

A chance to thrive



Where we work

In eight countries around the world Sense International supports children and adults with deafblindness to live their lives to the full.

With the right support, their lives do not have to be short and lonely. By overcoming barriers to communication and learning life skills, everyone living with deafblindness can thrive as active members of their communities.

We are a small charity with a big impact because of the way we work. It's all about partnership. Partnership with people with deafblindness, their families, communities, health and education professionals, disabled people's organisations and governments. We work directly with local people and local organisations to share knowledge, skills and expertise so that each country can carry on this vital work in a sustainable way.



Priority 1:
Early intervention

We work with Ministries of Health so that children with hearing and visual impairments are identified as early as possible and go on to get specialist therapy and support to develop to their full potential.



Priority 2:
Inclusive education

Every child has a right to learn so we work with teachers, parents, and governments to develop specialist educational support for children with deafblindness at their local school or at home.



Priority 3:
Vocational training

Vocational training means young people with deafblindness can earn and participate in their communities, for example by running a small business.



Priority 4:
Advocacy and research

We support people with deafblindness to advocate for their rights and we advocate at all levels for their inclusion. We also undertake research to provide evidence of what needs to change and of what works.



Celebrating 25 years of life-changing work

In 2019-20, we celebrated 25 years of supporting people with deafblindness to thrive. Here you can read about the life-changing impact of our work with our partners during our 25th year and how we stepped up to meet the challenge of Covid-19.

Some highlights have been a long time in the making. Take, for instance, our years of advocacy and research on Congenital Rubella Syndrome, which contributed to the Government of Uganda's first ever vaccination campaign against rubella. It reached over 18 million children in October 2019. A major milestone.

We also hope you enjoy reading about our work to identify children with deafblindness like Sospeter, to support children like Isabela and Angel to learn in the environment that's

right for them, to provide vocational training for young people like Mwanaasha to play an active part in society and to enable people like Mădălina to get their voices heard.

As these stories show, with the right support, at the right time, people with deafblindness can live full and meaningful lives. Everything we do at Sense International is about making this happen. But we can only do so in partnership with others and with the remarkable support of people like you.

Over 18 million children

were reached last year through Uganda's first ever vaccination campaign against rubella.

Thank you for helping to make a difference to so many people's lives over the past year.

Sunil Sheth
Chair of Sense International



Richard Kramer
CEO of Sense and Sense International



Meeting the challenge of Covid-19

When Covid-19 hit towards the end of 2019-20, our staff went the extra mile to make sure that the people we support knew how to stay safe.

By March, all country teams had to stop home visits to children with deafblindness, cancel or postpone events, stop advocacy meetings, and re-think, re-plan and re-budget.

In some countries, we adapted our programmes to deliver emergency food and hygiene packages to people with deafblindness and their families.

We have connected families to local support schemes where these exist and have been advocating to governments for people with deafblindness to be included in national response plans.

At the same time, we have kept in touch with families by phone and moved much of our work on-line, for example, our training courses for parents and teachers.

Throughout this challenging time our teams have been resilient, adaptable and flexible and we know they will keep finding practical, imaginative solutions everywhere we work.

During the coronavirus pandemic, we supported

1,761 families

with emergency food and hygiene parcels to help them care for a child with deafblindness and provided vital information and advice to many more.

Muid's story

Muid, 16, lives with his family in Bangladesh and COVID-19 has hit them hard. Muid, who has physical disabilities and deafblindness, had been doing well at school, but with lockdown not only has his school closed, his parents have lost their income and are struggling to stay safe and survive.

"We are four people living in a congested area surrounded by Covid-19 infected people," said Muid's mother. "Days are passing whilst the anxiety of being infected continues to grow. My husband worked as a day labourer, now he cannot go out to work since lockdown started."

As part of Covid response projects, funded by UK Aid, Sense International and partners are providing vital cash transfers to Muid's family and 600 other families in a similar situation so they can buy basic necessities to survive and stay safe during the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.





Early intervention

From the moment a child is born they need to communicate. That's why early intervention work is so vital.

