



VISION 2020 LATIN AMERICA

FINAL REPORT ON WORLD SIGHT DAY ACTIVITIES 2005

ARGENTINA

Dr. Jorge Kleisinger is the head of "Programa Vision Solidaria", a CBM supported project in Castelli, a small town in Northern Argentina. He informs us that he conducted a cataract surgical campaign on October 13th, and intraocular pressure screening day on October 18th for people with identified risk factors for Glaucoma. An interesting idea that he shares with us, is that on October 13th he organized a marathon to increase awareness regarding visual problems, in which many members of the community walked or jogged and had a wonderful time; it also had substantial coverage in the media as it also promoted the idea of physical activity and awarded prizes to the winners in the different age groups, including children. It is noteworthy to mention that this activity was co-sponsored by the Municipal Authorities of Castelli, demonstrating the commitment of this small but dynamic town to be able to declare itself a cataract blindness free zone by 2012.

Mrs. Maria Eugenia Nano, facilitator of the monitoring technical subcommittee of VISION 2020 Latin America, is based in Buenos Aires. She is also the administrator of the "Fundacion Oftalmologica Hugo Nano", and her foundation screened 153 students from underprivileged schools in Pilar, about 50 km away from Buenos Aires on October 28th. These students will receive the necessary care through the generous co-sponsorship of one of the local Rotary Clubs. Prior to this, the blind and low vision students that this foundation supports on a regular basis, participated in a municipal expo in San Miguel, province of Buenos Aires, in an awareness campaign and educating the public on how to help a blind person in the streets as well as on the Braille system.

Two other municipal authorities, Ciudad de Esquel in the Neuquen province and Jose C. Paz in the Buenos Aires Province, declared their interest in WSD and participated in radio programs regarding this topic.



Dr. Antonio Anzalaz is the president of Fundanoa in La Rioja, and he informs us that his group participated in a local fair for which they had prepared a flyer, and on WSD they examined over 700 people.

BOLIVIA

Dr. Gustavo Aguirre heads the VISION 2020 Committee of Tarija, a medium size town, but very active in prevention of blindness activities. His foundation along with other partners published an article in several newspapers explaining prevention of blindness and WSD activities. They also conducted some cataract and pterygium surgeries to commemorate this date.

COLOMBIA

“Fundacion Oftalmologica del Caribe” has a longstanding commitment to prevention of blindness activities and an ophthalmology residency programme that places great emphasis on community eye health concepts. It conducted a general ophthalmology clinic in the female prison, with 50 inmates receiving attention on October 10th. In the following four days, they also screened and treated 381 patients in underprivileged communities and other associated foundations.

COSTA RICA

Dr. Johann Fernandez, spokesperson for VISION 2020 Costa Rica, informs us that he authorities of the National VISION 2020 Committee were sworn in by the Minister of Health Dr. Maria del Rocio Saenz-Madrigal on October 13th. The event received a large coverage from the media, particularly from one of the larger radio stations, which explained to the general public what VISION 2020 is as well as its aims and objectives.

HONDURAS



Mr. James Bahr is a member of the Lions Club of San Pedro Sula, and is actively participating with several other members of the Ophthalmology and NGO groups in Honduras, to form their National VISION 2020 Committee. His group participated in several refractive errors campaigns in three different communities over a period of 23 days, in which they examined slightly under 2500 people and

donated spectacles to those in need, and identified 38 people with cataracts which will receive free surgery in 2006. Other screening campaigns were planned to celebrate this important date, unfortunately this was the worst hurricane season in years, and many activities were postponed for 2006.

MEXICO

“Centro de Estudios para invidentes A.C.” (a study center for blind people), is a CBM supported project in Cuernavaca, located about an hour drive from Mexico City, and they sponsored a newspaper advertisement explaining what WSD is and conducted a cataract surgery campaign and provided several low cost spectacles.

