

Blindness in India

Despite significant economic growth and prosperity over the past decade, India has the unenviable responsibility of shouldering the world's largest burden of blindness. With a total population exceeding 1 billion, as many as 15 million people are blind, and an additional 52 million visually impaired. India is also home to one-fifth of the world's blind children – which amounts to more than 320,000 children who are blind. More than fifty percent of these children could be cured if adequate facilities and trained staff were available.

Some Quick Facts on Childhood Blindness and Gender Inequality

According to the World Health Organization:

- Every minute a child goes blind—an estimated 500,000 each year
- 75% of those children live in the developing world
- 90% of blind children live in low-income countries and do not go to school.
- In many places, men have twice the access to eye care as women
- Women of all ages are more frequently exposed to causative factors, such as infectious diseases and malnutrition, and utilize eye care services less frequently than men
- Childhood cataracts are responsible for up to 30% of all childhood blindness – a simple surgery is often enough to restore vision

ORBIS and Alcon – Leading the Way to a World Without Blindness

For more than 25 years, Alcon has supported ORBIS' sight-saving programs and initiatives worldwide. In 2009, Alcon strengthened its commitment to ORBIS by renewing its global sponsor status for a further two-year period. This grant, of more than \$2.7 million, provides cash and medical gifts-in-kind. It also increases Alcon's support of training initiatives in developing countries through a combination of Flying Eye Hospital programs, hospital-based programs, fellowships and online Cyber-Sight® telemedicine consultations.

Over the years, Alcon has donated state-of-the-art ophthalmic equipment, pharmaceuticals and supplies for the Flying Eye Hospital and its partner hospitals around the world, making it possible for ORBIS volunteer ophthalmologists to teach advanced surgical techniques to doctors in the developing world. Additionally, the Alcon Volunteer Biomedical Corps, a dedicated group of Alcon biomedical technicians, participate in ORBIS training programs and share their skills with those in developing countries.

About Alcon, Inc.

Alcon, Inc. is the world's leading eye care company. Alcon, which has been dedicated to the ophthalmic industry for more than 65 years, researches, develops, manufactures and markets pharmaceuticals, surgical equipment and

devices, contact lens care solutions and other vision care products that treat diseases, disorders and other conditions of the eye. Alcon operates in 75 countries and sells products in 180 markets. For more information on Alcon, Inc., visit the Company's web site at www.alcon.com.

About ORBIS International

ORBIS International is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving sight worldwide. ORBIS provides the tools, training and technology necessary for local partners to assess their needs and develop workable and lasting solutions to the tragedy of unnecessary blindness. By building their long-term capabilities, ORBIS helps its partner institutions take action to reach a state where they can provide, on their own, quality eye care services that are affordable, accessible and sustainable. To learn more about ORBIS, please visit www.orbis.org.