**Introducing the SVOSH chapter at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina**

## Who we are

Our SVOSH-UNLP-Argentina chapter collaborates with the University's Outreach Program *Visual Health for All* (SVPT) which is part of the Faculty of Exact Sciences at the National University of La Plata. Together, we deliver primary eye health and visual care services to underserved communities who face significant barriers to accessing public healthcare and obtaining essential optical devices.

A group of faculty and students of the Bachelor's Degree Program in Ocular Optics and Optometry form the SVPT team. The program's strong commitment to educating professionals dedicated to serving society's most excluded communities enables us to deliver quality, well-organized care that helps people "see well and live better".







The SVPT program has been operating since 2006. Since then, it has seen more than 17,000 patients of all ages either at the faculty's premises or directly in the communities. This work has highlighted the significant need for eye health services by communities in our country, in alignment with the findings provided by the WHO World Report on Vision (2019).

## Where we work

Patient care is carried out at the vision clinic located in the Faculty of Exact Sciences of the National University of La Plata (UNLP) and directly in the communities where people are invited to attend.

These community activities take place in various neighborhoods of the capital of the province of Buenos Aires, and in other parts of the country at the request of government authorities or NGOs.





**How we work**

**Our working approach in the communities is organized in two key stages**

We begin by conducting initial visual acuity screenings to identify individuals who require a comprehensive eye examination. Those in need are referred for further evaluation, during which prescriptions for corrective glasses are determined.

In the second stage, the prescription glasses identified in the first stage are produced and then distributed to the patients we had examined, free of charge.

In remote areas outside the capital, access to the health system is extremely limited. Primary eye health and visual care are not part of the government's policy, which further exacerbates the challenges faced by these communities. This was evident, for instance, during a humanitarian activity carried out in the town of Tartagal, located in the province of Salta, in northern Argentina, 57 km from the border with Bolivia.

In these efforts, the optometrists focused on serving various communities of indigenous peoples such as the Guarani, Wichis, Tapietes, Tobas, Chanés and Chorotes, who live in places outside the region's urban center. For the most part, these communities had never had access to visual health.





A total of 168 eye exams were carried out over five days. 172 prescription glasses for near and far vision were produced and distributed in the second stage. This work was coordinated with a local health provider, with the corresponding referrals made to the different specialties as necessary.

**Our lines of work**: clinical care, awareness raising campaigns, epidemiological research, visual rehabilitation

For more information, please contact Micaela González, President of the SVOSH-UNLP chapter at micaelahuanguelen@gmail.com