

Sub-Theme Symposium: 2030 in Sight: The Future of Global Eye Health

To Activate Consumer Demand and Market Change by Raising Public Demand to Ensure Markets are Responsive, Remove Barriers to Care and Make Services Available and Affordable

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SUMMARY

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)'s 10-year mission, 2030 In Sight, recognizes the hurdles that need to be overcome and presents the eye health sector with a new approach to ELEVATE, INTEGRATE and ACTIVATE. The Activate Strategy is the key to translating the overarching goals of this initiative into actionable outcomes at national and global levels. To activate this strategy successfully, adopting a multifaceted approach that includes eye health campaign reforms, financial mobilization, equity-focused actions, and active community participation is essential. Increased funding and collaboration across stakeholders, as well as robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks, will be key to ensuring that the global burden of preventable sight loss is reduced. Community engagement and public awareness are vital to seeking care early and adhering to treatment regimens. Public eye health campaigns also play a critical role in breaking down stigma and empowering individuals to take charge of their eye health. Ensuring equitable access to eye care is crucial for success, and financial models that reduce costs for underserved communities will improve outcomes and increase demand for services. This review explores the key components of the 2030 In Sight Activate Strategy, the critical actions required to implement it, what has been done so far, the challenges that need to be

addressed for successful activation, and proffers suggestions about what we can do locally to drive consumer demand for eye care services. In conclusion, with concerted effort, 2030 In Sight can achieve its goal of significantly improving eye health outcomes worldwide, particularly for the most vulnerable populations.

Keywords: 2030 In Sight, Activate, Preventable Sight Loss, IAPB.

BACKGROUND

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) launched the 2030 In Sight vision as a global framework aimed at reducing the burden of avoidable blindness and visual impairment by the year 2030. This strategic vision targets key areas such as equitable access to eye care, sustainable service delivery, financial mobilization, integration of technology and innovation to improve eye health worldwide.¹ The Activate strategy is central to turning this vision into concrete, actionable steps at local, regional, and global levels. Historically, all eye health development strategies have a bearing on existing global health development plans (Figure 1).

According to the World Report on Vision (WRV) 2019² and the Lancet Global Eye Health (Lancet) Report 2021,³ the end of VISION 2020 and its successes made a new set of challenges evident. The gains of nearly eliminating preventable transmissible eye diseases and improving services for avoidable blinding eye conditions are challenged by the emergence of non-communicable eye diseases, lifestyle conditions affecting eye health and

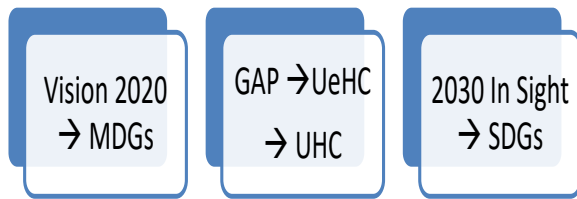


Figure 1: Global eye health action plan versus health and development targets

Keys: MDGs: Millennium Development Goals; GAP: Global Action Plan; UeHC: Universal eye Health Coverage; UHC: Universal Health Coverage; SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals.

increasing ageing populations. The impact of the three action plans of Vision 2020¹ was summarized into -

- A decrease in the prevalence of blindness from 4.8% to 3.1% over thirty years.
- Trachoma and Onchocerciasis, the two biggest infectious diseases that cause blindness, could be eliminated within the next ten years.
- 90 million people worldwide have had their vision impairment treated or prevented since 1990.

