

Report of MEI/ForSight Foundation Trip

February 22nd – March 9th, 2014

I. Teams

A. From

1. The USA

- a. Rebecca Coakley, M.A. *Program Director/Education Specialist*
Children's Vision Rehabilitation Project, WVU
- b. Nabil Jabbour, M.D., FACS, *Professor, Ophthalmology, WVU*
President, M.A.R.C. & the ForSight Foundation
- c. Nina Jabbour, M.D., *Vice President & CFO, M.A.R.C.*
Co-Chair, No Child Left Blind
- d. Gregg Pusateri, O.D., M.Div.
Low vision, Wheaton Clinic

2. Lebanon

- a. Charbel Fahd, M.D., *Chief of Ophthalmic Services, LAU*
Ophthalmic Consultants of Beirut
- b. David Fahd, M.D, *Ophthalmic Consultants of Beirut*
- c. Vicki Fahd, *Co-Chair, No Child Left Blind*
- d. John Fahd, *CEO, ITegrators*
- e. Cedar Mansour, DJ, *Former Vice President, LAU*
- f. George Mansour, DJ, MA, *President, MM&M*
- g. Yara Mansour, DJ, MA, *Partner, MM&M*

3. Egypt

- a. Dr. Adel Girgis, *Professor & Program Director, NEI-Cairo*
- b. Dr. Maged Adly, *Consultant, Ophthalmology*
- c. Dr. Adel Sami, *Consultant, Ophthalmology*
- d. Dr. Lucy Masarani, *Director, Ammoun Hospital*
- e. Dr. Sally Farouk, *Director, "Integration"*
- f. Mrs. Serene Damerjian, RN, *Nursing Director, Ammoun Hospital*

B. Locations, visited

1. Europe (Nabil and Nina)
 - a. Netherlands
 - b. Switzerland
 - c. Macedonia
2. Lebanon
Nabil, Nina, Charbel, David, John, Cedar, George and Yara
3. Egypt
 - a. Assiut (Nina, Gregg, Becky, Vicki, Sally)
 - b. Manouf (Nabil, Adel Sami, Maged)
 - c. Cairo - Surgery (Charbel, David, Adel Girgis, Lucy, Serene & Nabil)
 - d. Cairo – Meetings and lectures (Charbel, David, Vicki, Gregg, Becky, Sally, Nina, Nabil, Adel Sami, Maged, Adel Girgis, Lucy & Serene)

II. Chronologic Summary

- A. Visit to Dorcas Aid International & Dorcas Hulp Nederland (Amsterdam)
 1. Nabil shared a devotional and information on the Febi Project with Dorcas staff (~60 brothers and sisters who could worship, sing, pray and fellowship as good as they serve...).
 2. Nabil and Nina met with Dr. Michel (CEO of Dorcas): A wonderful and dedicated man of God with great knowledge of, and care for the suffering around the globe.
- B. Visit to “Services Along the Nile” (Guitle)
 1. Nabil and Nina met with Mr. Markus (CEO), Dr. Emad (Egypt national director) and Mr. Peter and Mrs. Edith (Founders).
 2. Toured Guitle and surrounding (community living: supporting missions).
 3. Met briefly with the board.

An amazing experience to witness Christ in action.

C. Visit to Skopje (Macedonia) – Dr. Andy Sander’s LinkAcross

1. Nabil
 - a. Met with and lectured to ophthalmologists and neonatologists – coordinated with Dr. Larry Wallin (see report).
 - b. Made rounds, saw patients and supervised laser treatment.

2. Nina met with orthoptic specialists and with teachers from the school for the blind (see report).

D. Visit to Lebanon

1. Feb. 28th – March 1st

- a. Nabil

- i) Lectures and seminars to practicing ophthalmologists and residents from different programs.
- ii) Saw patients and performed laser.

- iii) IT meeting with John Fahd.

- b. Nina coordinated with Vicki for No Child Left Blind.

2. March 7th – 8th

- a. Nabil

- i) Performed surgery.

