



A milestone in global eye health

The integrated people-centered eye care resolution recently adopted by the World Health Organization is a political commitment to advancing eye health care as part of universal health care.

In 2019, the World Health Organization launched the World Report on Vision that laid out a comprehensive global strategy to address global inequalities in eye health. The report found that 2.2 billion people suffer from vision impairment globally, but nearly half of those cases could have been prevented or have yet to be addressed. The report also estimated that the number of people living with blindness could triple by 2050. In August 2020, the integrated people-centered eye care resolution was adopted by the World Health Organization. Operation Eyesight is thrilled to see that eye health is being recognized as a key component of overall health and well-being and not just a peripheral health issue. Ensuring that everyone has access to quality and affordable eye care is the core of our programs and we will continue to serve our mission with a focus on our beneficiaries' needs.

Recommendations

- Make eye care an integral part of universal health coverage
- Implement integrated people-centred eye care in health systems
- Promote high-quality research
- Monitor trends and evaluate progress
- Raise awareness and engage and empower people and communities



A woman has her vision tested at an Operation Eyesight outreach screening camp in Zambia's Sinazongwe District.

Eye screenings resume in Zambia

As part of our plan to resume delivering eye health care, we coordinated with the department of health, the district hospital and the district council of Zambia's Sinazongwe district to conduct an outreach screening camp after four months of suspension due to COVID-19. At this camp, 1,745 individuals were screened for eye health issues. During the screenings, health staff and community members followed all recommended COVID-19 prevention measures, including maintaining a distance of two metres where possible, sanitizing their hands and wearing face masks.

Community members have been waiting for the screening camp for six months, and were thrilled that they could get their eye care needs met while still being safe. The community's enthusiastically positive response to the availability of eye health services shows that they are eager to take ownership of their eye health – a predictor of the long-term sustainability of the impact of our programs.



A community health worker tests a young girl's visual acuity at a screening camp in Zambia.



Zambia



A community health worker in Nepal follows up with a man who recently underwent cataract surgery and had his sight restored.

Around the World Sight Day with Operation Eyesight

World Sight Day will be celebrated on October 8 this year. The theme for 2020 is "Hope in Sight".

World Sight Day is an annual day of awareness held on the second Thursday of October, to focus global attention on blindness and vision impairment. At least 2.2 billion people experience vision impairment globally. Of those, at least 1 billion people have vision impairment that could have been prevented or has yet to be addressed.

This year, plans are underway at Operation Eyesight for you to hear directly from our country program offices with Around the World Sight Day. This global social media journey will give you insight into the communities where we work, our country offices, partner hospitals, board locations and corporate partners. Join us on Facebook for a firsthand look into our global operations. There is #HopeInSight and we can't wait to celebrate!



The impact of school closures in Kenya goes beyond education

Kenyan schools closed their doors in March 2020, and there is still no set plan to facilitate a safe return to school. Virtual learning sessions are available online, on television and on the radio, but most students cannot access them because they do not have electronics or reliable internet access at home. There is a significant risk that online working and learning will make existing inequalities even worse. As the COVID-19 pandemic stretches on, the economic, mental and physical side effects of the pandemic are becoming increasingly apparent. With schools closed, it means that Operation Eyesight is unable to conduct school screenings and refer children with visual impairment to the care they need.



A mother in Kenya poses with her three children.

It's almost an entire year of education lost, as well as another year for students to potentially live with an avoidable eye health issue.

Leave a legacy of hope for the future



"I'm happy to know my gift will be helping people well into the future," says Marilyn.

The work we do would not be possible without the support of our caring and dedicated donors. "I can't imagine what it must be like to live with blindness and have no one willing to help," says Marilyn Dunk, who has donated monthly for over 20 years.

In fact, Marilyn believes so strongly in the importance of eliminating avoidable blindness that she has decided to leave half her estate to Operation Eyesight. "If you have the capacity, consider leaving a planned gift or bequest. It has truly been a rewarding process," Marilyn says.

Join Marilyn and other Operation Eyesight donors whose gifts will help make the world a better place for years to come. For more information, contact Brittany Beatty at 403-670-2629 or beattyb@operationeyesight.com, or download our Will Preparation Guide at [operationeyesight.com/how-you-can-help/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/](https://www.operationeyesight.com/how-you-can-help/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/).

Mahavir smiles as he demonstrates his ability to read off his phone once again



When sight is restored, independence is restored

Mahavir owns a small grocery store in his home city of Kharjamma, India. Early this year, he had noticed that his vision had been gradually getting worse over time. It eventually got to the point where he was having trouble locating items for customers, counting out exact change, and dialing his phone to contact his suppliers.

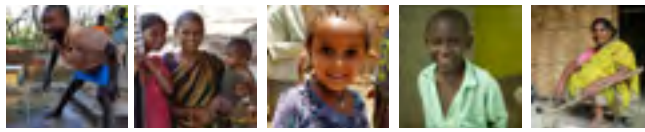
Sunita and Sushila, two local community health workers, visited Mahavir in his shop and screened his vision. They discovered that he had cataracts in both eyes that were so advanced he was considered blind. The community health workers referred him to the Mehnar Vision Centre.

Sunita and Sushila followed up at the vision centre several days later, and they discovered he hadn't gone. When they returned to his shop and inquired why, he explained that the surgery frightened him. The community health workers carefully went through the surgery process with him and explained that he had nothing to worry about. They escorted him to the vision centre personally to ensure he felt safe and comfortable. Following his surgery, Mahavir can now run his business on his own and he once again feels connected to his community.

Mahavir was able to get help before COVID-19 spread into his community, but there are so many who have continued to suffer throughout the lockdown. As eye health programs are resuming, we need your support to bring safe, quality eye care to vulnerable people.

Connect with us!

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Operation Eyesight Canada is a registered charitable organization.
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Yes, I want to make sure everyone has access to eye care.

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By emailing this form to: admin@operationeyesight.com
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Yes! I will support Operation Eyesight's sight-saving projects by making a regular monthly gift of:

\$75 \$50 \$30 Other \$ _____

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