



IAPB Regional Report – Latin America Region

First Semester 2012

The VISION 2020 Latin America (V2020LA) Strategic Plan Meeting convened in Lima, March 1-3, 2012 and resulted in the draft regional plan. Regional mapping of both country and NGO activities were produced that better demonstrate who is doing what, where the biggest gaps are, and where there is potential for better coordination and collaboration on the ground. Finally, an evaluation of the technical subcommittees was carried out for the first time since their inception in 2004 to assess their strengths and weaknesses and better understand their future role in V2020 LA.

A three-year strategic planning document has been drafted from the Lima meeting discussion that outlines the needed activities within the region and will provide measurable outcomes for 2013-2016. The V2020 LA Strategic Plan aims to strengthen the organizational capacity of V2020 LA, to guide future operational plans, to have “ready-made” proposals for other potential donors, and to strengthen regional eye care systems by focusing on strategic objectives and activities that are based on advocacy, communications and visibility, capacity-building and institutional development, research, and resource management. This strategic philosophy will work to ensure that no one is needlessly blind from V2020 LA priorities: cataract, diabetes, glaucoma, refractive error in children, low vision, and childhood blindness.

Five working groups were assigned to each objective and are working on evidence-based operational plans which will include: indicators and targets for each strategic activity of their objective, specific tasks to be undertaken with expected deliverables over the next three years, a budget to carry-out these tasks, activities, and produce deliverables, and a time-line.

The Cataract and Low Vision Curricula have been finalized, but they are pending publication. The Cataract and Low Vision Guidelines remain under review by the technical subcommittees and will be finalized in the 3th Quarter. The massive review of causes of blindness and visual impairment in Latin America was published: Furtado JM, Lansingh VC, Carter MJ, Milanese MF, Peña BN, Gherzi HA, Bote PL, Nano ME, Silva JC. **Causes of blindness and visual impairment in Latin America**. Survey Ophthalmology 2012; 57(2): 149-177.

Highlighted courses

- CEH Course for residents in Chile with 47 ophthalmology residents from all the training programs in Chile. April 2012
- CEH Management Course in Paraguay for different eye care cadres
- Guatemala’s first Community Eye Health course, which was organized in Guatemala City on February 9-11.

PAHO

A CEH Course for residents proposal was sent to PACUPO (Profesores de la Asociación Panamericana de Oftalmología) in order to promote this courses with their National Societies. The Colombian Society of Ophthalmology is oriented on how to prepare a CEH Course. Fernando Barría attended to the regional course which took place at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, presenting his concerns on Advocacy. The need of completing the advocacy guide presented by Dr. Natalio Izquierdo was exposed.



Sight First receives a guideline on how to make a CEH Project for Laser treatment.

Dr. Fernando Barría also participated in the Strategic Planning meeting as the PAAO representative.

Chile

The most important activity this semester was the 3rd CEH Course for residents with 47 ophthalmology residents from all the training programs in Chile. The presentations will be made accessible through internet.

Boliva got its Prevention of Blindness Committee established which will diagnose the number of treatable blind people and then act in coordination with MOH. August 2012 will see the Jornadas Bolivianas de Oftalmología .

The first Community Eye Health course in **Guatemala** took place in Guatemala City on February 9-11, 2012. This course was very successful with the enthusiastic participation of 135 people representing 29 areas of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, the various organizations that form the national committee for eye health (PAHO, National Association of the Blind, Visualiza, Operación Milagro, etc), and representatives from key INGOS such as CBM and the local Lions. A very important outcome of this course was the development of a national cataract project for the prevention of blindness, which will serve as the basis for requesting government and INGO support. This project could potentially double the Cataract Surgical Rate. Dr. Mariano Yee Melgar from VISUALIZA was nominated as "Eye Health Hero".



Fundación Nano from **Argentina** also updated its facilities. 46 adults and 72 children were attended. Several activities such as Sports, pottery and crafting were also promoted. Fundación Nano also negotiated with the Local and Provincial governments to improve the current policies. 2000 school students from San Miguel, Cardales, Parada Robles y Pergamino were evaluated. Lenses and surgery were given under the Ver para Aprender Project. The first Marathon on Blindness Prevention took place in San Miguel with more than 400 participants.

FUDEM from **El Salvador** celebrates its 20th Birthday. In January During their Campaña Gratuita de Cirugías de Catarata “El Salvador con Visión” 228 free cataract patines were operated with the needed follow up. In March Ama a tus ojos (Love your eyes) Glaucoma Campaign got 899 patients examined.

April: 1000 Lenses were delivered for free to rural population children under the “We want you to see a World of opportunities”.

2nd Campaña Gratuita de Cirugías de Catarata “El Salvador con Visión” 210 free cataract surgeries. Proyecto Piloto “VENTANITAS DE LUZ” 2294 students from 11 Schools were screened.

Salud

Actualidad
FUDEM organiza campaña para detectar glaucoma

El 26 y el 27 de marzo es la oportunidad para que acuda a practicarse un examen visual de forma gratuita, para detectar si padece del glaucoma.

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El glaucoma es la segunda causa de ceguera en el mundo, siempre es prevenible, muchas personas se dan cuenta de su padecimiento hasta que ya es demasiado tarde y se ha ligado a un problema de baja visión. Con el objetivo de prevenir la ceguera por esta causa, el próximo 26 y 27 de marzo FUDEM realizará una campaña de detección de glaucoma. Durante dos días especialistas de FUDEM trasladarán a Metrocentro ocular etapas los instrumentos médicos necesarios que permitirán identificar a las personas que padecen de esta condición oftalmológica y que pueden originar un tratamiento y así evitar complicaciones que presenten la visión en el futuro.

