

# TRAINING MISSION IN LIMBE, HAITI

## - Objectives achieved !



The IRIS Mundial training team is back from Haiti! Volunteers Dr. Marie-Chantal Hudon, optometrist, Dr. Annie Moreau, ophthalmologist and Mrs. Catherine Rioux, General Manager of IRIS Mundial, have returned from a training mission for the teammates of our two ongoing permanent eye care programs in Limbe and Labrousse. From November 22 to 29, they braved the bad weather and the rain to visit the CEDI-Village of Hope\*, located in Limbe, northern Haiti.

### QUALIFIED STAFF SERVING THE MOST DISADVANTAGED

Since the establishment of permanent programs in Haiti, nurses have provided visual screenings for schoolchildren and adults through the organization of mobile clinics. People who need reading glasses or sunglasses can now get them for a symbolic fee. Thanks to the team's hard work, more than 30,000 people have had access to visual care in areas where these services were previously non-existent. The trainers were happy to observe the team members implementing new concepts they had been taught. Several changes have helped improve staff professionalism and the quality of interventions during the last few months: the installation of new premises, the acquisition of new equipment and additional training

*\*Centre d'Éducation et de Développement intégré- Village de l'Espoir*





## **“ EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON THAT YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD” - NELSON MANDELA**

The team members showed great enthusiasm when learning how to analyze prescription glasses, how to use the electronic refractometer and how to evaluate the patient's field of vision. They also learned about the use of mobility aids and magnifying glasses for people with low vision. Basic training on medication prescribed by ophthalmologists was also provided, so that the team members could better teach patients about their importance for their eye health, for example in the case of glaucoma. The trainers worked each evening to create reference documents that the team members will be able to consult in in the future. The team members learned quickly with expert teachers in a hands-on situation. In addition, there was a real synergy between the two programs.

### **OPHTHALMOLOGICAL DAY - FOR ESSENTIAL CARE**

During the visual screening days, patients requiring further treatment are referred to a Haitian ophthalmologist paid by the program and can benefit from a complete eye exam, eyeglasses, medications or eye surgery at a lower cost. The monthly ophthalmological exam day took place during the training visit. This gave the trainers the chance to assist and coach the team members in their tasks in order to improve the quality of their service. During the day, more than 40 patients referred by the head nurse were examined. Several people had serious eye diseases, as the photo below illustrates.

*“The program is very good. I am satisfied with the service because it has changed a lot in my life. I love my glasses! ”*

**-Mrs. Mathieu,  
Beneficiary**



Mrs. Enice Mathieu



All patients were offered eye care, medication and glasses at a lower cost. Mrs. Enice Mathieu, aged 55, came to get her prescription glasses, enabling her to see well from near and far. She was delighted to meet the IRIS Mundial trainers: "The program is very good. I am satisfied with the service because it has changed a lot in my life. I love my glasses! "

## THE CHALLENGE OF MOBILE CLINICS

Once again, the trainers observed the challenges faced by the team members when they organize mobile clinics for visual screenings in remote locations. For example, the clinic that was scheduled to take place on Thursday had to be canceled due to a violent storm, preventing any travel. Fortunately, the weather was good the following Monday, allowing the team to get to the area, three on a taxi-motorbike, the only means of transport. The roads, however, were badly damaged by the flood waters meaning teammates and trainers had to get off the taxi-motorbikes in order to walk across a river; the current was too strong to remain seated behind the driver. This is one of the many obstacles faced by team members who work tirelessly to provide these services to the population.

Several people were present and waiting impatiently for the team. As usual, the nurse began by offering an educational session on hygiene and visual health to patients. Subsequently, each teammate took up his post and worked until the last patient was seen, with the help and training support of the visiting professionals.

Here's what Mrs. Rioux testified on her return: *"Like previous training missions, this one had firm work objectives and was characterized by unexpected events to manage, heat to tolerate and obstacles to overcome, but also interesting meetings, children, laughter, pleasure and pride!"* Thank you to the trainers and staff of the IRIS Mundial programs for their great dedication during the mission.

