



Sightsavers



Sightsavers

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# Seeing Change

Annual Report 2012-13

# Contents

Seeing Change **01**

Foreword from the Chairman **02**

Foreword from the CEO's desk **03**

Our Vision, Mission & Values **04**

Eye Health & Disability Scenario in India **05**

Where We Work **06**

What We Do **08**

How We Work **09**

Milestones in 2012-13 **10**

Delivering Quality Eye Health Care **11**

Social Inclusion **17**

Inclusive Education **22**

Advocacy **29**

Testimonials and Thank You Letters **38**

Branding and Events **42**

## Seeing Change

There is no better way to understand the term "Seeing Change" than to put oneself in the shoes of someone who has recently been cured of reversible blindness. The change, one might say is visible and palpable. It is a change that brings along with it hope for the future and a life of dignity.

**"Seeing Change" is what we do.**

We have been instrumental in "seeing change" in both cases of avoidable blindness as well as in the social/political and economic conditions of the visually impaired. We work in a sustainable manner to promote lasting change. We strengthen existing health systems, wherever possible and seek to influence governance through advocacy and demonstrating best practices.

Seeing change for us is the culmination of our efforts to improve the quality of life of the visually impaired. It is also a barometer of our efficacy as a global development organisation.





## Foreword from the Chairman

“To be blind is not miserable; not to be able to bear blindness, that is miserable.”

-John Milton  
*efficacy as a global development organisation*

As chairman of Sightsavers in India, it gives me great pleasure and pride to be associated with such a noble cause in the field of Eye Health and Disability. The expertise and commitment of Sightsavers in tackling major cause of blindness is truly commendable. The number of blind persons in India in 2000 was estimated to be 18.7 million of which 9.5 million were Cataract-related and 3 million Refractive Error-related. If there is no change in the current trend of blindness, the number of blind persons in India would increase to 24.1 million in 2010, and to 31.6 million in 2020. If effective strategies are put in place to eliminate 95% of blindness due to cataract by 2020, blindness in 15.6 million persons would be prevented who would otherwise be blind by 2020 if the current trend continues. Similarly, if effective strategies are also implemented to eliminate 95% of the Refractive Error blindness by 2020, another 4.2 million persons would be prevented from being blind by 2020, and 82 million blind person-years would be prevented.

In 2012, Sightsavers has reached out to over 1.5 million persons with potential eye problems and over 510,000 persons have been treated as a result. Through partnerships and government tie-ups, we have managed to perform 77,084 eye operations and trained over 22,000 people on primary eyecare (including health workers and volunteers).

Over the next half decade, Sightsavers shall undergo a process of transformation that will define the way public health care and disability programmes would be

executed in India. Our strategy for the next five years shall be in the field of eye health specifically focus at constructing national level initiatives that shall decipher the challenges of urban and rural eye health. Sightsavers, during this period will also initiate a nationwide school eye health programme that will focus at preventing the most vulnerable section of our society from going blind. In our efforts of main streaming persons with disability from the fringes of our society, Sightsavers shall undertake national wide demonstration programmes to enhance the learning levels of children with disability studying in regular schools and at empowering disabled people through financial and social independence. All our efforts would be strongly focused at strengthening existing government and non-government systems in a manner that the process leads to enhanced scalability through a cost effective and sustainable mechanism. I am confident that with the current level of enthusiasm and commitment as shown by the staff of Sightsavers, the organisation is sure to reach new heights in the coming few years and would help make an everlasting change in the lives of millions. I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude to the partners and dedicated staff members and would like to personally wish them all the best in the future.

Thank you very much!

**Dr. S. Y. Quraishi**  
*Chairman of the Board  
&  
Former Chief Election Commissioner of India*



## Foreword from the CEO's Desk

We made a huge impact on 'World Sight Day' that took place on October 2012 and remained to focus attention on the global issue of avoidable blindness and visual impairment

### Seeing the Change!!

The development landscape of India has changed significantly over the last one decade. India presents a paradoxical situation of high economic and technology growth on one hand and prevalence of high rate of poverty, hunger and very poor health indicators on the other hand. In order to be more relevant and impactful for an organisation like Sightsavers in India, it is imperative to change the way we have been working for the last few decades to remain more aligned with the changing development scenario in the country.

2012 was a year that witnessed immense changes and has helped us develop a platform from where we can strive towards rapid and sustainable growth. Key initiatives like "Through Different Eyes" which aimed at raising awareness about avoidable blindness, was a great success. Innovative initiatives like the Sightsavers' photo contest on Facebook was not only cherishing but engaging too.

We also made a huge impact on 'World Sight Day' that took place on October 2012 and remained to focus attention on the global issue of avoidable blindness and visual impairment. Yet another key initiative taken by Sightsavers India was the successful launch of 'Vision Delhi' project which will be implemented in partnership with Dr. R. P. Centre for Ophthalmic

Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi over the next three years. The project primarily targeted at the urban slums of East, South and West Delhi aims to demonstrate scalable cost effective approaches that contribute to addressing the unmet need for Refractive Error services.

### What's ahead...

The future ahead indeed looks very exciting as we embrace new challenges and look forward to a better and sustainable future. Sightsavers in India also looks to revisit its programming approach and develop models that would help it transition into an organisation that is impactful, relevant and a "partner of choice" in the field of eye care and disability.

I would like to end by saying a great big thank you to our supporters, our partners, dedicated staff members and donors.

Thank you very much!

**Mr. R. N. Mohanty**  
*CEO, Sightsavers (India)*

## Vision

We are an international organisation working with partners in developing countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

## Mission

Sightsavers' vision is of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes and where visually impaired people participate equally in society

## Values

- Blindness is an important cause and effect of poverty. We work with poor and marginalised communities in developing countries. We achieve much more when we collaborate
- We forge alliances and partnerships to ensure a positive and long term impact on people's lives
- People should not go blind unnecessarily. We prevent, treat and cure avoidable blindness and promote eye health
- People with visual impairment should be able to develop their potential to the full. We work with disabled people and others to promote equal rights and opportunities
- With the right resources, people can find their own solutions. We strengthen organisations and communities to develop practical and enduring solutions
- Learning and innovation are essential in order to improve the quality of what we do. We underpin our work with the best available evidence and research
- Our supporters are a key part of the solution. We work together to accomplish our goals

## Eye Health and Disability Scenario in India

It is estimated that India accounts for the highest number of blind people in the world, with about one fourth of the world's blind population residing here. According to the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB), there are estimated 15 million people living with blindness in India. It also houses the highest percentage of cataract population of the world. The major causes of blindness in India are Cataract (63%) and Refractive Error (20%), followed by Glaucoma.

With nearly 21 million people, according to 2001 census, having some or the other form of disability and nearly half of them (48.55%) are either blind or living with visual disability is a harsh reality that India faces on the public health front and is a daunting challenge to overcome. Besides the enormous challenges that these visually impaired people face in their daily lives, are serious socioeconomic implications emanating from the loss in productivity levels of these individuals due to their visual disability. With less than 10% of all the disabled children attending school, the social and humanitarian cost also seems incalculable. However, the scenario is not all that bleak. The fact that eighty percent of blindness can be cured or prevented and is avoidable, is a reason to smile!

NPCB launched in 1976 was a significant step to turn the tide of visual disability in India and reduce the prevalence of blindness from 1.4% to 0.3% by

2020. The NPCB has been India's biggest and most extensive Public-Private Partnership effort in the health sector and has made significant strides with regard to prevention and treatment of Cataract, Diabetic Retinopathy, Low Vision, Glaucoma and Childhood blindness. Government is strengthening primary eye health interventions, regional institutes of ophthalmology, low vision initiatives etc. as part of the national blindness control strategy.

As the prevalence of blindness is higher amongst the rural and the marginalised (including those residing in urban slums), and a large section of the country's population remains underserved, the emphasis shifts towards universal coverage to meet the goal of eliminating avoidable blindness since 80% of all blindness is avoidable and relatively simple to treat. Primary eye health and care is emerging as an important strategy of the national plan. Providing primary eye care services on a regular basis through effective linkages to reach vulnerable groups and respond to their needs is the focus of the national plan.

Given the above scenario and several cross cutting issues on Eye Health, Inclusive Education of blind/visually impaired children and Social Inclusion of the visually challenged community, Sightsavers in India has been playing a lead role on 'changing lives' and moving towards its goal of bringing a sustainable impact.

The fact that eighty percent of blindness can be cured or prevented and is avoidable, is a reason to smile



## Overview

Sightsavers is a leading global development agency working with local partners in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, to eliminate avoidable blindness, restore sight, work for the rights and needs of those with irreversible visual impairment and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people in the developing world.

Sightsavers was founded in 1950, and initially known as the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind.

## Sightsavers in India

Sightsavers started working in India in 1966 by the initiative of Sir John Wilson and ever since then, the organisation has been working in India to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for disabled people. Over a span of more than 65 years, Sightsavers has emerged as one of the leading national organisation and development agency for eye health and disability in India.

Sightsavers in India works with over 100 local partners across 17 states to bring about lasting change in the lives of the visually impaired. Over the years, we have worked through alignment with the Government of India's national plan and global movements such as VISION 2020: The Right to Sight and the Global Campaign for Education to address issues around Eye Health and Inclusive Education.

Sightsavers' work in India has supported the treatment of millions of people with eye disorders and brought services to some of the least served areas of the country. In addition, many thousands of irreversibly blind people have received rehabilitation and educational support to enable them to lead lives of independence and dignity.

**Presence :** Sightsavers is spread over 17 states in India. Steering through the challenge of balancing between spread, strategic presence, quality of oversight and impact, Sightsavers works with partners to positively transform lives of the visually impaired.

Our work is focussed on strengthening eye health in some of the least served parts of rural, urban slums, tribal, desert, flood and tsunami hit areas. Sightsavers' priority states are Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa & Rajasthan. Other states we work in are Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu.



## What We Do

Sightsavers believes in providing quality eye healthcare, enabling greater access to health services and promoting equal opportunities for the disabled in India. We work on a wide variety of programmes that improve availability and ensure quality of life.

## How We Work

Sightsavers works in a sustainable manner to promote lasting change, by strengthening existing health systems, demonstrating best practices and working with governments to bring them to scale, and fostering alliances and networks for advocating the rights of the disabled.

