

WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY
GENERAL DELEGATES MEETING TO BE HELD IN MELAKA,
MALAYSIA, ON 5 JUNE 2009

Report of the WOF President

1 Introduction

In my last report to the General Delegates Meeting, held in Mexico City in April 2007, I presented the summary of the strategic planning meeting held in Denver in December 2006. The main headings for that strategy were as follows:

- sort out relationship with OGS
- consider Global Eye Health Council programs
- define roles and responsibilities of the trustees
- build capabilities for fundraising
- match human resources with needs

I will leave it to Clive Miller, who is presenting to the GDM on the relationship between OGS and WCO/WOF to provide more detail on this item.

At the Strategic planning meeting in Denver it was agreed that the prime function of the WOF was to raise funds for WCO projects and WOF. One of the products of that planning meeting was that WOF subsequently hired Maybury Consultants to investigate potential funding sources which had up to that point not been explored at all – sources such as private and government foundations and trusts. Maybury came back with a list of twenty foundations. This was narrowed down to four with the help of Dr Tony Di Stefano. Because of the changes to the Secretariat arrangements, and the need to identify new trustees with fundraising expertise, these leads have not yet been followed up.

The issue of the governance of WOF was put on hold whilst the Secretariat transferred to the UK, but in October 2008 the Trustees met in Anaheim to consider how to move forward (see section 2 below).

2 Last meeting of the WOF Board (Anaheim, October 2008)

This was the first meeting that Mrs. Pawinska, acting WCO executive director and WOF Secretary had attended. I therefore spent some time providing some history on WOF for her.

I outlined the background to the formation of WOF and it may be helpful to remind delegates of WOF's purpose.

Initially the role of WOF was to select fellowships and raise funds. Originally there were 3 types of fundraising projects –Direct approach to the ophthalmic industry for specific projects support,

a leadership fund launched in 2000 whereby leaders gave to WOF, and a search for private donations, either via estates or citizen support. You may also recall that there was a fund raising campaign called “Give One Exam for World Optometry” aimed at the average practitioner. The money raised by this campaign purposely did not go to WOF but directly to WCO so that it could be used for purposes outside the humanitarian and educational mandates of WOF (e.g. persuading a government to legalize or strengthen optometry’s existence a country).

WOF often found itself in competition with ICEE for fund raising and the two bodies eventually agreed to collaborate. IAPB then said they also wanted to participate and OGS was born as optometry’s fund raising vehicle for specific projects linked to correcting refractive error.

The principle is that the funds raised by OGS are split between countries that raise the money and OGS internationally. That international money is split between ICEE, IAPB and WOF. In order to get some high profile campaigns off the ground quickly the three organisations agreed to pool the total and this goes on until 2010.

It is important to note, however, that WOF is not restricted just to OGS type projects and can raise money for projects completely unconnected with URE. WOF can only fund educational and humanitarian projects initiated by WCO. “Political” projects that involve such things as enabling legislation regarding legalizing optometry fall outside the scope of WOF according to US law.

2.1 Roles and responsibilities of WOF Trustees

In Anaheim the Board considered skills required by Trustees, and the composition of the Board. WCO’s Governing Board has responsibility for selecting the Trustees (with terms varying from one to three years), but the WOF President, Vice President and Treasurer are elected by the Trustees and their term on the executive is a two years term.

It was agreed that all Trustees have a responsibility to raise funds. The potential for having a crossover between Trustees and the WCO Executive Committee was discussed and it was agreed that it would be a good idea to have WCO officers involved as they understand WCO projects. It was agreed that a ‘job description’ for Trustees should be developed so that WCO can identify people who have the skills to fulfil the role.

It was agreed that three of the four WCO Officers should be Trustees, plus 4 other people, excluding the secretary, who do not need to be optometrists. It was agreed that the WOF Officers should not also be WCO Officers. (The WOF Byelaws provide for no less than 5, and no more than 9, voting Trustees.)

