

LIGHT
FOR THE WORLD



Light for the World International **Activity Report 2025**



Dear friends and supporters,

Thanks to your support, we continued to drive significant impact in 2025 — sparking positive, long-lasting change in the communities we work alongside.

2025 was another year shaped by conflict, the accelerating climate crisis and economic uncertainty. People with disabilities and those requiring eye services in Africa were among the hardest hit. When emergencies strike, people with disabilities are up to four times more likely to die. Yet they are often overlooked in planning and decision-making. With humanitarian emergencies becoming increasingly common in the countries where we work, we continue to advocate for an inclusive response that leaves no one behind.

Our mission at Light for the World has never been more urgent — and your support has never been more vital.

Thanks to you, our generous supporters and trusted partners, we sparked lasting change in disability rights and eye health in our focus countries — Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda — and beyond. We reached more than two million people with eye health services and through advancing disability rights, inclusive education, economic empowerment and protection of people with disabilities in emergencies.

Our Strategy 2030 continued to guide our efforts, helping us focus on long-term, sustainable systems-level impact. We launched key Policy Briefs on disability rights and eye health and celebrated milestones across all our programme areas. We are proud to highlight some of these successes in this report. We were also proud to welcome Andreas Onea as the new Chair of our International Board of Trustees. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Tom Shakespeare for his exceptional leadership and guidance as our previous Board Chair.

These achievements come amid an increasingly difficult fundraising environment, as the global political landscape threatens development cooperation. What does not change is our resolve — and our belief that a more inclusive world is possible and worth fighting for.

Together, we are stronger. Thank you again.

Marion Lieser
CEO, Light for the World International

Who we are & why we act

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

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

Our programme and advocacy work ensures individuals and communities are the drivers of change and focuses on countries including

Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda.

Our sustainable impact is made possible through generous donations and powerful partnerships in these countries, as well as Light for the World member organisations in Austria, Belgium (until end of April 2025), Germany (until end of April 2026), Czech Republic, UK (currently being dissolved as per decision in March 2026), Switzerland and USA.

Highlights 2025

With our partners...



2.49m

We reached nearly 2.5 million people with crucial support in eye health, including Mass Drug Administrations, and disability inclusion

705,000

Total eye consultations

27,000

People reached with humanitarian assistance

13,000+

People reached with Economic Empowerment activities

activities of all Light for the World member organisations in 2025 - including Light for the World Belgium up until 06/2025

Sparkling lasting change

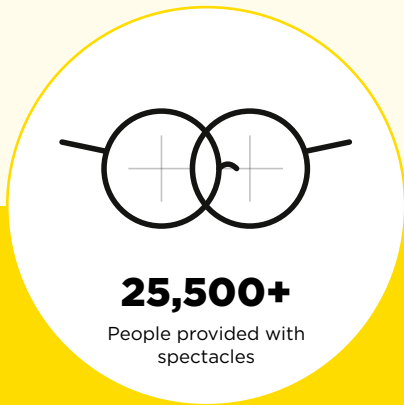
EYE HEALTH

Everyone deserves access to quality eye care. Yet 1.1 billion people live with vision loss, 90% of which is preventable or treatable. In 2025, Light for the World strengthened eye health systems across our focus countries. We ensured children, like Cheick Omar To  , pictured with his mother Fatimata, and people with and without disabilities had access to life-changing care.

In Ethiopia, we launched two new projects with the Tigray Regional Health Bureau to support the elimination of trachoma by 2030, providing training for medical staff, mass screenings and house-to-house outreach. We also finalised plans with the Ethiopia Ministry of Health for the country’s Second National Eye Health Survey: a crucial step to track progress and address national gaps in care.

In Burkina Faso, we launched a project with Sightsavers to screen more than 19,000 children and adults and provide more than 500 pairs of glasses to students and teachers. In Uganda, we convened the country’s first National Eye Health Dialogue, uniting the Ministry of Health, clinical experts and key partners to make child eye health a coordinated national priority.

