

**Home for the Terminally Ill
"Albergue La Esperanza"
(Mexico City, Mexico)**

Participants	Priests of the Congregation of the Mission Daughters of Charity Vincentian Marian Youth Vincentian Volunteers - AIC St. Vincent de Paul Society Association of the Miraculous Medal
Place	MEXICO : Mexico City (Federal District) Address : Manuel Acuña, 43 ¹ Col Palmitas. Delegació Iztapalapa ² C.P. 096670
Social Context	Mexico City has a great number of terminally ill who must leave the hospital quickly because of a shortage of beds. They are sent to their homes where all too often they are rejected by their families and by society in general because of the great economic burden they represent. Sometimes they are rejected because of a total misunderstanding of their illness. Such is the case with diabetes, cancer, AIDS, leukemia. The fact is that these sick people are left alone with no one to help them.
Target Group	- terminally ill who have been abandoned and are in extreme poverty - family members who are asked to participate in the care and well-being of the sick person
Objective	To offer medical assistance, shelter, spiritual care, mental health counselling, and social assistance to persons who, because of their socio-economic situations or other problems of disability or illness, find themselves unable to care for themselves or provide for their needs. The criterion for admission is to be in the terminal phase of an illness. There is no discrimination of age or gender. To make families aware of their own responsibilities, to support them, and enable them to care for their sick member.

¹ Very populated, marginalized area of extreme poverty

² East of Mexico City

Activities

- Development of an internal policy : handbook of organization of the home and care for the sick
- Evaluation of each case upon admission to the home : home visit, social work assessment of each patient who is admitted, medical service, initiation of an individual program of activities, periodic evaluation of the program according to outcomes
- A complete follow-up of the persons in the home, including assistance with legal affairs, transfers for other services and activities which are needed, as well as assistance offered at time of death
- The Home also functions as a "day hospital" for the sick who are not hospitalized. Their care and activities are organized by an interdisciplinary group of volunteers and paid personnel who work at the Home.
- Family members receive education about the most effective ways to care for the sick person, taking into account their own state of health and their social condition.

Administration

*"Patronato"*³: This refers to the upper administrative level of the Home. It is composed of representatives of the Vincentian Family nationwide in Mexico. It functions to supervise and oversee the program, to seek sources of financial support, to communicate with other organizations, to ensure budget control, to look for competent personnel, to provide ongoing training for the paid staff, as well as for the volunteers.

General management: This function is control, coordination, supervision, evaluation of programmed activities of the Home. It is the voice of the "Patronato," and the link between the "Patronato" and the Home.

Administration committee: Vincentian Family in Mexico The committee is composed of delegates from the different branches:

- Congregation of the Mission
- Company of the Daughters of Charity
- Vincentian Volunteers - AIC Mexico
- Vincentian Marian Youth
- Association of the Miraculous Medal

Personnel

Volunteers:

The work is carried out by lay volunteer groups in each of the branches of the Vincentian Family, by a group of Daughters of Charity, and by Priests of the Mission. All areas of activity are carried out by young professionals who offer their social services at the Home.

³ Patronato : group of people who give financial support

Paid personnel:

- *General Management.* Functions: to plan the budget, supervise, coordinate, to channel and record the resources of the institution, to observe statistical trends to evaluate and make decisions; facilitate the procedures for admission in coordination with General Management, the social worker, the psychologist and the medical personnel. The Administration, along with the "Patronato" and General Management, takes part in the choice of personnel. Outside the Home, they collaborate with public officials and private institutions.

- *Medical and nursing personnel.* Social worker. Psychologist. Administrative interns.

Problems

Financial

- a) Lack of resources to purchase a building in this city.
- b) Mr. José Mata had pledged to finance the cost of construction of the Home in this city. The steps to obtain suitable property were drawn out and during that time, Mr. Mata died. His heirs have not assumed the commitment to finance the construction and have limited the donation to 10,000 Mexican pesos.
- c) Through the intervention of Caritas of the Archdiocese of Mexico City, we had the promise of the operations of the house being paid for, but this has not been possible.

Organizational

Several developments have come about and have influenced the organization of the project.

- a) The frequent change in the national representatives of the different branches of the Vincentian Family.
- b) The meetings for the "Patronato" have to be frequent (monthly) because the project is in the beginning stages.
- c) Distance and work of the national representatives has not allowed the development of relationship with the sick. They have relied on the presence of the Vincentian Family in the city.

Plan of action

The "Patronato" is conscious of the challenge of undertaking a common project with the Vincentian Family and of committing itself to be responsible for the work, to accomplish all the objectives and to adapt itself to its needs and demands.

The members of the "Patronato" must be vigilant to make sure the work does not lose the Vincentian spirit.

The Committee of Private Assistance, which regulates the activity of institutions, will continue supervision of this project.

Financing

Sources:

- International donations (the project has been presented to several international organizations);
- National donations (private enterprises and certain NGO's)
- Government donations through contractual agreements (example: DIF⁴ to obtain food for the home)
- Charity bazaars, lotteries, bingo
- Gifts in kind and things made by groups of volunteers. Other various contributions, collections, etc.

Accreditation by authorities *Civil:*

- The Committee of Private Assistance
- The Secretary of Finances and Public Credit
- The Department of the Federal District
- The Political Delegation of Iztapalapa
- "Nacional Monte de Piedad"

Religious:

- The Episcopal Commission on Health Care
- National Caritas
- Caritas of the Archdiocese of Mexico City
- The Diocese of Nezahualc6yotl

⁴ DIF : Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (governmental organization)