



sense  
international

# Reaching higher

Impact report 2021/22

## Where we work



Sense International is a leading global charity supporting people with deafblindness in eight countries worldwide.

**Our vision** is of a world in which all people with deafblindness are equal and active members of society.

**Our mission** is to work with people with deafblindness and partner organisations to remove barriers in societies and systems, so that people with deafblindness are fully included and can fulfil their potential.

**Our work** ensures children with deafblindness are identified as early as possible and enables people with deafblindness to access healthcare, education, training and work, so they can thrive.

### Our priority areas:



#### 1 Early intervention

We work with ministries of health so that children with hearing and visual impairments are identified as early as possible, before going on to get specialist therapy and support to develop to their full potential.



#### 2 Inclusive education

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



#### 3 Vocational training

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



#### 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.



## Increasing our reach and influence

During 2021/22, Sense International reached more people than ever. Over 37,000 young children were screened for deafblindness, while thousands more received educational support, vocational training and help to establish livelihoods. We trained thousands of parents and carers, healthcare workers, teachers and government officials. In this report, you can read their stories and hear how, together, we changed laws, policies and budgets to improve support for people with deafblindness and their families, for generations to come.



*Richard Kramer*  
Richard Kramer  
CEO of Sense and  
Sense International

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, our teams across the world showed remarkable resilience and commitment, adapting to online training, meetings and events - all of which helped further our reach. We thank them all.



Special thanks go to our Director, **Alison Marshall**, who left us after five and half years to become CEO

of Age International. We welcomed **Kavita Prasad** as the new Director in August 2022.



*Sunil Sheth*  
**Sunil Sheth**  
Chair of Sense  
International

I will be stepping down from the Board of Sense International UK in September 2022, after many years as a Trustee. I am very proud of the way the organisation has grown to serve larger numbers of people across four continents, and of all the organisation has achieved in this time. It has been my pleasure to champion Sense International's work and I am grateful to everyone who has lent their support. I am delighted that **Rex Shah**, a Trustee for the last three years, will take over as Chair in September 2022. I know he shares my passion for our mission and will help lead the organisation to new levels of impact.



## Rutu's story

Rutu is a 17-year-old boy who is deaf and has a learning disability. He is the eldest of six children and is looked after by his mother and father. When Rutu was younger, his mother noticed he had delayed speech and mobility. She took him to a specialist, who diagnosed him with a learning disability. At first, Rutu's parents were worried about how his disability would impact him, but they wanted to make sure he had the best chance in life.

At times, Rutu's disability has caused him to be discriminated against. However, through the 'Learn, Work, and Earn' programme with Sense International Uganda, Rutu has been training in hairdressing to help him build a livelihood.

Rutu has been provided with a start-up kit and has begun an apprenticeship at a local salon within his community. His mother expressed her gratitude for the programme, as her son has been able to acquire a skill that he can earn a living from.

Providing access to employment enables people with disabilities to contribute to their family economically and promotes their wider inclusion in society.



## Values and principles

1. We champion inclusion.
2. We are rights-based.
3. We value individuals.
4. We work in partnership.
5. We uphold high standards.



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# Early intervention

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From the moment a child is born, they need to communicate. Early identification of deafblindness is vital so children can get the support they need as soon as possible. In many countries, health services lack the capacity, equipment and trained staff to do this.

We share approaches and train health professionals and governments so more children can be supported now and in the future. This includes:

- Showing how screening and testing systems can be established through working in partnership with local health services and ministries of health.

- Training health workers and community health volunteers to identify children with deafblindness or other complex disabilities. We ensure children are referred for therapy and, if appropriate, fitted with hearing aids and glasses.
- Showing how children with deafblindness can learn from multi-sensory stimulation. This practice encourages children to make use of all their senses to explore, discover and learn through special lighting, sound and tactile toys.
- Supporting parents and caregivers to gain the skills to nurture their child's development in the home.



## Key achievements



### India

4,606 babies were screened for sensory impairments. 697 received early intervention support.



### Kenya

We are demonstrating the difference screening for vision and hearing impairments can make in Garissa and Kwale counties. 20,859 children were screened by community health volunteers at community and health centres. 62 were enrolled in early intervention therapeutic services.