### Some of our programmes include:

- Strengthening primary eye care initiatives with focus on early detection, treatment and referrals for cataract and higher order diseases
- Bringing comprehensive eye health to the urban underserved communities through urban eye care initiatives
- Strengthening school eye health for early intervention and prevention
- Training and capacity building of community level health workers in primary eye care to treat common eye problems and provide referrals wherever necessary
- Developing human resources for eye care, contributing to the national efforts in bridging the gap in healthcare human resources.
- Strengthening of systems of medical assessment of children with visual impairment; and provision of assistive aids like Low Vision and Braille devices as per the need
- Ensuring engagement of the local communities in designing, implementing & evaluation of all our projects

### Sightsavers in India since 1966: A glimpse

- Supported treatment of over 51 million persons with potential eye problems and treated over 36million as a result
- Supported over 4.7 million eye operations of which over 4 million were sight restoring cataract operations
- Brought eye services to the least served areas of the country
- Provided rehabilitation and educational support to thousands of irreversibly blind people
- Enabled visually impaired to lead lives of independence and dignity

Building efficient and sustainable systems by collaborating with various stakeholders is how we create lasting change

## Milestones in 2012-13

### Eye Health

Eye Health initiatives have a significant impact on four of the Millennium Development Goals: a) The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; b) Securing universal primary education; c) Ensuring gender equality with the empowerment of women and d) Reducing infant mortality. Sightsavers' aim is to move closer to these MDGs and ensure availability of quality eye care universally as part of a wider health system. We therefore align our strategies and interventions with the overall goals of VISION 2020: The Right to Sight initiative and contribute to poverty alleviation along with the Millennium Development Goals.

To achieve this, Sightsavers has been gradually moving from a service delivery approach to a systems strengthening approach. We reach out through community based workers as well as highly skilled ophthalmologists, thereby improving eye care and contributing to reduce avoidable blindness.



## Delivering Quality Eye Health Care

### Screening and Treatment of School Children

#### Pivotal role in the “Ambassador for Eye Care Campaign”:

Chhattisgarh is one of the least developed states having a large number of visually impaired children in schools. Sightsavers initiated the “Ambassador for Eye Care Campaign” for identifying visually impaired children and suggesting strategies for their Inclusive Education and integration with the Government’s Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme. Through meticulous planning, capacity building and implementation with the two government departments on Education i.e. SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) and Health i.e. State Programme for Control of Blindness (SPCB), respectively, Sightsavers’ joint initiative covered four million children across 52,000 government schools from remote and even insurgency affected areas.

The campaign was conceptualised at the Annual Plan Development meeting of SSA in January 2012 at Raipur, Chhattisgarh. The process of identifying visually impaired children emerged as one of the biggest challenge and consequently screening of school children was taken up on a campaign mode across the entire state of Chhattisgarh.

During the campaign period, SPCB officials and Sightsavers representatives trained over 300 Mobile Resource Advisors as Master Trainers on basic Eye Care concepts and Vision Screening. Through block and cluster level training programmes, Sightsavers through its Master Trainers and Ophthalmic Assistants provided technical support and training to around 52,000 primary and upper primary school teachers on a sample basis. One



Training of Master Trainers on basic eye care and vision screening

of our hospital partner even conducted cataract surgeries on identified children; financed by SPCB under RashtriyaSwasthyaBeemaYojana [RSBY]. The campaign resulted in:

- Restoration of sight in 233 out of 272 children identified with cataract
- Spectacles were provided by SPCB to 23,526 out of 31,329 children who were found with refractive errors
- The success of this campaign led SSA to organise a similar campaign for identification of hearing impaired children



## Utilisation of Human Resource for Eye Surgery

### Hospital partners registered under NPCB's Health Management Information System (HMIS):

Sightsavers facilitated registration of all its hospital partners under NPCB's Health Management Information System (HMIS) for their future surgery submissions to District Health Society. This was a continuation of the training received during the state level review meeting of the State Blindness Control Society.

It was anticipated that registration would increase transparency, enhance data availability and ensure improved monitoring while increasing efficiency of grant-in-aid from NPCB.

All the NGO partners of Sightsavers in collaboration with District Project Manager of their respective districts registered themselves in the HMIS and after authorisation, started filling data related to surgeries.

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## Ensuring Quality in Service Delivery

Sightsavers' moto is quality assurance and we have worked towards delivering quality programmes. We gather evidence to check the safety and quality standards in clinical works of our partners and provide improvement measures. This includes measuring and supporting improvements in standards of practice and care among our partners. Some of the initiatives are briefly presented below:

### Independent Assessment of Hospital Partners on "Adult Cataract Treatment Service Quality":

In order to support the implementation of the Thematic Quality Standards (TQS) developed by Sightsavers, an assessment methods development and pilot field testing project was planned by our UK office. An external agency, "Murray Health Consulting Ltd, UK" was contracted to conduct the assessment in five partner sites in Malawi and Northern India. The intent was to evaluate adult cataract treatment services in Sightsavers' supported medical programmes.

The assessment of adult cataract treatment service quality was conducted with two eye care partners namely Gomabai Hospital, Neemuch, MP and Nirmal Ashram Eye Institute, Haridwar, Uttarakand. The assessment covered: a) Clinical practice; b) Infrastructure, facilities and equipment (surgical & OPD care); c) Staff insight, knowledge, practice, experience and awareness of quality; d) Patient's experience of care given in hospital; e) Clinical note content and quality; f) Outcomes of the treatment and g) Documented details of quality systems and management.

The findings of the assesment will lead to improving quality standards of the hospitals and help in ensuring best treatment.





## National Low Vision Project

As part of national initiative to address low vision services, Sightsavers started 21 low vision clinics in 2012 and achieved the following:

- Increased the number of eye care professional including of Ophthalmologists and Optometrists capable of Low Vision (LV) assessment
- Provided hospitals with low vision centres staffed with trained Ophthalmologists, Optometrists, LV devices and LV services
- Oriented stakeholders at the state/district inclusive department on low vision and to establish linkage of trained manpower and assistive device providers with the government so that their services can be used for low vision assessment

### Integrating vision centre in primary health centre: A case of Bahadurganj PHC, Kishanganj district, Bihar:

In Kishanganj, Bihar, Sightsavers conducted a joint facility survey to identify the causes of poor eye care services offered by 7 PHCs in the district. The findings culminated in Sightsavers advocacy with the District Health Society of Kishanganj to demonstrate a model of comprehensive primary eye health care service delivery through Primary Health Centres

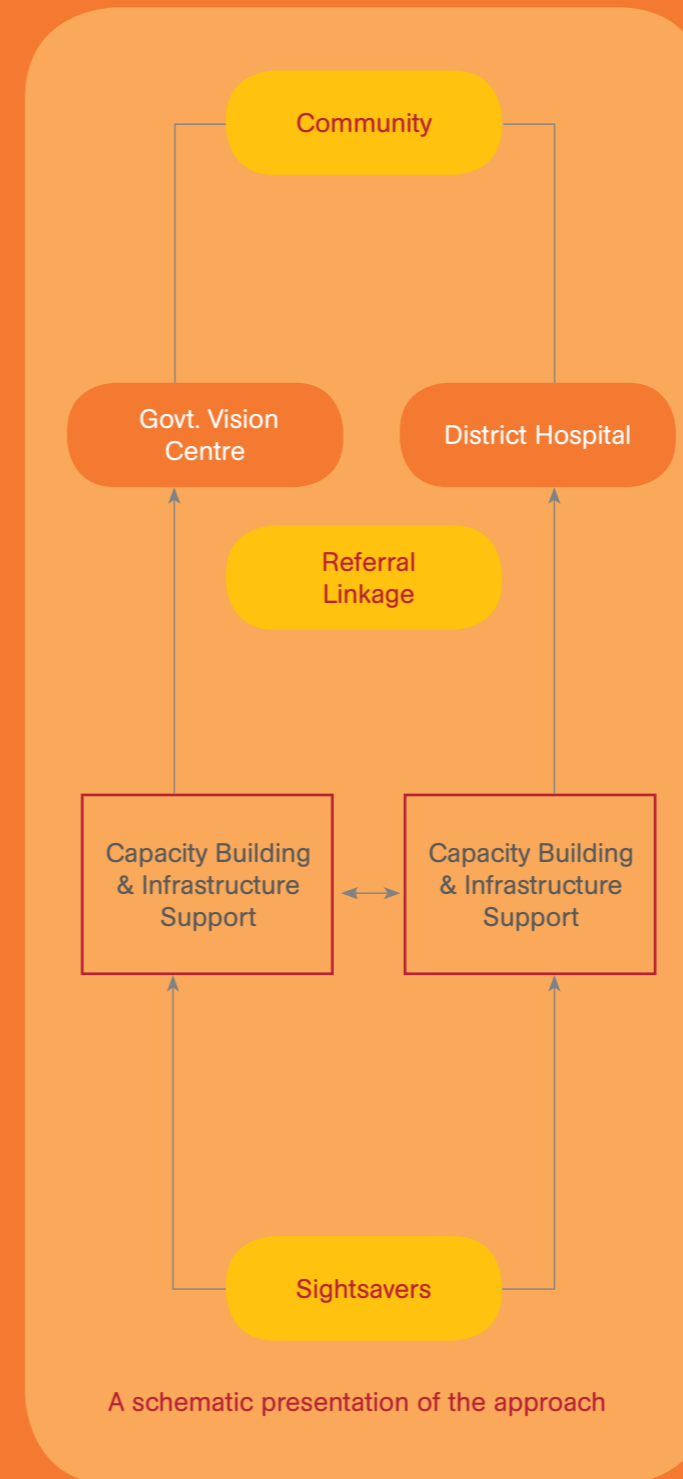
(PHC) by integrating a Vision Centre in a PHC where it was non-functional. The District Health Society of Kishanganj District and Sightsavers agreed to demonstrate functioning of the vision centre at Primary Health Centre in Bahadurganj Community Development Block.

The focal areas of the model were: capacity building and infrastructure support; provisions of more space and better equipment; deputation of mid-level Ophthalmic Assistants (PMOA); management of Vision Centre by a Medical Officer-in-charge of the PHC; and provision of medicines and consumables for the Vision Centre of the PHC by Kishanganj District Health Society.

All this is now practically visible in the Bahadurganj Community Development Block where Vision Centres are linked with district hospital, have refraction and cataract screening and referral services, treat minor ailments, have low vision school screening services, conduct orientation of community health workers like Accredited Social Health Services (ASHAs) and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) by their participation at monthly meetings at the PHCs. Kishanganj is meant for referral services and follow up of the patients for primary and secondary eye diseases. Thus a comprehensive model of delivering primary

and secondary Eye Health services has been demonstrated in Kishanganj district of Bihar through the public health system.

