

# 2017 MISSION CAÑETE, PERU





# MISSION ACCOMPLISHED FOR THE IRIS MUNDIAL VOLUNTEERS

By Dr. Francine Lavallée, Optometrist  
(with the help of Catherine Rioux, General Manager)

*From October 21st to 29th, the IRIS Mundial team went to the Cañete area in Peru, in order to provide eye care to the community. The project was a great success! Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers, 2,085 people among the poorest were able to obtain an eye exam.*

*Last February, an exploratory mission made it possible to understand the state of the situation and the resources of this region located about 150 km south of Lima. More than 250,000 people live in this arid area, and many of them in precarious conditions, without drinking water or electricity. Health services are difficult to find and disadvantaged people do not have access to visual care. From the first day, the volunteers were able to measure the scale of the challenge: there were numerous cases of impairments and visual disabilities, far beyond what we imagined.*

*“There were so many cases of cataracts, pterygium and high astigmatism! Today I think I have seen as many cases of severe pathologies as in my 30-year career ...”*

- Dr. Francine Lavallée, Optometrist



## AN INCREDIBLE CHALLENGE TO FACE

We are very proud of the tremendous work done by this dynamic team of 38 volunteers consisting of ophthalmologists, optometrists, opticians, assistants, nurses, translators and a doctor, with the support of local volunteers. Experienced volunteers are well aware that every mission in a developing country is characterized by unforeseen events, and this was no exception.

The people in charge had to deal with some electrical, technical and logistical problems. Located on the premises of the local polyclinic, volunteers worked all day long with incredible energy. Hundreds of people with serious disabilities went through every exam one by one, with hope of regaining their sight. Some patients were thankfully treated, and were sensitized to the harmful effects of sunlight thanks to the advice of our eye care professionals.

## AN EFFECTIVE LOGISTIC

A large crowd was waiting for the team each morning. Some spent the night waiting, seated on a chair with a blanket to protect them from the cold, while others walked several hours to join us. Rigorous queue management along the stations combined with the effectiveness of the volunteers, allowed 2,085 patients to benefit from an eye exam and a solution to their visual problems. Eye medications and/or prescription glasses were given to those who needed them; many were fortunate enough to receive new glasses, courtesy of our generous suppliers. All the patients examined received sunglasses.

Therefore, more than 4000 pairs of glasses were delivered. During this five-day mission, thirty patients had the chance to be operated for cataracts or pterygia thanks to the collaboration of the Peruvian professionals from the OphtalmoSalud clinic. A doctor examined and provided the necessary medications for 200 patients with health problems that could affect their vision, such as hypertension and diabetes.

*“I had the chance to live and experience an incredible trip, where through intensely busy days, I built relationships with wonderful people. I believe that to live fully, we must be involved in projects like this! Helping people to restore their sight is a way to get involved for a cause that is important to me. It was a very rewarding trip ... I hope to experience it another time.”*

- Dr. Stéphanie Gagnon, Optometrist



*Meet Prada, a very shortsighted 53-year-old woman who was examined by the IRIS Mundial team. She had the chance to receive her first pair of glasses: -15.75 diopter. According to international standards, Prada was considered “legally blind” before the arrival of IRIS Mundial. Thanks to her glasses, she is now functional and can hope for a better future!*

## RESTORING SIGHT, ONE LIFE AT A TIME

Beyond the waiting lines and the statistics, there are the people: disadvantaged people that we meet for the first time. Each of them has their own story and wants to improve their life. However, very often, the first words we hear are: “Thank you doctor! Thank you for the good you bring to the people of my country!” We met a welcoming population and we experienced intense emotions: few words exchanged in Spanish with a young mother coming from the mountains who was worried about her baby, the empty expression in the eyes of a 93-year-old lady who arrived on the arm of her grandson, the hesitant steps of a very short-sighted young man, a birth-blind little girl...

The last step of the process is always the most awaited: the work of the opticians, which is often difficult. What happiness to find in our stock a pair of adequate glasses with the right prescription and to see the shy smile of a pretty girl! And, what about the recognition of these people: these short meetings always end with a handshake or a hug, and sometimes tears of joy...

## TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE PROJECT

This IRIS Mundial one-time project helped to improve the awareness of the population and the medical authorities about oculo-visual problems in the area. It made them realize that most visual impairments can be avoided or cured simply with glasses or surgery.\* The data collected will provide information on eye care needs in the area and will serve as a basis for implementing a permanent program in the Cañete region of Peru, based on the IRIS Mundial permanent program model in Haiti. This program could provide vulnerable people in the region with a full-service, low-cost, year-round eye care service.

\*Over 80% of all vision impairment around the world can be prevented or cured.

Source: World Health Organization - 2015





# THANKS TO ALL OUR PARTNERS!



We sincerely thank **IRIS The Visual Group**, all owners and teammates of the **150 IRIS stores across Canada** that have supported IRIS Mundial in its projects since 2001, collecting and preparing eyewear, the **Lima Siglo XXI Rotary Club** and the **Imperial municipality** for their support and logistics, the **Ernesto Mispireta Valdivia** policlinic and the **Rezola Hospital** where we accomplished our mission, the **OftalmoSalud clinic** for surgeries, **Novartis**, **International Health Collaboration**, **Allergan** and **Bausch & Lomb** for medication donations, the **Rotary Club of Montreal**, the **Rotary Club of Canete** and all those who contribute directly or indirectly to this cause that is very dear to our hearts.

Congratulations and THANK YOU to all the volunteers for their generosity, determination and exceptional dedication:

Caroline Anderson  
Stéphane Bédard  
Lucien Bonnardel  
Liette Bougie  
Marie-Claude Cossette  
Sylvie Cossette  
Johanne de Champlain  
Murielle Dépault  
Carole Deschenes  
Barbara Doyle  
Hélène Dussault  
Christian Gagner  
Stéphanie Gagnon  
Élaine Giasson  
Louise Giasson  
Mohammad Hamid  
Marie-Chantal Hudon  
Christine Kokic  
Gilles Lafond

Yves Lafontaine  
Francine Lavallée  
Noémie Lesperance-Hudon  
Mihaela Mara Somogyi  
Pierre Martin  
Elvie Maxineau  
Caroline Mayer  
Jean Mayer  
Martine Mercier  
Clair Muninder  
Jean-Pierre Paradis  
Anthea Paterson  
Jérémie Plourde-Perreault  
Monique Prud'homme  
Josée Ricard  
Charles Taschereau  
Gerald Trees  
Nicole Vachon



Since 2001, IRIS Mundial carried out 16 training missions, 23 humanitarian missions and implemented two permanent programs in Haiti.

IRIS Mundial projects contributed directly to assist over 85,000 people.  
It's our mission for eye in need.

YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

[irismundial.ca/donations](http://irismundial.ca/donations)

THANK YOU!