### Uganda

44 health workers and 50 local health volunteers were trained in screening – 8,557 children were screened.

91 children have been enrolled in early intervention services. Support plans were developed for each child and guidance provided to their parents.

Health centre and hospital staff were trained on sensory stimulation and provided with equipment.

37,190

infants were screened for sensory impairments globally.



## Khalili's story



Khalili was born breech, which damaged his spine, and he experienced foetal distress. In the first two months of his life, he was in and out of hospital.

Khalili was eventually referred to Sense International Kenya's screening programme and diagnosed with deafblindness.

Following his diagnosis, he was referred to an occupational therapy programme.

Now, Khalili has regular sessions with an occupational therapist. During the sessions, the therapist does physical therapy with him, as well as muscle massages. Khalili is supported into a standing position, which helps to strengthen the muscles he needs to sit and stand. The occupational therapist also uses lights and toys to stimulate Khalili's limited vision.

Saumu, Khalili's mother, explained:

"Before therapy, Khalili was not able to stand or sit by himself. He can now sit independently for some time, and he no longer shakes when he stands. He is also now reacting to sounds.

We practice an exercise by ringing a bell, which he responds to, and he has started to smile too!

We still face many challenges – these are mostly to do with money – however, I am more hopeful now. I hope that one day Khalili will be able to recognise me as his mother."

880

children received early intervention support and therapy.

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## Inclusive education

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

We help facilitate learning for children with deafblindness by:

- Working closely with families, schools, colleges and governments. Together, we support children so they can learn in the place that suits them best.
- Developing community support for children to learn at home, as well as providing training for Learning Support Assistants to work alongside children in their local mainstream school.

- Training parents, teachers and parent-teacher associations, while also providing appropriate technology, adapted school facilities, specialist curricula and learning materials.

5,449

children received educational support.



## Abbas's story

Abbas has weak legs and arms, which limit his mobility. He is also deaf in his left ear and has a speech impairment, which makes it difficult for him to articulate words.

Before he started attending primary school, Abbas spent most of his time at home with his mother, Fatihuba. This meant that Fatihuba could not work to support the family.

Then Fatihuba heard about Sense International Tanzania's inclusive education programme, which supports children with complex disabilities to attend mainstream education.

After learning about the programme, Fatihuba enrolled Abbas in first grade at primary school. Abbas's first few months at school were challenging as he struggled to communicate with other children. But being part of the programme meant he had the support of Ms. Pendo, his Learning Support Assistant.

Ms. Pendo worked with Abbas to develop his communication skills and his confidence. She has also taught Abbas basic arithmetic and colouring.

Now, Abbas can write his numbers, and recognise colours and shapes. His ability to interact with other children has gone from strength to strength, and his friendships with classmates have flourished. He even has two best friends. As well as this, with Abbas attending school, Fatihuba has had the opportunity to set up a small business selling homecooked fish, giving her a chance to earn money to support her family.



## Key achievements



### Nepal

87 children were supported to access education. We provided training for staff and parents, and made classrooms accessible so children with disabilities can attend. Teacher training was conducted for 42 teachers in Morang and Rupandehi.



### Peru

247 children were supported with education.

Sense International Peru was awarded first place in the National Competition of Good Practices in Inclusion and Disability 2021, for work on improving inclusive education for students in rural Peru.



### Tanzania

67 children were supported to access education. 5 learning centres for students with deafblindness were equipped with up-to-date teaching and learning materials.

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# Vocational training

Meaningful work gives young people with deafblindness an income, confidence and a role in society.

By supporting young people to run small businesses, we are also helping them become role models who tackle stigma in their communities. We do this by:

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

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## Key achievements



### Uganda

122 young people with deafblindness were trained in vocational skills and have established small businesses.



### Tanzania

35 young people with complex disabilities were assessed and provided with recommendations on a vocational course.

Our guidance for tutors was adopted as part the national vocational training curriculum for youth with complex disabilities.

33 young people received livelihoods support.



### Bangladesh

15 young people were enrolled in vocational training and 13 received support to establish a livelihood.



## Lydia's story

Lydia is 17 years old and lives with her sister, Gladys, in Uganda. She was born with partial hearing and sight.

