambia's Sinazongwe district. **Thanks to your support**, we drilled a borehole at the school in 2008.



Blessings is all smiles outside Mweela School. Her parents enrolled her here specifically because of the school's access to clean water.



Blessings and her peers using the borehole outside their school, which was established thanks to YOU.

Many girls, like 12-year-old Blessings, are happy to go to Mweela School. A high standard of hygiene and sanitation has led to an **unprecedented rise in the enrollment of girls at the school** – from 86 girls and 112 boys in 2008 to 282 girls and 190 boys today. Thanks to the borehole, the higher number of girls and their consistent attendance rates are unlike any other school in the district!

"We're grateful that we have a reliable source of water," says Marrian. "Every morning, the school grounds are swept, plants are watered and toilets are cleaned."

Because of you, we drilled or rehabilitated 31 boreholes across Zambia in 2018. Now, with better hygiene and sanitation, girls can continue to go to school and build better futures for themselves, their families and their communities. **Thank you!**

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Yes, I want to help more children **SEE** so they can go to school

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Seattle, WA, United States, 98168-4654

By telephone: 1-800-585-8265 (Toll-free in Canada & the USA)

By emailing this form to: admin@operationeyesight.com

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Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Thank you!



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