

TRAINING MISSION IN LIMBE, HAITI

New notions in ophthalmology and management



By Catherine Rioux, general director

After a synergy and training week in Labrousse, Catherine Rioux, General Manager of IRIS Mundial, went to Limbe in northern Haiti from 19 to 26 May, accompanied by a second volunteer optometrist, Marie-Chantal Hudon. They joined the team of the organization's second permanent eye care program which is made up of 6 people, including Nadia Bazil, the head nurse and Nelly Paul, her assistant.

The purpose of this mission was to follow up on the objectives of the program and to improve the quality of vision screenings thanks to training on oculo-visual examination techniques. Since the implementation of the program in Limbe in October 2013, nearly 5000 people have benefited from quality eye care.

Dr Hudon and Mrs. Rioux were visiting the CEDI-VE (*Center for Education and Integrated Development - Village of Hope*) for the second time. Their first meeting took place there, last summer, when Dr Hudon was present for an IRIS Mundial training mission and Mrs. Rioux was completing an internship designed to strengthen organizational skills with another organization. They were warmly welcomed by the team and by the many children living around the site. During the week, the two trainers helped and supported the team with several activities: a day of ophthalmologic consultations, a vision screening day in an elementary school and a mobile vision screening clinic for adults in the surrounding area. Through these activities, they also taught new theories to the team, such as the examination of the inside of an eye and the fitting of eyeglasses, in addition to giving advice on how to organize a mobile clinic.



At the end of the week, Djery Baptiste, one of the program leaders, explained how important this program is, in a region that has no ophthalmological services: "It's terribly difficult for residents to go to Cap-Haitien when they have a vision problem. Now, with the introduction of the program, [...] they have access to that service at the Village of Hope". Proud to work within the IRIS Mundial program, he also told us that many people have benefited from surgery they would not be able to pay for themselves.

Finally, after a busy week full of ups and downs because of the oppressive heat, the mosquitoes, the tropical rains and the flooding, both trainers returned to Quebec, satisfied with the work done with the team. Mrs. Rioux says she is proud of her teammates and is already looking forward to meeting them again in Haiti!