In Uganda, people with deafblindness face many barriers. Social stigma, financial pressures, communication differences and accessibility barriers, including access to healthcare, affect daily life.

In 2019, Lydia enrolled in our vocational training programme, for a course in beading. As Lydia progressed through the programme, she did exceptionally

well with her training. She was top of her class and her instructor said:

“No student has ever made such a beautiful bag.”

Lydia was also supported to have a medical assessment, where she was diagnosed with Usher syndrome - a progressive condition which affects sight and hearing. She has been provided with a white cane to support her ability to move around independently.

Lydia had already started selling her products to other young people and their parents before she graduated from her programme, as her work showed such creativity.

Following her graduation, Lydia and her sister Gladys have been able to access a start-up grant from Sense International Uganda, to buy materials that can be used in creating crafts to sell. Lydia and Gladys now plan to move to an area with a bigger market, so that they can grow their business.

1,653

young people were supported with vocational training and livelihoods.



“No student has ever made such a beautiful bag.”

Lydia's instructor

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## Advocacy and research



### Shruti's story

Shrutilata Singh is Sense International India's Specialist Network Support Lead. As a woman with deafblindness, Shruti is committed to campaigning for greater inclusion of people with deafblindness.

Shruti's journey towards her network support role began as a young girl, when she participated in a programme partly facilitated by Sense International India. She progressed through the programme to become employed as an advocate for people with deafblindness.

In October 2021, Shruti attended the UN World Data Forum, where she highlighted the importance of counting women with

deafblindness in censuses. This is imperative to ensuring women and girls with disabilities are identified and acknowledged in national policy. She told us about her experience there:

"I think everyone has one of those defining moments, where they learn to believe in themselves and it completely changes them – that is what happened with me on my trip to Bern. I feel completely changed and I am more sure of myself than I ever was."

Shruti also spoke at the Global Disability Summit in February 2022, where she highlighted how women with deafblindness face dual discrimination. She explains in her own words:

"As women, we are already disadvantaged, and when we have a disability such as deafblindness, which can cut individuals off from the world, the issues and challenges multiply."

**In many countries, women with deafblindness are excluded because of inaccessible information and lack of opportunities. Women and girls with disabilities need to be at the core of inclusive development. Across Sense International, we are committed to tackling gender inequalities that are made worse for women with deafblindness.**

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The voices of people with deafblindness must be heard by decision-makers and wider society. This is essential if the barriers that prevent people from living to their full potential are to be challenged.

Advocacy is key to achieving system change and sustainability. We help push for change for people with deafblindness by:

- Supporting people with deafblindness to advocate for their rights.
- Building relationships with governments and decision-makers to ensure people with deafblindness are included.

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**"I feel completely changed and I am more sure of myself than I ever was."**

### Key achievements



#### Romania

Sense International Romania is supporting the government to establish occupational standards for interpreters working with people with deafblindness. We are also advocating for inclusion of deafblindness in Romanian Sign Language law.



#### Tanzania

Following successful advocacy efforts, the Tanzanian Commissioner of Education approved the Curriculum for People with Deafblindness – developed by Sense International Tanzania.

Deafblindness has now been recognised for the first time as a disability in the Social Action Fund, which provides monetary support to marginalised people.



#### Peru

The formal requirements, profile and competencies for the training of interpreter guides for people with deafblindness have, after 10 years of sustained advocacy, been published by the Ministry of Education. This success is thanks to the persistent efforts of Sense International Peru, which first drafted the law to recognise deafblindness as a unique disability and establish provisions for support, back in 2010.

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# Fundraising

## Highlights



Our work as part of the Disability Inclusive Development 'Inclusive Futures' consortium (funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) has gone from strength to strength. We are now working on inclusive education projects in Tanzania and Nepal, and livelihoods projects in Bangladesh and Kenya.



Fundraising from within countries is increasing. In Romania, we secured support from the Norway Active Citizens Fund to establish an organisation of people with deafblindness. In Uganda, we secured funds from the International Development Research Centre Global Partnership for Education.



The Nelumbo Stiftung Foundation continued its generous, multi-year support for inclusive education across all eight Sense International countries, in addition to early intervention support in Uganda.



