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Limited Excess Property Program (LEPP)



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USAID/LEPP

The Limited Excess Property Program (LEPP) provides Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) access to federal surplus property to support their humanitarian and development projects abroad. LEPP utilizes an innovative model of recovery and reuse to support a variety of development projects that promote sustainability in developing countries. LEPP is managed by USAID's American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA), which is part of the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation's Local, Faith, and Transformative Partnerships (LFT) Hub.

PVO Spotlight on Charity Vision

We are proud to present our second PVO Spotlight! As



CharityVision

our PVO partners strive to impact the world by offering disaster relief, humanitarian aid, and emergency preparedness where needed, we will continue to highlight the good work they are doing as well as the good people who are doing the work. In this issue, we are featuring Aaron Lock, Director of Operations with CharityVision.

Q: Hi Aaron, it's great to talk with you. Can you tell me how long CharityVision International has been partnering with LEPP?

A: CharityVision International (CVI) has partnered with LEPP since 2014. In that time, we have distributed over \$50 million worth of LEPP resources on more than 20 container shipments to eight approved countries.

Aaron Lock, Director of Operations

Q: Can you tell us a little about your program and your role?

A: There are 2.2 billion people suffering from visual impairment of which 123 million people could have corrected vision with a simple pair of eyeglasses. An additional 65 million people require cataract surgery. CharityVision believes sight is imperative to a fulfilling and sustainable life. Everyone deserves to see. By restoring sight, we restore lives. Our model creates sustainable solutions in eye care and empowers local health professionals. In 2019 our partners restored sight to 142,000 people in 26 countries.

My role as Director of Operations is to collaborate with the Programs team and our in-country directors around the world to understand the medical resource needs of our partners and our eye surgery centers. I oversee a small, but dedicated team that manages the Gifts-in-Kind (GIK) program at our warehouse near Salt Lake City, Utah where we select the most appropriate resources to meet our partners' needs and prepare those resources for deployment overseas.

Q: What types of humanitarian aid or development programs are utilizing the federal surplus property transferred by your organization?

A: CharityVision is primarily focused on the development of sustainable eye-care solutions. We utilize federal surplus property to upgrade existing eye surgery centers around the world or to establish new eye surgery centers in underserved regions of Haiti, Peru, Nigeria, Tanzania, Pakistan, and the Philippines. We also utilize property made available through LEPP to support eye screening programs, eye screening of school children, eyeglass distribution, and other medical initiatives. In addition, we support health care initiatives our in-country directors and partners present to us that are not related to eye care such as orthopedics, maternal health, dental, and other services in places such as Chile, Tanzania, and the Philippines. All assistance, eye care or otherwise, is provided to the most vulnerable or underserved populations.

Q: What community challenges/problems do these programs try to address? Can you share with us any statistical data related to the problems/challenges?

A: Let's use Pakistan as an example. Cataracts cause 51% of all blindness in Pakistan. If those 51% of people with cataracts received surgeries and entered back into the workplace, it is estimated that their average combined productivity input would add \$255 million to

Pakistan's economy. Since the establishment of our new eye surgery center in Northern Pakistan, CharityVision has performed almost 14,000 cataract surgeries. We estimate the result of these surgeries has added over \$3 million back to the Pakistan economy.

Q: What have the programs/organizations/institutions been able to accomplish with property donations made available through LEPP?

A: Since 2014, CharityVision, in collaboration with local ophthalmologists, has established three new eye surgery centers in Haiti and in 2021 we will open a fourth eye surgery center. Each year, we perform on average 4,300 eye surgeries in Haiti and distribute 3,000 pairs of eyeglasses. We have trained ophthalmic nurses to screen underserved and rural populations resulting in 58 screenings. Our Haitian eye surgery centers are fully self-sustainable and are having a tremendous impact on eye care across the country. This was all made possible because of LEPP. Our eye surgery centers have state-of-the-art surgical and examination equipment and offer previously unavailable or hard to find services. It is truly a remarkable accomplishment.