El glaucoma es una enfermedad de los ojos que ocurre cuando la presión del líquido que se encuentra dentro de estos aumenta gradualmente. Esto produce un aumento de presión que genera trastornos oculares que llevan a que se presente un daño en el nervio óptico, encargado de llevar la información visual del ojo al cerebro.

En consecuencia, reduce la visión de manera gradual y por lo general no presenta síntomas y puede resultar un aumento de la presión de la vista de manera permanente.

Si el tratamiento apropiado, el glaucoma puede llevar a la ceguera. La buena noticia es que con exámenes oftalmológicos periódicos, la detección temprana y el tratamiento puede prevenir la visión.

Al contrario, no hay síntomas. La visión permanece normal y no hay dolor. Sin embargo, a medida que avanza la enfermedad, la persona con glaucoma puede notar que la visión periférica le comienza a faltar. Es decir, es posible que siga viendo bien hacia el frente, pero no a los lados. Como si su vista estuviera enmarcada a través de un túnel oscuro, según avanza la enfermedad, el campo visual se va reduciendo y lleva a la ceguera.

Entre las causas está el factor genético, hipertensión arterial, diabetes, tienen mayor riesgo las personas mayores de 40 años. Algunos síntomas, que pueden aparecer hasta que ya es demasiado tarde, son: sensibilidad a la luz y al brillo, dificultad para diferenciar entre los diversos tonos de luz y oscuridad, dificultad para ver de noche, visión borrosa, náuseas y vómitos, y enrojecimiento del ojo afectado.

Antes este tipo de padecimientos es importante que las personas visiten al oftalmólogo por lo menos una vez al año, al fomentar la prevención se tiene mayores posibilidades de presentar un problema visual temprano. Mayor información al teléfono usar-eyes.



Las personas que padecen de glaucoma no experimentan dolor ni molestias en la zona del ojo. Si avanza se puede llegar a la ceguera.





Mexico

Lic. Hilda Dávila, from the International Secretary of Health was visited by Francisco Martinez Castro in order to integrate the plan discussed in the Strategic Planning meeting.

Ecuador

Since the beginning of the year a new Refractive Errors program is under development supported by MOH and the government in order to assist children, adults and learning adults. The aim is to screen for refractive errors and give away free lenses. The idea is to reach a million people. CBM is funding 7000 cataract surgeries this year.

PCM for Prevention of Blindness CLUSTER **Ecuador**. 18-19 May 2012 a Project Cycle Management Workshop was conducted in Quito, Ecuador with the 6 projects working on Prevention of Blindness. The result was the elaboration of a three year plan for a CLUSTER based on individual plans developed previously. The main objective of this event was to strength partner's coordination and also to reach common results planned for Prevention of Blindness.

Cuba

National Cataract Workshop

The Cuban institute of Ophthalmology served as the venue for the V National Cataract Workshop. 150 specialists attended. Results of the 40.000 surgeries from this last two years were discussed.

RAAB LA HABANA

Dr. Marcelino Río president of the Cuban Society of Ophthalmology together with Dr. Hans Limburg as consultant prepared for the RAAB that will take place this year. The RAAB is expected to cover the prevalence of Diabetic Retinopathy for the first time in Cuba.

Diabetic Retinopathy workshop. Managua, **Nicaragua**. August 3rd and 4th. The workshop had the attendance of national as well as local media, which allowed the event to be published in TV and many newspapers.

The dynamic of the workshop was to hold the same program for four different audiences, with different levels of complexity in presenting the information. The attendance was: over seventy

general physicians, diabetologists, and doctors from different medical areas not including ophthalmology in Managua. Plus, all 40 active ophthalmologists in Managua and 10 residents also attended, as well as 60 nurses and health related workers.

Conclusions from each group were different but audiences in general, were really enthusiastic and decided to hold meetings to prepare plans for detection, referral and counter-referral of patients.

Ophthalmologists also decided to prepare a national plan for equipping departmental clinics for treatment of patients.

Breaking the barriers, Piura, **Peru**, July 18-20 2012. 39 participants from North Peru attended to Breaking the Barriers course carried out in Piura. All participants came from the Ministry of Health.

The main objective of the workshop was to provide to these community and health centers workers appropriate tools to identify patients with cataract and to convince them to get operated, overcoming obstacles such as: economic, physical, myths and believes.

The information shared with the participants was medical (about eye anatomy, eye diseases, etc) and practical (screening, sharing experiences).

A five day Project Cycle Management workshop with Prevention of Blindness partners in **Peru** was carried out in Lima (April 19-24).

The main objective of this workshop was to have one three year plan for all 7 PBL partners in Peru, based on joint work and capacities strengthening.

In the first part (April 19-21), individual three year plan were elaborated by the partners after an intensive work going through the PCM methodology, with the assessment of 5 facilitators (CBM LARO staff, medical adviser and key local partner).

On April 22, the group of facilitators had a meeting in order to consolidate all individual plans in only one with common objectives and results.

The two days remaining (23 and 24), specific activities (by project) based on common results and detailed budget was prepared by partners.

The final plan included 4 strategic areas of work:

- Capacity Building of partners improved
- Quality and coverage of services improved
- Community work strengthened
- Networking strengthened

Paraguay



A two week course in Maintenance of ophthalmic Instruments and Equipment was held at Foundation Vision, Asuncion, **Paraguay**. Three technicians from Mexico, Two from Bolivia, one from Honduras and five from Paraguay participated. The medium of instruction was Spanish. Though some of participants have been doing similar work in their own way in their respective institutions, everyone thought that the systematic approach practiced at Aravind Eye Hospital introduced to the trainees in their course was very useful. Prof. V. Srinivasan, Mr.S. Poornachandran and Mrs. D. Ganga(all members of this group) served as instructors besides two more of Foundation Vision trained earlier at Madurai.

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