



# BLINDNESS PREVENTION: ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

## AUTHOR (S)

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## THIS CHAPTER WILL INCLUDE A REVIEW OF:

- Important organisations
- World sight day

## IMPORTANT ORGANISATIONS

- **Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM)** <http://www.cbm.org>
- **The Fred Hollows Foundation** <http://www.hollows.org.au/>
- **Impact EMR** Email: [info@emr-iapb.org](mailto:info@emr-iapb.org)
- **International Center for Eye Care Education** [www.icee.org](http://www.icee.org)
- **The International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO)**  
<http://www.icoph.org>  
<http://www.light-for-the-world.org/>
- **Lions Clubs International Foundation** <http://www.lionsclubs.org/>
- **Operation Eyesight Universal** <http://www.operationeyesight.com>
- **ORBIS International** <http://www.orbis.org>
- **Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)** <http://www.rnib.org>
- **Sightsavers International** [www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org)
- **Vision CRC** <http://www.visioncrc.org>
- **World Blind Union** [www.worldblindunion.org](http://www.worldblindunion.org)
- **Optometry Giving Sight** <http://www.givingsight.org/>

## WORLD SIGHT DAY

The second Thursday of October each year is included in the official WHO calendar as World Sight Day (WSD) – a day focused on creating global awareness of avoidable blindness and visual impairment. WSD is coordinated by the IAPB under the VISION 2020 Global Initiative. The IAPB is also responsible for generating the annual WSD theme and supporting resources.

VISION 2020 members work together to achieve the WSD objectives, which are to:

- Raise public awareness of blindness and vision impairment as major international public health issues
- Influence Governments/Ministers of Health in developing countries to participate in and designate funds for national blindness prevention programs
- Educate target audiences about blindness prevention, about VISION 2020 and its activities, and to generate support for program activities of member organisations
- This year, World Sight Day will be held on 9 October, and the theme for WSD 2008 is “*Eyes on the future: vision impairment later in life*”. The world’s population is ageing and life expectancies are increasing. As a result, blindness from chronic conditions is also on the increase.

### GLOBAL KEY MESSAGES FOR WSD 2008

- 75% of blindness is avoidable
  - 80% of the world's 45 million blind people are over 50 years of age
  - The risk of vision-impairing conditions such as cataract and macular degeneration increases exponentially with increasing age
  - 90% of blind people live in low-income countries, where older people often face barriers to health care
  - The main blinding conditions affecting older people are cataract, refractive error, age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and glaucoma.
  - Cataract remains the leading cause of blindness in older people – yet it can be cured with a simple, cost-effective operation. VISION 2020 seeks to make this 'gift' available to all who need it
  - Glaucoma has blinded 4.5 million people worldwide
  - Due to ARMD over 3 million people are without sight
  - 8 million people worldwide are functionally blind due to uncorrected refractive errors. A simple sight test and glasses could restore sight to most of these people
  - The world's populations are ageing - don't be robbed of your vision
- Please see <http://www.v2020.org/page.asp?section=000100010007> for more information on WSD.

### RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS

- Website of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB): <http://www.iapb.org/>
  - Website of VISION 2020: The Right to Sight: <http://www.v2020.org/>
  - Website of the World Health Organization (WHO): <http://www.who.int/en/>
  - Website of the World Blind Union: <http://www.worldblindunion.org/en/>
  - IAPB/WHO, 2004. VISION 2020: The Right to Sight. Developing an Action Plan: Toolkit. Version 2.
  - Available from: [http://www.who.int/ncd/vision2020\\_actionplan/start.htm](http://www.who.int/ncd/vision2020_actionplan/start.htm)
  - IAPB/WHO, 2007. VISION 2020: The Right to Sight. Global Initiative for the Elimination of Avoidable Blindness : action plan 2006-2011
- Available from: <http://www.who.int/blindness/Vision2020%20-report.pdf>



## SELECTED READING/REFERENCES

- Schwartz SH. **Visual Perception - A Clinical Orientation, 3rd Edition**. Appleton & Lange, Stamford, Connecticut, 2004