Conversely, the challenge has grown with 1.1 billion people living with sight loss around the world projected to 1.8 billion by 2050 if unchecked (Figure 2).^{1,4} A growing myopia epidemic affects the younger generation at an alarming rate, such that half of the world's population is estimated to have myopia by 2050.⁵ Above all, the challenge is not borne equally because of the inequity of eye care in under-resourced communities and the fact that eye care is unaffordable for many, because 90% of those affected with sight loss reside in low and middle-income settings. For example, in 2020, rates of blindness were up to nine times higher in western sub-Saharan Africa than in North America.¹ In addition, women, rural populations, those with low incomes, older people, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and ethnic minority groups are the most likely to suffer from sight loss and its negative implications.^{6,7}

The WRV document key recommendations were to:

- Include eye care as a fundamental component of universal health care.
- Implementing integrated people-centered eye care (IPEC) in health systems will result in eye care services that are people-centered, that is, services delivered based on people's expectations and health requirements throughout their lives. This method actively embraces the health consumers' view as users and recipients of eye care services and gives them the tools they need to actively manage their own eye health. While integration guarantees that services are managed and provided to guarantee a continuum of preventive, treatment, rehabilitation, and promotion actions to tackle vision disorders. Additionally, this is coordinated amongst the various care levels and locations both inside and beyond the health sector.
- Make eye care an integral part of universal health coverage.
- Support the body of research on effective eye care practices by promoting a high-quality action plan and pertinent health systems studies.
- Monitor advancements and evaluate the uptake of integrated people-centered eye care.
- To raise awareness of the importance of eye care and to empower both individuals and communities.

Lancet defines eye health as "maximized vision, ocular health, and functional ability, that contributes to overall health and well-being, social inclusion, and quality of life. Poor eye health and impaired vision have a negative effect on quality of life and restrict equitable access to and achievement in education and the workplace."³ Its key messages are:

- Good eyesight should be projected as a development issue since it is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Since everyone might need eye care services due to a vision impairment at some point, it is important to address the



Figure 2: Challenges of visual impairment and benefits of sight restoration

Source: 2030 In Sight Ending Avoidable Sight Loss: A Strategic Initiative. <https://www.iapb.org/learn/resources/2030-in-sight-strategy-document/>

constantly expanding demand for eye health services

- Eye healthcare should be incorporated into the planning, fundraising and provision of healthcare, since it is a crucial part of universal health coverage
- Many people are unable to receive high-quality eye care; therefore, coordinated efforts are required to enhance quality and offer of timely, safe, equitable, effective and people-centered care
- A higher, financially improved budget towards eye health is necessary because affordable vision-restoring procedures have the potential to improve the individual and the nation's economy
- Implementation with newer tools to enhance eye health provided by advancements in technology and therapy

is required for an optimized and enhanced coverage, accessibility, quality, efficiency and affordability

- In poorer nations, the workforce providing eye care cannot keep up with the demands of the populace; a significant increase in service capacity is necessary through staff task sharing, improved training and supportive work conditions under capable leadership.

An elaborate connection between eye health and the 17 SDG goals was postulated by the Lancet Global Eye Health Report. The authors concluded that the resultant effect of increasing the reach of eyecare delivery positively boosts the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Access to eye health services' contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals

Source: 2030 In Sight Ending Avoidable Sight Loss: A Strategic Initiative. <https://www.iapb.org/learn/resources/2030-in-sight-strategy-document/>

This narrative review explores the key components of the 2030 In Sight Activate Strategy, the critical actions required to implement it, what has been done so far, the challenges that need to be addressed for successful activation and what we can apply locally.

What is 2030 In Sight Initiative?

Ultimately, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), through the 2030 In Sight Initiative, set ambitious goals (Elevate, Integrate and Activate) to eliminate avoidable blindness and visual impairment worldwide. 2030 In Sight is a global action plan initiated by the highest coalition of organizations working in eyecare and drawn from the findings of the WHO World Report on Vision, the Lancet Global Health Commission on Global Eye Health and the landmark UN Resolution, Vision for Everyone. It aims to provide equitable and accessible eye care through collaboration, innovation, and sustainable models. Key components of the vision include:

- Universal Eye Health: Ensuring that all individuals, regardless of geographic or socio-economic status, have access to affordable and effective eye care services.
- Equity and Inclusion: Addressing disparities in access to eye care among women, children, rural populations, and those with disabilities.
- Global Partnerships: Engaging governments, international organizations, private sector partners, and communities to improve eye health systems globally.
- Financial Mobilization: Securing sustainable funding to ensure long-term success.