We were delighted that our UK government-funded Aid Match early intervention programme in Kenya received an 'A' grade, based on our progress in the first year. We also scored 'A' for our 'Learning for All: inclusive education for learners with complex disabilities in Kenya' programme, supported by the UK government's Aid Direct grant, alongside funding from several trusts and foundations.



The National Lottery Community Fund gave very positive feedback on our vocational training and livelihoods project in Uganda. The final evaluation report made note of our team's role in the success of the project.

## Our events and engagements

We enjoyed welcoming supporters to our end of summer party and golf day, with 80 golfers at Stoke Park.

In April 2021, at a time when international travel was not possible due to Covid-19, supporters joined a virtual field trip to our programme in Kenya. Guests included a member of the Kenyan High Commissioner's team and a supporter from Jaspar Foundation, who said, "The virtual trip to Kenya was a real eye opener for me... I was really moved to hear about the mothers' struggles and experience of extreme poverty, with the added responsibility of deafblind children."

In March 2022, we were delighted to welcome our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, for a discussion with Sense International's directors from across the world, about how Sense International had adapted its work during the pandemic and found opportunities amid the restrictions.



"The virtual trip to Kenya was a real eye opener for me."







## A word from our partners

Phil Mole, Portfolio Officer at The National Lottery Community Fund:

“I wanted to recognise the work of the teams in Uganda and Tanzania, who’ve been reaching and helping support young people with deafblindness. They’ve been agile, creative and inventive under extremely difficult circumstances. A big thank you on my behalf for the work everyone has done.”

The CareTech Foundation, who made a grant of £184,000 for early intervention work in Tanzania, said:

“We are pleased to be able to award Sense International with this grant, which will have a huge impact on the lives of children with deafblindness in Tanzania. This vital service will bring essential sight and hearing screening to 86,000 children in the country. It will also make a significant difference to the quality of their lives by delivering long-term, sustainable impact with its base firmly rooted in early intervention and upskilling of local workers.”

Jonathan Freeman MBE, CEO of the CareTech Foundation

## Looking ahead

We are in the process of putting in place a five-year strategy, taking us from 2022 to 2027. We have agreed our global strategic objectives, focusing on three key interlinked areas of innovation, information and influencing.

These aim to ensure people with deafblindness are included in national systems; have access to better support; and are recognised in laws, policies and budgets. We will continue with our strategy work in the year ahead, ensuring consultation with key stakeholders in each of our eight countries, to shape national-level priorities and plans.



## Major supporters

**The Trustees are indebted to all our donors for their ongoing support.**

**Major grants from statutory authorities and substantial donations were received from the following supporters:**

Beatrice Laing Trust

Comic Relief

Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung (EFKS)

Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency (funded by the European Union)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

Hollyhock Charitable Foundation

Jaspar Foundation

Jersey Overseas Aid

Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa

Latin American Children’s Trust (LACT)

Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Inc.

Medicor Foundation

Nelumbo Foundation

Orange Foundation

Rupin and Madhavi Vadera

Sense International’s Ambassador Circle members

Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

The Band Aid Charitable Trust

The Batchworth Trust

The Britford Bridge Trust

The British & Foreign School Society (BFSS)

