

LIGHT
FOR THE WORLD



Annual Report 2024



Dear friends and supporters,

Without your support, we would have been unable to make the significant impact we did in 2024 — sparking positive, long-lasting change in the communities we work alongside.

In 2024, Light for the World and our partners have worked in a challenging context with increasing numbers of conflicts, the climate crisis and other emergencies. People with disabilities and those requiring eye services in Africa have been majorly impacted.

Our mission at Light for the World is more urgent than ever — and your support continues to be as invaluable as ever. Thanks to you, our generous supporters and trusted partners, we sparked lasting change in disability rights and eye health in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda.

Light for the World and our partners have reached millions of people with eye health services and to promote disability rights, inclusive education and economic empowerment, including in emergencies. We continue to use cross-cutting approaches for all our programmes: gender, climate, partnership, and communities are central to everything we do.

From the first-ever child mass trachoma treatment campaign in Tigray, Ethiopia, to breaking employment barriers for young people with disabilities, I am delighted to share in this report highlights showing our positive impact in 2024. 2024 was also the year we launched our bold Strategy 2030 with a new mission, vision, values and theory of change. Together with the people we work with – the drivers of change – our Strategy 2030 strengthens Light for the World's commitment to delivering impact, at scale, sustainably.

We strengthened our leadership team, welcoming Lucy Nyaga as International Director of Programmes, Katri Bertram as International Director of Impact & Advocacy, and renowned disability rights advocate Stanley Mutuma to our international board. Their expertise will help drive our mission forward.

Yet, these achievements come amid an increasingly difficult fundraising environment, as global political shifts threaten development cooperation and the budgets required. Rather than discourage us, these challenges reinforce our resolve. They fuel my drive to ensure Light for the World continues making a positive impact through work that is now more crucial than ever. Light for the World has always adapted to disruptions, and our solidarity with people with eye conditions and disabilities remains unwavering.

We believe in a world where people with eye conditions and disabilities can fully exercise their rights to health, education, work — and protection in emergencies. With your continued dedication, we will carry on building this inclusive, just future together.

Together, we are stronger; thank you again.

Marion Lieser
CEO, Light for the World International

Who we are & why we act

Light for the World sparks lasting change on disability rights and eye health.

We believe in a world where people with disabilities, and people with eye conditions, fully exercise their rights to health, education, work — and protection in emergencies.

Our programme and advocacy work ensures individuals and communities are the drivers of

change and focuses on countries including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda.

Our sustainable impact is made possible through generous donations and powerful partnerships in these countries, as well as Light for the World member organisations in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland, UK and USA.

Highlights 2024

With our partners....

10.26 m

... beyond this, we delivered **10.26 million** doses of medication against diseases like blinding trachoma



10,000

Nearly **10,000** health workers received eye health training.

9,000

Close to **9,000** children and teens with disabilities were supported to attend school.

1.45 m

... we reached **1.45 million** people with crucial support in eye health and disability inclusion.



1,000,000

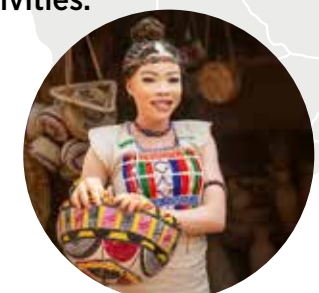
More than **1 million** eye health consultations took place.

48,000

More than **48,000** eye surgeries were performed.

40,000

More than **40,000** people with disabilities took part in economic empowerment activities.



These figures show the activities of all Light for the World member organisations in 2024.

Sparking lasting change

EYE HEALTH

After Deolinda (pictured), age two, received surgery to treat cataracts in Maputo Hospital, Mozambique, her mother, Herminia, was relieved. “I want Deolinda to grow up as a healthy child,” she said. “She should be free to do what she wants to do in her life.”

Everyone deserves access to quality eye care, yet 1.1 billion people worldwide live with vision loss — 90% of which is preventable or treatable. With the support of our donors, Light for the World continued to tackle this crisis by strengthening eye health systems in 2024. We ensured children, especially girls, and people with and without disabilities had access to life-changing care, including for those living in remote areas.