In addition, the Activate plan of this strategy is the key to translating the overarching goals of this initiative into actionable outcomes at national and global levels. According to available working documents,^{1,9} the 2030 In Sight initiative encourages all to build a world where:

- No one experiences unnecessary or preventable sight loss, and everyone can achieve their full potential.

- Eye care and rehabilitation services are accessible, inclusive, and affordable to everyone, everywhere, whenever they are needed.
- People understand the importance of caring for their eye health and demand access to services free from the weight of any social stigma.

So, with the future in sight, how does the eye health sector need to change to effect the expected change? In other words, what do we need to do differently and collectively as a sector to drive positive change? Ten areas of priority were postulated for the next 10 years from 2021, which include:

1. Develop leadership
2. Secure new forms of funding
3. Strengthen partnerships with private sector
4. Develop the workforce
5. Improve accountability
6. Advocate differently
7. Embrace technological solutions
8. Create new allies
9. Prove our case
10. Influence the widest audience

Core 2030 In sight priorities that address the “Activate” Strategy

The ultimate goals of the Activate strategy are shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Goals of the Activate strategy of 2030 In Sight

Almost every person will need help with their vision at some point in their life.¹ It is an inevitable occurrence, and there is a need to activate universal demand. We need to educate and empower people to force change by making people more aware of what they can do to look after their own eyes. (Figure 5a & e)



Figure 5: Core 2030 In sight priorities that address the “Activate” Strategy

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Collaboration with the private, corporate and business sectors can help improve access to affordable treatments, innovative technologies, and supply chain solutions. PPPs have been instrumental in improving healthcare infrastructure in low-resource settings.¹⁰ The Activate Strategy emphasizes the need for substantial financial investment in eye care through global and international funding mechanisms, including donor support and multilateral financing, which will be necessary to ensure equitable access to eye care in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). The role of the private sector in providing effective and efficient markets with affordable products and services can be a big part of the solution. This can create the right market environment, break down regulatory and financial barriers to help expand access to affordable eye health services. (Figure 5c & d)

Equity and inclusion, addressing disparities in rural areas and marginalized groups, such as women, children and the disabled, often face significant barriers to eye care access.^{6,11} This calls for targeted interventions to address these disparities, such as community outreach programs and awareness campaigns.³ Gender-sensitive studies show that women are more likely to suffer from visual impairment than men, particularly in developing countries.⁷ The Activate Strategy advocates for gender-sensitive programs to ensure women have equal access to services.

Leveraging Technology and Innovation (Figure 5b) as a powerful tool for scaling up eye care services. The Activate Strategy highlights the role of digital solutions and innovative technologies in transforming eye care:

- **Telemedicine and Teleophthalmology:** The use of telemedicine for remote consultations and diagnosis has shown promise in providing care in underserved areas. For example, teleophthalmology programs are increasingly used for diabetic retinopathy screening and retinal imaging.¹²
- **Mobile Health (mHealth):** Mobile applications for eye care education, reminders for follow-up visits, and remote diagnostic services can greatly increase accessibility in remote areas.¹³
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI has shown potential in improving diagnostic accuracy, especially for conditions such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.¹⁴ AI tools can support healthcare workers in resource-poor settings by providing decision support for diagnoses.

How to Activate?

According to the 2030 In Sight initiative document,¹ a proposed 4-step implementation roadmap is outlined below:

1. **Campaign on a new level**
To assist individuals and communities around the world to make their vision a priority, understand the link with their wider health, grasp the social and economic impacts of inaction and take the steps needed. From childhood, individuals should be exposed to all the

information they need to protect their eyes, ranging from reducing screen time to seeking help for any ailments or discomfort. This level of awareness and demand should flow through every single person's education pathway and employment environment. Individuals should continue to demand protective measures, equipment and safer working environments that prevent sight loss or harm to their eyes. This will create an enabling situation where everyone knows how and where to get help with the treatment of any eye issues or sight loss, demanding access to affordable services and glasses if needed, as well as complaining and campaigning if that does not happen.

