

**October 30, 2012 Presentation at the American Public Health Association  
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**A HEALTH PROMOTER MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE PRIMARY EYE CARE  
PROGRAMS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

In many areas of the world basic primary eye care is not available. Data from the World Health Organization shows that the need for refractive vision correction, surgical eye care and other eye health treatment is substantial throughout the world and especially in areas of extreme poverty. Adequate eye care and treatment has been shown to improve school performance, increase worker productivity and foster community involvement. These are all factors which can help a population raise its quality of life and standard of living. Unfortunately, areas of extreme poverty are not places where eye care professionals can work to derive sustainable income.

Enfoque Ixcán, a U.S. based non-profit providing eye health care and eye health education in Guatemala, uses local health promoters, health referral resources and optical laboratories in Guatemala to serve the people in a remote and impoverished area of the country. With eye health training and the development of a reliable infrastructure, affordable, sustainable access to eye care is being established for this poor and neglected population.

Collaboration with school administrators, public health doctors, eye surgery clinics, Guatemalan optometrists and area churches is forging new career opportunities for the eye health promoters, and accessible, year around eye care for the people of the region. The results of an innovative eye care needs survey will be presented along with an outline for the development of this program.