

Joyce and Henri Samoutou– Co-founders, New Sight



Joyce and Henri Samoutou, recipients of the international Excellence in Ophthalmology Vision Award (2012), are the founders of the charity New Sight, which serves the Republic of Congo. Dr. Joyce Samoutou-Wong, a native of Hong Kong, won a full scholarship to study at the United World College of the Atlantic in the UK. Joyce then read medicine at the University of Edinburgh, which was followed by a stint as a visiting fellow at Harvard University. She has contributed to numerous humanitarian initiatives around the world, including running a mobile clinic and pioneering a successful first-aid programme along the ancient Silk Road in Uzbekistan. She is a recipient of the Hong Kong Outstanding Students' Award (1992), the Women of Hope Award (2017), the Compassion Award (2020), and was honoured as one of the 300 Faces of 300 Years of Edinburgh Medical School (2025).

Mr. Henri Samoutou was born in a village deep in the Gabonese rainforest. Despite facing multiple family tragedies, against all odds, Henri successfully completed his nursing studies with the financial support of a generous American missionary couple. He went on to earn a full scholarship from Christian Blind Mission to study eye surgery in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, and later received a scholarship from the University of Edinburgh to pursue a Master's in Primary Care Ophthalmology. He has dedicated his life to giving sight, through service in missionary hospitals, Salvation Army surgical campaigns and Mercy Ship, the world's largest charity hospital ship.

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 centre has since become self-sufficient and continues to provide care for approximately 6,000 patients each 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 surgical centre. New Sight now provides comprehensive eye services, including consultations, glasses, medical and surgical treatments, as well as screening and community education, and empowers the local community by training nurses and support staff.

In 2019, invited by local authorities, Joyce and Henri moved to Ouessou to build New Sight's second eye centre, where patient reach has grown by 20% year-on-year. Since then, they have continued breaking new ground by launching Congo's first prescription-glasses manufacturing facility and creating the nation's first children's magazine. In July 2025, New Sight opened a new teaching hospital in Ouessou, offering eye care, dental services, and a school health program, with plans to expand the 15-acre site into a general hospital. Supported by visiting health professionals, New Sight plays a key role in building capacity by training Ministry of Health clinicians — many of whom travel from remote areas across the country to gain new skills and bring them back to their communities.

Joyce and Henri are passionate about transforming lives through accessible healthcare and empowering children through Project Two Front Teeth, which they founded with their kids. They publish a free children's magazine that reaches more than 22,000 readers across Congo. Through partnerships with more than 40 schools, New Sight runs summer camps and has held special projects, including a virtual choir featuring over 2,500 children worldwide. They also champion empowering others to serve abroad and have created a missions resource page for this purpose. Their work has been featured by the BBC and South China Morning Post, and was the subject of a documentary series by Hong Kong Cable TV. In 2017 and in 2023, the Samoutous were invited to the Forbes Philanthropy Summit in New York.

Joyce is an inspirational and sought-after speaker, known for her sincerity and natural ability to make audiences both laugh and cry; she has spoken in several countries to audiences including the Royal Geographic Society, TEDx, Harvard Club, Yale Club, Stanford Club, and many more. New Sight's fundraising events are routinely sold out.