



Strategy 2030



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Executive summary

At Light for the World, we believe in a world where people with disabilities and eye conditions can fully exercise their rights to health, education, work - and protection in emergencies. By ensuring individuals and communities are at the centre and the drivers of change, we spark lasting organisational, policy and systems change on eye health and disability rights.

In our Strategy 2030, we commit to being more agile in the face of volatility, to amplify the voices and needs of the people we work with, to scale our impact in sustainable ways, and to make strategic decisions and investments. With these commitments, we will remain resilient and valued as a trusted partner. To deliver on our mission, we will prioritise the following five targets by 2030:

1. Increase Light for the World's agility to address volatility
2. Strengthen our advocacy and strategic communication capabilities to spark systems change
3. Mobilise funds effectively for more impact
4. Innovate and co-create to walk the talk on our values
5. Strengthen our accountability.

Together with the people we work with - the drivers of change - our Strategy 2030 sets us on a stronger footing to deliver impact, at scale, sustainably.



Helena, a Disability Inclusion Facilitator with Light for the World shares her expertise on inclusion in emergencies, during a cyclone simulation exercise in Mozambique, delivered in 2023 with the support of the Austrian Development Agency.

Message from Board Chair & CEO

Light for the World's mission to achieve lasting change on eye health and disability rights remains as essential as when we were founded more than 35 years ago.

According to the World Health Organization, two billion people globally need eye health services, and one in every six people (16 per cent of the global population) has a disability. The greatest inequities in accessing quality services are in Africa, including in Light for the World's focus countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda.

In the time since Light for the World was founded, the world has changed. Today, a top-down, charitable approach cannot deliver what is needed in a scalable and sustainable way. At Light for the World, we are proud to have worked through solidarity-based partnerships with local organisations for several decades. Such partnerships place individuals and communities at the centre of our work to drive sustainable change.

Since we began in 1988, the world has also become a much more volatile place - politically, economically and due to the climate crisis. We must become more agile and resilient to continue having an impact. Human rights, including disability and gender rights, are being rolled back in many countries, requiring rights-based organisations like Light for the World to build enhanced coalitions across sectors. We need to play a stronger role as advocates, and "walk our own talk", leading with an inclusive and feminist approach.

We are privileged to work with our partners, peers and colleagues every day to deliver on Light for the World's mission. With our Strategy 2030, we invite you to join us in our collective efforts to support lasting change.



Marion Lieser
CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marion Lieser".



Tom Shakespeare
Chair of Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Shakespeare".



Light for the World advocates for the inclusion of people with disabilities in climate action. Working alongside ELRHA and Butterfly Works, we launched a user-centred exploration programme of preparedness needs with people with disabilities and older people in Mozambique.

Context

At Light for the World, we believe in a world where people with disabilities and eye conditions can fully exercise their rights to health, education, work - and protection in emergencies. By ensuring individuals and communities are at the centre and the drivers of change, we spark lasting organisational, policy and systems change on eye health and disability rights.

In today's context of volatility across the globe, different challenges and risks are affecting our partners and people we work with - and our work as an organisation. The climate crisis and conflicts are leading to increasing insecurity, displacement and humanitarian needs across Africa and beyond. The erosion of human rights, shrinking civic spaces and rising polarisation affect the people and partners we work with. Development financing is in upheaval, with important decolonisation debates, and increasing needs in times of constrained budgets. Costs in health and social services are rising. Digitalisation offers opportunities, yet risks leaving many people behind. As the world changes, Light for the World needs to change too, to remain agile, innovative, and impactful for the people we work with.

We need to act effectively, and with urgency, over this next strategic period until 2030. At Light for the World, we are committed to a world that is just, inclusive, and where people with disabilities and eye conditions are the drivers of sustainable change. In our Strategy 2030, we commit to being more agile in the face of volatility. To amplify the voices and needs of the people we work with. To scale our impact in sustainable ways. And to make strategic decisions and investments over the next years, so that we remain resilient and valued as a trusted partner.

Who we are

Our work and how we engage are guided by our vision, mission, approach and values. Our focus countries are Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda.