2. *Tackle negative stereotyping*

Negative stereotyping for the rights of people who are blind or have serious sight loss currently affects 43.3 million people around the world. They are often stereotyped, excluded and silenced. There is a need to highlight and tackle the unacceptable level of discrimination that still exists and create a world where those with sight loss are fully engaged in society and enjoy the same opportunities and legal rights. Societal attitudinal change towards stereotyping and name-calling (nerdy) of spectacle wearers, particularly girls and vulnerable children. This weeps up self-consciousness that necessitates reluctance to use glasses, sabotaging good vision and progressive development. In some parts of the world, wearing glasses is seen as a weakness and could impact social standing, employment prospects and future life plans.

3. *Build Public-Private partnerships*

Eye health cannot be addressed, nor will services be scaled up without a major contribution from the private sector. There are already strong examples of good public-private partnerships, such as with the pharmaceutical sector on tackling onchocerciasis and trachoma. Extending

this experience and concept to other areas, such as working with the private sector on tackling conditions such as diabetic retinopathy or creating sustainable, affordable, accessible markets for glasses, especially for communities in LMICs. Part of the solution would be the integration of vision tests and prescribing glasses within mainstream health systems, especially in primary care, in line with IPEC. NGOs and the private sector can work together to leverage their respective strengths, relationships, reputations, skills, resources and funding to find solutions and apply the collective power to deliver change. This will mean jointly developing sustainable business models and investments based on the principle of affordability.

4. *Create the right regulatory environment*

In many parts of the world, regulations stipulate that glasses are only sold by registered eye health professionals. This can result in a lack of open competition, poor quality products, inflated prices and a market that is not driven by consumer need. Creating an open supply chain can lead to a situation where consumers can purchase glasses affordably, particularly reading glasses. Secondly, there is a need for governments to cut the taxes and duties on glasses, especially in LMICs. This additional cost for an essential assistive product risks making glasses a luxury item, unaffordable and out of reach for many people. Thirdly, regulation of quality should be embedded within procurement and distribution systems. For example, global standards should be adhered to, enforcing that glasses meet ISO standards or an acceptable equivalent.

What has been activated globally to drive consumer demand as outlined by the IAPB?

Glasses are now part of the World Health Organization's assistive products list, and this

is being used as leverage with governments that adopted the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution on vision. With this resolution, governments are encouraged to cut taxes and duties on glasses because of the resultant additional cost and unaffordability risk. Similarly, they are to ensure feasible global standards for spectacles as well as enforce the regulation of quality embedded within procurement and distribution systems of eye products and services.

A range of alliances with other coalitions and sectors has resulted in successful and impactful cross-sectoral awareness campaigns, linking eye health directly with wider health, lifestyle issues with fundraising initiatives. Increased funding is critical for scaling up eye care services. The cost-effectiveness of eye care interventions such as cataract surgery and trachoma control demonstrates that investment in eye health yields significant economic returns.^{3,15} Such fundraising awareness initiative is a yearly exhibition to mark World Sight Day tagged “a picture is worth a thousand words” (Figure 6) endorsed by Friends of Vision, the World Health Organization

Light for the World attends the 2030 IN SIGHT photo exhibition, launched on 10 October 2023 at the UN Headquarters in New York. The exhibition challenges viewers to consider the impact of eye health on sustainable development outcomes.



Source: <https://www.lightfortheworld.org/news/sustainable-development-goals-eye-health-subtitle/>

Figure 6: 2030 In Sight Photo Exhibition in New York 2023.

and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) highlights the importance of achieving this goal. According to H.E. Ambassador Walton Webson, permanent representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations and Founder & Co-chair of the UN Friends of Vision Group, “This immersive exhibition makes it clear that reaching our Sustainable Development Goals is in sight if eye health lies at the heart of our transformative efforts to ensure a better future for all.”