In 2025 we also spotlighted four pioneering paediatric ophthalmologists, all trained under our “1,2,3 ... I Can See!” programme and leading the drive to save children’s eyesight in their countries.



SYSTEMS CHANGE WIN:
In Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda there is now at least one ophthalmologist specialising in child eye health, thanks to Light for the World.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



Every child has the right to education. Yet children with disabilities are 49% less likely to attend school than their peers. In 2025, Light for the World continued to break down these barriers — ensuring children with disabilities can

learn alongside their peers in inclusive classrooms.

In Mozambique, we partnered with the Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (OPD) ADEMO on the InPower programme to identify and refer girls, including Wilsa Chitato Manuel (pictured), and boys with disabilities into all levels of the education system. In South Sudan, under the Education Cannot Wait programme, we supported teachers to lead disability-inclusive classes, with training in sign language, braille

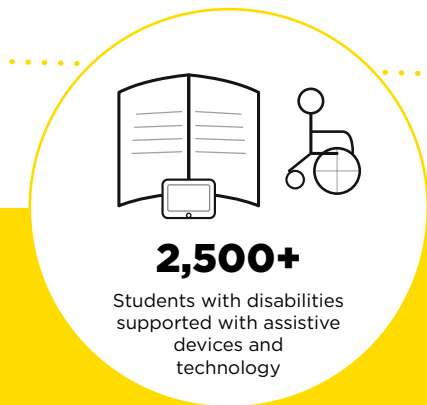
and inclusive teaching methods. In Ethiopia, through a project with UNICEF, we worked with Cheshire Ethiopia to identify children with disabilities, provide rehabilitation and assistive devices, as well as train teachers to improve attendance and learning outcomes.

And in Burkina Faso, we ran a successful pilot with the Ministry of National Education and OPD UN-ABPAM of inclusive exams for learners with visual impairments. Accessible digital examination papers were produced, and blind and partially sighted learners were able to sit exams on computers in the same room as sighted students.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Everyone has the right to dignified and fulfilling work. Yet people with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to employment. In 2025, working alongside local partners, governments and private sector organisations, Light for the World drove disability inclusion in workplaces, entrepreneurship and skills development across Africa.

The Inclusive Futures programme concluded successfully in Kenya, having supported more than 1,700 micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities, like Duncan (pictured), a landscape gardener. The We Are Able programme also completed its five-year journey in South Sudan and Uganda, leaving a legacy of strengthened OPD advocacy and improved policies. In South Sudan — where more than half the population faces food insecurity — the programme secured government commitments to advocate for inclusive budgeting and fast-track a disability bill. We continued training Disability Inclusion Facilitators, who are now advancing inclusive practices and influencing policy reforms in nine countries. The first-



SYSTEMS CHANGE WIN:
In South Sudan, Light for the World’s training in sign language, braille and inclusive pedagogy saw the Ministry of Education integrate inclusive education into the national teacher training curriculum — equipping every future teacher to include children with disabilities.



of-its-kind We Can Work Narrative Competition invited young Africans with disabilities across seven countries to share their stories through essays, art, film and photography.

Across our focus countries, we provided skills training and practical support for entrepreneurs, students and jobseekers with disabilities.

SYSTEMS CHANGE WIN:
In Kenya, OPDs supported through the InBusiness programme evolved from under-resourced community groups into credible institutions. They influenced county disability fund governance, strengthened business rights for entrepreneurs with disabilities and shaped national legislation on procurement and inclusive financing.

AMPLIFYING VOICES

Light for the World amplified voices of people with disabilities and raised crucial advocacy calls in 2025. Expert colleagues and partners engaged in key international platforms, driving forward the agenda for disability inclusion and equitable eye health. We supported inclusion initiatives, including the “Bright Stars” South Sudan blind football team (pictured) as they won the African Championship Division 2.