The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust

The Coles-Medlock Foundation

The Dorfred Charitable Trust

The Evan Cornish Foundation

The Hugh Symons Charitable Trust

The Ireland Roddan Trust

The Lady More Charitable Trust

The National Lottery Community Fund

The Princess Anne’s Charities Trust

The Quilter Foundation

The Randal Charitable Foundation

The Rhododendron Trust

The Souter Charitable Trust

The Spectacle Makers’ Charity

The St Mary’s Charity

The Tony and Audrey Watson Charitable Trust

The Tula Trust Ltd

The Ward Family Charitable Trust

UN Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund

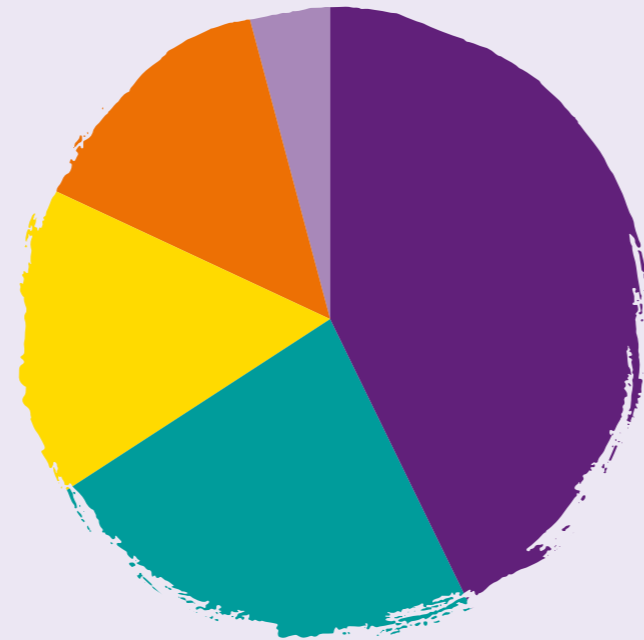
# Finance

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 2021/22, overall income rose to £2.5 million from £2.3million in the previous year. The proportion of expenditure used for generating further income was 8p in every pound. Expenditure increased from £2.5 million to £2.6 million.

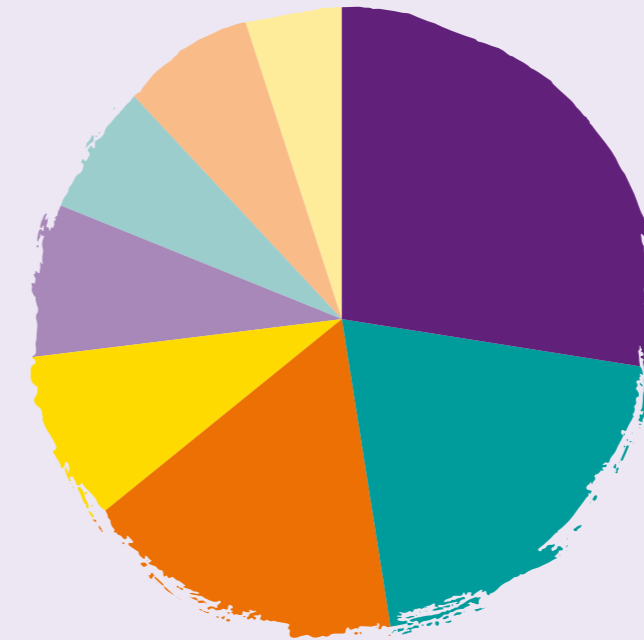
## Income was received from the following sources in 2021/22:

- Other UK funding 43%
- Grants received in the UK 23%
- Income received in the countries where we work 16%
- Donation from Sense 14%
- Shops income 4%



## Sense International 2021/22 expenditure by country:

- Uganda 28%
- Kenya 20%
- Tanzania 17%
- India\* 9%
- Nepal 8%
- Bangladesh 7%
- Peru 7%
- Romania 5%



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





## Modi's story

Over the last 18 months, we've been working to establish a sensory screening programme in two counties of Kenya, to identify and support young children with deafblindness – children like Modi.

At 5 months old, Modi started to have seizures and he was referred to Sense International Kenya's occupational therapy programme. Modi was given a hearing test, eye screening and physical examination. This confirmed that he had near blindness and cerebral palsy.

At first, Modi's mother Fatuma was upset by what this might mean for Modi. She explained:

"It can be hard as a parent, as there is stigma around disability. Members of the community talk and compare him to other

children who are walking and playing. He cannot join in and this saddens me. However, I am hopeful as we have seen small improvements since starting therapy."

Modi now has a personalised programme of occupational therapy sessions, including multi-sensory stimulation to help his cognitive development, as well as muscle massage. Fatuma says:

"At the moment Modi cannot sit, but he has an assessment coming up where he will be measured for a wheelchair. We will also find out what devices will support him best.

After each session, the therapist gives a report on Modi's improvements and any concerns. I can speak to the therapist about





any difficulties we are having as parents and he can refer us to other services that the hospital offers. For example, I now receive counselling and have been able to talk to other mothers who have children with disabilities. We give each other hope and this makes us feel like we are not alone."

If you, or someone you know, requires this information in a different format, such as large print or braille, please contact us using the details below.

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