The annual World Sight Day (WSD), observed every first Thursday in October, has evolved into a critical platform for global advocacy, rallying governments, organizations, and communities to recognize the importance of eye health. This annual event has become a cornerstone and an ongoing effort to build awareness that eye care must become accessible, affordable, and available to everyone, aligning with the United Nations’ promise to leave no one behind. World Sight Day “Love your Eyes” (Figure 7) campaigns are directed at a change in consumer awareness and behaviour, keeping pressure on

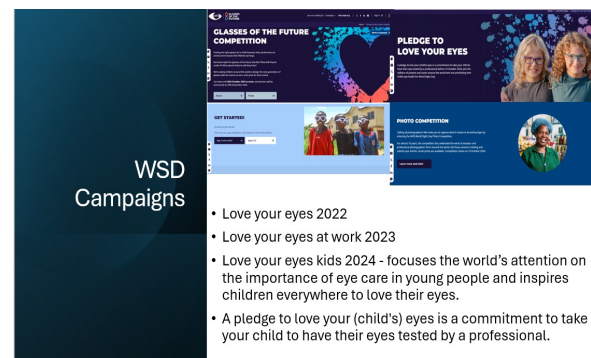


Figure 7: World Sight Day yearly “Love your eyes” campaigns

governments, suppliers, businesses and service providers. Launched by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) in 2021, this campaign has played a pivotal role in driving momentum toward a world where eye care is recognized as vital to health, development, education and economic growth. The campaign has garnered significant global attention from world leaders, policymakers, corporate businesses and the public. Resources on the “love your eyes” yearly theme and how to participate can be found at the IAPB website. IAPB 2030 In Sight Live events – This is a meeting of an overarching alliance for the global eye health sector with more than 180 members in over 100 countries, creating a platform for leaders, innovators and change-makers in the eye health sector to create radical change. The LIVE events rotated through different cities and continents (Figure 8) give attendees exclusive learning opportunities and insights featuring global key opinion leaders. As of 2020, over half of the world’s population (4.1 billion) was digitally online,¹⁶ with proper



Figure 8: 2030 In Sight Live 2021 Launch in Dubai

technology, this creates a fast and wide modality of eye health awareness creation. Technological developments have created a disruptive force within the private sector and have resulted in new businesses, products and services reaching more people. The possibility of technology to support and possibly lead to sustainable outcomes and economic growth for government, enterprises and citizens is enormous. Examples include the use of the Internet, big data, AI, immersive technology in Telemedicine, telesurgery and information sharing; social media movements using hashtags, content creation, online engagement, celebrity influencers and digital wellbeing using mobile and personal devices serve as trainers and health information reminders. The online space can be leveraged to market and bring eye health screening programs and delivery services into the homes of the consumer, as seen in the home, food and pharmacy sectors. Mobile and internet-based applications such as Peek acuity, WHOeyes, and eyeonic vision test (Visual field

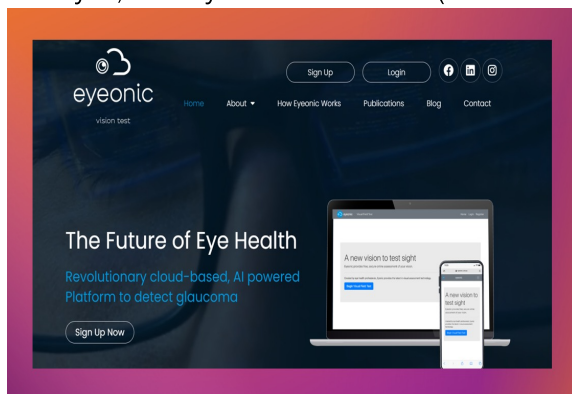


Figure 9: Web homepage for eyeonic vision test platform.

analysis, Figure 9) can be used as platforms for driving change in consumer behaviour. A review paper of 25 mobile apps evaluated from 22 enrolled studies showed evidence that mobile app-based visual acuity tests can be useful to drive on-demand visual impairment detection.¹⁷

How can we activate within the National Context?

