



Belize Council for the Visually Impaired Annual Report 2017

Primary Eye Care Programme

Belize operates five clinics throughout the country which offer free eye testing by an Optometrist. Our Ophthalmic Assistants are trained to assist with screening, dispensing glasses and data management. BCVI's Optical Lab produces high-quality low-cost glasses specific to our patients' needs.



In 2017, a total of 11,945 people had eye examinations at our base clinics and on outreach clinics.

A total of 4,786 prescription glasses were produced (an increase of 783 over 2016) and an additional 745 reading glasses were dispensed.

Secondary Eye Care Programme

The National Eye Clinic (NEC) is our main referral centre for secondary eye care. However, ophthalmologists also conduct clinics in the districts to provide easier access for patients.

In 2017, our full-time Ophthalmologist Dr Zoraida Diaz performed 3,685 examinations at the NEC and 13 visiting volunteers did a total of 1,317 examinations.



Thanks to our volunteers we increased the number of cataract surgeries from 135 in 2016 to 264 in 2017. We also provided five strabismus and 49 pterygium surgeries.

A total of 135 laser treatments were performed for diabetic retinopathy and an additional seven patients received laser for glaucoma treatment. Visiting ophthalmologists performed additional laser treatments for both DR and Glaucoma in the districts.

Diabetic Retinopathy Programme

Diabetes can cause **BLINDNESS**
Visit BCVI to get your free eye test today!
WWW.BCVI.ORG

Dr. Diaz along with the Optometrist from Orange Walk Rita Witzil, DR Programme Manager Mark Mitchell and Executive Director Carla Ayres Musa attended the Vision 2020 LINKS DR Net Workshop in Jamaica. Since the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) has taken over management, the countries involved have been assigned a partner in the UK from whom we will be able to receive training and guidance for the remaining year of the project.

In 2017 we screened a total of 1312 patients with Diabetes throughout Belize. Of those, 459 were found to have some reduced vision or pathologies and of those, 29 were found to have advanced Diabetic Retinopathy in need of laser treatment. A total of 195 patients (new and old) received laser treatment from BCVI's full-time ophthalmologist and visiting specialists.



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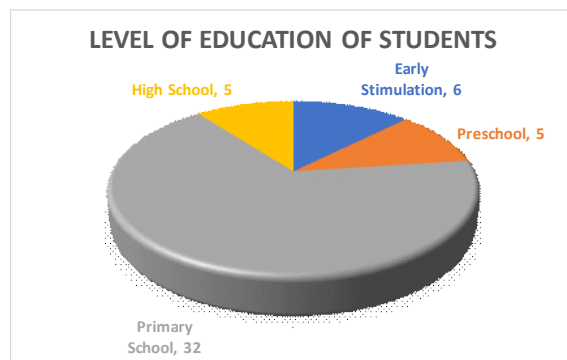
Rehabilitation and Education

Our Education programme would not be the success it is without the preparation of the students through early stimulation. They need a strong foundation to achieve their maximum potential and to be able to live independently. We recognise the contribution of the classroom teachers who are so willing to learn and support these 54 special children in their classrooms in various schools around the country. Parents and family support play a vital role and in some instances parents support each other in working with their children by knowing they are not alone and that they can learn from each other's experience.

In 2017 we celebrated 20 years of BCVI's annual summer camp, which was a truly remarkable milestone. Twenty-three children from throughout the country gathered with their guardians for the two-week event. Students work alongside their peers with support from our Rehabilitation Field Officers (RFOs) and BCVI's first-ever Itinerant Teacher. Parents, siblings and family members were also included in the lessons to ensure continued support at home.

Each child received his/her Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with targets set out for subjects ranging from Braille reading to Math skills and they performed exceedingly well. Students were particularly excited to attend the computer classes where different skills had been identified based on the level of knowledge.

This annual event is a wonderful opportunity not only for the children to gather, but also for the parents who often times find support from others who have been in the programme and who are able to see the children are excelling, despite having a visual impairment.



The Vision

The Belize Council for the Visually Impaired's vision is of a Belize where no one is needlessly blind and those who are irrevocably blind are integrated as equal members in all aspects of society.

The Mission

The Belize Council for the Visually Impaired is a non-profit organisation committed, through a comprehensive programme, to prevent and cure blindness, restore sight and to rehabilitate and educate people who are blind to enable them to use their talents and abilities to live independent lives.

For a copy of BCVI's Annual Report visit www.bcvl.org or email us at bcvibze@gmail.com