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EYES OF THE WORLD FOUNDATION

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Ulls del món · Eyes of the world · Les yeux du monde · Olhos do mundo · Munduko begiak · عيون العالم

BLINDNESS IN THE WORLD

- There are **1.1 billion people with vision loss in the world**.
- **161 million people have uncorrected refractive errors**, 100 million suffer from cataracts, and 510 million have problems seeing up close.
- **90%** of cases of visual impairment could be **prevented or cured**.
- **55%** of visually impaired people are **women**.
- **90%** of visually impaired people live in **low- and middle-income countries**.
- Annual global productivity loss due to visual impairment is estimated to be approximately **\$411 billion per year**.

ORIGINS

The Foundation was created in July 2001 by **Rafael Ribó** and **Borja Corcóstegui**. It began to take shape half a year earlier, as a result of their trip to the Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria, with the objective of learning about the situation in the territory. The precarious health situation and the visual deficiencies suffered by the local population alerted them to the need to create an organization to improve these conditions.

MISSION

Eyes of the world is a non-profit organization that helps to ensure that visually impaired people without economic resources in poor countries can receive **quality ophthalmological care from their local health services**, and to create the conditions to **reduce the incidence of eye diseases** in each territory. It also **raises public awareness** of the deficiencies in basic health care in those areas.

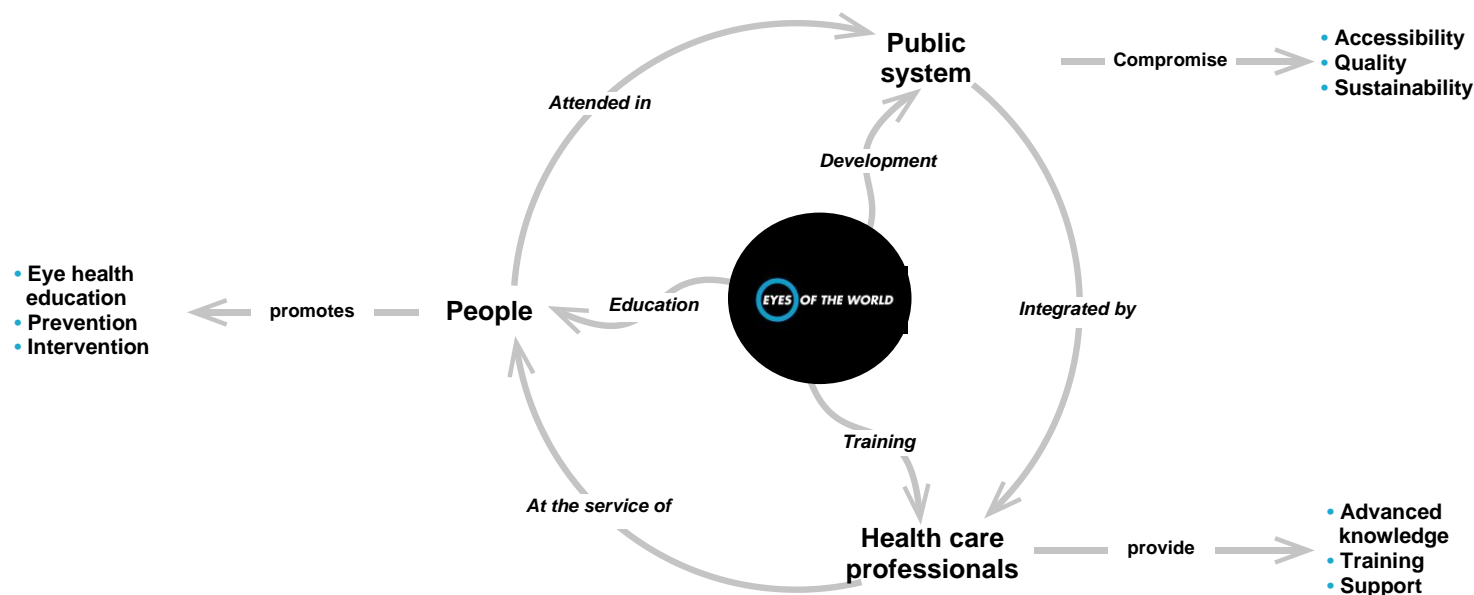
VISION

Eyes of the world aspires to a world where **there are no unnecessarily blind people**, where the right to sight is effective and everyone has the opportunity to develop their human potential.



INTERVENTION MODEL

Our own model for the eradication of avoidable blindness in the poorest areas of the world:



INTERNATIONAL PROJECTION

Eyes of the world networks with leading international organizations in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), within the framework of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), of which the Foundation is a member of the Advisory Board, and in accordance with the World Health Assembly resolution on integrated, person-centered eye health. Giving people back their sight or preventing them from losing it is an achievable and efficient goal that serves as an accelerator of the 2030 agenda.



WORK CONTEXT

SAHARA

Created in 2001 as an initial project of the Foundation, the *Eyes of the Sahara* programme develops its activities in the United Nations Saharawi refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria.

The Saharawi people have been living in exile for over 40 years in a desert area marked by harsh living conditions.