Q: Do you have any examples of smart, flexible, and creative solutions implemented by local stakeholders who were actively engaged in the planning and implementation process of projects that made/make use of federal surplus property donations?

A: In the Philippines, we set up several eye centers using federal surplus property donations. One of them was set up in Tondo, a populous and underserved area of Manila. Three Filipino doctors came to us with the idea originally. They found a location on a busy street and had the space renovated and prepared for surgeries. It took years, but eventually the eye center was approved. Now, a total of six Filipino eye surgeons work at the eye center, which is called the Hermosa Surgical Care Center, doing mostly cataract surgery on low-income individuals. And, as word has spread about their high-quality, yet charity-minded work, the Hermosa Surgical Care Center's patients come not only from Tondo, but from all over the region. Before the pandemic, the center performed over 100 surgeries each month. Now that some of the restrictions are being lifted, the center has started to see even more patients than before. One week in March 2021, they performed close to 80 procedures. Thanks to donations made possible through LEPP, we were able to support local surgeons with the surgical equipment they needed and provide services to the most vulnerable in Manila.

Q: How is COVID-19 impacting your programs? Are you using federal surplus property in your COVID-19 response? If so, how?

A: The need for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) during COVID-19 was immense. While we had a significant volume of PPE available that we had sourced through LEPP, we were presented with multiple international shipping restrictions; governments in our program countries were not permitting our in-country staff to import anything originating from the United States. Where possible, our in-country staff were able to provide creative local solutions to the PPE shortage and distribute any PPE items from previous LEPP shipments already stored in that country.

While many of our partners are provided limited services, they are still finding creative ways to offer those services. For example, Mabuhay Deseret Foundation staff in the Philippines began offering virtual screenings for eye conditions as well as implementing strict protection protocols for in-person screenings to protect both staff and patients during severe country-wide restrictions.

Q: Do any of your programs utilizing federal surplus property work on increasing women's access to income, productive resources, or technology?

A: In 2017, CharityVision established a nurse training program in Haiti. CharityVision trained 14 women nurses to successfully screen, educate, and refer patients in need of eye care. This program provided education and income to the nurses while offering eye care services to people in underserved regions of Haiti. The equipment the ophthalmic nurses used, such as portable autorefractors, were sourced through LEPP. It was an empowering program that resulted in 27 outreaches and screened 3,576 patients in need that year. The nurses have become an essential asset to our team in Haiti to find and help those in need of eye care services.

Q: In your years working with CharityVision and partnering with LEPP, how has the relationship grown?

A: CharityVision's GIK operations have grown exponentially. We started in a 6,000 sq. ft. warehouse and quickly thereafter had to relocate to a 25,000 sq. ft. warehouse. By May 2021, we will complete our relocation to a new 36,000 sq. ft. warehouse. We have increased our annual container shipment rate from a few containers to almost 12 and we are providing our partners with newer and better equipment all the time. Our annual acquisition of resources provided by LEPP continues to increase. In FY 2020, we requisitioned almost \$22 million worth of resources and have exciting new projects in Chile, Haiti, Peru, Pakistan, Tanzania, and the Philippines. We are excited to add Ghana to our list of countries and continue to provide support to Nigeria and Kenya. Partnership with LEPP continues to allow us to source high-quality resources at a much lower cost and leverage available funds to make a larger impact.

Q: What is most gratifying about working with CharityVision and partnering with LEPP?

A: CharityVision has established itself as a leader in the humanitarian eye care sector. Our model is distinguished by our focus on local health care solutions, and we are constantly witnessing outstanding outcomes in the delivery of eye care services. In 2019, we restored sight to 142,000 people. We have found that the gift of sight is not limited to the individual undergoing surgery; it is a gift that changes families and even communities. A young girl who has difficulty learning in school because of poor eyesight can receive a new pair of eyeglasses and her life can change forever. She can now realize her potential and become a force for change in her community. Interviewing patients, listening to their stories, and hearing of their hardships due to loss of vision is heartbreaking, but the simple solutions offered by CharityVision and their partners is truly restoring lives and having an incredible impact around the world. I am blessed to play a part in this great work.