Burkina Faso

South Sudan

Ethiopia

Kenya

Uganda

Mozambique



Mission

We spark lasting change on disability rights and eye health



Vision

At Light for the World, we believe in a world where people with eye conditions and disabilities can fully exercise their rights to health, education, work - and protection in emergencies



Values

Our values are Together with Respect, Accountability, Inclusion & Learning



Approach

We ensure individuals and communities are the drivers of change; supporting organisational, policy and systems change.



Christine, a cataract patient from Ziou in Burkina Faso, laughs during her sight test.

Our theory of change

Light for the World is a trusted partner to many influential international, regional, national and grassroots organisations, and makes a positive difference to the lives of individuals and communities.

We are proud of our strong record of impact and expertise in eye health and disability rights; including child eye health, economic empowerment, inclusive education, humanitarian action, and our broader intersectional systems change, climate and gender equality work.

Our theory of change, which guides our strategic decisions and investments, stems from the impact we aim to achieve together with our partners by 2030: A world where people with disabilities and with eye conditions exercise their rights and are drivers of change.

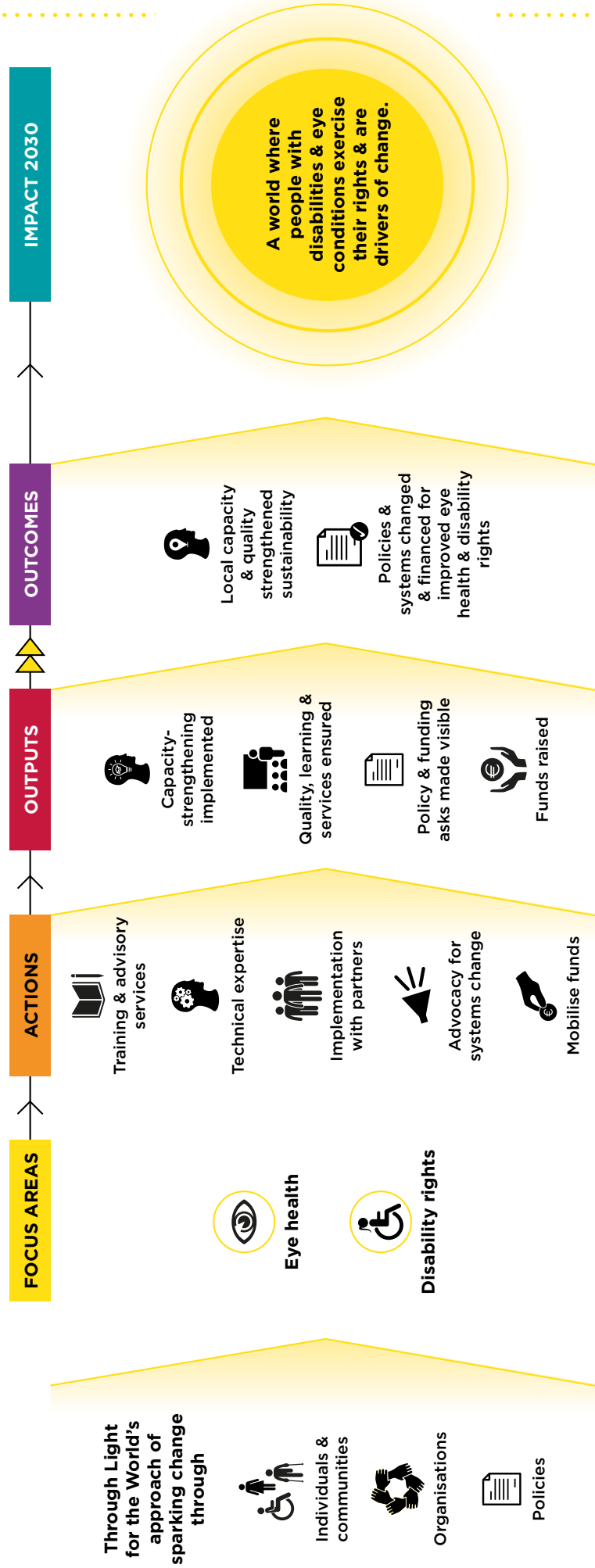
Through our approach of sparking lasting change, we are working hand-in-hand with individuals and communities and transforming organisations and policies. Our theory of change prioritises our focus areas - eye health and disability rights - and outlines actions and outputs we collectively work on:

- ▶ Providing training and advisory services, technical expertise and programme implementation with partners; to continue capacity-strengthening and ensure quality, services, and learnings.
- ▶ Strengthening advocacy, coalitions, strategic communication and campaigns and mobilising funds; to ensure policy and funding requirements are reached, our independence remains, and our effectiveness is maximised.