Saharawi healthcare is dependent on foreign aid and project-related activities are only sustainable thanks to the presence of non-profit organizations and other international bodies.

The main eye pathologies are cataracts, glaucoma and refractive problems related to the cornea. There are significant refractive problems among children.

The camps are staffed by a dozen technicians (trained by the Foundation) who work in the optician's offices and workshops.

The Foundation's work consists of supporting the activities programmed by the local counterpart, as a result of the gradual assumption of responsibilities by the Ministry of Health and the SADR Ophthalmology Service, which has led to the existence of an eye health network with clinics in each of the wilayahs (districts).



MOZAMBIQUE

The *Eyes of Mozambique* programme, launched in 2002, focuses on the province of Inhambane in the southern part of the African country.

The population lives in unhealthy conditions: almost half of the inhabitants do not have access to drinking water and life expectancy is less than 60 years.

Medical specialties are underdeveloped, especially those that are not considered a priority, such as ophthalmology.

There are 2.7 million people with vision loss, 110,000 of whom are blind, mostly due to corneal pathologies, glaucoma, trachoma, malnutrition, trauma and degenerative diseases.

The need for trained professionals is high. Only since 2011, the Ophthalmology Service of the Provincial Hospital of Inhambane has had one or two ophthalmologists and two technicians. Even so, most of the country's ophthalmologists are concentrated in Maputo.

Eyes of the world promotes the implementation of activities for the prevention and early detection of eye diseases, with the aim of reducing the incidence of avoidable blindness in this territory. In this sense, eye health is brought closer to the communities and assistance is guaranteed in the six hospitals of the province.



BOLIVIA

The activities of the *Eyes of Bolivia* programme -initiated in 2003- take place mainly in the Departments of Tarija and Oruro.

Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. It has enormous social inequalities, with indigenous people and peasants being the most disadvantaged population groups.

Health services are focused on primary care and do not serve more than three quarters of the population for socioeconomic and displacement reasons.

Blindness and visual impairment affect more than 1.3 million people. The main causes are pathologies such as cataracts, pterygium, glaucoma and retinopathies. There are some 300 ophthalmologists throughout the country, most of whom practice in private practices and are concentrated in three of the main population centers, leaving rural areas without eye care services.

The Foundation has succeeded in creating an eye care network in El Alto (Department of La Paz), which is integrated into the Bolivian public health system and run by local ophthalmologists.

Eyes of the world is currently supporting public health officials in this Department through training and continuous improvement of local professionals. It has also initiated the implementation of an eye care network in Tarija (where surgical interventions have already begun) and, more recently, in Oruro and Chuquisaca.



MALI

In 2008, the Foundation launched the *Eyes of Mali* programme in the Mopti region, located in the south of the African country, and also carries out activities in the district of Bamako.

Mali has a very fragile economy, mainly linked to agriculture and river fishing. The incidence of poverty stands at 60%. Mali is currently experiencing a particularly unstable context, with a serious economic collapse, a very tense social climate and numerous violent conflicts.

There is a low supply capacity of health services and a high demand due to the prevalence of infectious and parasitic diseases, as well as those resulting from food shortages.

There are approximately 170,000 blind people, mainly due to cataracts, glaucoma, trachoma, refractive errors and trauma.

Most of the ophthalmology services are concentrated in Bamako, where 65% of the country's ophthalmologists practice. The Mopti Ophthalmology Service has an ophthalmologist, two senior ophthalmology technicians and an eyeglass fitting technician.

Eyes of the world works to contribute to the improvement of eye health of people with few resources, providing them with greater access to eye care services, from the first level of care (community health centers) to specialized care (permanently at the Mopti Hospital and at the Bankass Reference Center).



GOALS AND LINES OF ACTION

1 Training local medical professionals and providing technical expertise

Strengthening local capacities is the priority of the Foundation's projects, so that these professionals can, in the medium term, attend to the eye care needs of the population in their own territories. This initiative is carried out either by sending expert ophthalmologists to the field as part of training projects, by organizing distance specialization courses via videoconferencing, or by awarding study grants to enable general practitioners, ophthalmologists, surgical technicians and optometrists to complete their training. Since 2001, almost 13,000 professionals have benefited from the different training activities carried out.

2 Preventing the causes of avoidable blindness

The Foundation organizes eye health promotion campaigns to raise community awareness of the importance of eye hygiene, early detection of pathologies and referral of patients to health centers, reaching some 55,000 people annually. It also carries out eye check-ups for children and studies on the incidence of the main pathologies in certain environments. Good early detection could prevent thousands of people without economic resources from going blind.

3 Providing health centers with the equipment and supplies necessary for medical practice

Eyes of the world provides material, equipment and consumables to the health centers and public opticians' offices with which it collaborates to create complete ophthalmological units, both for consultation and treatment. It also sets up optical workshops that allow access to low-cost glasses for people with fewer resources who suffer from visual impairment due to uncorrected refractive defects.