- ii) Hosted GME-Lebanon roundtable (follow-up meeting) and planned for a fall summit and future steps with the 7 medical schools (see summary).

E. Egypt (March 2nd – March 7th)

1. Assiut (March 4th & 5th)

Intensive training for 37 teachers (demonstrating on 5 children with visual Impairment), covering the following topics:

- a. The space camp and the whole child
- b. Low vision aids
- c. Low vision technology (I-pad)
- d. Assessment tools and techniques
- e. O&M (cane techniques)
- f. FVA/LV Assessment
- g. Assistive technology
- h. Albinism
- i. Importance of early intervention

2. Manouf (March 3rd – 5th)

- Retina training and service (staffed by visiting professor: Nabil Jabbour)

Medical: 28 patients

Surgical: 12 patients

5 ophthalmologists

(Patients came from as close as Manouf and as far as south Sudan)

- Phako (cataract) training and service (staffed by national instructor: Maged Adly)

- Visit by His eminence Dr. Ali Gomaa and The most reverend Dr. Mouneer Anis celebrating the partnership between the Febi Project, Misr El Kheir and Harpur Memorial Hospitals in the presence of the political and religious leaders of the region.

- Several glitches ranging from funny to serious are worth highlighting:

* As an indication of how fragile the infrastructure is, water is rationed on certain days. When that happens, there isn't enough water pressure to fire up the water heaters for showers. Of course the locals know all of that, but visitors like me would never know about it, unless told. People living through this get so used to it, they don't remember to alert visitors. So when I told the pastor who graciously shared his apartment with me (for the 2 nights I was at the hospital) that I was planning to take a shower, he wished me well and went on his morning run. I got myself ready in the bathroom and turned the water on: no hot water. After 10 – 15 minutes of trying to get the heater fired up, I gave up – took a very cold shower, dressed up and got ready to leave the apartment only to find out that I was locked in. The door only locks with a key and the pastor is used to locking it so that morning he did, and left with the ONLY key to the apartment in his pocket – and he was not reachable.

Neither was anyone else in the hospital. I tried the few numbers I had on my Egyptian cell phone but apparently many of them don't get good reception. I tried to look out from the balcony; no one was there to call and it was two floors high – not possible to jump. Realizing there were patients and doctors waiting, I prayed and immediately remembered that my room had a window which opened to a construction site which was only about 5 feet below.

In my suit and with my computer and briefcase tucked under my arm, I opened the window, held on to the edge, and jumped. I closed the window from the outside and realized my hands were now pitch black, but I was out!

** On our second operating day, we hit a glitch that was by far more serious and threatened to mess up our ability to help many patients who traveled from Meniah and Assiut (many came by multiple trains – Most are over 12 hours long - and camped out for 2 days in Manouf): our main (and only) vitrectomy machine broke down!

We tried everything we could think of including a 2 hour session of step by step troubleshooting maneuvers while on speaker phone with engineers from the company in the U.S. NOTHING WORKED!

We had doctors in Cairo, Lebanon and the USA calling local reps in Cairo from 3 different companies trying to secure a machine for the next day so we could do the patients left from this day and those who were scheduled for the day after.

No one could make that time frame and travel to Manouf (2 to 4 hours from Cairo on rough roads).

The visiting team and the OR team gathered that evening (almost desperate) and prayed for a miraculous intervention. While we were praying, the Vice President of Synergetics (in the U.S. – Mr. Alex Bergoudian) called and said he had a local rep (Mr. Mohammad Barakat) who might be able to help. I called him and he had the only vitrectomy machine in Egypt that was similar to ours (which was donated by Synergetics 2 years ago). Initially, he was not sure he could bring the machine the next day even in the evening (when we were planning to leave for surgery in Cairo); then, he promised he

would try for an afternoon arrival. I asked him to promise to come by noon.

At 12:10 p.m. that day we were able to start surgery. We finished at 5:30 p.m. and by 9:00 p.m. we were in Cairo at Amoun Hospital. THANK GOD AND THANK YOU SYNERGETICS (Mr. Alex Bergoudian and Mr. Mohammad Barakat and the AMICO team).

