



## SERVICE PROJECT SHEET Sense International



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First published by RIBI: 2003/2004

Project name:  
**Sense International**  
(Registered Charity 1076497)

Project goal:  
Sense International's mission is to work in partnership with others - deafblind children and adults, their families, carers and professionals - to ensure that everyone facing challenges because of deafblindness has access to advice, opportunities and support. Our vision is of a world in which all deafblind children and adults can be full and active members of society.

Rotary service type:  
Fund raising and supporting fund raising events.

Unique selling proposition:  
Sense International is the only international charity which works exclusively to meet the needs of deafblind people in developing countries.

Description:  
A deafblind child is both deaf and blind. Because 95% of what we learn about the world comes through sight and hearing, deafblind people face enormous challenges. With expert support and education it is possible for a deafblind person to learn to communicate, to gain employment and to lead a quality life. However, in most countries of the world this support does not exist. Fewer than 1% of deafblind people in developing countries are receiving appropriate support. Too often deafblind people remain in total isolation at home or are placed in long-stay institutions. For many of the deafblind people in the countries in which we work, poverty is a daily reality. Even in countries which have managed to decrease the incidence of poverty, deafblind people will still be at the bottom of the economic ladder. The poverty faced by deafblind people is exacerbated by the lack of opportunities and access they have to the world around them meaning that without appropriate support there is little prospect of escape from poverty or for social improvement. Sense International was established in 1994 as the international arm of Sense UK, the world's largest organisation for deafblind people, in response to the huge demand for services and support that we were receiving from overseas countries. In 1999, we became an independent charity in recognition of the different approach required to working internationally. Sense International is currently actively working with partners in eleven countries (three in Africa, four in Latin America, three in Eastern Europe and one in Asia).

We work with local partners to provide the following services:

- Early assessment and intervention programmes for deafblind children.
- Education programmes for deafblind children.
- Specialist training for teachers.
- Vocational training/employment programmes for deafblind people.
- Community-based health and medical support.
- Management and fundraising support to help overseas projects become financially independent.
- Help to develop local networks of deafblind people and their families to provide support and a platform for campaigning.

Although we have been extremely successful in building the first services of their kind in these countries, we are still only reaching a small percentage of the total population of deafblind

people. The next stage of our strategic development will address this and use the expertise we have developed since our inception to reach a much wider audience.

Achieving our aims:

We are currently working in eleven countries and we aim to increase this to 21 by 2010 and more than 30 by 2020. We also aim to be reaching more than 50% of deafblind people in these countries by 2010 and 75% by 2020. To do this we will:

1. Continue to invest in the countries in which we are already working.
2. Undertake detailed country assessments in new countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America.
3. Develop plans and priorities for these new countries, secure funding and implement plans. By 2010, we will be working in at least nine other countries.
4. Gradually devolve authority and responsibility in the countries in which we currently work. By 2010, we will ensure that local people control the programmes in all eleven of these countries.
5. Using our influence in international development networks to work with international disability non-governmental organisations to develop services following our model for the development of services for deafblind people across the developing world.

Working in Partnership:

Sense International and Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland have successfully worked in partnership on a number of overseas challenges, like District 1210 who helped to raise in excess of £120,000 for deafblind children in India. We would also like to strengthen our links between Rotary clubs in Great Britain and Ireland and in the countries in which we work. This is an opportunity for Rotary International in GB&I to join in partnership with Sense International to make a real difference for thousands of deafblind people in the developing world by helping us fulfil our ambitious plans for the future.

Personalities supporting project:

HRH The Princess Royal is Sense International's Patron and has supported the Charity on many occasions.

Benefits to clubs:

- Making a real impact on the lives of thousands of deafblind people across the developing world.
- Acknowledgement of Rotary International in GB&I's support in publications and on the website.
- Potential to visit some of Sense International's projects.
- Speakers at Rotary events and conferences.
- Potential to network with other Rotarians overseas.

Feedback from clubs:

Rotary Clubs of Wrekin; Tooting; Penkridge; Audley; Tiverton.

Contact for further information:

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or your District International Service Chairman.

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland has adopted this statement of policy for its work with children, the elderly, the vulnerable and those with disability. The needs and rights of the child, the elderly, the vulnerable and persons with disability take priority. It is the duty of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of his or her ability, the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of all children, the elderly, persons with disability or otherwise vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact in their Rotarian duties. Rotarians should refer to the detailed "RIBI Protection Policy" when planning events and activities.