

# Vision for a brighter future

Read about Lovemore's  
amazing transformation  
following cataract surgery



Sightsavers



Sightsavers' vision is of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes, and where people with visual impairments and other disabilities participate equally in society.



**Amazing supporters like you make our work possible. We really do appreciate every single donation from the Lions Sight Savers Trust that support our efforts to eliminate avoidable blindness.**

Thanks to you, 2019 was another incredible year. You helped support more sight-saving surgeries than ever before, enabled us to distribute over 142 million treatments for neglected tropical diseases, and helped achieve some significant developments in disability rights. Yet as I write, the world is reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are particularly concerned for the countries where we work, where fragile health systems and vulnerable people are struggling even more through the pandemic. Because of you, we are still there to support them.

Since the health crisis started, we have continued working with our partners and world governments to keep our eye health programmes running, providing emergency treatment adapted to WHO COVID-19 guidelines. As restrictions have started lifting in some countries, we have been ready to ramp up our activities, as carefully and as safely as possible, to tackle the huge need for urgent eye care we know will exist.

We are so grateful for your kindness and generosity. We hope Lions clubs will continue to support our valuable work this year so we can protect some of the most vulnerable people in the world through this global crisis.

**Dr Caroline Harper  
CEO, Sightsavers**

Read more about our eye health work here  
[www.sightsavers.org/protecting-sight](http://www.sightsavers.org/protecting-sight)



# Championing eye health

**At least 2.2 billion people in the world are blind or visually impaired – and over 1 billion of those cases could have been prevented or have yet to be addressed, according to the World Health Organization. Of those, 89% live in developing countries where healthcare and social support systems are severely lacking.**

Blindness and poverty are closely linked. Poverty leads to a lack of health services and poor eye health, which, in turn, leads to blindness and increased poverty. Impaired vision can mean people lose their independence and access to education or employment, making it very difficult for them to support themselves.

Straightforward eye health interventions, such as a cataract operation or a pair of glasses, can drastically improve a person's life, but costs relatively little. Sightsavers works with governments and local partners in Asia and Africa to create robust and lasting eye health services to help people now and in the future.

We are working to ensure people with disabilities are not left out of the COVID-19 response by adapting our materials and campaigns to include prevention messaging, particularly aimed at

vulnerable groups. We are also helping to supply health facilities with protective equipment and cleaning supplies. As we start to resume some of our work, we are ready to ramp up our activities to meet the built-up demand.

In 2019, our supporters helped us:

- perform **472,499** eye operations
- prescribe **493,186** pairs of glasses
- screen **11.5 million** children and adults for eye conditions.

We have achieved so much thanks to supporters like you. However, with the number of people living with blindness projected to triple by 2050 we still have a huge challenge ahead to ensure no one goes blind from avoidable causes.

Our eye health work remains vital to our mission. Lions clubs can help make an even greater impact by continuing to support us.



## A childhood restored and a bright future ahead

Lovemore lives with his aunt in a poor urban town on the outskirts of Petauke, an area lacking basic sanitation and water facilities. He had been suffering with cataracts in both eyes since he was very small. His parents and siblings live a couple of hours away over the border in Mozambique, where his father is originally from.

Lovemore's aunt explained to us he had not been to school for a long time as he was struggling to read the blackboard and unable to run around with his friends. His



**Name:** Lovemore

**Age:** 9

**Location:** Petauke, Zambia

grandmother, Iredy, heard on the radio that Sightsavers was helping to provide eye examinations at the local eye clinic in Petauke. She took Lovemore to the clinic to have his eyes assessed and he was referred for surgery the following day. There are only two trained surgeons in Zambia able to carry out child cataract operations, and they work in hospitals in Lusaka, a six-hour drive away.



Sightsavers arranged the appointment, transportation, and accommodation for Lovemore so he could have his sight-saving operation. When we asked Iredy about her expectations for a successful surgery, she explained: “I will take him to school so that he gets educated.”

Both of Lovemore’s eyes were operated on in less than 45 minutes. The surgeon explained to us that because of Lovemore’s young age, he had been able to follow a procedure that meant he should have almost full vision the next day, when the bandages were removed.

### After the operation

Previously, Lovemore had been shy, sedentary, and unsteady on his feet. He was now running, laughing, singing, talking, and dancing! There was a playground outside the hospital, and he

started running around playing football. He climbed up and slid down a slide for what looked like the first time ever: he was hesitant at first, but quickly went back for a second and third time.

With just a straightforward operation, Lovemore had been given a brighter future. He will be able to live an independent life, gain an education and provide for himself instead of being reliant on those around him.

**Iredy tells us:**  
“Thank you for what you’ve done for helping my grandchild and please continue helping others. I’m very thankful to Sightsavers.”

“

## Thanks to you...

This wonderful story of Lovemore gives you a glimpse of the enormous difference something as straightforward as a cataract operation can have on a child's life. Clear vision allows a child to get the most out of their education and gain the skills they need to build a better future.

There is still so much work that needs to be done. In Africa alone, 82,000 children are living with cataracts and waiting for the same opportunity that supporters like you helped give Lovemore.

We hope Lions clubs will continue to support our eye health work this year as we protect some of the most vulnerable people living in the poorest communities across Africa and Asia.

## How your support can make a difference



**£2** could buy a visual assessment chart used for eye tests

---



**£90** could pay for a child cataract surgery

---



**£500** could fund the training of 100 health workers to complete their training in primary eye health

---



**£1,000** could screen a community of over 1,200 people for a range of eye conditions

---



**£5,000** could cover the cost of distributing over 76 pairs of glasses to children

**Your support transforms lives  
in so many ways. Together, we  
can continue to reach those  
who need our help and deliver  
more life-changing treatments.**

**Want to know more?**

Email us at [lions@sightsavers.org](mailto:lions@sightsavers.org)

[www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org)

 **SightsaversUK**

 **@Sightsavers**

 **SightsaversTV**

35 Perrymount Road  
Haywards Heath  
West Sussex  
RH16 3BW  
+44 (0)1444 446 770  
[lions@sightsavers.org](mailto:lions@sightsavers.org)

Registered charity numbers 207544 and SC038110