The flow-chart below depicts the comprehensive model of eye care services established in Kishanganj district of Bihar by Sightsavers in partnership with the Government of Bihar.



## National RoP (Retinopathy of Prematurity) Project

Towards the end of 2012 in order to address the capacity of selected eye care centres in the country the national RoP project was started in collaboration with Rajender Prasad Center for Ophthalmic Centres of All India Institute of Medical Sciences with the following major objectives:

- Capacity building of eight networked institutions to further promote RoP services in their respective regions with expected output being improvement in knowledge of stakeholders in the region and in referrals to eight centres and increase in number of screening of premature babies and their timely treatment
- Developing a web-based RoP registry and linking all centres having access to data on RoP management with expected output being high quality quantitative and qualitative data, sharing of experiences and global access to data for better RoP treatment
- Better management of RoP in India by developing a programme manual

## Urban Eye Care- The Process of Transformation

Urban eye care programme is an initiative of Sightsavers in partnership with Standard Chartered Bank under its flagship programme "Seeing is Believing". It is a five year comprehensive eye care project which is implemented in slum communities of Kolkata and Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

### Kolkata

The Kolkata Urban Comprehensive Eye Care Project (KUCECP) was initiated in October 2010. Major achievements during the year include:

- Created awareness among 141 municipal wards on eye care facilities and services in Kolkata
- Ensured primary eye care services to slum communities by establishing 14 vision centres

- > Provided cataract services to 3,830 adult patients which include 2,439 women
- > During this year the project reached out to 21,464 children with provision of screening and thereby providing 5,217 no. of spectacles
- > In total the project could reach to 62,443 no. of people by providing eye screening services during this year
- > As special initiatives the project also addressed the needs of very poor communities living in old age home, sexual workers and in night shelters

During the year the project achieved the following:

- > Created awareness about eye care among 4,44,558 no. of people
- > During this year the project provided eye screening services to 3,28,871 no. people
- > Refractive error services were provided to 403 no. of children and 44,221 no. of adults
- > Project successfully collaborated with various stakeholders including Mumbai Municipal Corporation
- > Project successfully conducted 190 eye camps and addressed the eye care needs of low economic status communities like Rickshaw Drivers, Taxi Drivers, Construction Workers and Domestic Workers
- > The 15 vision centres established in slum communities has made the primary eye care services accessible to them

## Mumbai

Mumbai Eye Care Campaign is a joint initiative of Sightsavers and Standard Chartered Bank aiming at improving the eye health of people in Mumbai. This is supported by Standard Chartered Bank through their 'Seeing is Believing' programme. The campaign started in April 2009.



## Social Inclusion

According to 2001 Census, of the total population, 2.13% (i.e. 21 million) persons live with disabilities in India. 75% of the population of persons with disabilities is concentrated in rural areas and the largest proportion of the people living with disabilities are the ones who are living with visual disability or are blind (48.55%). However, activities related to their inclusion remain fragmented. Even though there has been increasing awareness about inclusion of people with visual impairment, the overall environment is still not disabled-friendly. This is especially true with regard to livelihood options and access to financial services. These pose impediments to the disabled in schooling and finding employment for becoming independent. Contributing to society becomes a huge challenge for people who are visually impaired and this leads to their social exclusion. Inclusive environment for the blind lies at the heart of Sightsavers' commitment and we work with partners to augment educational, rehabilitation, vocational and healthcare support for them so that they can lead normal, productive and independent lives.

### Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Sightsavers has been implementing Social Inclusion projects since 1983 in partnership with NGOs enabling persons with disabilities to live lives of independence and dignity.

Sightsavers' Social Inclusion advocacy efforts have largely demonstrated success in enhancing access of disabled people to government schemes, job reservations, etc.

### Enhanced Accessibility of Government Schemes for PWDs

Project DRISHTI, Bikaner: Bikaner being part of the desert, poor socio economic indicators have made the district, one of the priority districts for any developmental work in the state of Rajasthan. With limited accessibility to government schemes, the vulnerability of people with disability all the more increases, leading to poor social and economic development of PWDs in Bikaner. They are considered unproductive and are confined to their homes with high dependence on the family members for undertaking routine activities.

The DRISHTI project of Bikaner launched in 2009, adopted the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach to ensure the rehabilitation of persons with disability across five blocks in the district of Bikaner. The project aimed at facilitating Social Inclusion of the PWDs through: a) Awareness generation, b) Capacity building of the PWDs,

c) Provisions of assistive devices, d) Sensitisation of communities and other stakeholders, e) Formation of pressure group to advocate for rights and f) Creating an enabling environment for the PWDs to live life with dignity.

The project started with a baseline survey to identify key issues and prepare a database of PWDs across the district. Orientation of the PWDs and training on O&M and Daily Living Skills (DLS) established their rights and entitlements with special focus on the visually impaired. This enabled the PWDs to perform their routine work independently and live with dignity. Provisions for aid and appliances were made for all the PWDs from the project as well as through the social welfare department.

To support advocacy initiatives of the PWDs, they were encouraged to form pressure groups and fight for their rights and entitlements. Formation of groups at the block level later culminated into development of the district level Disabled People Organisation (DPO), Bikaner. The DPO- "ZilaViklangAdhikarManch" pursued issues of rights and entitlements with concerned departments through written complaints and requests with the District Collector, bank managers and local administration. Regular block and district level meetings of the DPOs enabled them to discuss and develop a plan for the future. Linkages with Social Welfare Department, SarvShikshaAbhiyan (SSA), Banks and local administration were developed to ensure that PWDs have greater access to the social and economic



security schemes like VISHWAS, Indira Awaaz, SwarnaJayantiSwarojgar, Pension, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) and Anugrah.

With support from the Uttari Rajasthan SahkariDugdhUtpadakSangh Ltd. (URMUL) network partner, the DPOs pursued the approval of new account opening in banks and requests for loans on the grounds that PWDs were less credit worthy. Applications with the District Collector and Commissioner of Disability with copies marked to Social Welfare department at the district and state levels helped them in opening bank accounts and securing loans. Various advocacy initiatives by the DPOs further helped PWDs to avail jobs under MNREGA, which ensured 100 days of employment for 1755 PWDs in 2012. The success at district level encouraged DPOs to write letters to the Chief Minister requesting for an increase in the budget for the self-employment “VISHWAS” scheme. The State government intervened and increased the allocation under the VISHWAS Scheme for 20 PWDs for the year 2012-2013. The project facilitated the funds worth INR 38.02 million which were accessed by 4600 PWDs of the target blocks during the project duration under various government schemes. This clearly shows that the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach adopted in the project facilitated the social inclusion of the PWDs.

## DPO Empowerment and Livelihood Promotion

Launching of the flagship Social Inclusion Programme in Odisha and Jharkhand focusing on DPO empowerment and livelihood among PWDs:

Sightsavers launched its Social Inclusion flagship programmes in two states – Jharkhand and Odisha. The projects were initiated in 2012 and have now completed their first year of implementation. The main objective of the project is to enable and empower the PWDs in these remote and under developed districts. The programme seeks holistic inclusion of people with disabilities in every aspect of life and thus addresses concerns around entitlement, sensitisation and skill building of stakeholders at ground zero like parents, teachers, health workers, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) members and so on. The programme also has a strong highlight with various activities focusing on liaisoning with government departments at panchayat, block, district and state levels in order to ensure sustainability and long term impact of the work being implemented.

**Funds accessed by PWDs in Bikaner under various schemes in 2012-13**

Name of the Government Scheme	No. of PWDs Benefited	Amount (INR)
Pension Scheme	2472	14,832,000.00
Swarna Jayanti Swarozgar Scheme	82	5,421,000.00
Vishwas Scheme	57	3,530,000.00
MNREGA	1755	8,703,000.00
Indira Housing Scheme	97	4,850,000.00
Anugrah Grant Scheme	137	685,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>4600</b>	<b>38,021,000.00</b>

Table 1 – Status of the funds accessed by PWDs.

Two partners, ManavVikas and ChetnaVikas in Hazaribagh and Dumka districts of Jharkhand are implementing the Jharkhand Social Inclusion Programme respectively. In Odisha, four partners-Jan Jagarana, AdivasiKrushisSwasthyaSikhyaUnnayanaSamithi (AKSSUS), Centres for Community Development (CCD) and ADHAR are working across four districts i.e, Ganjam, Rayagada, Gajapati and Bolangir. The first year of programme implementation has led to the identification and assessment of people with disabilities with regards to their current status in terms of entitlements, knowledge, access to services and livelihood. This was accomplished by means of a door-to-door survey. With availability of the baseline data, the programme has started with its field level interventions in full swing. Disability certifications have been taken as the priority. The project has also conducted skill development camps along with medical and low vision assessment camps. Apart from this, school enrolment and home-based intervention has also been undertaken. To promote the process of inclusion, training has been imparted to school teachers and PRI members at the panchayat and block levels. The first year has set the momentum for the five years project.

**Mission inclusion possible; the success of cross CBR project in Hazaribagh:**

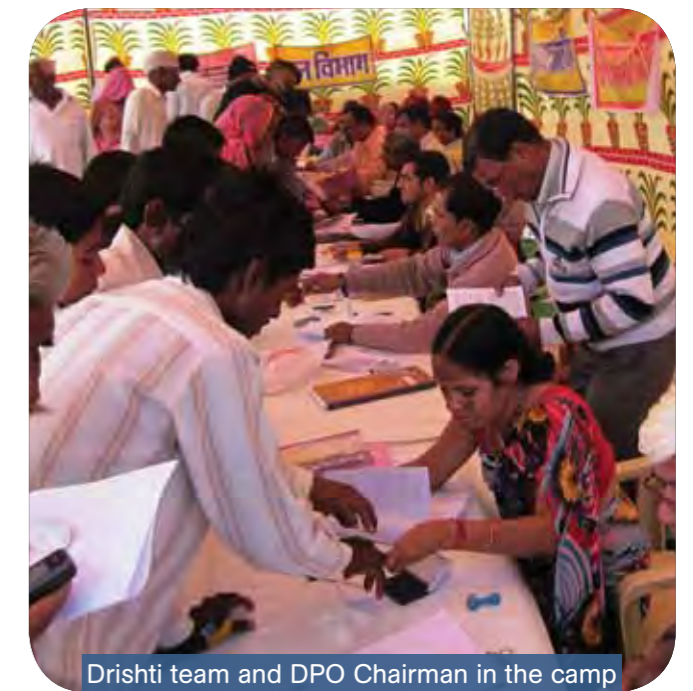
The cross disability project, which is a pilot initiative by Sightsavers in Hazaribagh, is managed by our partner Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra in Chauparan Block. The project focuses on Visual, Speech & Hearing and Locomotor Impairment. The project has identified 1274 persons with locomotor impairment, 224 persons with visual impairment and 449 persons with speech and hearing impairment who have received benefits from different components of the project. To enable access to sources of livelihood a number of identified disabled persons were introduced to and trained in income generation activities.