Q: In your experience, what was a particularly memorable humanitarian project CharityVision has supported with property made available through LEPP? Why was it memorable?

A: In 2017, we began finalizing a project to bring eye services to the underserved communities in the Tanzanian capital city of Dodoma. Most of the equipment was sourced through LEPP and included a great deal of brand-new ophthalmic equipment. In 2018, the CharityVision Tanzania (CVT) Eye Hospital opened in Dodoma. In late 2018, I got to visit CVT Eye Hospital for the first time. It was an emotional experience to witness what we were able to accomplish due to the hard work and commitment of so many. Moving into 2021 and beyond, we have several new and exciting projects planned for Tanzania in collaboration with our fantastic team in East Africa.

Q: Doing great humanitarian work requires a lot of energy! In your program travels, where did you enjoy your best cup of Joe for a quick pick-me-up?

A: When conducting program travels, the overseas staff rarely allows us time to rest. We are constantly on the go! I wish I could give advice on the best cup of Joe, but actually I do not drink coffee. My pick-me-up is usually found in working out in either the hotel gym (when available) or in going for a run. Enjoying the local cuisine is also crucial to keeping the energy levels high!

Q: I'm sure your work is extremely rewarding but also has its challenges. Can you give me an example of a challenge you've faced in your work and how you've overcome it?

A: For CharityVision, the challenge is in always making sure we are meeting the needs of our international partners and delivering the highest-quality resources on time and within budget. This is not always possible. In 2020, we had to delay most of our international shipments due to the pandemic. This resulted in us having to disappoint partners who were desperately awaiting resources to establish eye surgery centers and provide eye services to their communities. We are now working extremely hard to get caught up in 2021 and ship out as many LEPP resources as possible.

Q: Can you give some tips for other PVO partners on how you've used federal surplus property to successfully support your programs?

A:

- 1. Create relationships with the Area Property Officers (APOs) and Holding Locations** – With 6 years of successfully requisitioning LEPP from military facilities and VA Medical Centers, we have developed strong relationships with the points of contact (POCs). Oftentimes, the POCs will reach out to us with available property before it becomes viewable on GSAXcess. In addition, most holding locations will not assist with any packing/palletizing of property. However, the POCs with whom we have a good relationship will go above and beyond to help in any way possible, especially those who understand CharityVision's mission.
- 2. Screen property** – Prior to 2020, CharityVision staff would travel to major holding locations monthly to screen property. This allows us to see what property is available prior to it becoming viewable on GSAXcess. Screening is especially important at military holding locations because there is rarely much information available for property listings on GSA, and photos of the property are even rarer. Screening property beforehand allows us to make a more informed decision on requisitions and better plan for removal methods. Visiting holding locations also strengthens relationships with POCs.
- 3. Set up strong shipping logistics** – LEPP is “as-is” “where-is”. The best-case scenario is the property is palletized and can be very easily shipped with a regular freight carrier. The worst-case scenario is the holding location cannot/will not help pack/prepare property and we must seek the help of the local UPS store to pick-up, pack, and ship the property for us; or, for larger items or more sensitive property, we contract with blanket wrap movers. Occasionally, packing/preparing property removal requires a CharityVision staff member to travel to the holding location.
- 4. Collaborate with in-country staff** – The success of our in-country staff is our success. We consult with in-country staff to determine their program needs and then establish our game plan for requisitioning federal surplus property, timeframe for deliveries, shipping and logistics, etc.

Thanks so much for taking the time to help us learn more about your program and your

LEPP Donations Support Pediatric Hospital with Strong Focus on Gender Equity



Dr. Atz, Assistant Director of the Children's Hospital.

In Guatemala—where women make up 51% of the population but men have historically controlled the political, economic, and social resources—one hospital is closing the gender gap: the Juan Pablo II Children's Hospital in the city of Mixco.