The “Asociacion Oftalmologica Santa Lucia A.C.” (St. Lucia Ophthalmology Association) in Manzanillo, conducted a 2 day course for eye health promoters in conjunction with the local naval hospital, CBM, a local eye drop laboratory and the municipal authorities. The aim of the course was to increase awareness and patient uptake, in order to fulfill the goal of declaring this city, as the first cataract blindness free zone in the country.



The “Asociacion Centro de Rehabilitacion para Ciegos” (Association for the rehabilitation of blind people) is also based in Cuernavaca, and they conducted a free consultation session on World Sight Day, both on their premises as well as in the municipality of Emiliano Zapata. The total number of people seen was 627, many of which were identified to have cataract, glaucoma or diabetic

retinopathy and will receive adequate care in the near future.

“Centro de Estudios para invidentes A.C.” (a study center for blind people), in Chihuahua, in northern Mexico, published a newsletter in three local newspapers explaining what blindness is and encouraging people to attend their center for an evaluation.

PARAGUAY

Paraguay formed the first VISION 2020 Committee in Latin America (CONAVIP), and in order to celebrate WSD 2005, a meeting was held with PAHO and the Ministry of Health in which the final details of the National Eye Health Plan were agreed upon, and Dr. Maria Teresa Leon, the Minister for Health, ratified the Global Declaration of Support of October 13th.

Most of the CONAVIP member organizations celebrated WSD with free consultations, while the ophthalmology clinic of the “UNA” (National University of Asuncion) held a free eye screening in one of the best known streets in down town Asuncion. The eye bank foundation operated 30 patients and screened over 100 people in a shopping center.



“Fundacion Vision”, another member of CONAVIP and that has a strong component of community eye health in its residency curricula, conducted 80 consultations in an isolated indigenous community on October 5th, of which 5 patients underwent cataract surgery of the 8 identified. From October 10th to 12th, it conducted 180 free

consultations and 65 sponsored cataract surgeries by various business houses or donors; 10 more patients were operated on in a satellite clinic on October 14th. Finally, it conducted a free vision and IOP screening in the best known shopping center in town, with over 280 people examined and with great media coverage, including participation in radio talk show.

PERU

The Peruvian Society of Ophthalmology organized a series of conferences to educate the general public and health professionals regarding World Sight Day, and it helped the Ministry of Health to give 350 free consultations in its hospitals with personnel of an NGO by the name “Divino Nino Jesus” and of the Maria Auxiliadora Hospital. During that week, and in the periphery of Lima, the capital city of Peru, the INO (an acronym in Spanish meaning ophthalmology specialized institute) organized one day clinics in disadvantaged areas with free consultation.

In Arequipa, local ophthalmologists spoke about World Sight Day in radio programmes and used local press. This generated great interest, allowing free consultation for 500 people and 65 cataract surgeries. A similar programme was organized in Piura, which included a street parade and 20 free cataract surgeries were performed. The same number of patients received free surgery in Chiclayo.



In Trujillo, the Regional Ophthalmology Institute (IRO), also organized a campaign using the media (they distributed 3,000 brochures and 1,500 posters) and conducted a press conference in the Municipal Hall (3 major newspapers as well as 5 TV stations and 3 radio companies participated) informing the community about the importance of an ophthalmic examination during the first years of life, reinforcing the idea that some

causes of poor vision and blindness can be prevented or treated if detected on time. Finally, they conducted a free eye clinic on October 13th with 200 patients

receiving a full ophthalmic evaluation, 100 who had their visual acuity tested and over 180 patients received counseling regarding various eye conditions.

VENEZUELA

Venezuela is a country in which the ophthalmology society as a whole has managed to garnish support from the ophthalmic industry which allowed for 122 clinics in the entire country with the participation of 552 ophthalmologists and residents to conduct free consultations and surgery from October 10th to the 15th. All these activities had great media coverage in, with educational material and spots sponsored by the industry. All the major pharmaceutical companies also helped by providing the initial treatment that patients needed absolutely free. A statistical report is currently being prepared, but such a national support is certainly an example for the rest of the countries in our region.