Our screening programmes identify babies with sight and hearing impairments and provide specialist therapy and support to enable them to break through the isolation of deafblindness.

We train health workers and parents to understand, communicate and work with their child. And we demonstrate to Ministries of Health the huge difference early screening and professional support make, advocating for scale up of these schemes.

“They gave us a new hope and purpose for our baby”



84,000 children

were screened last year for sight and hearing impairments around the world – **866 children** were identified with deafblindness as a result and received specialist help.

Sospeter's story

“We were heartbroken after learning that our baby was deaf and could not develop at the pace of other children.” Tabby, Sospeter's mother

When Sospeter was born deaf, with complex medical needs, his parents felt alone with no-one to support them.

In Kenya, children with deafblindness rarely get the support they need. Without support, these children face a lifetime of isolation, struggling with mobility and communication, unable to form connections with those around them.

Tabby, pictured here with her son, says: “You are so desperate for answers, yet nobody has

them, and it feels like the majority of people do not care. Meeting the team at Sense International Kenya was the turning point for the family. They gave us a new hope and purpose for our baby.”

Through regular sessions with a Sense International trained therapist, Sospeter has learnt to walk independently, feed himself, and communicate with his mother – and has been fitted with hearing aids.

Elly, his therapist, says: “It is such a satisfaction watching a child improve and seeing their parents smile once more.”

Key achievements



Tanzania:

8,400 children were screened at four Sense International supported early intervention units based in government health centres.



India:

3,596 babies were screened for vision and hearing impairments and 573 young children are benefitting from our early intervention services.



Uganda:

19,627 children have been screened and 157 are receiving therapy services at Sense International supported early intervention units.

Looking ahead

We want all babies who may have hearing or vision impairments to be screened early in their life. This way they and their families can get the support they need as soon as possible.



Inclusive education

Every child has the right to an education but children with deafblindness are too often denied the chance to learn and develop their potential.

We work with families, schools, colleges and governments. Together we support children with deafblindness so they can learn in the place that best suits them. We develop community support for children to learn at home, and train Learning Support Assistants to work alongside children in their local mainstream school.

We train parents and teachers, as well as Parent-Teacher Associations, and provide appropriate technology, adapted school facilities, specialist curricula and learning materials.

Isabela's story – Peru

“She loves the lights and sounds in the sensory stimulation room.” Nery, specialist teacher

Isabela has cerebral palsy and struggles to see, walk and eat – but until she was two, her only formal support was basic hospital check-ups and her parents' therapy at home. That all changed when she joined a specialist school supported by Sense International.

Isabela really enjoys the school's new sensory stimulation room, playing with sensory balls, watching lights and listening to music. Her teacher Nery, pictured with Isabela, says “We love to work with Isabela. She loves the lights and sounds in the sensory stimulation room.”

Sense International has not only created Isabela's favourite room. We have also given teachers the training and tools to deliver the sensory therapies that children with deafblindness need.

These therapies can make a huge difference to a child's ability to learn “The stimulation she receives in the sensory stimulation classroom has generated the main changes in Isabela,” says her dad Antonio. “The colours and sensations have helped to develop her gestures and communication.” Antonio's dream is to see Isabela talking to him like any other child. He would love to hear her thoughts.

5,500 children
with deafblindness received specialist educational support at home or in school last year.



Key achievements



Peru:

249 teachers and professionals trained in a range of topics, including dual-sensory impairment and adapting the curriculum, lesson planning and adoption of best practice.



Bangladesh:

We worked with ten partners to provide education and livelihood support to 804 children and young adults.



Uganda:

200 children were supported to learn at home using the community-based education curriculum and 193 teachers were up-skilled in deafblindness.

Looking ahead

We want more schools to be disability-friendly and more teachers to feel confident teaching learners with different needs. In Peru for example, we plan to expand our education work into three new regions.



Vocational training

Meaningful work gives young people with deafblindness an income, confidence, and a role in society. Each young person we help has a ripple effect, showing their community how capable they are.