At Light for the World, we hold ourselves and the partners we work with accountable for prioritising capacity, and effectively, efficiently, and transparently using funds to deliver these outputs.

Together with our partners and other key stakeholders, we aim to:

- ▶ Sustainably strengthen local capacity and quality
- ▶ Achieve impactful and accessible programmes
- ▶ Transform systems and policies, and the financing thereof, to deliver widespread, sustainable, lasting change
- ▶ Make disability rights and eye health a reality for all.




Our mandate areas

Our strong eye health and disability rights expertise defines our mandate. The greatest inequities determine our geographic focus on Africa; including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda. Our value-add is our strong rights-based partnership approach, which places individuals and communities with disabilities and eye conditions as drivers of change. Our work on eye health in the new strategic period will continue to take a comprehensive and systems-based approach, aligned with the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the World Health Organization's Report on Vision. We will increasingly look to connect our technical expertise and work on eye health, including child eye health, to our work on broader disability rights. All our partnerships and programmes should serve to sustainably strengthen comprehensive and people-centred primary and national services that are inclusive of all genders, ages and populations. As 90 per cent of vision impairment and blindness are preventable or treatable, eliminating these conditions and cost-effectively addressing uncorrected refractive errors will remain a core focus of our work and partnerships.

Preventing child blindness

Light for the World in partnership with the Tigray Health Bureau in 2024 launched a child mass trachoma treatment campaign in Tigray, Ethiopia, along with disability inclusion training for trachoma trichiasis surgeons. Trachoma is a disease of the eye caused by infection and is responsible for blindness or visual impairment. Blindness from trachoma is irreversible. Over 116,00 children have been treated for trachoma by the end of 2024 and ophthalmic (eye health) nurses have undergone training to become surgeons, receiving disability awareness and inclusion training. The NTD programmes are funded by USAID's ACT to End Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) | East and The END Fund through the ARISE programme.

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a white headscarf, holding a young child. She is administering eye treatment to the child using a small white applicator. The child is looking towards the camera. The woman has a focused expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting.

Teser came to the health center of Lemelem kebele with her daughter to take Zithromax, an antibiotic which treats trachoma.



A trainer provides advice on core life skills during a session of the We Can Work Academy.

Light for the World will scale up its unique disability inclusion expertise and approach based on community development, strengthening local capacity, and placing human rights and safeguarding at the centre. Our support to partners demonstrates what inclusion and meaningful participation of people with disabilities looks like in practice – be it at the local community or cross-national organisational level, in areas such as access to education, work and responding to humanitarian crises in a disability-inclusive way. By shifting more of our work to advisory services and advocacy, we will in the next strategic period significantly expand our reach and sustainability, and support countries to deliver on their commitments made in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We will leverage digitalisation, and tackle changing contexts that affect disability rights caused by climate change, conflicts and other crises.

Enabling young people with disabilities to access work

Light for the World and the Mastercard Foundation in 2023 expanded a partnership to improve access to work for 1 million youth with disabilities in Africa through the We Can Work programme. Central to this partnership is the scaling of the Disability Inclusion Facilitator (DIF) approach that trains young people with disabilities to offer training and coaching on disability inclusion for a wide range of organisations. We Can Work is implemented in partnership with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and is part of Light for the World’s advisory services for organisational transformation.