4 Improving the visual health of people with eye diseases

Eyes of the world periodically sends surgical commissions made up of expert ophthalmologists, anesthesiologists, surgical technicians and optometrists to visit visually impaired people and operate on patients with eye pathologies that require it. Since 2001 and until 2021, the Foundation has carried out more than 985,000 visits and 37,500 surgeries.

5 Contributing to the improvement of eye health management systems and procedures

In collaboration with local authorities and other cooperation entities, the Foundation contributes to improving the organization of ophthalmological health care in the countries where it operates. It does so by encouraging self-management so that health managers in each territory take responsibility for eye care activities, as well as by promoting the implementation and monitoring of national ophthalmology plans in those territories that do not have them.

6 Raising public awareness of the precarious ophthalmologic situation in the poorest countries

Eyes of the world raises public awareness of ophthalmological reality of the territories in which it carries out development projects and encourages reflection and public awareness of the eye health needs experienced by thousands of people around the world, through the organization of photographic exhibitions and participation in talks, round tables and professional forums. It also encourages public commitment through activities aimed at increasing the number of people linked to the Foundation.



MAIN RESULTS

Beyond the eye care of people, Eyes of the world is committed to the training of local staff in each of the projects with the aim of developing the capacities of the different territories. For example:

SAHARA

Eyes of the world has managed to ensure the operation of eye care centers in the camps where local opticians, trained by the Foundation, take care of the Sahrawi population with visual impairments.

MOZAMBIQUE

The Provincial Hospital of Inhambane has an Ophthalmology Service comprising a consulting room, an operating room and an optical workshop managed by local professionals thanks to the training provided by Eyes of the world. The Foundation has provided these infrastructures with the necessary equipment and materials. Eyes of the world has also made eye care accessible to communities in the province of Inhambane and has created the first optical workshop in the rural region of Vilankulo, managed by a local women's association, as well as the first mobile optician's shop to facilitate access to eye care for the most remote populations.

BOLIVIA

The ophthalmologic care network created in El Alto and its rural area of influence within the framework of the public health system is already being managed by Bolivian professionals and was handed over to local authorities in 2013. The success of this project has represented the validation of the intervention model and its replication in the departments of Tarija and Oruro.

MALI

After four years of training at the Institute of Tropical Ophthalmology of Africa (IOTA), thanks to a scholarship granted by Eyes of the world, Dr. Siaka Diakité has joined the Bankass Reference Health Center (launched by Eyes of the world in the Mopti region in 2009) from where he carries out an average of 550 cataract surgeries per year. In addition, the Foundation has equipped the IOTA in Bamako with a retina unit and is training its professionals, making the Institute the reference center not only in Mali but also for all the countries of the subregion, where cases requiring specialized retina care are referred.

VOLUNTEER NETWORK AND TERRITORIAL EXTENSION

The Foundation has a network of more than **700 volunteers**, including ophthalmologists, surgical technicians, optometrists, anesthesiologists, equipment technicians and other professionals who contribute their knowledge in solidarity for the benefit of people with ocular deficiencies. The work of these professionals is made possible thanks to the institutions, private companies and individuals who support the organization, either through financial and material contributions or in other indirect ways. Headquartered in **Barcelona**, the Foundation has regional offices in the **Basque Country, Navarra, Valencia, Andalusia** and **Madrid**, and regional centers in **Portugal, France** and **Argentina**.



BUDGET

In 2023, the Foundation expects to receive **2,173,093 euros**, 1,177,278 euros from public contributions and 955,816 euros from private funds. In relation to execution, Eyes of the world plans to allocate 78.4% of the resources to development programmes, 12.4% to fundraising and 9.2% to the administrative management of the Foundation.

It is estimated that 7% of the total will be allocated transversally to the implementation of gender policies.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rafael Ribó Massó

President and member of the Executive Committee

Borja Corcóstegui Guraya

Vice-president and member of the Executive Committee

Núria Ramon Garcia

Head of Strategic Partnerships and member of the Executive Committee

Daniel Capdevila Dalmau

Secretary and member of the Executive Committee

Josep Antoni Pujante i Conesa

On behalf of the Generalitat of Catalonia

(Director of International Relations and Cooperation of the Department of Health)

Pilar Díaz i Romero

On behalf of the Diputació de Barcelona

(Second vice-president of the Diputació de Barcelona)

Pilar Solanes Salse

On behalf of the Barcelona City Council

(Director of the Health Programme)

Enric Botí Castro de la Peña

On behalf of the ONCE Foundation for Latin America, FOAL

(ONCE Territorial Delegate in Catalonia)

Miriam Barbany Rodríguez

Ophthalmologist

Andrés Müller-Thyssen Bergareche

Ophthalmologist

Maria Teresa Vilalta Ferrer

Economist

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTS

Since 2001, representatives of multiple public administrations, CEOs of large international foundations and private companies and personalities with international projection have been involved with Eyes of the world, such as Antoni Tàpies, Miquel Barceló, Andreu Alfaro, Jaume Plensa, Javier Bardem, Pep Guardiola, Ferran Adrià, the Roca brothers, Mariem Hassan, Lang Lang, Lluís Claret, Barbara Hendricks, Jordi Savall, Eduardo Galeano and Eduardo Mendoza, among others.