We work with governments, training colleges and partners to set up high quality vocational training. We help young people to join training centres, to become apprentices, to make business plans, to start their own small enterprises, and link them with advisers and local business support schemes.



945 young people

with deafblindness gained vocational skills last year. And **144 young people** received business start-up support to help them earn a living.

Mwanaasha's story – Tanzania

Mwanaasha met Sense International when she was six years old in primary school, and she says, "It has changed my life".

Mwanaasha is 30 now and is an independent businesswoman (she is pictured front right in a white shirt). The soap and detergent business she set up with support and investment from Sense International has given her a vital source of income for herself and her family, including during the Covid crisis.

Mwanaasha attended a school for children with deafblindness where she learned to read and write. But when she moved into mainstream school the teachers could not use sign language, so learning was tough.

Mwanaasha was determined to forge a career so she learned to make soap. She attended our five-day seminar for young entrepreneurs, learning how to generate business ideas and key business management skills. This put her in a strong position to expand her business to meet the surge in demand because of Covid-19.

Not only has her business been a success, but, says Mwanaasha, it has "proved to the community that we are able and we can stand alone, that we can take care of ourselves and our families and we can contribute to our communities."

"It makes me be confident and free to lead my life," she says.

Key achievements



Kenya:

12 micro-entrepreneurs and their families were trained and linked to an adviser and lead business partner through the "InBusiness" project.



Romania:

We worked with 25 vocational skills teachers to explore how digital technology can best support their students.



Bangladesh:

21 young adults and their families received support to set up income-generating activities such as working in a motor garage and a grocery shop, tailoring using a sewing machine, printing, shoe repair and poultry-rearing.

Looking ahead

We have secured funding for a joint programme spanning Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda which will promote vocational training and support for youth with deafblindness and complex disabilities to find work.



Advocacy

Disability activists say, “Nothing about us without us.”

We support people with deafblindness to advocate for their rights - to healthcare, education, jobs and support - and get their voices heard. Through training, networking and opportunities to meet decision-makers, we ensure they can speak out about their challenges and the changes they want to happen, like equal access to social protection, services and education.

We also advocate at all levels - from the local to the UN - for inclusion of people with deafblindness in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Key advocacy achievements



India:

We worked with the Census Office to identify persons with deafblindness. Among various positive outcomes, the Commissioner in Delhi State addressed the need for certification of people with deafblindness and for special educators.



Uganda:

After years of advocacy by Sense International Uganda, the government finally began vaccinating children against rubella, a major cause of deafblindness. The Ministry of Health reached 18,770,706 children, representing almost all those in the target age-group in October 2019.



Nepal:

We provided training for the Board of the Deafblind Association of Nepal and supported the establishment of networks of people with deafblindness and their parents in Morang and Rupandehi.

304 decision-makers

were trained on deafblindness last year, including government officials, civil servants, district officials and community leaders. We also trained almost **8,000 teachers, health workers and professionals** too.

Looking ahead

We will work with people with deafblindness to continue to push educators, local authorities and governments to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in order to reduce the barriers faced by people with deafblindness at all stages of their lives.



Mădălina’s story – Romania

Mădălina is a final year student at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca, specialising in special education.

Mădălina has deafblindness and, after receiving support from Sense International Romania, is now a volunteer and advocate. Through education, courses, trips and camps she says, “I learned to trust in my own abilities. I went to the Palace of Parliament, where I talked to politicians about deafblindness alongside Professor Vasile Adamescu.” Vasile too had deafblindness, inspiring Mădălina to overcome her challenges. “What do I want?” she says, “I wish for a world with no barriers and no prejudice.”



Research

Our research shows what needs to change and what works.

Evidence of the impact of our work is vital to persuade decision-makers to change policies and systems.

Looking ahead

We plan to conduct further research, connected to our programme work on early intervention, inclusive education and livelihoods, to provide a strong evidence-base so that we can advocate with governments nationally and internationally.