Our work featured in leading international media, including [The New York Times](#), [AFP](#), and [Associated Press](#) — challenging stereotypes about disability and bringing crucial attention to disability rights and eye health. We also secured visibility in focus countries — including a media takeover across television, print and digital in Uganda on International

Day of Persons with Disabilities to shift the national conversation from charity to agency. We saw significant growth on our own platforms — where we shared practical expert tips and compelling programme stories — with followers on [LinkedIn](#) growing more than 50%. We also launched our international newsletter in October ([subscribe via our website](#)), telling stories from changemakers driving inclusion.

We strengthened our technical leadership, programme quality and advocacy capacity in 2025, and through our [#CommitToInclusion campaign](#), Disability Inclusion Facilitators from Uganda shared lived experiences — demonstrating what meaningful inclusion looks like in practice.



HUMANITARIAN ACTION

In times of crisis, people with disabilities are often the first to be excluded from emergency responses. We work to ensure emergency support is accessible and inclusive — because everyone has the right to protection in emergencies.

In 2025, we took a major step toward closing the disability data gap with the launch of the Survey for Inclusive Rapid Assessment (SIRA) — the [first fully inclusive digital data collection tool for emergencies](#). Developed with Mozambique’s national OPD FAMOD, the open-source, screen-reader-accessible tool helps aid workers gather the data needed to reach communities and individuals at the last mile. Our IMPACT-BF project in Burkina Faso continued transforming humanitarian action for internally displaced people and vulnerable communities in the Centre-East region, together with OPDs, local organisations and government representatives.

We advocated for disability-inclusive humanitarian responses across our focus countries.



We supported refugees, like David Liep in South Sudan (pictured), and displaced people with disabilities. We also called on humanitarian partners to prioritise inclusivity and make camps and shelters physically accessible.



SYSTEMS CHANGE WIN:

In Mozambique, we supported FAMOD to collect data on disability prevalence, and barriers and enablers to accessing humanitarian assistance in Cabo Delgado. This helped shape the country’s national humanitarian response plan — ensuring people with disabilities are visible, and better served, when the next crisis strikes.

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

Donors, Institutional Partners, Foundations

adidas Foundation | Austrian Development Cooperation | BopInc | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH | Deutsche Postcode Lotterie | Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Education Cannot Wait | The END Fund | Essilor International | ETHOS.Legal | Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria | Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer | Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office UK | Global Affairs Canada | Inclusive Futures | International Fund for Agricultural Development | International Labour Organisation | IKEA Foundation | Linsi Foundation | Mastercard Foundation | Medicor | Novartis Pharma AG | L'Occitane Fondation | Optometry Giving Sight - OGS | Orbis International | PRANA Foundation | PROCASUR | Standard Chartered Foundation | UNESCO | UNICEF | USAID | H. + W. Winkler Stiftung

Networks and Alliances

African Disability Forum (ADF) | Allianz für Klimagerechtigkeit | Austrian Disability Council | Bündnis für Gemeinnützigkeit Austria | Global Responsibility | BOND | Coalition for Clear Vision | CBR Global Network | College of Ophthalmology of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (COECSA) | CONCORD European Confederation of NGOs working on sustainable development and international cooperation | DAISY Consortium | EnableMe Foundation | Enabling Education Network (EENET) | European Disability Forum (EDF) | FAIRTRADE Austria | Fundraising Verband Austria | Global Business and Disability Network (convened by ILO) | WHO, Global Rehabilitation Alliance | WHO, Health equity network | WHO SPECS | International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) | International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC) | International Disability Alliance (IDA) | International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) | International Ophthalmological Fellowship Foundation (IOFF) | No Means No Worldwide | NPO Austria | RED NOSES Clowndoctors International | RTI International with Funding from USAID | SDG Watch Austria | Save the Children | Sightsavers International | UK Aid | Women in Development WIDE | World Health Organization | VSO | PAFFiD | Zero Project



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