Since 1985, Caritas Archdiocese of Guatemala (Caritas), the primary relief and development agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Guatemala City, has owned and operated Juan Pablo II Children's Hospital, the country's only pediatric hospital. The hospital provides services to children from 0 months to 17 years of age in more than 20 pediatric specialties as well as to women in the areas of maternity and gynecology. Most

significantly, it is the only nonprofit hospital that specializes in adolescent health care in Guatemala where 23% of the population is between 10 and 19 years of age and nearly half of all girls ages 15 to 19 are pregnant or already mothers. Currently, Juan Pablo II provides services to over 125,000 patients yearly. The hospital also provides emergency care services in pediatrics, gynecology, and maternity 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Furthermore, since over 20% of patients reside in rural and remote areas, the hospital provides housing facilities to parents and family members free of charge.

Food For The Poor, in partnership with LEPP, has supplied federal surplus property and equipment to several departments within Juan Pablo II Children's Hospital. Equipment includes incubators and thermal modules that are critical in the treatment of infants and premature newborns. Incubators are used in the maternity ward and thermal modules are used in the intermediate pediatric care ward for newborns with age-specific pathologies that require intra-hospital treatment. Other federal surplus property donated to the Children's Hospital includes ultrasound machines, oximeters, ophthalmic/optometric supplies, a bladder scanner, a bronchoscope, exam tables, blood pressure monitors, electrocardiographs, blood bank freezers, incubators, a pulmonary function analyzer, dental equipment, and 125 computers. Dr. Azañon, a pediatrician at Juan Pablo II, expresses how the incubators LEPP donated are helping newborns in their transition period.

"Thanks to the receipt of five incubators from LEPP, the maternity ward is now better equipped to handle the care of newborns at the Children's Hospital. In 2020, 1,012 newborns were cared for using the incubators, which help newborns in their transition to post-delivery in the critical hours and days after birth. Before receiving this surplus property from LEPP, the hospital had a single incubator for the entire maternity ward. Many times, this one incubator had to be shared amongst newborns, and in some cases the decision had to be made about which children to help in their transition period. Thanks to LEPP, we no longer experience this dilemma, and we are most grateful."

– Dr. Ana Sofía Azañon, pediatrician in the maternity ward

Closing the Gender Gap



Dr. Jazzmin Soriano examining pediatric patient with patient's mother.

In addition to being a treatment facility, the Juan Pablo II Children's Hospital is known as one of the few institutions in Guatemala where women receive the training they need to excel in their chosen fields and spur their upward mobility. Since 1994, the Children's Hospital has had a Post-Graduate Residency Program in Pediatrics in collaboration with Rafael Landivar University, which provides medical training to Guatemalan and Central American residents. Seventy-nine percent of the doctors who are currently

attending the hospital's post-graduate program are women, and in the past 24 years, 69% of the pediatricians who have graduated from the program have been women. Women graduates go on to serve as leading pediatricians and policymakers throughout Guatemala, creating a cadre of experts who understand the importance of gender equity and who promote it throughout Central America. Since 1988, the Juan Pablo II Children's Hospital has also provided medical education to nurse's assistants through its School of Nursing Assistants Program Monsignor Arnold Poll. Eighty-nine percent of the current student body in this program are women and over the last 29 years, 88% of the program's graduates have been women. Furthermore, women play a significant role in the operation and administration of the Children's Hospital. Women professionals and specialists at Juan Pablo II include chemical biologists, traumatologists, business administrators, auditors, researchers, orthodontists, pediatricians, gynecologists, ophthalmologists, and more.



Dr. Vanesa Estrada, gynecologist, examining a pregnant patient on a LEPP donated exam table.

