Reflecting on two years as president of VOSH/International

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The transition of leadership at VOSH/International marks an occasion to reflect on two years of growth, profound global collaboration, and the **strategic elevation** of the organization's influence. As the baton passes, the organization stands on a strong and internationally connected foundation, prepared to tackle the global challenge of accessible eye care with renewed vigor.

The most tangible measure of success during this period is the **30% growth in VOSH chapters**, expanding the network from 95 chapters in October 2022 to 122 by October 2025. This achievement is not merely a statistic; it represents a vast, tangible expansion of humanitarian service reaching more communities and impacting more lives across the world. This deliberate growth was mirrored by the transformation of the leadership itself, cultivating a **Global Board of Directors** that incorporates diverse perspectives from experienced USA-based members and dedicated international leaders like Beatriz Gómez, Jairo Mercado, Tuwani Rasengane, Jennifer Viñola, and Ameer Abou Adela. This commitment to international representation ensures that VOSH's strategy is informed by the real-world needs of communities across all continents, solidifying its identity as a truly global force.

Complementing this internal expansion was a focused effort on **strategic external partnerships**, recognizing that collaboration is the ultimate force multiplier in global health. Critical alliances were forged or strengthened with organizations that share VOSH's core mission. These included partnerships

with the Latin American Association of Optometry and Optics (ALDOO) to advance education and service delivery in the region, as well as collaboration with the OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation, a global leader in sustainable vision care. Furthermore, engagement with Special Olympics Latin America brought essential vision care to people with intellectual disabilities. At the same time, work with Charity Vision and Keralink demonstrated a broad commitment to eliminating preventable blindness and advancing corneal health worldwide. These formalized partnerships have amplified VOSH's reach, ensuring that its humanitarian services are both far-reaching and deeply sustainable.

Perhaps the most significant long-term achievement of this period was VOSH/International securing a **seat at the table in shaping global eye health policy** through active participation in the World Health Organization's (WHO) SPECS 2030 Initiative. Achieving official member status and having representation at the initiative's launch in Geneva positioned VOSH not just as a service provider, but as a key advocacy and policy leader. This influence was leveraged through sponsorship of the WHO Workforce paper, led by Yazan Gammoh and Tuwani Rasengane, which advocates for advancing optometry globally, and through the crucial translation of the Refractive Error Situation Analysis Tool (RESAT) into Spanish, dramatically broadening its accessibility and utility. This work in global policy, combined with **specific national advocacy efforts** like supporting Argentinian optometrists in their fight for professional recognition, has redefined VOSH/International as a powerful advocate for the profession and for human rights.

The organization also took bold steps to enhance connectivity and solidarity. Hosting **the first major international gathering in Latin America** in Quito, Ecuador**,** in October 2024, brought together Latin American chapters, fostering vital regional networking and the sharing of best practices. Moreover, VOSH stood firm in its humanitarian commitment by issuing a statement on **humanitarian values in times of war**, reaffirming that access to eye care is a fundamental human right that transcends conflict and borders, and ensuring that services continue for the most vulnerable populations. The consistent output of research, conference presentations, and educational resources further ensured that VOSH remained a thought leader, committed to **sharing**

knowledge and enhancing the quality of humanitarian care delivery worldwide.

A New Era of Leadership: Best wishes to Dr. Victoria Molnar Weiss

As VOSH/International enters its next chapter, it does so with immense confidence under the guidance of its new President, **Dr. Vicki Weiss**. Dr. Weiss steps into a role built upon a foundation of dynamic expansion and strategic authority. Her leadership promises not just continuity, but a fresh perspective and unwavering dedication to the principles that define VOSH.

Dr. Weiss, your exemplary embodiment of the VOSH spirit—service, compassion, and tireless dedication—makes you the ideal leader for this moment. We extend our sincerest best wishes for your success. May your tenure see the seeds planted over these years blossom into even greater global initiatives. May the strong networks and strategic partnerships continue to flourish, and may VOSH/International, under your direction, remain a beacon of hope, bringing the gift of clear sight and health to all corners of the world. The entire VOSH family is excited to support your vision as you lead this essential mission forward.