

SEEING REALLY IS BELIEVING IN NIGERIA

An estimated five million people are blind, or have impaired vision in Nigeria, and around 130,000 are children. As in many developing countries, Nigeria suffers from a lack of trained staff and equipment to enable the backlog of cataract operations to be reduced. In this part of Africa, the number of ophthalmologists is less than one per million people. With a scarce number of eye care professionals and lack of funds for such treatments, individuals and families in these parts of Africa rely on Standard Chartered's Seeing is Believing (SiB) supported eye clinics in Ibadan and Kano for their eye care needs.

Following the successful launch in 2010 of Standard Chartered Private Bank's first vision centre in Kolkata the Bank has expanded further into our footprint by supporting two eye care projects in Ibadan and Kano, Nigeria, as part of our global SiB initiative. The SiB projects in Nigeria were launched in partnership with Christian Blind Mission (CBM), an international Christian disability and development organisation, committed to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and at risk disabilities in the poorest countries of the world. The USD1million fund raising target needed to fund these two projects aims to help over 2.7 million people in these two regions and the surrounding areas. It will help provide cataract operations to 34,500 people, support medical infrastructure and train health workers, nurses and doctors to provide eye care services in the community.

In May 2012, I had the opportunity to visit our SiB sponsored eye clinic in Ibadan along with the West African Private Banking team and Head of Corporate Affairs Nigeria. It was a day that touched all of us in ways we never expected. The eye clinic serves all individuals from infants to the elderly. Many walked as much as five kilometres to receive treatment or services. Our host and Group Medical Director Dr. Ajayi, advised me that they do not turn away any individuals who need treatment. His biggest concern for why Nigerians were not receiving adequate eye care was due to the fact that many of the trained eye care doctors leave the country to work abroad. According to Dr. Ajayi, "the greatest problem at the Eleta Eye Institute in Ibadan is that the ophthalmologists are not adequately equipped. The clinic needs four ophthalmologists but only has one. The support from SiB has been able to provide funding to train staff and middle level personnel to alleviate the shortfall in trained staff".

The four hospitals serve between 250-350 people daily. Dr. Ajayi stated, "that over 5,000 people have regained their sight and about one million have been treated for different eye problems through the involvement of the CBM's eye clinics in Ago- Iwoye, Iseyin, Eruwa and Ibadan, in the Oyo and Ogun states. At least 1.5 million Nigerians require cataract surgery to be able to see."

I had the privilege of watching two cataract surgeries and seeing first hand and documenting how the project has benefitted the community.

Since SiB support commenced in July 2011

- 27,000 patients have been screened
- 1,626 surgeries have taken place, including 1,429 adult cataract operations and 15 paediatric cataract operations
- 1,285 pairs of spectacles were dispensed



- Development of information, education and communication material
- Raising awareness through radio advertisements and church organisations for the cause

In conjunction with this visit, the Private Bank sponsored an art auction in Lagos with all the proceeds being donated to SiB Nigeria. This provided a great opportunity to raise the profile of SiB in Nigeria. The event raised USD65,000 through the auction and donations. Together we are making a difference. The monies raised will impact many lives and will go directly to delivering valued eye care services in Nigeria. All the money donated to SiB is matched dollar for dollar by Standard Chartered Bank until we reach our goal of USD100 million by 2020. To date we have raised over USD50 million including matching and are pressing ahead to achieve the target by 2020.

I feel so lucky to have been able to visit the Eleta Eye Institute in Ibadan with my Standard Chartered colleagues. We have all become champions for SiB after having experienced the incredible work Dr. Ajayi and his team do everyday. I am proud the funds we raised will help provide Ibadan and Kano projects support for training, surgeries, education, surgical equipment and much more to help the communities in Standard Chartered's footprint.

If you would like to find out more about the projects or make a donation, please visit the [SiB website](#).

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