



**Media Advisory: For Immediate Release**

## **Operation Eyesight Focuses on Child Eye Health Ahead of World Sight Day with a Student Eye Screening at St. Marks Academy in Kajiado North Sub-County**

**Media are invited to attend student eye screening activities at St. Marks Academy in Kajiado North Sub-County on 8 October between 08:00 & 16:00 Hours**

***This is part of the four-year Vision Impact Project, which aims to reduce vision loss and blindness in Kajiado County. Half a million people have been screened.***

**Nairobi, Kenya, Saturday, 5 October 2024:** Operation Eyesight Universal invites media to attend a student eye screening at St. Marks Academy in Kajiado North Sub-County this 8 October 2024, to highlight the importance of child eye health. The screening is one of multiple activities taking place leading up to and following World Sight Day on 10 October, which focuses on child eye health this year. The activity will see 240 learners and teachers screened. It is part of a four-year eye health program called the Vision Impact Project (VIP), which aims to reduce visual impairment and avoidable blindness in Kajiado County. VIP is implemented by Operation Eyesight Universal in partnership with Kajiado County Government and funded by CBM Christian Blind Mission.

**What:** Eye screening for school learners and teachers (part of the Vision Impact Project)

**When:** 8 October, 08:00 – 16:00 Hours

**Where:** St. Marks Academy – Kajiado North Sub-County

**Why:** To raise awareness of the importance of child eye health in learning and gaining an education; detecting and treating issues early; and reducing vision impairment and avoidable blindness in Kajiado County

**Who:** Screening of 240 learners and teachers as part of the Vision Impact Project (VIP) implemented by Operation Eyesight Universal in partnership with the Kajiado County Government and funded by CBM Christian Blind Mission

The Vision Impact Project was implemented in January 2022 and has achieved significant results. These include the construction of a modern state-of-the-art eye unit at Kajiado Referral Hospital, the establishment of an eye clinic at Kitengela Sub-County Hospital and equipping the Loitokitok Sub-County Eye Unit to deliver improved eye health services. Through VIP, more than half a million people have been screened – 452,039 people through door-to-door eye surveys in communities, and 154,281 learners and teachers in schools. During community and school screenings, the VIP promoted eye care services, which created greater awareness and demand



for eye health care. This was done by utilizing County Government health personnel, including Community Health Assistants and Public Health Officers trained through the VIP.

Caroline Ikumu, the Operation Eyesight Universal Program Manager, says, “Child eye health is a significant public health issue. There are thousands of children in Kenya who are needlessly blind or visually impaired. These children are not able to achieve their maximum potential, given that 80 per cent of learning is visual.” Ikumu adds that “diagnosing eye problems early can help minimize damage and makes treatment faster and more effective, hence the need to support screening of children in schools and in the community.” Ikumu emphasizes the need to educate parents on the importance of helping children to access eye health care. Globally, 450 million children have an eye condition that requires treatment, according to the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness.

### **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

### **About Operation Eyesight Universal *Learn more at [operationeyesight.com/kenya](https://operationeyesight.com/kenya)***

Operation Eyesight Universal is an international development organization, and registered charity in Kenya and multiple other countries, working to prevent blindness and restore sight. Its vision is the elimination of avoidable vision loss. Founded in Calgary, 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. Operation Eyesight Universal has been working to prevent blindness and restore sight in Kenya since 2007 and has programs covering nine counties.

### **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



per cent 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 200 members around the world.

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