



Seeing is Believing:  
A visionary partnership

## Seeing is Believing

Vision loss affects more than 1.35 billion globally. It can prevent people from attending school or maintaining a job, limiting their ability to support themselves and their families. Yet more than 75 per cent of all visual impairment can be prevented or cured.

Standard Chartered set out to address this problem through Seeing is Believing, an ambitious partnership with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) to tackle avoidable blindness and visual impairment.

Between 2003 and 2020, Standard Chartered raised

USD 104.2 million

enabling Seeing is Believing (SiB) to reach

250 million people across

38 countries

SiB has supported

5.1 million

sight-restoring  
surgeries and

trained more than

374,000 health workers



Image courtesy of Tommy Trenchard/Sightsavers.

## The issue

Avoidable blindness and visual impairment are key health issues across our footprint, impacting access to education and employment opportunities with long-term implications for livelihoods and economic growth.

Globally, an estimated

# 1.35 billion people

have significant levels of vision loss: 36 million are blind; 217 million have very serious problems seeing distance objects; and 1.1 billion have problems seeing near objects.<sup>1</sup>

More than

# 75 per cent

of all visual impairment can be prevented or cured.<sup>1</sup>

# 89 per cent

of those affected live in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>1</sup>

Good vision is pivotal to educational attainment and facilitates participation in the workforce, contributing to economic benefits and a sense of identity. Some estimates state that every USD1 invested in eliminating avoidable blindness generates on average USD4 of economic gain in emerging economies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://atlas.iapb.org/global-burden-vision-impairment/>

<sup>2</sup> Price Waterhouse Coopers and The Fred Hollows Foundation. (201). Investing in Vision. The cost & benefits of ending avoidable blindness. Last accessed October 2019 <https://www.hollows.org/getattachment/au/What-We-Do/Ending-Avoidable-blindness/Research/PwC-Investing-in-Vision.pdf.aspx>.

## Our approach

Between 2003 and 2020, SiB has funded projects implemented by international eye health organisations providing access to affordable and quality eye health services to people in low- and middle-income countries.

SiB began in 2003, when the Bank committed to raise enough money for 28,000 sight-restoring surgeries – one for every member of staff at the time - to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

SiB evolved from supporting cataract surgeries into a global multi-stakeholder partnership that supports comprehensive eye care, strengthens eye health systems and fosters the development of new technologies across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America.

In 2018, Standard Chartered celebrated 15 years of SiB and announced that with bank matching the USD100 million fundraising target had been reached two years ahead of schedule.

SiB has reached 250 million people through 237 projects across 38 countries low-and middle-income countries.

This includes 44 Innovation Fund projects to develop pioneering ideas that have the potential to significantly impact how eye care is delivered in low-and middle-income countries.

SiB is a strong model for corporates and NGOs to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>3</sup>

### Treated

# 7.4 million people

for other eye conditions (e.g. glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, retinopathy of prematurity).



Screened over

# 37,000 people

for visual impairment.

Dispensed

# 1.78 million

pairs of spectacles and low vision devices.

<sup>3</sup> A Visionary Partnership - <https://av.sc.com/corp-en/content/docs/A-partnership-vision-15-years-of-Seeing-is-Believing.pdf>

## Our impact

SiB changed the lives of millions of individuals and families, making it easier for many to return to education and work. As a result, this has boosted local economies and strengthened communities.

SiB is internationally recognised and acclaimed. By virtue of the difference made by its efforts in eye health, the Bank became the only corporate member in 2008 to sit on the National Council of Eye Health (NCEH).

### SiB leveraged

# USD158 million

for eye care.<sup>4</sup>

### Reached

# 250 million

people through medical interventions, eye examinations, eye health education and training.



### Supported

# 5.1 million

sight-restoring surgeries.

### Trained

# 374,000

health workers.

### Distributed

# Vitamin A

deficiency supplements and treatment for river blindness (Onchocerciasis) to 13 million people.



Image courtesy of Ashley Gilbertson.

<sup>4</sup> A Visionary Partnership - <https://av.sc.com/corp-en/content/docs/A-partnership-vision-15-years-of-Seeing-is-Believing.pdf>

Image courtesy of IAPB



## The legacy of Seeing is Believing

SiB provided access to affordable and quality eye health services to people in low- and middle-income countries, reaching millions of people.

Standard Chartered will build on Seeing is Believing's legacy by mobilising support for the Vision Catalyst Fund and by supporting people with visual impairment through Futuremakers by Standard Chartered, the Bank's global initiative to tackle inequality and promote economic inclusion.

## Further reading

**World Health Organisation World Report on Vision:**  
<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/world-report-on-vision>

**IAPB Vision Atlas:**  
<http://atlas.iapb.org/>

**A Visionary Partnership:**  
<https://av.sc.com/corp-en/content/docs/A-partnership-vision-15-years-of-Seeing-is-Believing.pdf>