Targets for the strategy period

In our Strategy 2030, we take steps to: become more agile and innovative in the face of volatility, scale our impact in sustainable ways, and make strategic decisions and investments over the next years, so that we remain resilient and can continue to strengthen our track record as a valued and trusted partner. To deliver on our mission, we will prioritise the following five targets and actions:

1) Increase Light for the World's agility to address volatility

Within our focus areas - eye health and disability rights - our expertise and how we provide services in-country need to adapt and adjust to different contexts and crises. We will prioritise strategic partnerships with key coalitions and organisations working on cross-cutting issues such as climate, gender equality, and humanitarian action. In our recruitment, we will prioritise transferable skillsets and foster technical learning opportunities and growth for all colleagues.



2) Strengthen our advocacy and strategic communication capabilities to spark systems change

We will increase our advocacy capability and strengthen our external communication and campaigning capacities across our entire organisation. Based on our values and our commitment to shift power to the regions and people we work with, we will amplify the voices and demands of our partners through strategic communication. We will, in partnership with key coalitions and partners, elevate eye health and disability rights in our work with organisations, countries, and in regional and international forums.



3) Mobilise funds effectively for more impact

We will in early 2025 develop a funding strategy for the new strategic period that balances our mandate areas, fundraising streams, and helps guide our strategic investments. We will develop funding and growth scenarios, and regularly review shifts, and investments required to deliver on our mandate and mission goals. We will retain our independence, and regularly evaluate costs, benefits, and risks of investments made to strengthen our organisation.





4) Innovate and co-create to walk the talk on our values

We will innovate and co-create together with our key partners, including youth, people with disabilities, and people of all genders, and ensure we walk the talk on disability rights, diversity, decolonisation, anti-racism, and our organisational role in climate change. We will implement diversity and inclusion, that includes decolonisation, for all aspects of our work, including in our leadership and governing bodies, and reduce our carbon footprint by 2030.

5) Strengthen our accountability

As an organisation committed to safeguarding and transparently tracking our impact and funding, we will strengthen our investments in accountability to our donors and to and from our partners. We will over the next two years invest in our financial monitoring and digital infrastructure, invest in our extensive monitoring and research data also for advocacy and strategic communication purposes, and develop key performance indicators to track our strategic targets until 2030.



