

Portuguese award goes to Helen Keller nonprofit

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(AP) -- The Helen Keller International nonprofit organization has won a \$1.4 million prize from a Portuguese foundation for its work in preventing blindness in the developing world, the foundation said Friday.

The Champalimaud Foundation's annual Vision Award was given to the New York-based organization for its "outstanding achievements," particularly its efforts to combat vitamin A deficiency which is a leading cause of childhood blindness, the foundation said in a statement.

Hellen Keller International was founded in 1915 and runs programs in 21 countries in Africa and [Asia](#), as well as in the United States. It is named for Helen Keller, an American who was left blind and deaf by illness as a toddler, and became a famed author and humanitarian.

The Champalimaud award, established three years ago, claims to be the largest monetary prize in the field of vision and one of the largest scientific prizes in the world.

The private foundation was created with an endowment from Antonio Champalimaud, one of Portugal's wealthiest businessmen, who bequeathed a quarter of his euro2 billion (US\$2.8 billion) estate when he died in 2004. He lost his sight in the final years of his life.

On the Net:

Helen Keller International: <http://www.hki.org/>

Champalimaud Foundation: <http://www.fchampalimaud.org/>

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