Key research achievements



Kenya:

Research in Nairobi County showed many government programmes aiming to increase employment among youth with disabilities are ineffective and young women with disabilities are doubly discriminated against because of their gender. This meant we, and the people we work with, could advocate for change with the authorities.



Tanzania:

Research demonstrated to the Government of Tanzania that our Teaching Assistant model is effective and made recommendations for the government to support and adopt it.



Uganda:

Research into the cost to a family of caring for a child with deafblindness demonstrated that it is more expensive for many reasons, including the costs of specialised medical and educational support. This gave the evidence to advocate to the Government for increased social protection grants for families living with deafblindness.



A massive thank you!

Sense International is extremely grateful to have so many amazing supporters who help us support people with deafblindness and their families around the world.

A few highlights

- Our Chance to Shine appeal raised £813,365 in total from all sources, including £383,794 of match funding by the UK government to establish sight and hearing screening for children in rural Kenya and provide vital early support to those identified with deafblindness. Money was raised through all kinds of activities - from clothing sales in our shops to quizzes and cookbooks, and from generous trusts and foundations including The Shanta Foundation and Princess Anne's Charities.
- Sense International celebrated its 25-year anniversary with an event at 1 Lombard Street in London attended by many of our wonderful supporters as well as our Regional Directors, our President Lord Levy and our Chair of Trustees Sunil Sheth.
- The Hemraj Goyal Foundation held SENSES at Aures London, inviting guests to explore their own senses in new and exciting ways whilst helping to support its funding of Sense International's work in Kenya. The work has enabled hundreds of children with complex disabilities such as deafblindness to gain an education and to live, learn and thrive.



Building for the future

- Our new livelihoods programme in Tanzania started in 2019 with a National Lottery Community Fund three-year grant of **£180,131**.
- Our new inclusive education programme in Kenya started in 2019, supported by a UK Aid Direct grant of **£410,730** and several trusts and foundations.
- Our sensory screening and early intervention programme in Uganda continued thanks to a Guernsey Overseas Aid & Development Commission grant of **£39,946**.
- Our new regional vocational education and training programme started in November 2019 across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda with a grant of **EUR396,000** from Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency (funded by the European Union).
- We received **£309,648** from Jersey Overseas Aid for our Healthy Life for People with Deafblindness in Nepal project which started in April 2019.

A word from a partner

The Latin American Children's Trust's (LACT) principal objective is relief of poverty, distress and hardship by promoting the education, health and welfare of children and families in Latin America. It prioritises projects with long-lasting impact that involve local communities.

LACT says, "The work Sense International does fits this bill perfectly." LACT visited Sense International's work at a special education school in Peru and they were extremely impressed: "The workshops we visited were truly imaginative and engaging for all involved."

Sense International's work with authorities to update government policies and change society is another key reason for LACT's support: "One important reason for our engagement with Sense International has been the drive to extend their impact by effecting change through advocacy."

Our sincere thanks to LACT for their vital support.



Major Supporters of Sense International

- The Alchemy Foundation
- Australian High Commission Direct Aid Programme
- The Beatrice Laing Trust
- The Batchworth Trust
- The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust
- Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust
- Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency (funded by the European Union)
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK Aid)
- The Grace Trust
- Guernsey Overseas Aid and Development Commission
- The Hemraj Goyal Foundation
- Human Development Innovation Fund
- The Ireland Roddan Trust
- The James Tudor Foundation
- Jersey Overseas Aid
- Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa (KBTA)
- The Lady More Charitable Trust
- Latin American Children's Trust
- Lord Dolar Popat Foundation
- Lynn Foundation
- Old Mutual International Trust Company
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Nelumbo Stiftung
- The Princess Anne's Charities
- The Saga Charitable Trust
- The Shanta Foundation
- The S M B Trust
- Souter Charitable Trust
- The Spear Charitable Trust
- The St Mary's Charity
- The Tony and Audrey Watson Charitable Trust
- The Tula Trust Limited
- The Ulverscroft Foundation
- Mr Rupin and Mrs Madhavi Vadera
- Ward Family Charitable Trust
- The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers Charity



