



Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the UK and Ireland

Fact Sheet: **MISION MILAGRO**

Background

Despite Venezuela's great natural resource wealth, the poor and rural citizens historically lacked access to basic health services. In 2004, Venezuela and Cuba signed a revolutionary agreement to help thousands of people in the poorest communities in Venezuela overcome vision problems such as cataracts.

According to the World Health Organization, there are more than 37 million people in the world who have lost their sight as a result of preventable causes; of these, more than a million and a half are children below the age of 16.

How does Mision Milagro work?

The majority of problems treated by Mision Milagro include pterygium, cataracts, strabismus, retinopathies, glaucoma, myopia, ptosis, and difficulties in the cornea. The programme provides free eye operations, including correcting and restoring eyesight as well as providing free consultations and glasses.

An operation to remove cataracts typically costs around \$1,000 making it inaccessible to people from poorer communities.

Mision Milagro spreads to other countries

In the spirit of solidarity and international cooperation, residents of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua,

Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay as well as the US, have all benefited from the free operations.

Mission Miracle is present in 31 countries across Latin America, Asia and Africa. During its initial phase, Mission Milagro was based in Cuba where 204,000 Venezuelans in need of care were sent for surgeries. Venezuela is now the site of the operations where Cuban and Venezuelan doctors work side by side.

There are currently 74 centres in Venezuela where the operations take place as well as around 30 other centres in Latin America.

Latest statistics

Mision Milagro has treated almost 2 million patients since 2004¹ with an average of 5,000 operations occurring on a weekly basis in Venezuela alone. Over 1,130,000 Venezuelan's have been treated since the launch of the programme. Hundreds of thousands of people have also been treated across Latin America:

- 75,000 operations in Nicaragua
- 110,000 operations in Ecuador
- 50,000 operations in Haiti
- 82,000 operations in Bolivia²
- 1,400 operations in Peru
- 29,000 operations in Argentina³
- 12,000 operations in Guatemala⁴

¹ <http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/5829>

² <http://www.radioreloj.cu/index.php/noticias-radio-reloj/36-nacionales/3468-mision-milagro-beneficia-a-pacientes-bolivianos>

³ <http://www.operacionmilagro.org.ar/>



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- 40,000 operations in Guyana

Mission Milagro has also treated thousands in Costa Rica, Uruguay, Paraguay and El Salvador, Suriname, Brazil and the Dominican Republic, Mexico.

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For more news and information about Venezuela, please visit our website:

www.embavenez-uk.org

⁴<http://www.alternativabolivariana.org/modules.php?file=article&name=News&sid=2272#3>