It was acknowledged that WOF probably needs to demonstrate some success in fund raising before it will attract good people.

At the meeting of WCO Governing Board, which will be held on Thursday 4 June, the three Officers of WCO who are to become WOF Trustees will be confirmed, as well as the re-election of retiring WOF Trustees who wish to be re-elected. These people will attend the meeting of the WOF Board to be held on Friday 5 June.

2.2 Requests for funding

The WCO President made a formal request for the sum of \$10,000 for the Malawi school which is being co funded by Optometry Giving Sight, Sight savers International, and WCO. This was approved.

The WCO President made a formal request for funding to cover Kovin Naidoo's flight to Argentina to work on the RESC Project. This was approved.

3 Fundraising

In Anaheim, Dr. Stern presented a document outlining ways in which WOF could raise funds. It was agreed that Trustees should use their contacts to make initial approaches, informed by current WCO project details, and that once potential sponsors have agreed in principle to donate funds, the negotiation should be finalized by the Secretariat.

I remain convinced that we must seek funding outside the traditional pool of resources and must include private and public foundations and grants. This will not provide instant dollars, but the longer we delay aggressive pursuit of this funding resource, the farther away our effort's reward will be. Those plans must now be revived.

4 Finance and banking arrangements

At the end of 2007 the total assets of WOF amounted to \$1,236,087. At the end of 2008 this had decreased to £780,900. Although a small amount of the decrease can be attributed to losses on investments, in the main the difference results from a legacy received in 2007, and the payment to OGS in 2008 of monies received in 2007.

The differences in income are as follows:

	2008	2007
Legacies and bequests	8,219	380,173
Sponsorship fees	32,006	4,560
Contributions	27,500	425,291
Investment income	23,055	31,517
Total	90,780	841,541
Expenses	412,705	188,779

WOF's current accounts have been moved to Barclays Bank in the UK. The signatories are the WOF President, Vice President and the Acting Executive Director, but to comply with UK money laundering regulations (and as he is known to the bank), Mr Chappell was also approved as a signatory. However, Mr Chappell is not being able to sign for or move any funds without a WOF counter-signatory.

5 The Future

On 6 July the new, permanent, Executive Director, Caroline Hyde-Price, takes up her post, which will include becoming the Permanent Trustee, replacing Bryony Pawinska in that role. In addition to the three WCO Officers who will join the Board, of the current Trustees Dr. Stern, Dr. Smick and Mr. Gutman have expressed their desire to remain on the Board. At the meeting to be held in Melaka, the new Board will elect a President to replace me. I was persuaded to stay

in the role while the new Secretariat arrangements were put in place and Dr. Stern has now expressed his interest in taking over as President. I believe that Dr. Stern will make an ideal leader in this endeavour and will need to surround himself with trustees who can play specific roles and possess specific talents and connections to maximise that function. Dr Stern will attend the meeting in Melaka, and, if elected as President, will present this report. I regret that I, Dr. Smick and Mr. Gutman are able to attend for economic or political/safety reasons.

While I won't be able to welcome our new Executive Director in person I would like to take this opportunity to do so in writing and to express my confidence that her impressive background promises to make her a fine fit for international optometry. "Welcome to the team, Caroline!" I also want to thank Bryony for her excellent job in doing double duty and helping steer the "Good Ship WCO" until we found a more permanent Executive Director. Finally, I would be remiss if, in this, my final report as WOF President, I did not express my gratitude and admiration for the years of dedication and "overachieving" given to WCO and WOF during my time with both organizations by the secretariat in Pennsylvania – particularly Tony and Melissa.

It has been a great privilege to serve as WOF President since 2004. Serving international optometry over the past 15 years has been one of the highlights of my professional life. I am grateful for the opportunity and will continue to champion the causes I so strongly believe in – The World Council of Optometry, The World Optometry Foundation, and Optometry Giving Sight.

With gratitude and respectfully submitted,

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