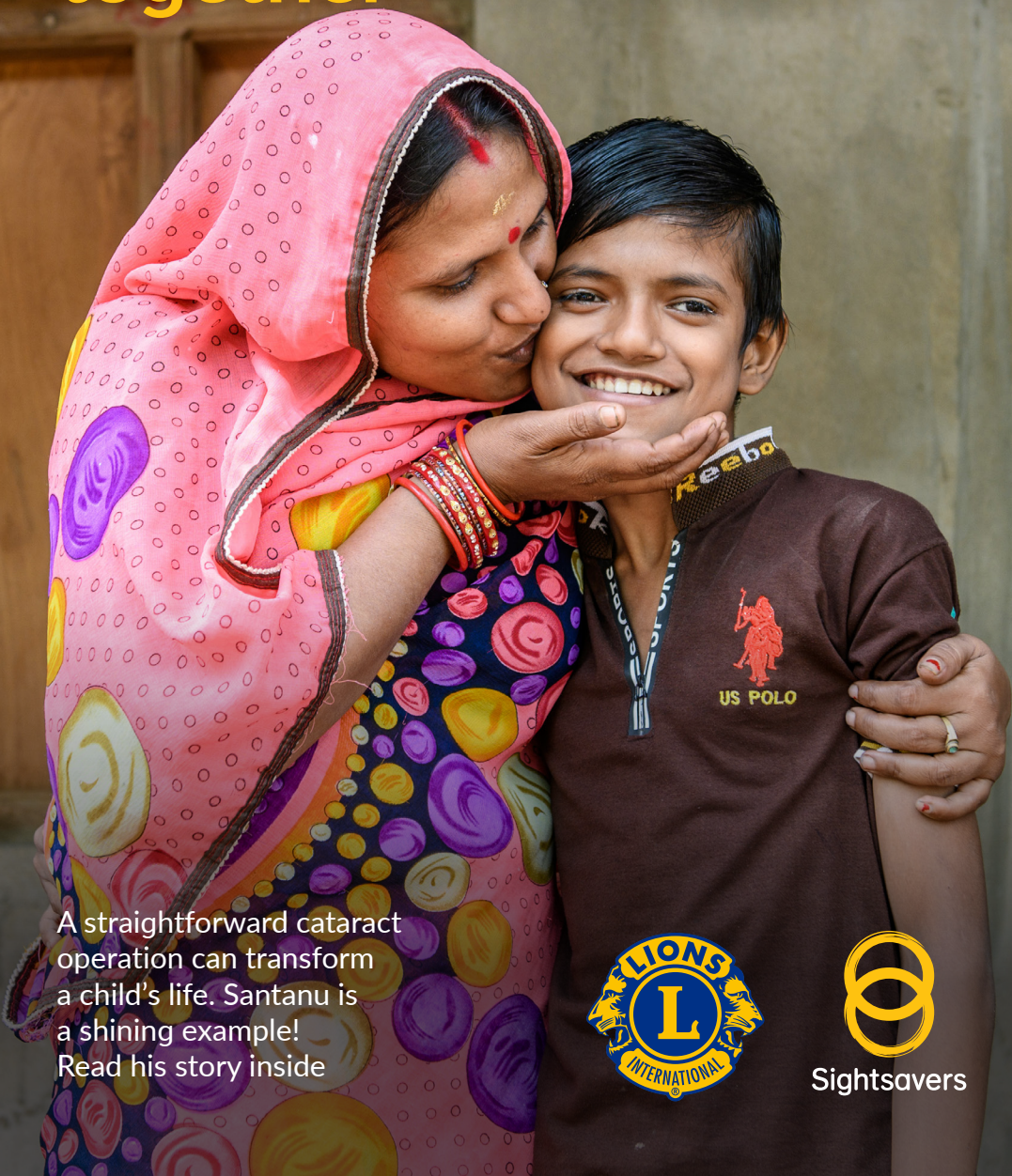


Saving sight together



A straightforward cataract operation can transform a child's life. Santanu is a shining example! Read his story inside



Sightsavers



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

Supporting communities in India

As India starts to recover after COVID-19, the impact will be far-reaching. Lockdown restrictions mean eye health care has been less accessible, with a growing backlog of people waiting for treatment.

In India, 9.2 million people are blind, and 78.9 million people have moderate or severe visual impairment. Yet the leading causes of sight loss – cataracts and refractive error – can be treated.

Cataract surgery is one of the most cost-effective health treatments available and has a huge impact on

people's lives. Restoring their sight gives them the chance to earn a living and take care of loved ones.

India now faces the monumental challenge of rebuilding its economy. We are concerned that vulnerable people, such as those living with sight loss, have been disproportionately affected.

Adapting our programmes

During the pandemic, we have continued to deliver vital eye care services in India while ensuring the safety of staff and patients.

We follow government guidelines, with all health staff adhering to safety protocols. During lockdowns, advice has been provided by field staff through video calls and phone calls. Ophthalmologists have also contacted any patients with urgent medical needs.

During 2020, we were unable to reach many of those in desperate need of eye care, so it is vital we ramp up our work this year. Now that schools across India are reopening, our school eye care

programme can once again screen students for eye conditions. And as experts in building stronger healthcare infrastructure, our work is more important than ever.

