



For Immediate Release

Operation Eyesight Universal Encourages Parents, Guardians, Caregivers and Children to Make Eye Health Care a Priority this World Sight Day (October 10) – in Zambia and the world

450 million children worldwide have an eye condition that requires treatment – detecting and treating eye conditions early can prevent lifelong consequences of vision loss

Lusaka, Zambia, October 4, 2024: Operation Eyesight Universal is championing child eye health care this World Sight Day, Thursday, October 10, 2024, alongside the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and its more than 250 global members. Currently, [450 million children worldwide have an eye condition that requires treatment, and 90 million children live with sight loss, according to the IAPB Focus on Child Eye Health 2022 Report.](#) Early detection of eye conditions is essential as [approximately 40 per cent of childhood blindness is preventable or treatable, according to the IAPB Vision Atlas.](#) For those in need, wearing prescription spectacles can reduce class failure rates by 44 per cent. Children who go without treatment can face lifelong consequences – those with vision loss in low- to middle-income countries are two to five times less likely to attend school as stated in the [IAPB Vision Atlas.](#)

Operation Eyesight has been working to prevent blindness and restore sight in Zambia since 2001, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders. It works alongside communities to provide access to clean water, which is fundamental to eye health, through community boreholes. Currently, Operation Eyesight works with the Ministry of Health to incorporate eye health care in primary health care, and to reach people, including children, across the country. **Highlights to share in leading up to and around World Sight Day include the following programs and activities:**

- School screenings in several schools in Matero and Kanyama by teams from Matero Level 1 and Kanyama Level 1 hospitals
- School screening in Mkushi by the team from Mkushi District Hospital
- Partnering with University Teaching Hospital (UTH) for community screening in selected areas of Matero, and Kanyama Compound
- A vision clinic is slated to open in 2024 at Kafue Gorge in Chikankata District

Kennedy Phiri, Operation Eyesight Universal Country Director for Zambia, says, “This year's theme is important as it directs attention to child eye health. Investing in children’s eye health through screening, provision of spectacles and, most importantly, health education means that future generations will be more prepared to deal with their eye health and therefore less likely to live with avoidable blindness.”



Kashinath Bhoosnurmath, President and CEO of Operation Eyesight Universal and elected trustee of IAPB, says, “Every day, preventable and treatable eye health issues cause children to miss out on learning and social opportunities. They do not just deserve but have the right to a happy childhood. Healthy eyes enable kids to learn, play and thrive, setting them on a path for life.” Through support from generous donors around the world, Operation Eyesight has been providing eye health care and child eye health for more than 60 years in Africa and South Asia.

Child Eye Health Facts [Source: [The Issues - The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness \(iapb.org\)](#)]

- 450 million children worldwide have an eye condition that requires treatment
- 90 million children live with some form of sight loss
- Children with vision loss in low- to middle-income countries are two to five times less likely to attend school
- 40 per cent of childhood blindness is preventable or treatable
- Wearing prescription spectacles can reduce class failure rates by 44 per cent

Help Children Love Their Eyes

- Parents, guardians and caregivers are encouraged to help the children in their lives to love their eyes with eye health tips and resources: operationeyesight.com/worldsightday
- Help all children love their eyes by donating at operationeyesight.com

About Operation Eyesight Universal *Learn more at* operationeyesight.com/zambia

Operation Eyesight Universal is an international development organization, and registered charity in Zambia and multiple other countries, that works to prevent blindness and restore sight. Its vision is the elimination of avoidable vision loss. Founded in Canada in 1963, Operation Eyesight is a global community spanning four continents – Africa, Europe, North America and South Asia. Its vision is global and the focus local, with teams on the ground in communities of work. Through activities like community outreach, water and sanitation projects, and health education, Operation Eyesight is addressing the root causes of avoidable vision loss which contribute to [six United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: no poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and partnerships for the goals.](#)

In Zambia, Operation Eyesight has worked with the Ministry of Health to establish eye care services into the existing primary health care system at University Teaching Hospital (UTH); Lusaka Eye Hospital (LEH); Chawama, Kanyama, Matero and Maamba Hospitals; and Bauleni, Kapiri Mposhi Urban, Mandevu and Chibefwe Urban (Mkushi) Clinics. Operation Eyesight has provided equipment, infrastructure, training, drugs, and other medical supplies. Going forward, it will continue to scale up the implementation of this model in other locations to increase the coverage of eye health services.

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About World Sight Day

World Sight Day is an annual day of awareness, held on the second Thursday of October every year, to draw attention and action to vision loss in the world. The focus of World Sight Day for 2024 is child eye health. Currently, more than 1.1 billion people live with vision loss, and 90 percent is avoidable or treatable, according to the [IAPB Vision Atlas](#). Vision loss and eye health care are highly correlated with complex and interconnected development issues such as the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness champions World Sight Day, as do its 250 members around the world.

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