DPOs were strengthened with leadership development activities, and SHGs were provided support and guidance by partnership organisations with a view to make them independent bodies.

**When the blind see opportunity, they become contributing citizens:**

ChatraramKumhaar lives in Barsalpur, a remote village of Kolayat block in Bikaner district, close to Pakistan border. As a child he suffered from severe pain in his eyes and experienced gradual loss of vision. His father Ashuram had his son’s eyes operated, yet it did not improve his vision. His father did not give up hope and took him for check-ups at various hospitals in Bikaner and Barmer but all efforts turned futile resulting in Chatraram’s forced isolation at home, doing nothing. Moreover, the absence of special education in his locality made him remain illiterate and lack of proper training made him unable to undertake routine tasks independently. He became dependent on his family members for the simplest of things.

In the year 2009, representatives of our NGO partner UrmulSeemantSamiti visited his house during a routine survey under the DRISHTI project of Sightsavers. Chatraram was identified in the survey and he was given orientation on the rights and entitlements of the persons with disabilities. The project oriented and taught him to successfully undertake routine tasks through Orientation and Mobility (O&M) and Daily Life Skills (DLS).



The team Urmul supported him regularly with information on the government schemes and benefits for persons with disabilities. He got his disability certificate, bus pass, rail pass, MNREGA job card and also got registered for the pension for the PWDs. He started thinking of contributing to the family income.

In 2010 with the support from the project team, he applied for a loan under the VISHWAS (economic rehabilitation scheme) scheme of the government through which he got a loan INR 100,000. Of this amount, INR 30,000 was subsidy for the PWDs. He used that amount and engaged himself in two Income Generating Programmes i.e. a pottery store and a small shop. His innovative idea of transporting drinking water to the village turned out to be a gainful occupation that earned him some money. Within a short span of time Chatraram has managed to increase his income to INR 6,000 per month. He has been repaying his loan and interest amount regularly and also supporting his younger brother in taking up water transport business which has led to further enhancement in the family income. From being a liability for the family, he has transformed himself into a contributing citizen.

Today, Chatraram lives a dignified life. The local people praise him and recognise him as role model for the community. The metamorphosis in the life of Chatraram is remarkable.

#### District Disability Resource Centre launched in Odisha and Jharkhand:

Sightsavers and its NGO partners have launched four District Disability Resource Centres (DDRC) in Odisha and two in Jharkhand. The Resource Centres shall be managed by the District Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and it will create a level playing field for the disabled persons in the district. The disabled leaders from the DPOs are also provided training on managing the DDRC. The centres shall manage disability statistics and information and will support the district administration in their plan to include disabled persons in all round development.



DPO meeting in progress

The DDRC shall also take multiple training programmes ranging from livelihood and vocational training to building leadership. The opening of the centre has given an institutionalised voice to the PWDs in their respective districts. The DDRC also hosts meetings of Disabled Persons Organisations. DPOs where leaders across the District gather every month to pursue their development and inclusion agenda. The centres are working closely with the District Social Welfare Department, Department of Education and other concerned departments and agencies to mainstream the inclusion of PWDs in the wider development scene.

#### Sankara – Sightsavers Inclusion Park at Bangalore

Kids are kids because of their characteristics such as innocence, playfulness, naughtiness and unbounded thinking. This priceless childhood can get robbed if any of these characteristics are marred as a result of disability - especially if the disability is as cruel as vision impairment. Sightsavers work with Sankara aims to not just only restore the eyesight for kids but also to re-establish the childhood in these little ones. This noble aspiration has acted as an impetus to set up an inclusion park for visually impaired children in the courtyard of the Sankara Eye Hospital.

The inclusion park in Sankara premises is an interactive platform providing an opportunity to children, the



Children playing in Inclusion Park

visually impaired and the sighted, as well as adults to interact with one another.

This park is an attempt to bring visually impaired and sighted children on a common platform and allow them to interact and learn from one another. It comprises of inclusive games like knots and crosses, tangram, snakes and ladders, simulation activities for the sighted children to make them experience the plight of the visually impaired, sensory park, museum exhibit - a permanent exhibit featuring art and photographs taken by blind children to showcase "Ability" and a small library of braille and low vision magazines.

#### Awareness and belief helps others to solve their eye problems as well

Mr. Jayashing Phapale, aged 48, is a senior member of the **Nutan Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Association** (Dabbawala). He has been delivering tiffin's across Mumbai since the last 32 years and is also the treasurer of the Dabbawala Foundation and Mandal.

He along with another 5,000 odd Dabbawala's delivers over two lakh tiffin boxes across Mumbai daily. Though the job sounds straight forward but it entails rigorous detailing. Each Tiffin box is given a unique identity number which helps them to identify the delivery point for the tiffin.

All was going well until a couple of years back when he started facing difficulty with his vision.

He couldn't read the unique numbers on the tiffin boxes properly and this affected his work and time schedule of delivering the tiffin's. It even became difficult for him to write his own and the Mandal's daily accounts.

Though Mr. Phapale was aware of Mumbai Eye Care Campaign's mobile van activity, he could not find time to get himself checked. It's then when he realized that there may be many more like him who would be ignoring such problems due to lack of time/money.

In March 2013, on the occasion of the annual pooja ceremony of the Dabbawala foundation, Mr. Phapale took the lead in organizing a screening camp through the Mumbai Eye Care Campaign for the Dabbawala's and their family members. 51 persons (including Mr. Phapale) were found to have some vision problem and were prescribed spectacles.

Mr. Phapale is happy to be able to see clear again and is now an ambassador for eye health awareness amongst his community. He says **"It is amazing, how a simple pair of spectacle solved my problem. Thanks to MECC, today I am back at full efficiency."**





## Inclusive Education

The PWD (The Persons with Disabilities) Act, 1995 and the Right to Education Act 2010 together have made it possible for every disabled child to access free education till the age of 18. The SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) is the Central Government's flagship programme for Universal Elementary Education with a special focus on children with special needs which aims to ensure that they are accepted into the mainstream schooling system. It coordinates an annual community-based identification of blind and LV children in India. There are 5,94,716 blind and LV identified children of which, 5,39,244 (91%) are registered in schools.

Sightsavers' work complements the efforts of SSA and enables its strategic interventions on making Inclusive Education for the blind and low vision children a reality.

### Inclusive Education of Blind and Low Vision Children

Sightsavers' Inclusive Education programme is spread in most of the needy states, with implementation taking place at the district level. It focuses intensively on developing individual education plans, monitoring the child's progress and supporting resource teachers. Sightsavers' advocacy initiatives on Inclusive Education have been instrumental in strengthening implementation of SSA programmes for Children with Disabilities (CWD).

Sightsavers currently supports over 3000 children with disability in the mainstream education system with more being added each year. This enables children with disabilities to access quality education along with all children. Inclusive Education is a model which enables the sighted and the visually impaired to study together in comfortable settings, thereby enabling the disabled child to be part of the holistic mainstream development process. Sightsavers works in coordination with the Government's SSA

programme and thus maximises the return through collective efforts, making CWDs feel a part of mainstream society.

Partnership and collaboration with both Government and Non-Government stakeholders forms the hinge of Sightsavers' inclusive education strategy. We collaborate with the Government to strengthen the state's education system for effective service delivery in schools. Sightsavers and its partners have proven their effectiveness in collaborating with governments to screen children for low vision, providing them with assistive devices, training of teachers etc. Based on our success in various states, the Ministry of Human Resource Development issued a letter to all the states to encourage collaboration with Sightsavers. This letter promoted many requests from states to collaborate with them. MoU's with the state governments of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh to implement programmes jointly has been a significant step in this direction.



Launch of Inclusive Education Programme for Children in Jharkhand



### Global CEO at the launch of Jharkhand Inclusive Education Programme

In collaboration with the Jharkhand Education Project Council, Sightsavers launched its flagship Jharkhand Inclusive Education project on 15th May, 2012 at Ranchi. Mr. Satish Chandra, Disability Commissioner, Jharkhand officiated the launch of the programme in the presence of Dr. Caroline Harper, OBE, CEO, Sightsavers and other dignitaries from the Government of Jharkhand.

The launch event was attended by representatives of Jharkhand Education Project Council, district

and block education programmes, State Blindness Control Programme, INGOs, NGOs and other partner organisations of Sightsavers working in the field of education. Jharkhand Inclusive Education Programme will support the State SarvaShikshaAbhiyan programme to strengthen its Inclusive Education agenda by developing inclusive education workforce, provide educational aids and appliances, and undertake clinical and functional assessments for CWSN. The project will also create awareness and sensitisation among parents and communities.



### From Education to Rights; Voices of Children with Disabilities Reaches Delhi

Sightsavers along with World Vision India, organised a Disabled Children Assembly in Delhi to amplify the voices of Children with Disability for their inclusive development. Visually Impaired children from Sightsavers' Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion projects were part of this children's special assembly. The National Forum of Children with Disabilities, representing more than 1000 children with disabilities from seven states and north eastern states of India came together in New Delhi to discuss about issues

related to children achieving their fullest potential. Children raised a united voice on issues related to quality education, accessibility, health, nutrition and deprivation. The children's assembly interacted with national government officials, international NGO representatives, policy makers and urged on the need for early action to fulfil their demands. The function sensitised a large number of stakeholders from government, civil society, corporate and other educational institutions.

### Developing Teachers for Inclusive Education

Developing quality human resource (teachers) is one of the critical areas for the success of any education programme. Sightsavers has taken this as a priority area in its Inclusive Education programme aimed at strengthening the inclusive education system. In 2012, we trained over 2,900 teachers spread across the various states where we work, contributing to efforts in improving the quality of education and learning outcomes among children.



