

I Can See!

By Leslie Urie

Celebrating Mission, January 2023

(This article was written by Gloria For security reasons, her last name is withheld and the article is published under the name of Leslie Urie, WMPL's Prayer Mobilization Team Leader.)*

"I can see!"

These are the words that inspire Gloria when she accompanies medical teams doing eye camps in the bush areas of East Africa.



Kenya

Having worked in rural Kenya among the Samburu for nearly 30 years, as a Registered Nurse and as a global worker with the Lutheran Church, Gloria is uniquely qualified to accompany the teams wishing to bring the Gospel in both word and deed, to rural areas.



Kenya, global view

Before retiring from full-time work in the area, Gloria had traveled thousands of Kenyan miles by jeep, public transportation, camel and foot. Over Christmas of 2021, nearly 500 people were seen from the villages surrounding the area known as Arsim where the World Mission Prayer League has had a presence for many years. Patients are seen for medical problems, but their spiritual ones are considered just as important, and a Christmas message is as critical as medicine and surgery.

Eye camps are focused on for a variety of reasons. Many underlying medical problems present themselves with problems in vision; diabetes and high blood pressure are the most common to North Americans. Cataracts, lazy-eye, and macular degeneration are also detected at the eye camps. And finally, many eye problems are relieved with a pair of glasses!

Now retired and on Associate status with WMPL, Gloria returned to another rural area accompanying another team in the Fall of 2022. Following are excerpts from her journal.

Journal Excerpts

Week 1 Eye Camps

Day 0

“Pray for tomorrow's eye camp about 2 km outside of Hola at the Mikindani Dispensary. We expect a lot of Pokomo and Waata people, and mixture of Hola town people. I met the nurse in charge there this afternoon and he is from Samburu!”



Preparing to travel

Day 1

“Today we are four on-surgery staff who remain at Hola government hospital to do surgeries, 2 CAPRO global workers, about 4 from the dispensary, plus 2 eye clinicians from Hola Hospital, me, driver and Josephat.”

“We move every day to a different site. Tomorrow, we go to village C for eye screening. We pray they are open to receive Gospel tracts like they were today! Josephat had good conversations with a couple of the volunteers. Seeds are planted.”



Cataract patients awaiting their turn for surgery at the hospital

Day 2

“We saw 140 again today at village C and 24 had eye surgeries. People were reading the tracts we gave out. All went well.

Tomorrow, we go to a community with a mixture of Somali people and Waarda people. I think I will call it village G. It will be a new outreach site for CAPRO Kenya Global workers after the eye work there. This event is getting a chance to put their foot into a door there. It’s exciting to see all the people who will soon be able to see much better!”

“It rained heavily today, a real blessing but makes traveling tricky on the non-paved roads. We made it safely back to Hola tonight.”



Eye clinicians examining and screening patients for cataracts



3 Patient prep for surgery



Lunch break of staff and eye screening team at a village

Day 3

“Something I forgot yesterday is that the village elders chose their primary school for the site of the eye camp. My first time to do an eye camp in a school from the primary religion!!”

After a village eye camp, being invited to come back again by a local leader



Day 4

“We saw 125 patients today at village U, 18 people had surgery. I worked with a Samburu-speaking global worker with CAPRO who lives there and teaches at the government preschool, made up of the students from the primary religion in the area. She is trying to master the language. After 4 years of work, the ground remains fallow. But the villagers have given them a parcel of land to build housing on. For now, she lives with a local family.”



Patient receiving his auto-refraction results from Josephat for possible need for distance glasses



Gloria making/issuing distance glasses



Being fitted for a pair of life-changing glasses!

Tomorrow is the last day, and we will be in village M, not far from village U. It is another new outreach site Capro is hoping to open up. Pray for stamina, I am a bit tired.

They went to the village today to open bandages for day-after surgery care and teaching.



Surgery patients lining up for removal of eye patches

Day 5

Well, we are done now and had another fine day at village M. Total seen for the week was 771 and 103 eye surgeries. Ready to get back to Nairobi tomorrow. CAPRO global workers here are now tasked with the follow up. Josephat is helping them with some strategy for that. We are grateful for your prayers and God's favor on this event.



Two of the CAPRO staff



Waiting for rechecks and getting instruction in eye care

“Toward the end of the day a fellow came through the line needing glasses and said he had something to tell me. I noted on his patient card that he was a Christian and he did not look like the local people. He said he was involved in a family-based foundation which financially supports organizations doing things which serve the local community. He was very impressed with our eye camp and gave me his card so we can discuss later about a possible future partnership with them and VMFKS (Vision and Mission for Kenya Society). Wow, another door opening up is possible, maybe even for funding some of Josephat's future work??? My head is spinning!”

Week 2 Eye Camps

We are having a good week at Kisii area eye camp. Around 95 so far need spiritual follow up after accepting Christ, want baptism, or have other spiritual concerns. We have seen a little over 1,000 so far and around 50 or 60 cataract surgeries. Heavy rains daily are a blessing but do deter people from coming in the afternoons.



Surgeons at work



Another row of patients waiting for rechecks at Kisii during 2nd eye camp week

You Can Help Change Lives!

For more information on how you can contribute to eye clinics and other exciting projects, contact World Mission Prayer League at: wmpl.org



Gloria worked with the World Mission Prayer League from 1991-2021. After returning from this recent eye camp, Gloria herself underwent cataract surgery! She is recovering well.