

Promotion, prevention, and action in Bogota, Colombia

Humanitarian outreach by the SVOSH chapter at University Foundation of the Andean Area in Bogota

This report highlights the activities carried out by the Optometry Program of the University Foundation of the Andean Area in Bogota. The program promotes comprehensive eye health care through promotion and prevention strategies, as well as offering eye exams and visual screenings. These actions are aimed at the early detection of visual problems and eye pathologies, in order to reduce the risk of visual impairment and to improve the quality of life of the target population.

The activities are carried out during the Vision Care Days organized as follows:

1. Promotion and Prevention in Municipalities and Schools

During the community outreach days, our work was focused on:

- Visual health education: Talks and workshops aimed at the general population, school children, caregivers and teachers on healthy habits for vision care, eye hygiene, visual ergonomics, and early detection of warning signs.
- Delivery of educational material: Distribution of brochures, posters and illustrated guides with recommendations for eye care.
- Interactive workshops: With children and teenagers to promote visual self-care.



2. Visual Screenings

- Visual screening tests for children, teenagers and older adults to identify refractive errors, amblyopia, strabismus and other visual pathologies.

- A total of 244 screenings were carried out, equally distributed among municipalities, prioritizing rural areas and areas of difficult access.
- Referrals made for specialized optometric evaluation.



3. Full eye examinations

- Complete clinical optometry examinations were performed, which included prescription glasses offered thanks to an agreement with Charity vision.



- Total number of examinations performed:

-In municipalities: 824 patients

-In schools: 198 patients

-At the optometry program's vision clinic: 1,241 patients.

- The optometry's program vision clinic worked with the patients referred from the municipal days and urban dwellers assigned to the program.



Impact on the Community

The promotion, prevention, visual screenings and eye exams carried out by the Optometry Program in municipalities, schools and in the program's vision clinic, have generated a significant impact on the community, especially among vulnerable populations in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

Thanks to the promotion activities, it has been possible to increase the level of awareness about eye care, promote healthy habits and improve people's ability to identify early signs of visual diseases. The timely detection of visual issues has facilitated immediate referral to specialized services, helping to prevent the progression of eye diseases and reduce the risk of visual impairment. In addition, the strengthening of the educational component during the activities has enhanced the active participation of the community, teachers and caregivers, generating a culture of visual self-care.

The actions combined had a positive effect on the quality of life of the beneficiaries, reducing barriers to access and promoting equity in visual health.

Conclusions

Early detection and timely referral facilitated access to appropriate treatments. In addition, the educational activities implemented during the outreach clinics increased the population's knowledge about visual self-care and the importance of periodic check-ups, thus strengthening the prevention of visual impairment.

The program's commitment to health equity is demonstrated by the coverage of 31 municipalities of the area and in the program's vision clinic reaching communities with limited access to visual health services. These activities have generated a positive impact on the quality of life of users and have contributed to the strengthening of the primary care network in visual health.

Between February and May 2025, the statistics are:

Total number of patients seen: 2507

Patients in municipalities: 824

Patients in schools: 198

Patients in vision clinic: 1241

Patients in screenings: 244

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