### Prioritising Sports in Inclusive Education Initiatives; Inclusive Sports Training Imparted to Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Staff

Comprehensive development of persons with disability can only be achieved when we include aspects of co-curricular activities like sports and culture in the overall development of children with disabilities.

In this context, a 'Train the Trainer Camp' was organised from 25th to 29th September 2012. The training provided basic information to the participants regarding sports for the disabled, health, nutrition, physical exercise etc. The participants were oriented



to understand sports and games according to the needs of Persons with Visual Impairment (PVI) so as they could coach PVI for sports. The camp also included practical orientation on training the PVI in selected games and planning sports events for PVI.

This was the first step to systematise the sports components of Social Inclusion and Inclusive Education programmes. The participants were enthusiastic with the practical knowledge they gained and the new experience of organising the sports training.

Seven children with visual impairment (three girls and four boys) from Raipur district of Chhattisgarh

participated in the National Paralympics Competitions held at Bengaluru in March 2012 and they came up with flying colors. They won two Gold, eight Silver and three Bronze medals in various track and field events. They were felicitated by the 'Youth and Sports Ministry' of the State Government and received cash rewards from the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. Gold, Silver and Bronze awardees received INR 15000, INR 10,000 each and INR 7000 each respectively. Participation in sports has increased their level of confidence and self-esteem and provided motivation for other children as well.

heart, and the parents allowed Samsuddin to attend a three- day camp for orientation.

The camp opened Samsuddin's eyes to a world of education and he became enthusiastic about education. He was diagnosed with low vision but nonetheless the social worker advised that he be taught Braille. Samsuddin was admitted to his age appropriate class and began his education. Today, Samsuddin attends school every day. He can do calculations on the Taylor frame and he can write

single line sentences in Hindi Braille. He regularly visits the Mosque where he receives religious education. His world has now expanded from the narrow confines of the home, to the world of education.

Samsuddin has been provided with all education materials and has also received a scholarship. This year he was promoted to Std IV. Today, his entire community is supportive and believes in his potential and is hopeful about his future.

## Transforming Lives of the Visually Impaired Children

### Dispelling Darkness, Lighting the Lamp of Literacy

Fourteen year old Samsuddin lives in a make shift house made of local material, in HetukiDhan, a small hamlet in the Pokhran block of Jaisalmer district. His small two room home is situated in a remote location, 10 km away from the nearest road. He lives here with his eight siblings and his father is the sole bread earner in the family. They make a living by rearing goats and planting seasonal crops.

Samsuddin suffers from low vision. He never went to school, was illiterate and had been living a life of seclusion until he was identified during a baseline survey by the Sightsavers' project in 2010. Illiteracy, limited understanding of visual impairment and a defeatist attitude ruled in the household and his family members were reluctant to let the child leave the confines of the home. Continued dialogue and counselling over a period of six months precipitated a change of



## Turning Disability into Ability

Master Chintoo is a nine year old boy who lives in Pokhran in Jaisalmer district. Deepak Kumar, alias Chintoo was born blind. He is the son of Jitendra Kumar who is a handcart owner, transporting small quantities of goods in the city. The family is originally from Uttar Pradesh, but migrated to Rajasthan in search of wage work, and finally settled there.

Chintoo has two brothers and he is the youngest of the siblings. Besides owning a handcart and transporting goods, Chintoo's father sells petty goods to earn a little more income. His mother helps in preparing such items and she is good at preparing a variety of ice creams which are popular amongst the local community.

Chintoo was identified by a Sightsavers project in 2010, and was examined by an Ophthalmologist who suggested that he be taught Braille reading and writing. Constant communication and convincing over time elicited consent from Jitendra Kumar to send his children to school. With regular support and intervention from the Education Facilitator, the children have improved a lot.

Chintoo was put through a skill development camp for a month's period where he developed skills in singing and sports. Chintoo loved sports and enjoyed participating in sporting events. He was encouraged

to participate in the annual sports meet organised by the National Association for the Blind where he won an award for excellent performance in the spoon race. The award made his family proud of him and they saw him in another light.

Today, Chintoo's father has affixed a photograph of him getting the commendation and joyfully tells this story with great pride to all his customers. From being a blind and disabled child, Chintoo has discovered new abilities and is flowering as a confident individual. Sightsavers is proud to have played a role in this blossoming.



Chintoo won an award for excellent performance in the spoon race



### CBR & IE Partner Staff Trained on Handling Reproductive & Sexual Health Issues of Visually Impaired Adolescents

Young people living with disability are among the most vulnerable and marginalised. It is widely acknowledged that the greatest impediments for young disabled people are prejudice, social isolation and discrimination, especially for visually impaired young people who are particularly at risk. However, there are very few experts to address the problems of visually impaired adolescents. Looking at the availability of experts with appropriate skills in addressing the needs of visually impaired adolescents, Sightsavers decided to train CBR and Education staff to develop teaching and counselling methodologies that would be suitable for use with visually impaired adolescents.

With a view to address the health needs of adolescent VI girls and boys, 37 field workers and IE teachers of two partners – TarunSanskar and Dalit Sangh of Madhya Pradesh implementing CBR/IE project were equipped with required skills and knowledge on adolescent health issues facilitated by an external adolescent health specialist. The training

covered issues related to: a) physical, mental, and social changes which occur during adolescence; b) nature of the menstrual cycle; c) importance of good nutrition; d) health problems due to unhygienic practices and e) physical and sexual abuse.

It was also observed that there is lack of braille and tactile education materials available on adolescent health issues. Hence, they developed materials themselves, such as tactile bead necklaces to explain the different stages of the menstrual cycle. Teachers were also advised to develop links with the government other development agencies who provide adolescent friendly health services as a part of their health programme.

This training would definitely support a large group of adolescents living with disability in acquiring the necessary skills to handle stressful situations and to protect themselves from sexual abuse. This programme will be replicated with other partners in Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Attitude towards children with disabilities form the greatest hurdle in their path to independence. Inclusive education helps combat ignorant perspectives and stigma associated with disability



## Advocacy

With a strong nation-wide operational presence, close alignment with national issues, and a history of advocacy for the rights of those who are visually impaired, Sightsavers weaves 'Advocacy' as a binding thread through all its work and aims to facilitate sustained and large scale change in each of its three core themes i.e, Eye Health, Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion.

### Advocacy as a Focus

Advocacy for change is part of the Sightsavers' agenda, change in attitudes, change in policies impacting eye health or the rights of disabled people. We campaign for children with disabilities to be included in mainstream schools, for adults who are blind to be supported to live independently, and for eye health to be given the attention it deserves in government budgets.

In order to influence governments to affect change, we work towards providing adequate evidence, research and policy documentation illustrating that the issues we are concerned with, need serious consideration. We also help people who are blind to advocate for their rights, and the most impactful way of doing this is to work with blind or disabled peoples organisations.



## Achievements Through Advocacy

Working with our partners or other coalitions to ensure our voice as effective as possible, we have found that advocacy has had a profound and long lasting impact on our programmes. Sightsavers in India has achieved significant successes in advocacy at the national and state levels.

The Eye Health advocacy successes were geared towards increasing grants from National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB)/Director of Health Services (DHS)/Panchayat and strengthening facilities and their functioning. The Social Inclusion, Advocacy successes were largely about enhancing access of disabled people to facilities already available for them (e.g, government schemes and grants, reservations, local representatives support). The advocacy successes on Inclusive Education were primarily towards strengthening implementation of the government SSA programmes for VI children.

## From Negation to Affirmation with Advocacy

A community based rehabilitation project in the village of Benisar in Bikaner district changed the lives of visually impaired Sohanlal and Meghramare and made people view them through a new perspective.

Regular counselling and training offered by the community based rehabilitation group enabled them to live their lives independently. With knowledge and orientation about government schemes along with help to access them, they rehabilitated themselves and began working in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NAREGA) scheme while running petty shops to earn a decent livelihood. They also became active members of the Disabled Persons Organisation and provided support to other members in pursuing cases of rights and entitlements of the people with disabilities.

Yet their rehabilitation would not be without impediments. In December 2010, they applied for a loan from the State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur under the SwarnaJayantiSwarojgarYojana for goat rearing. Their loan application was rejected by the Bank Manager who stated that they were amongst the least credit worthy and their visual impairment made them incapable of rearing goats.

Disappointed at this outright rejection of their proposal, despite enabling rules mandating their right to a loan, they took the matter up within the Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO). Key members and the Project Manager of the DPO decided to take up the matter by visiting the bank and trying to advocate a change in the mind-set of the Manager.

However, they met with disappointment due to the adamant attitude of the Bank Manager. Undeterred by this rejection, Sohanlal and Meghramare pursued this matter with the Chief Commissioner for persons with disability, Mr.PrasannaPincha, who gave them copies of the PWD act and the RBI guidelines and suggested this be shown to the Bank Manager.

Their next visit to the Bank also proved futile. They again advocated for their rights through the Commissioner of the Commission for People with Disabilities at Jaipur, seeking justice in this matter. Letters were sent by the DPO to the Commissioner and the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, escalating this issue to the level of policy makers. Repeated advocacy efforts and intervention of the Chief Commissioner for PWDs resulted in sanction of loan to Sohanlal and Meghramare.

Today, inspired by the example of Sohanlal and Meghramare, the DPO has become stronger, and it regularly takes up such matters of advocacy to eliminate existing prejudices against the disabled. Members have renewed hope that their rights and entitlements would not be denied to them.



Communication personality development

## Empowerment of DPO Members Leading to Successful Advocacy

Teaching PWDs to advocate for self and peers has been a strategy being followed by Sightsavers for promoting comprehensive inclusion of PWDs. The Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) have been strengthened and empowered to raise their voices 'to be included' on social entitlements and rights. Reversing the trend which excludes PWDs from processes and systems has yielded results due to the persistence of these DPOs and enhanced capacities of the members to effectively advocate.

Sightsavers' contribution to build the leadership skills, orient them in development paradigm and using international instruments like UNCRPD and organisational development has strengthened these DPOs. Some of the highlights on success story of the DPO movement are worth mentioning in this context.

Perseverance of 35 Members of DPO at Hoshangabad, (MP), resulted in very relevant victories such as:

- a) Construction of a bridge and road in the village Karanpur;
- b) Getting loans for PWDs;
- c) District panchayat organising marriages of persons with visual impairment and
- d) Monetary incentive to PWDs from the Government.