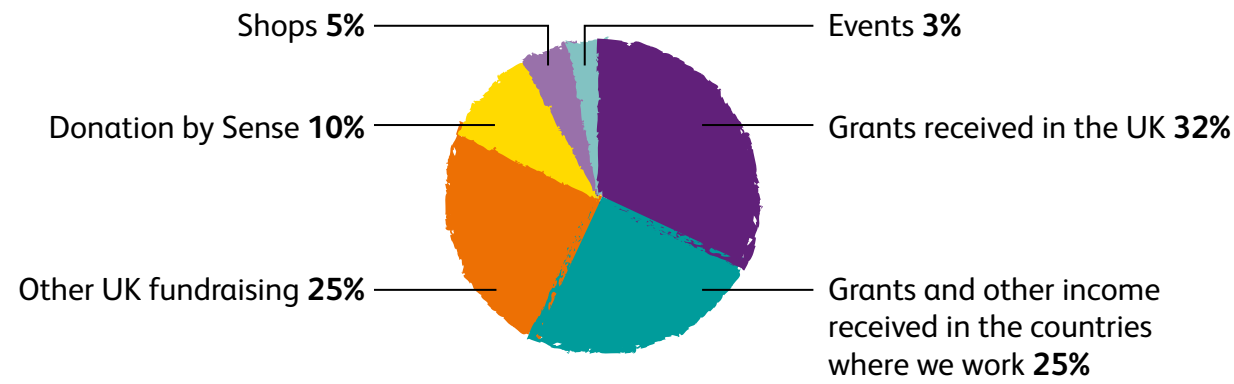
Finance

Sense International works in eight countries, delivering projects that span early intervention, inclusive education and vocational training. We also undertake research and advocacy, reaching thousands of people each year.

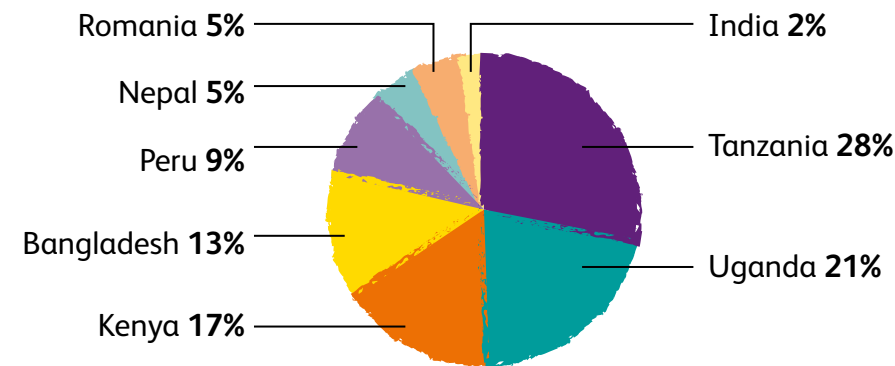
In 2019/20, overall income rose to £2.5 million from £1.9 million, while expenditure rose to £2.3m from £1.8m.

The proportion of expenditure used for generating further income was 11p in every pound.

Income was received from the following sources:



Sense International 2019/20 expenditure by country



Sense International India is an independent charity that raises its own funds, and its expenditure on programmes in India is not included in the figures above. Sense International UK is represented on the Board of Sense International India and we work together to implement programmes in Bangladesh and Nepal.

Angel's story

People in the local community were astonished to hear Angel was starting school, but now they see her learning just like other children.

Nine-year-old Angel, pictured with her mum, was born with cerebral palsy. It's hard for her to hold objects, stand, communicate and she has developmental delays - but when she was three her mother met a Special Needs Education

teacher from a local Deafblind Resource Hub supported by Sense International.

The teacher worked with the family at home and, gradually, Angel was able to stand with a frame, improve her communication and learn everyday skills such as getting dressed. In time, Angel joined a mainstream class with the support of a Teaching Assistant and the family's life was transformed.



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