A lot can be learnt from advocacy strategies such as the “See Now” campaign in India using celebrity influencers (e.g. Shri Amitabh Bachchan) to tackle negative stereotyping by deploying messaging strategically via radio, television, print, social media, WhatsApp and SMS. The campaign has successfully provided information on local eye services and how to access them. Similarly, in the United States, the Disney challenge was inspired by the emotional story of a young girl, Lowri Moore, who stated, “When I was 9 I asked my mam if I could write a letter to Disney. I wanted to ask if they could make a film with a princess who wears glasses. I love Disney but didn’t feel children with glasses were represented fairly. My mam posted a picture of my letter on her Facebook page, and we were blown away by the response. I received letters and comments from all over the world, from people who felt the same way I did. I was invited to speak on lots of TV and radio programmes and became an ambassador for Clearly.” According to this review author, suggested ways to Activate locally in Nigeria are depicted in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Suggested In-country Activate action plan

Challenges to Activating the Sight 2030 Strategy

While the Activate Strategy presents a clear path forward, several challenges must be addressed to ensure successful activation:

- **Limited Infrastructure in Low-Resource Settings** - Many LMICs lack basic healthcare infrastructure, making the implementation of eye care services difficult. Inadequate facilities, shortages of trained personnel, and lack of access to essential equipment hinder the delivery of effective eye care services.¹⁸
- **Financial Constraints** - Despite the growing recognition of the importance of eye health, many countries, especially in the Global South, do not allocate sufficient resources to eye care. Mobilizing sustainable funding from government and private sector sources remains a major challenge.⁸
- **Cultural and Social Barriers** - In some regions, cultural beliefs and social stigma related to blindness or visual impairment can discourage individuals from seeking care. Community engagement and awareness campaigns will be essential to overcome these barriers.¹
- **Political Will and Policy Integration** - The integration of eye care into broader healthcare policy frameworks often requires significant political will and commitment. In some cases, eye care may be overlooked in favor of more immediate health concerns.¹⁹

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability

Efficient monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems internationally and regionally are crucial components of the Activate Strategy. These systems are crucial instruments to guarantee that objectives are fulfilled and resources are utilized effectively. Progress may be monitored, and opportunities for improvement can be identified with the aid of transparent reporting and routine data collection. To ensure goals are met, indicators including the prevalence of cataract surgery, the precise causes of visual impairment, screening uptake, the coverage of eye health services,

and patient outcomes can be routinely tracked.³

CONCLUSION

2030 In Sight Vision provides a comprehensive and actionable roadmap for achieving universal access to eye care and reducing the burden of avoidable blindness. However, its success hinges on an effective implementation at both the local and global levels. Promoting equity, mobilizing financial resources, and leveraging technology are essential components of the Activate Strategy. Despite specific challenges, a collaborative approach involving governments, NGOs, private sector partners, and communities can make this a reality.

2030 In Sight ACTIVATE key messages

Through concerted effort over the next decade, the following is achievable.

- Eye health included in national health promotion schemes to increase awareness and promote care-seeking behaviours.
- A range of alliances with other coalitions and sectors resulting in successful and impactful cross-sectoral awareness campaigns, linking eye health directly with wider health and lifestyle issues.
- With global campaigns including World Sight Day, a direct change in consumer awareness and behaviour, keeping pressure on governments, suppliers, businesses and service providers is possible.
- Governments will ensure the tax system is not a barrier for the provision of affordable glasses for low-income countries.
- Regulatory frameworks dictating who can prescribe glasses will be modernized to improve affordable access to eye care services.
- Commercial providers of eye health can respond to market demand, and vision care and aids are competitively and fairly priced with easy access.
- Technological developments can create a disruptive force within the private sector

and result in new businesses, products and services reaching more people.

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