

Henri Samoutou – Co-Founder, New Sight



Despite given the surname which means “no-hope” (because ten of his eleven siblings died), Mr. Henri Samoutou, joint-winner of the international Excellence in Ophthalmology Vision Award (2012) with Dr. Joyce Samoutou-Wong, gives hope every day by restoring sight. Born in a village in the Gabonese rainforest, against all odds, he was fully funded by American missionaries and studied at Bongolo Nursing School. In 2001, he won a full scholarship from Christian Blind Mission to study at the Training Centre for Ophthalmology for Central Africa in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. There he learnt eye surgery under Dr. Adrian Hopkins MBE, renowned ophthalmologist and director for the Mectizan Donation

Program that is responsible for Onchocerciasis being on the verge of eradication. Thereafter, Henri chose to use his surgical skills to serve in non-profit hospitals and Mercy Ship, the world’s largest civilian floating hospital. In 2004, he won a full scholarship for a 2-year Diploma in Biblical studies at Hope City College, UK (now Leadership Academy). In the same year, he married Joyce and together, they started preparing for a life of service in Africa.

In 2006, Joyce and Henri relocated from the UK to develop a non-profit eye centre in a missionary hospital in the rainforest of Gabon. The eye centre has since become self-sufficient and continues to help around 6,000 patients a year. In 2012, the couple founded New Sight, and together with their three young children, moved to northern Republic of Congo to pioneer its first non-profit eye centre with surgery. New Sight provides full non-profit eye services, including consultations, glasses, medical and surgical treatments, as well as free screening and community eye education in the villages. New Sight also empowers the local community by training nurses and support staff. In 2019, at the invitation of the local authorities, they moved to Ouessou where they started New Sight’s second eye centre in Congo and embarked on plans to build a hospital. Since then, they have established the country’s first facility to manufacture prescription glasses locally as well as the country’s first children’s magazine. In July 2025, New Sight opened a new teaching hospital in Ouessou, offering surgical eye care and dental services, and is planning to expand the 15-acre site into a general hospital.

Joyce and Henri are passionate about transforming lives by giving the priceless gift of sight and providing accessible healthcare. They are also passionate about empowering children through Project Two Front Teeth, which they founded with their kids, as well as providing a free children’s magazine to educate and inform children in Congo, currently with 22,000 readers in over 40 schools nationwide. The meaningful work of Joyce and Henri has been featured in the BBC and *South China Morning Post* and was the subject of a documentary series by Hong Kong’s Cable TV. In 2017 and in 2023, the Samoutous were invited to the Forbes Philanthropy Summit in New York.