Advocacy of DPO members of Sultanpur convinced the Railway authorities to commission construction of a ramp

at Sultanpur railway station and opening of a separate enquiry window for enabling PWDs to access information.

The DPO members are much more politically aware and active than earlier. Their participation in the Gram Sabha meetings and raising issues related to their exclusion is a regular feature. Awareness has helped them realise the importance of the election process and now they are participating in electing their representatives through a formal election mechanism.

Advocacy is also helping in changing and establishing new systems. The DPO supported by Raipur Social Inclusion Programme advocated and achieved a proper system of certification in the district Baloda Bazar which is a newly formed district of Chhattisgarh.

The Advocacy of DPO at Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh resulted in the sanction of an additional budget of INR 41 million for pension of PWDs in district Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh. This is more than ten times the budget for last year. The change has come as a result of the achievement of advocacy initiatives taken at district level and the participation of the DPO at the state level advocacy.

The success of the DPOs has helped build the movement where more than 8000 PWDs are part of this large scale 'initiative for change'.





## Copyright and Sightsavers: Readability in Braille v/s Availability of Braille Based Books

The ability to read in Braille is useless unless there is enough material available to read in this format. There are 15 million blind and visually impaired people in India. While Sightsavers and many other organisations help them to read in Braille, without availability of ample reading materials in this format, our efforts will be futile. Research points out that a mere 0.5% of the total material that was printed in India was available for reading in Braille. The Indian Copyright Act did not also contain any limitation/exception to allow conversion of this reading material into an accessible format. Inclusion demanded that this situation be changed.

In 2006, Government of India proposed to carry out amendment in the Copyright Act. The amendment proposed for the blind community however was inadequate improving the situation.

In 2007, Sightsavers embarked upon Project Access with Xavier's Resource Centre for Visually Challenged (XRCVC) and one of its primary objectives was to work for the appropriate amendment to the Copyright Act. Several attempts were made to speak to the Copyright registrars and other bureaucrats. By the middle of 2010, this movement assumed momentum. We prepared three versions of drafts with varying levels of acceptability to negotiate our way to the proposed amendment.

We engaged with politicians and other stakeholders to garner support for our position. We also convinced publishers to make material available in an acceptable format, or in case they were not interested, allow us to do the conversion.

Simultaneously, we developed an ad-hoc network of members in India who worked on the World Blind Union called the National Access Alliance. Sightsavers was actively involved in planning and negotiating at all levels.

Eventually, in May of 2012, the Indian Parliament passed the amendment that gave an excellent opportunity to get maximum material into accessible format. In fact, the term "accessible format" was kept open and was liberally interpreted. This was a major achievement and was a precedent for the negotiation for an International Treaty for the Blind that was being negotiated in Switzerland.

*Advocacy won the day and we made another important step towards Social Inclusion of the Visually Impaired!*



### Sightsavers' Participation at Ninth General Assembly of IAPB, Hyderabad

Sightsavers' Participation at Ninth General Assembly of IAPB, Hyderabad

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) was established in 1975 as a coordinating, umbrella organisation to lead international efforts in blindness prevention activities. Its first major achievement was to promote the establishment of a WHO programme for prevention of blindness, with which it has remained strongly linked, and which is now embodied in the global initiative, VISION 2020: The Right to Sight.

IAPB's Ninth General Assembly, held in September 2012

in Hyderabad, India was arguably the biggest gathering of Eye Care professionals covering every aspect of Eye Health. With more than 1,600 registered delegates from 86 countries, IAPB's quadrennial event lived up to its theme, "Eye Health: Everyone's Business".

At the assembly venue Sightsavers had put off a display exhibiting its journey since its inception and contribution in the field of eye health.

The event underscored IAPB's role in the eye care industry as a key hub for knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and collaboration. A majority of its 120 member organisations participated in sizeable numbers, and the event helped forge a feeling of camaraderie and purpose.

### Sightsavers' Participation in the First World CBR Congress, Agra

The First CBR World Congress, co-sponsored by WHO, the Governments of Australia and the United States and two international NGOs: CBM International and Sightsavers, took place in Agra, India in November 2012. This historic event brought together 1,300 people from over 86 predominantly low and middle-income countries.

The theme of the Congress was: "Using CBR as a means for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". At the convention Sightsavers showcased the importance of human rights of persons with disabilities and the need to make international development inclusive of people with disabilities.

The culmination of the first CBR World Congress was establishment of the CBR Global Network, which brings together representatives from three existing regional networks from Africa, the Asia Pacific, and the Americas, and which involves 82 countries. People with disabilities and their organisations played a key role in the Congress and establishment of the Global Network.

During the Congress, a number of key strategies were discussed drawing on good practice in using CBR to support disability-inclusive development. CBR remains a cornerstone of WHO's work to enhance the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families.

The second CBR World Congress, to be organised by the new CBG Global Network, will take place in Malaysia in 2016.

## Changing from Click to Voice Talking ATM

This was an advocacy success achieved through 'Project Access', a joint project by Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged and Sightsavers.

"There is light ahead of the tunnel, figuratively, for the visually challenged people. For, banks are now waking up to make their daily tribulations a tad simpler. At least two banks have taken the first step by deploying what is described as 'accessible ATMs' in deference to the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India that at least one third of new ATMs installed should be talking ATMs with Braille keypads and that such ATMs should be strategically located in order to be available in each locality to the visually challenged people."

This has been largely made possible by the joint efforts of an advocacy group, the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC) and the Sightsavers, which launched 'Project Access' in October 2007, aiming among other things, to work towards building a social climate where the visually challenged in the country are not actively deprived but are equally empowered to access financial services like any other citizen.

It has been a long journey for XRCVC and Sightsavers to get the ATM manufacturers into their fold, doing research along with them to understand all the specific requirements of the visually challenged people and to come out with a format that will be the most suited one. The study in fact began in 2006 with two ATM manufacturers, NCR Corporation and Diebold India, and it took nearly three years to manufacture the machines that met with the requirements.

Some of the key features of the accessible ATMs are:

- Audio startups and guide of menus
- Voice output for transaction
- Tactile cues for the buttons
- Colour contrast and font sizes accessible for low vision users
- Cubicle and ATM size accessible for wheelchair users

Accessible ATMs are also providing physical accessibility facilities like ramp, floor guidance, door size, height and

reach, floor space, railings. A visually challenged person can independently operate an ATM machine for cash withdrawal, balance enquiry and PIN change, while Braille signage are put on the machine for locating ATM parts like card slot, cash dispenser, receipt printer, etc. The talking ATM mode is enabled through insertion of a headphone in an audio jack of the machine and the use of ATM keypad matrix helps complete the ATM operation. This functionality is similar to an IVR system wherein only number options are used to select different options. The keypad is a standard telephone matrix keypad with a raised dot on the key number five which is a universal design. A visually challenged user uses this key five as a reference key and can easily locate other number keys. Keypad buttons orientation is provided so that a visually challenged person can easily find buttons like Cancel, Clear and Enter. Also these three function keys have distinct raised symbols so that a visually challenged user can feel and press a correct key. Keypad number pressed is supported by a beep sound. Union Bank of India added an important factor to the talking ATM - bilingual orientation so that a visually challenged person who is a first time user will get complete orientation of the ATM and can learn different keys and slots on his own. An important security feature of talking ATM is that it provides the person an option to blank out the screen as a safety mechanism to avoid over the shoulder surfing by any by-stander trying to access customer data during the transaction.

Apart from Union Bank of India and Standard Chartered Bank, State Bank of India too has introduced the talking ATMs.

### Daunting Task Ahead

Ketan Kothari, programme development advisor for social inclusion at Sightsavers India, is happy that the project has been able to accomplish the first level of its daunting task. However, he is sceptical whether the mind-set of the people has changed. "For example," he says, "look at the stipulation by banks that a visually challenged person can only open a joint account in a bank where the joint account holder has to be a sighted person. I admit there are risks involved in financial transactions done by

a visually challenged person, but the need of the hour is to make fool-proof systems so that even ordinary people with disabilities can easily operate such systems and have trust in them. There is technology available and banks can easily evolve such systems. Biometrics is a wonderful tool!"

He says the intention behind the amendments to the rules is all good, "but I do not see much of a progress toward making a blind person self-reliant. I think this can be achieved only when the mind-set of the people change and there is willingness to make such systems work efficiently and effectively."

He lauds the efforts of the banks, especially the nationalised banks in having made a beginning. "They have come out with talking ATMs, which are really helpful for visually challenged people as the system developed - in consultation with the people manning Project Access - is effective, efficient and friendly. However, I believe it will take time for more such machines to be deployed and only then will the

true benefits expected of such machines be realised by the visually challenged people."

### Bank Accounts

Kothari emphasises that banks should allow visually challenged people to operate bank accounts on their own unlike the present joint account system, where he says, they are deprived of a facility that is otherwise available to any Indian citizen. "If it is a question of their signatures, this can be easily tackled by the e-signatures or digital signatures, which have almost become a norm these days. There is also biometrics available in such situations. If a visually challenged person can get himself or herself educated, secure degrees as high as PhDs, why should they be deprived of the facility of operating their own bank accounts?"

His question to banks is: "Why should they not consider servicing the needs of the visually challenged people as a business opportunity rather than as a CSR initiative?"



# Testimonials and Thank You Letters

## What our donors have to say about us...

“The behavior of the staffs of Sundarban Social Development Centre (SSDC) eye hospital is very good and I will pray to God for the success of SSDC eye hospital. The hospital is like a home and they have taken very good care of me. Henceforth I will refer all old people from my village to SSDC for cataract surgery”

- Mrs.AratiBala (Sightsavers beneficiary - Sunderban)

“Donating through Sightsavers is really a matter of satisfaction and I feel that having contributed for betterment of human life is a straight service to God”

- Mr.Sudhir Kr. Yadav, (Donor - NHPC Faridabad)

“I feel eyes are the window to the world around us and missing this vital ability is bound to create lot of hurdles for the people suffering from full or partial blindness. I am happy to be associated with Sightsavers, which is doing remarkable work in bringing hope to millions of people suffering from blindness and other sight related deficiencies”

- Mr.Yash Parekh (Donor – Mumbai)

“One should contribute for the people who are not so bestowed in health by God and through Sightsavers I have been able to do that”

- Mr. Harish Moolchandani (Donor - NHPC Faridabad)

“I donated to Sightsavers because I would like to light in others life and I found Sightsavers an ideal organisation”

- Subhash L. Tidke (Donor - Delhi)

“I find it amazing... the efforts made by Sightsavers and hope they continue to do so. After I saw the photographs taken by the children whose sight had been restored, it really felt good to know that they are being looked after with a lot of care and love.