In 2021 we will continue to raise awareness of the importance of eye health. We aim to reach more than 7.3 million people, dispense 500,000 pairs of glasses and deliver more than 450,000 eye operations. We hope Lions clubs will feel moved to support another year of our life-changing work.

A brighter future for Santanu

Without treatment for cataracts, Santanu was at risk of losing his education, his independence and his chance of a life free from blindness. Fortunately, we were able to reach him before his sight was permanently damaged.

Santanu lives with his parents, grandparents and siblings: his sister, Pooja, is 17, and his brother, Sanjay, is 16. Sanjay lives mostly at his uncle's house because their mother struggled to look after all the children and needed to spend time caring for Santanu.

Santanu's eyesight problems first became apparent at school. The head teacher tried to help, but there was nothing they could do. Santanu's mother told us he is



Name: Santanu

Age: 11

Location: Haripur village,
Odisha state

good at studying and he works hard, but he was struggling because he couldn't read the blackboard. To make up for this, he memorised everything.

Santanu's mother had been unable to work because she had to stay at home to look after him. The family were relying on his father, who is a daily labourer, for income.

Santanu had his eyes examined at a screening camp organised by Sightsavers in Haripur village, where he was diagnosed with cataracts in both eyes. He was referred immediately to Kalinga eye hospital for surgery.

.....
**"Santanu is upset
most of the time
because he can't read.
He finds school very hard."**



Santanu's mother
.....



After the operation

Santanu was smiling as the nurses arrived to remove his bandages. He was then taken to meet surgeon Dr Chandra Sekhar Sahoo, who examined his eyes. The doctor confirmed that the outcome was good.

Before his operation, Santanu needed help walking into a room, and was quiet and shy. After surgery, the change was remarkable: he was confident walking around the hospital.

In 2020,
our supporters
helped us to carry
out more than
283,000
eye operations



**"I like my sunglasses.
I am the hero!"**

ॐ

Santanu

We caught up with Santanu at home a few days after the operation. He looked physically different to when we first met him: we realised he used to often screw up the side of his face, but now it was relaxed. His mother was so happy, wiping tears of joy on the edge of her sari. She said: "I am grateful to everyone at the hospital. I am thankful to all the staff for the hospitality we got."

The family's house was filled with laughter. Santanu hadn't been able to play cricket because of his cataracts, and he wasn't confident to try, but his friend helped him hold the bat and practise hitting the ball – which he did!

**Thanks to you,
Santanu is now
able to see clearly
and can continue
his education.**

We want all children like Santanu, across India and other parts of the world, to have access to sight-saving treatment.

A straightforward cataract operation was all he needed to change his life. Clear vision enables a child to get the most out of their education and gain the skills they need to build a better future.

With resources stretched more than ever because of the global pandemic, we need your support to reach more children like Santanu to ensure they aren't facing a lifetime of blindness.

Please continue to support us this year. With your help, we can change the lives of some of the world's most marginalised people.

How your support can make a difference



£30 could
pay for an adult
cataract operation

.....



£100 could help pay
for personal protective
equipment (PPE) such
as face masks, which
are urgently needed
for safe eye screenings
and operations

.....



£500 could pay for
100 health workers to
complete their training
in primary eye health

.....



£1,000 could cover
the cost of distributing
more than 430 pairs
of glasses

.....



£5,000 could protect
or treat 750 people in
Africa for potentially
blinding diseases



2020 was one of the most difficult years in Sightsavers' 70-year history. But thanks to the support of the Lions Sight Savers Trust, we have been able to continue protecting sight, tackling debilitating diseases and upholding the rights of people with disabilities.

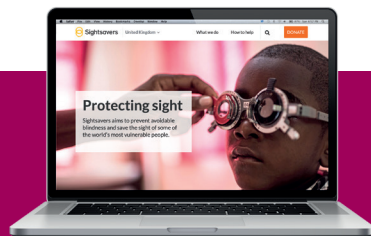
Our previous experience in dealing with the Ebola health crisis meant we knew how to adjust programmes during a health emergency, albeit on a smaller scale. The COVID-19 pandemic led to significant change for us internally – some difficult, but some positive – and enabled us to evolve into a stronger, better connected and more inclusive organisation.

Our incredible eye health teams and volunteers have worked tirelessly with ministries of health, communities and our partners. Together, we've adapted our programmes to make sure eye screenings and treatments can continue under COVID-safe conditions, and to ensure that people with disabilities are not forgotten. Our staff and partners have been stretched to the limits, but they've more than risen to the challenge – and you've been there to support them.

We hope you're proud of all the amazing things you've helped to achieve, and your commitment to our mission is now more important than ever. As the world learns to live with COVID-19, we need your continued support to scale up our services, reduce the backlog of patients waiting for cataract surgery and continue our vital sight-saving work across Africa and Asia.

Dr Caroline Harper
CEO, Sightsavers

Read more about our eye health work at
www.sightsavers.org/protecting-sight



Lions Clubs are helping
us to save sight and change
lives. Words can't express
how grateful we are.

Want to know more?

Email us at lions@sightsavers.org

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