In 2024, our “1,2,3 I Can See!” programme reached a major milestone, benefiting over half

a million children in its first phase. By integrating vision screening into schools, we are enabling early detection and intervention, improving educational outcomes and quality of life for children in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda.

In Uganda, we launched a project to screen approximately 150,000 schoolchildren over two years. And, across the countries where we work, we supported access to spectacles and vital surgeries to restore sight and independence. We also continued the fight to eliminate blinding trachoma by 2030, treating over 116,000 children for the first-ever child mass drug administration in Tigray, Ethiopia.

Sustainability remains at the heart of our approach. We continued investing in local health professionals by training ophthalmologists, nurses and health workers in specialised eye care. This ensures long-term improvements in healthcare systems, benefiting generations to come.



to education, they face lifelong barriers to employment and independence. Light for the World is breaking down these barriers — ensuring children with disabilities can learn alongside their peers in inclusive classrooms, even in emergencies.

In 2024, we trained teachers in South Sudan in sign language, braille and inclusive teaching methods, under a drive to train 1,400 teachers in

the next two years. This training, part of the Education Cannot Wait programme, lays the groundwork for teachers to better support pupils with disabilities to thrive in the classroom. In Ethiopia, we worked with UNICEF to help more than 2,600 displaced children with disabilities access inclusive learning, making classrooms more accessible in regions affected by conflict.

Our advocacy efforts led to major policy wins. In Burkina Faso, the government com-

mitted to allowing students with disabilities to use assistive devices during exams. Changes like this make learning environments fairer and more inclusive for all learners.

Thanks to our supporters and partners, we continue contributing to systemic changes that promote inclusivity in the classroom and create equitable educational opportunities for all children.



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Cate Kariuki (pictured), from Makueni County, Kenya, dreams of opening a beauty parlour and becoming an advocate for Deaf people. She drew her vision of what she wants to become.

Everyone has the right to dignified and fulfilling work, yet people with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to employment. Working alongside partners, governments and private sector organisations, Light for the World is driving disability inclusion in workplaces, entrepreneurship and skills development across Africa.

In 2024, more than 500 young people with disabilities, including Cate, graduated from the We Can Work Academy in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, with key core life skills. The We Can Work programme, in partnership with Mastercard Foundation and African Disability Forum, is equipping young people in these seven countries with the skills and networks they need to thrive.

Our Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs) continued to make an impact, working with businesses, NGOs and government institutions to create inclusive workplaces and transform

hiring practices. In Kenya, the InBusiness programme supported entrepreneurs with disabilities to start and build their businesses. And we partnered with WEEE Centre and Bopinc for the PowerUp initiative to create opportunities for young women and men with disabilities in the green economy.

Farmers, organisations of people with disabilities and technical experts from Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Malawi, India and Austria shared successful practices in disability inclusive agriculture. The ‘Learning Route’ showcased the services, support mechanisms and co-designed ‘AgriLab’ workshops that have enabled the inclusion of people with disabilities in agricultural and livestock value chains.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

When Moses’ (pictured) tricycle broke, he found himself excluded from education. “I had to stop coming because the school is far away from home,” he says. Disability Inclusion Facilitators from Light for the World, working with Save the Children, bought Moses, 18, a new tricycle. Now he is back in school, learning with his classmates.

Every child has the right to education, yet children with disabilities are 49% less likely to attend school than their peers. Without access

AMPLIFYING VOICES

Light for the World continued to amplify the voices of people with disabilities and raise crucial advocacy calls in 2024. Our expert colleagues and partners actively engaged in key international platforms, driving forward the agenda for disability inclusion and equitable eye health access.



Jane Waithera, Head of the Disability Inclusion Advisory Unit in Kenya, featured in a World Health Organization campaign showcasing the life-changing impact of eye care.

Musa Mwambu, a Disability Inclusion Advisor for Light for the World Uganda, made history as the first anchor with a visual impairment to deliver the news to the nation for NTV Uganda.

Stanley Mutuma, an international board member at Light for the World, attended the Paralympic Games in Paris in his role as Secretary General of the Kenya Paralympic movement.

Wilson Kamau, a Disability Inclusion Facilitator, was appointed to the inaugural European Union Youth Sounding Board in Kenya.