In May 2019, Caritas conducted a gender analysis, which revealed that the organization is clearly committed to gender equity, women's empowerment, and promoting policies that reduce the socio-political and economic gap between men and women. According to the Department of Human Resources at Caritas, of the 399-total number of Caritas staff, 234 are women, comprising 59% of the total employee workforce population. Segregating the analysis into two main groups of Caritas employees, the Children's Hospital employs 329 employees, of whom 200

are women, comprising 61% of the hospital staff. In addition, Caritas (the umbrella organization) employs a total of 70 employees, of whom 34 are women, comprising 49% of the staff. Among leadership positions at the Children's Hospital, 100% of management and administration positions are held by women, including the positions of hospital director, hospital co-director, and hospital administrator. Finally, of the total number of hospital coordinators, 73% are women.

Access to Technology Is Key

As Caritas remains focused on closing the gender gap in the socio-political and economic arenas, access to technology is key. The Children’s Hospital relies on technology for a variety of purposes including creating administrative tools, monitoring and evaluating staff, and facilitating internal and external communication. The 125 computers Food For The Poor donated in partnership with LEPP are being used in the hospital’s out-patient clinics and other areas of care. The laptops allow the hospital’s medical team to update patient files digitally at the time of service, which has helped to optimize patient care and administrative services. In addition, the donated laptops provided a timely solution for health care workers and other staff who were required to work from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The computer resources allowed hospital staff to continue their work remotely without compromising patient care. Thanks to LEPP, computer access in all administrative and operational areas has improved the overall quality and execution of hospital services. Dr. Paula Ruiz, a pediatrician at the Juan Pablo II Children’s Hospital, expressed the positive impact the donated laptops have had in her work area.

“Now I can enter important patient information into the system immediately; before we did everything by hand. The online system helps streamline patient care schedules. This allows me to help more people, making the most of my time.”

– **Dr. Paula Ruiz**, pediatrician in pediatrics

Making a Difference — One Family at a Time

As Caritas and the Juan Pablo II Children’s Hospital work to provide quality pediatric and women’s health care while promoting gender equity, here is a story of how the organizations have changed one family’s life with equipment made available through LEPP.



Ana María Molina at the Children’s Hospital.

Ana María Molina Reyes

Fifteen-year-old Ana María Molina Reyes was born with Hallux Valgus Bilateral, a condition that causes her feet to grow crooked. In a bilateral hallux valgus deformity, the big toe – almost always in conjunction with splayfoot – angles inward toward the other toes so that a deviation from the normal alignment of the big toe develops. This causes a growing and painful, inflamed protrusion in the metatarsophalangeal joint. In addition to causing her pain, this condition made Ana María feel self-conscious and insecure, which interfered with her social development at school. Ana tried to participate in physical education and sports but doing so caused her a great deal of pain. Often, she would sit sadly in the bleachers while her classmates played soccer. Her condition could only be remedied through surgery. Ana María’s mother, María Isabel Reyes, has worked at the Juan Pablo II Children’s Hospital for over 26 years and

dreamed that one day her daughter could be operated on by one of the hospital's specialists. When Dr. Celia Cristina Mazariegos returned to the Children's Hospital from her specialization in Pediatric Traumatology, María Isabel brought Ana María in for a consultation as her daughter's pain had become unbearable. Dr. Mazariegos used an exam table donated by Food For The Poor in partnership with LEPP during her consultation and determined that Ana María was ready for surgery.

"I had one of the most important moments in my life when the nurse confirmed the date for my daughter's operation. I knew that her life would change forever," said María Isabel. "God puts angels on the earth to see its wonders. My daughter will walk and run, thanks to LEPP, and this will give her more security and opportunities in life."

Ana María was happy about something more fashion-forward, "Thanks to the help from the LEPP program and the Children's Hospital, I will now be able to wear my favorite sandals."



Ana María pre-surgery.

"God puts angels on the earth to see its wonders. My daughter will walk and run well, thanks to LEPP and this will give her more security and opportunities in life."

– **María Isabel**, Ana María's mother



Ana María post-surgery.

"Thanks to the help from the LEPP program and the Children's Hospital, I will now be able to wear my favorite sandals."

– **Ana María**

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