May the efforts of Sightsavers continue to grow and may they excel in their ambition to save all those who come to them”

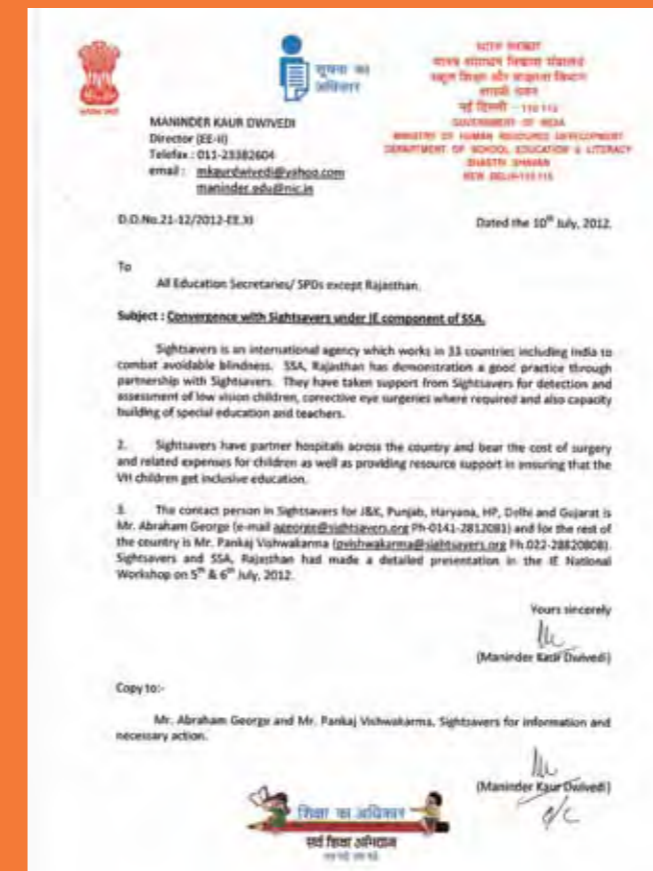
- Patricia P. Sadri (Donor - Mumbai)

## What our partners have to say about us...

“Sightsavers have carried out periodical Clinical, Financial and Administrative assessments through experts which helped GomabaiNetralaya in maintaining high standards of Clinical, Administrative and Financial protocols. Sightsavers also helped GomabaiNetralaya in capacity building of doctors and staff.

Without all these supports from Sightsavers it would not have been possible for this Netralaya to rise to the present level. We express our sincere gratitude for their continuous support to us and hope that we would be getting the same support and guidance in future also.”

M. L. Trivedi (Hospital Superintendent)  
GomabaiNetralaya, Nimach (M.P.)



Extract of a mail from Mr. Rust written on Monday, February 20, 2012 6:44 PM to Sightsavers representative, expressing his experience of visit to Barmer district where he witnessed the health, education and social inclusion work. Detailed report can be read on :<http://grahamrust-murals.com/visit-to-india-sightsavers>.

“I cannot tell you what a wonderful time I had in India. You organised it all perfectly, filling every day with



interesting things to do and see. I am so pleased that I kept a journal as it is hard to remember every detail.

I was much impressed by the work that you are doing in conjunction with the people on the ground there. Their dedication and care is very moving and I hope very much that I might help to facilitate things a little. You are all doing so much and yet there is so much to do, as you very clearly explained to me.”

Graham Redgrave - Rust is internationally renowned for his murals and ceiling paintings which can be found in houses in Britain, Europe, America, and The Middle East. He lives and works in Suffolk and has had twenty nine one-man exhibitions including four in aid of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (Sightsavers)

"It is a great discernible change taking place around the bordering district of Barmer and Jaisalmer in western Rajasthan. Over a period of time with continuous intervention, large change has occurred in the attitude and awareness level of the communities, also a good work has been done around strengthening the systems. As a result of the approach, lot many people are accessing quality services, a good number of children with visual impairment who otherwise deprived of the quality education, are being enrolled and securing as high as 90% marks in exams, sometime much better than their peers and at the same time thousand number of people have been

benefited with sight restoration surgeries thereby reconnecting to their livelihood."

LataKachhwaha, Project Director, education project in Barmer and Joint Secretary, society to uplift Rural Economy, Barmer (A partner of Sightsavers since the year 2000).

"Sightsavers have brought resources, including technologies, training, knowledge and expertise to meet specific needs of the children with disabilities, teachers, schools and education planners. The partnership is an innovative approach that seeks to reach out to as many children as possible in difficult to reach areas like the Thar desert using community based education models and rolling out new initiatives at the state level. I sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the work of Sightsavers. Our partnership with Sightsavers has been quite fruitful".

Smt. Veenu Gupta is a 1987 batch IAS officer from Rajasthan Cadre. She is currently the Principal Secretary, Education Department in Rajasthan.



### What our beneficiaries have to say about us?

"I thank Sightsavers and society to uplift rural economy for employing me; it is rare in my area that a blind person gets a job of mentoring others, thanks Sightsavers for breaking that taboo. Sightsavers is one of the few organisations who believe in practicing of what they preach to others."

Mr. Poonam Chand (A blind man in Jodhpur and mentor of blind people's forum who raises voices before the authorities)

"Not a single blind child should be out of the school, education is the only way to get a vision back. I aspired to become an educator, today I am shortlisted for a position of assistant teacher for a government school in Bikaner district. I must say - it was impossible without the support of my teacher and project Sightsavers".

Mahesh Sharma, Jodhpur, a child supported by education project



# Branding and Events



## “Through Different Eyes”: From Sight to Views

‘Through Different Eyes’ was a first of its kind initiative undertaken by Sightsavers in India. The initiative involved exhibiting pictures taken by children whose eyesight was restored (to the best possible condition) with the help of Sightsavers and its partners.

The pictures captured the world through the vision of the newly “sighted” children and expressed their joy and exhilaration at being able to “see”. The initiative began with a photography workshop held in Bangalore in March of 2012 and ended with the creation of a Sightsavers desk top calendar in December of 2012.

### Here are a Few Glimpses from the Three Workshops



Children in Bangalore being given the training in local language



Rugveer does his best to focus on a flower



Harish with hands on practice



Yakub and Ashok trying their skills at taking photo



Training session at Kolkata



Dipankar takes a shot

## “Through Different Eyes”- Photography Exhibition, Mumbai, May 2012

A photography exhibition was organised at St. Xavier’s College, and was inaugurated by Shri Suresh Shetty, Hon. Minister for Public Health and Family Welfare, Government of Maharashtra. The exhibition featured 40 photographs taken by 10 children from Karnataka. Case studies of these children’s road to rediscovering sight were also displayed enabling the visitors to experience the difference that the ‘ability to see’ makes in the lives of the visually impaired!



Sightsavers' global CEO, Dr. Caroline Harper at the event



Shri Suresh Shetty inaugurating the exhibition

## Photo Competition, Bhopal, October 2012

On the occasion of World Sight Day, on 11th October, Sightsavers organised a photo competition as part of our awareness initiative, ‘Through Different Eyes’. The theme of the competition was “Cherishing Vision” and participants were asked to take pictures of the sight that moved them most. A panel of judges shortlisted selected entries from the over 100 that we received.

## Exhibition and Activities in Bangalore, November 2012

The exhibition was inaugurated by H. E. Shri H. R. Bhardwaj, Governor of Karnataka at Raj Bhavan. The exhibition was also taken to the Sankara Eye Hospital and to the Mantri Hall for expanded visibility. It was also featured at a children’s activity hall, enabling children to view these unique pictures and become sensitised to their differently sighted peers. At the hospital and Mantri Hall, blind fold games were also organised to help the audience experience challenges that a blind person faces every day.



Onlookers viewing photographs



Participants and VIPs at the exhibition

## Photo Exhibition, Jaipur, December 2012

On the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disability held on 3rd December, Sightsavers and its partner CUTS (Consumer Unity and Trust Society) organised ‘Through Different Eyes’ exhibition that also featured pictures taken by children living in remote villages of Bikaner.



*Creating awareness amongst children*



*The exhibition at Atta Galatta*

**Photography Contest: The Facebook App**

'Through Different Eyes', moved online with a photography contest on popular social networking website, Facebook. The contest lasted three months and encouraged participants to capture, share and describe moments that define the "Joy of Seeing".

The contest involved over 600 participants who uploaded their entries.

**Sightsavers 2013 Desk Calendar**

'Through Different Eyes' eventually ended with the concept being the theme for the 2013 desk calendar. The calendar features 11 photographs that were clicked by the children and one from the overall winner of the Facebook contest.



*Shri H R Bhardwaj inaugurates the exhibition at Raj Bhavan*



*Shri H R Bhardwaj speaks to Ajay about the photo he clicked*



*The exhibition displayed at the lobby of Mantri Mall*



*The exhibition at Atta Galatta (Children's activity centre)*



*Visitors experience the exhibition*



*Lots of enthusiasts interacted during the exhibition*

*'Through Different Eyes' photography exhibition, Bangalore*



**'Through Different Eyes' photography exhibition**



# Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind

(Formerly known as Royal Commonwealth Society For the Blind - Indian Branch)

## Balance sheet (Schedule VIII (Vide Rule 17 (I)))

as at 31 March 2013

(Currency : Indian Rupees)

Registration No. E-4330 Mumbai

Funds and Liabilities	31 March 2013	Property and Assets	31 March 2013
<b>Trust funds or corpus</b> (Refer schedule 3)	<b>54,77,746</b>	<b>Immovable properties</b> (Refer schedule 4) Gross block Less : Accumulated depreciation	<b>51,95,990</b> <b>33,90,265</b> <b>18,05,725</b>
<b>Other earmarked funds</b> (Created under the provisions of the trust-deed or Scheme or out of the income)		<b>Other fixed assets</b> (Refer schedule 5) Gross block Less : Accumulated depreciation	<b>1,71,30,873</b> <b>1,24,11,195</b> <b>47,19,678</b>
Tata trust	6,455		
Gift reserves	5,60,704		
Depreciation fund	-		
Sinking fund	-		
Reserve fund	-		
Any Other fund	-		
		<b>Investments</b>	-
		<b>Current assets</b>	
		<b>Prepaid expenses</b>	<b>31,05,004</b>
		<b>Deposits and advances :</b>	
		- To Trustees	-
		- To Employees (Refer schedule 6)	<b>34,679</b>
		- To Others	<b>3,32,329</b>
<b>Loans (Secured or Unsecured)</b>		<b>Cash and bank balances</b> (Refer schedule 7)	<b>73,72,440</b>
- From trustee			
- From banks			
- From others			
		<b>Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind-UK</b> (Refer schedule 3)	
<b>Liabilities</b>			
- For expenses	<b>32,41,354</b>		
- For advance form employee	<b>3,631</b>		
- For Rent and other deposits	-		
- Sundry creditors for grants	<b>22,98,781</b>		
- For employee benefits	<b>57,81,184</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,73,69,855</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,73,69,855</b>

Significant accounting policies (Refer schedule 2).

