



## THE ALLIANCE TO FIGHT AVOIDABLE BLINDNES

### **ANASTASIA** Sompougdou.

When Agnes Sompougdou was nursing her three-month-old twins, she noticed that something was not right with the girl: she did not react as her brother did. Agnes soon realized that little Anastasia (pictured) was blind, born with cataracts in both eyes. To keep her from harm, Agnes had to watch her every move. When Anastasia started walking, she used a small stick to navigate around the homestead. But she was vulnerable, highly prone to scrapes and bruises. And in the wider world lurked worse dangers. Then they heard about the Alliance campaign at the regional hospital. Although it was far from their village, they prepared for the journey with new hope.

When Agnes and her family arrived early in the morning at the hospital in nearby Koudougou, they faced a long wait. Hundreds of people, mostly in their fifties but some younger, milled around the waiting area. But their journey paid off: Anastasia was examined and quickly had both cataracts operated on under general anaesthetic. When they returned the next day to have the bandages removed, the anxious mother looked into her daughter's eyes and was overcome to see her little girl return her gaze for the first time. Now four, Anastasia can run and play like her brother - and also retaliate when he teases her! She will go to school with him in a few years, and can look forward to a bright future. But for now, she proudly helps her mother prepare meals for the family.