3. Cairo

a. Eye surgery (March 2nd – 5th)

62 surgeries were performed (cataract, strabismus and glaucoma) with visiting doctors training local ophthalmologists. The patients were brought each day by buses from rural areas (in upper Egypt) accompanied by volunteer helpers who purchased meals and took care of all the logistics on our behalf.

Follow-up was arranged for the patients to see our local doctors in their towns. These are the doctors who were involved in the pre-screening prior to Dr. Adel Sami going ahead of the campaign for final screening. He screened 200 patients in Miniah and 100 patients in Assiut (mostly children).

b. “Integration” and “No Child Left Blind” celebration

In the presence of partners, GOs, NGOs, religious leaders, academic leaders, educational leaders and government officials.

c. Round table discussion on GME.

d. Ophthalmology lectures (anterior segment) for approximately 18 ophthalmologists who traveled from around the country.

e. Inaugural board meeting for new Healthcare training center in Cairo (more details later).

III. Highlights and Landmarks of Unique Blessings

A. Community Medicine

What started as an experiment last time proved to be a reliable and progressive process of identifying, screening and treating the needy patients.

With the help of various groups and individuals in the rural community, patients are identified, pre-screened by the local physician (who was trained by us) and then screened by our own Dr. Adel Sami to plan for who needs advanced management in Cairo, which is then scheduled.

Then the community volunteers help transport and care for the patients in buses we provide. The schedule is set before any visiting teams arrive and then on a daily basis, like clockwork, the patients are brought into the hospital in the morning and all return in the evening after the procedures are performed. Their follow-up is then done by the local physician, supervised by Dr. Adel. This is the reverse of mobile clinics.

B. Progressive Training

Dr. Fahd remarked at the end of a long surgery day: "One of the best feelings is to see our trainees grow from visit to visit and from year to year, and to watch the more senior among them now be involved in teaching and training others!" So true...It has been great to be able to follow a sustainable path for service training going back to progressively better equipped facilities and progressively better trained staff and seeing measurable growth in efficacy and efficiency...

C. Instruments of Peace

Perhaps the biggest blessing is the fact that our work has been going on in a low profile, no brand name style and reaching all sectors of society regardless of their political, ethnic or religious backgrounds.

How rewarding to see everyone from patients to teachers to doctors and partners sitting side by side, loving and serving each other while others on the street are fighting, killing and maiming while claiming they want peace. This is the only hope for true peace.

D. Hearing from the Lord

Our loving heavenly father communicates with us in so many ways, ranging from a whisper to the full manifestation of Himself in Christ.

Recently, He has been communicating a few words of instruction, encouragement and even gentle rebuke to many members of our teams. It has come through an unexpected channel: Our driver Hanni!

Egypt, as most of you know, is a hierarchical society and as such the driver is expected to take our team to our choice of restaurant for dinner, wait for us outside and take us back. Instead, we insisted that he (being an equal and integral part of the team) join us for dinner, anywhere we go. It took him awhile to get used to it, but it has now become a routine. The last 2 trips, the Lord surprised us at a couple of the dinners and one time even while in our van. Hanni's facial demeanor changes and his voice gains confidence (while still soft) and he starts looking at one person after another and by name tells them that he has a word for them from the Lord. "Things that I don't fully understand but feel I need to share with you..."

I have to admit the first time I saw that I was afraid that snake handling might follow, but instead there was this reverence that almost unmistakably means the Holy Spirit is in charge...Then, Hanni would share detailed stuff that more than one of our members admitted that NO ONE ELSE knew about. The sober joke now is, if Hanni says he has a word from the Lord for you, you better have a box of tissues ready. This has transformed some of our dinners from a mundane routine to amazing spiritual highs and some of our commutes in the crowded streets of Cairo from a frustrating experience to revival meetings with Hanni singing, praying and prophesying while driving! Who can ask for more? We go to bless...and receive many more fold than we give!