Issa Khamis, a Disability Inclusion Advisor for Light for the World South Sudan, called for a more inclusive society at an international anti-landmine conference.

When You Become Me, a groundbreaking film co-produced by Light for the World Uganda that challenges disability stereotypes, received international awards.

International media organisations, including CNN, The Guardian, BBC and Christian Science Monitor covered our work and featured interviews with our expert colleagues. This coverage has raised awareness of our work and helped foster a broader understanding of disability rights in the countries where we work.

Showcasing the expertise of our colleagues, we provided practical guidance to our audiences:

- With 2024 the biggest election year in history, our experts gave advice on how to ensure equal access for voters with disabilities. We had close to 4 million impressions on the article across our social media channels.
- Our advice for media — “How to report on disability: 6 tips for journalists” — had significant engagement, with more than 26,500 impressions on LinkedIn alone.
- Ambrose Murangira, Thematic Director of Disability Inclusion at Light for the World, shared his top tips on how to respectfully communicate with a Deaf person.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Ayuen Kuol (pictured) received a tricycle and training from Light for the World about how to prepare for floods in his home in Jonglei State, South Sudan. “I learned about looking for higher ground to evacuate,” he says. “Previously, I had no other ideas.”

In times of crisis, people with disabilities are often excluded from emergency responses. At Light for the World, thanks to our donors, we work to ensure emergency support is accessible and inclusive — because everyone has the right to protection in emergencies.

In 2024, unprecedented flooding in South Sudan displaced more than one million people. Light for the World supported people with disabilities to evacuate to safe spaces. We provided mobility devices, including wheelchairs, tricycles, walking sticks and white canes. Several temporary shelters were made accessible for people with disabilities.

In Tigray, Ethiopia, we resumed efforts to combat Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), including blinding trachoma, following years of conflict. Our work helped restore eye health services and prevent further avoidable blindness. In Mozambique, we partnered with INGD to include people with disabilities, especially

women and girls, in disaster response. Local Disaster Risk Management Committees received emergency kits with essential equipment to alert communities, locate safe zones and support vulnerable populations during climate emergencies. In Burkina Faso, we continued to support resilience and inclusion, including for people displaced by conflict.

We continued to advocate for disability-inclusive disaster response, calling on humanitarian partners to prioritise inclusivity and advising how to make refugee and IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps accessible. We pushed for better data collection to ensure people with disabilities are visible and protected in emergencies.



A BIG **THANK YOU** to our partners and supporters!

Donors, Institutional Partners, Foundations

Austrian Development Cooperation | Croma-Pharma GmbH | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH | Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Education Cannot Wait | The END Fund | Essilor International | ETHOS.Legal | Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria | Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer | Freshfields Rechtsanwälte PartG mbB | Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office UK | Global Affairs Canada | International Fund for Agricultural Development | International Labour Organisation | IKEA Foundation | Leopold Bachmann Stiftung | Linsi Foundation | Mastercard Foundation | Novartis Pharma AG | OWP Brillen GmbH | PRANA Foundation | Standard Chartered Foundation | UEFA Foundation | UNESCO | UNHCR | UNICEF | USAID

Networks and Alliances

African Disability Forum (ADF) | Austrian Disability Council | BOND | Bündnis für Gemeinnützigkeit Österreich | Coalition for Clear Vision | CBR Global Network | College of Ophthalmology of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (COECSA) | CONCORD European Confederation of NGOs working on sustainable development and international cooperation | DAISY Consortium | Enable Me Foundation | Enabling Education Network (EENET) | European Disability Forum (EDF) | FAIRTRADE Austria | Fundraising Verband Austria | Global Business and Disability Network | Global Campaign for Education (GCE) | Global Rehabilitation Alliance | Global Responsibility Austria | Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) | International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) | International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC) | International Disability Alliance (IDA) | International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) | International Ophthalmological Fellowship Foundation (IOFF) | No Means No Worldwide | NPO Austria | Orbis International | RED NOSES International | RTI International | SeeYou Foundation | Save the Children | SDG Watch Austria | Sightsavers International | The SPECS Network | UK Aid | Women in Development WIDE | World Health Organisation | VSO



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