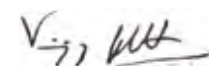
Schedules to the financials statement (Refer schedule 3 - 14).

The schedules referred to above form an integral part of the balance sheet.

The above balance sheet, to the best of our knowledge and belief, contains a true account of the Funds and Liabilities and of the Property and Assets of the Society as at 31 March 2013.

As per our report of even date attached.

For **B S R and Associates**  
Chartered Accountants  
Firm's Registration No: 128901W



**Vijay Bhatt**  
Partner  
Membership No: 036647

Mumbai  
Date : 10 September 2013

  
R N MOHANTY, CEO INDIA  
Authorized Signatory  
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind

For **Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind**  
(Formerly known as Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind-Indian Branch)



**R N Mohanty**  
Chief Executive Officer

Mumbai  
Date : 10 September 2013

# Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind

(Formerly known as Royal Commonwealth Society For the Blind - Indian Branch)

## Income and expenditure account - (Schedule - IX (Vide Rule 17 (I)))

for the year ended 31 March 2013

(Currency : Indian rupees)

Registration No. E-4330 Mumbai

Expenditure	31 March 2013	Income	31 March 2013
<b>To Expenses in respect of properties:</b>		<b>By Interest (accrued / realised)</b>	
Rates, taxes, cesses	<b>32,778</b>	On securities	-
Repairs and maintenance	<b>1,68,856</b>	On loans	-
Salaries	-	On Income tax refund	-
Insurance	<b>3,251</b>	On bank / fixed deposit accounts	<b>7,01,881</b>
Deprecation (Refer schedule 4)	<b>95,038</b>	<b>By Dividend</b>	-
<b>To Establishment expenses</b> (Refer schedule 9)	<b>5,28,47,699</b>	<b>By Donations is cash or kind</b> - in cash (through bank) (Refer schedule 8)	<b>1,75,91,802</b>
<b>To Remuneration to CEO</b>	<b>33,93,438</b>	<b>By Grants</b> (Refer schedule 13)	<b>4,88,331</b>
<b>To Legal and professional expenses</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>By Grants from Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind - UK</b>	<b>3,77,22,026</b>
<b>To Audit fees</b>	<b>4,88,464</b>		
<b>To Contribution to charity commissioner</b>	-		
<b>To Miscellaneous expenses</b> (Refer schedule 11)	<b>2,86,08,507</b>		
<b>To Depreciation</b> (Refer schedule 5)	<b>14,20,340</b>		
<b>To Amounts transferred to reserve or Specific funds</b>	-		
<b>To Expenditure on objects of the Society</b> (classification is as certified by trustees) (Refer schedule 10)			
(a) Religious	-		
(b) Educational	<b>2,59,45,698</b>		
(c) Medical and poverty relief	<b>10,42,48,344</b>	<b>By Deficit transferred to trust funds or corpus</b> (Refer note 3)	<b>16,07,68,373</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,72,72,413</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>21,72,72,413</b>

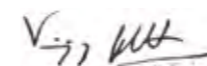
Significant accounting policies (Refer schedule 2).

Schedules to the financials statement (Refer schedule 3 - 14)

The schedules referred to above form an integral part of the Income and expenditure account

As per our report of even date attached.

For **B S R and Associates**  
Chartered Accountants  
Firm's Registration No: 128901W



**Vijay Bhatt**  
Partner  
Membership No: 036647

Mumbai  
Date : 10 September 2013

  
R N MOHANTY, CEO INDIA  
Authorized Signatory  
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind

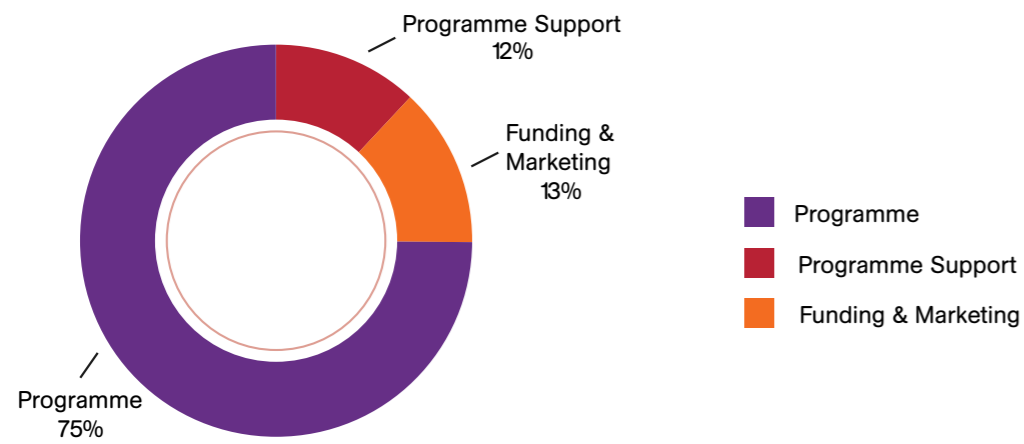
For **Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind**  
(Formerly known as Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind-Indian Branch)



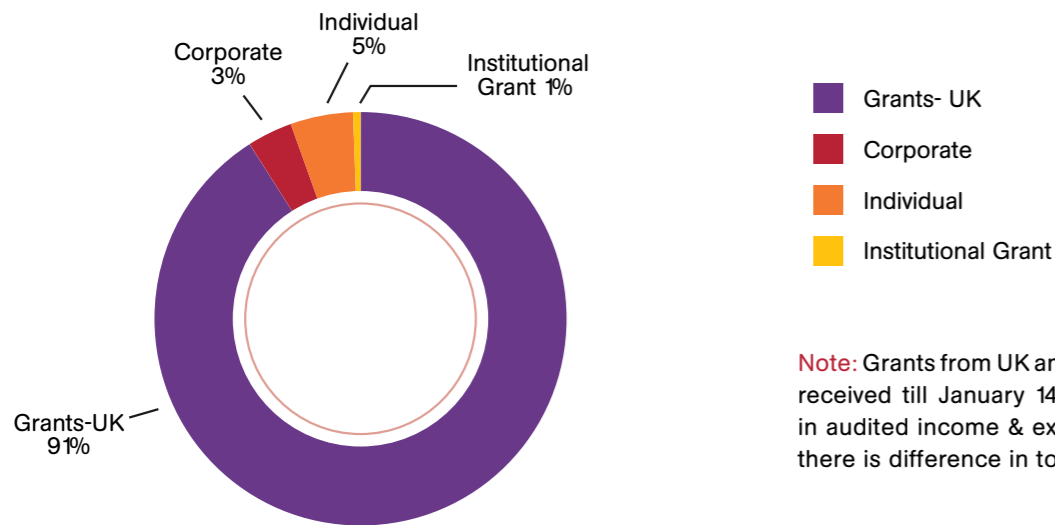
**R N Mohanty**  
Chief Executive Officer

Mumbai  
Date : 10 September 2013

### Total Expenditure : 2012-13

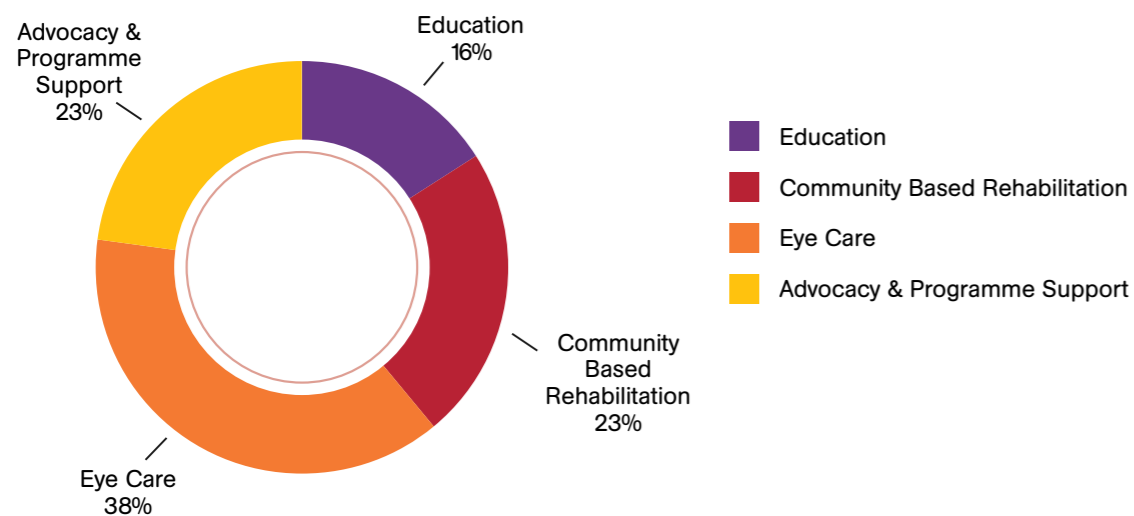


### Sources and % of Funding



**Note:** Grants from UK amounting INR 1,52,096,499 received till January 14 considered here but not in audited income & expenditure account. Hence there is difference in total income.

### Thematic Utilisation



## Contact

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For general enquires write to us at:  
indiaweb@sightsavers.org

If you wish to donate or have any  
donation related queries, write to us at:  
supportusindia@sightsavers.org

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Phone: 91 75 5429 2807

If you wish to stay in touch with our work,  
connect with us at:

[f/SightsaversIndia](#)  
[t/SightsaversIN](#)

This publication is available in accessible format upon request. Please contact any of our offices for a copy.

We would like to thank our partners who have shared information for this publication.

Sightsavers is registered in India as “Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind” under  
Bombay Public Trust Act 1950 vide registration number E4330.