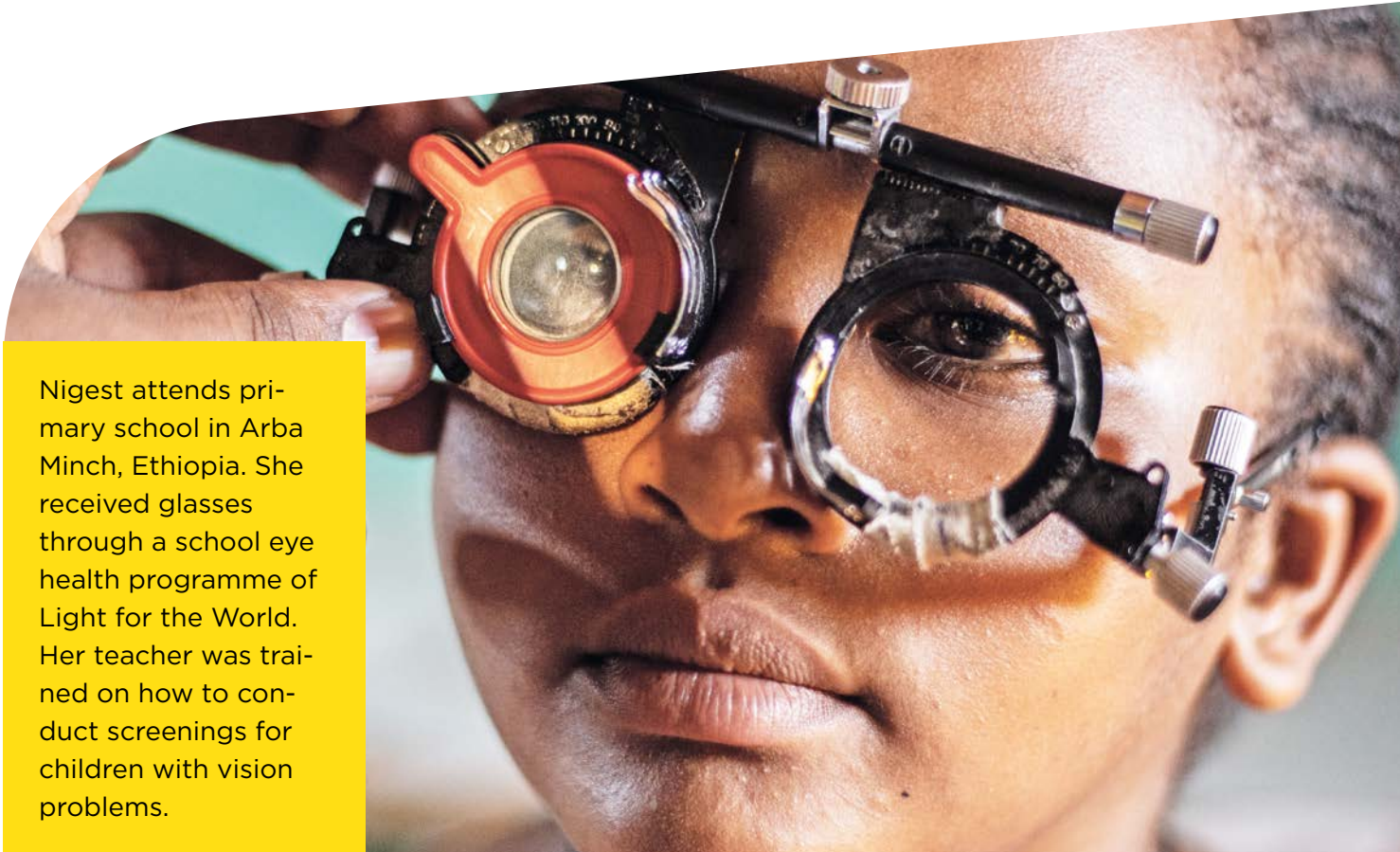
Our governance

Effective leadership, oversight, and accountability are central to Light for the World's work. Our governance* is composed of:

- ▶ **Assembly of Members:** The Assembly of Members is the highest body of the organisation. It is the interface between the national members and the international organisation. The Assembly of Members decides on the vision, mission, strategic framework and policies binding for all members. The Assembly of Members consists of delegated national board members representing each core and associate members. They elect the Board of Trustees and appoint the auditor.
- ▶ **Board of Trustees:** The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the association. Its members, called trustees, are appointed by the Assembly of Members for a three-year term and serve the interest of the association and safeguard its mission. The Board of Trustees appoints the Chief Executive Officer and decides on strategy and annual workplans.
- ▶ **National Boards:** The National Boards are the governing body of our national members. National Boards ensure national accountability, including compliance with national laws and standards.
- ▶ **Chief Executive Officer:** The CEO leads the international team. She/He is appointed by and accountable to the Board of Trustees for a period of three years. The CEO is responsible for the overall management of the organisation as well as the implementation of the strategy and annual workplans.

* www.light-for-the-world.org/about-us/our-organisation/





Nigest attends primary school in Arba Minch, Ethiopia. She received glasses through a school eye health programme of Light for the World. Her teacher was trained on how to conduct screenings for children with vision problems.

Acknowledgements

Light for the World was founded, and is supported by our trusted donors and partners, to serve people with eye conditions and disabilities, so that everyone can fully exercise their universal human rights. In volatile times, our work in Africa remains as important as ever. Yet as the world changes, we as an organisation must also change. What worked twenty years ago may no longer be suited for the world of today and tomorrow. Climate change, conflict, shrinking civic space, constrained budgets and other crises and challenges affect the people we work with, and impact our work as an organisation.

As an organisation, together with many partners, and with the active engagement of our Board of Trustees, we have evaluated trends that affect our work, and the agility required of us to deliver our mission and remain fit for purpose. Together with the people we work with – the drivers of change – our Strategy 2030 sets us on a stronger footing to deliver impact, at scale, sustainably.

We would like to thank all Light for the World colleagues, leadership and Board Members, past and present, for their dedication and work, and thank our strategy working group: Carolin Blank, Mira Buttinger-Kreuzhuber, Fee Clemens, Susanne Fröschl (design), Dawn Rennie, Erika Tschöfnig, Katri Bertram. To all people with eye conditions and disabilities, you are front and centre of our collective work.

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