

The Bambi Homes project in Bogotá (Colombia)



A family programme to promote better alimentary and health practices in daily life for small children and families.

This project supported by the Givaudan Foundation and taking place in Bogotá (Colombia) is conducted in partnership with the Bambi Homes Foundation, an NGO that supports children and families in situations of vulnerability, giving shelter to children and providing them with food, education and emotional support.

This project was initiated by Givaudan Colombia employees, so let's dive further into it through an interview of Diana, member of the Green Team Colombia, and one of

the volunteers helping to drive and coordinate the project.

Diana, tell us a bit more about this project with BAMBI Homes?

It is a Project that falls in the Family nutrition category of the Givaudan Foundation. It takes place at the Bambi Home of Bogotá that is part of a network of four such institutions in Colombia, the others being in Cali, Darién and Medellín. Bambi Homes were founded in 1985 to bring vital assistance to children in situations of physical and psychological distress and improve the socio-economic condition of parents, most often

single-parent families deprived of a regular source of income.

Givaudan employees come to the Bambi Home to hold workshops for parents of families in a state of vulnerability. These workshops aim to provide them with training in good nutritional, health and financial practices, all topics which we are familiar with through our work at Givaudan. In addition, we also sponsor a self-esteem workshop, a creative and fun workshop for children around personal hygiene; and finally we complement this with a basket of food and/or toiletries.

How did you get to know about BAMBI Homes and how did the project come to life?

The information about Bambi Homes came through our site manager, who mentioned it to the Green Team. We immediately liked the idea of helping people to recover a secure and healthy family environment, not only based on improving nutrition of small children, but also through a support to parents that would contribute to the strengthening of the whole family. The project is not just about giving a food basket but about transmitting knowledge and promoting personal growth through workshops. We felt this could be our little contribution and therefore we initiated contact with the Bambi foundation.



How many employees are involved in this project and what are your different roles?

Employees from different departments who want to transmit their knowledge participate in the project and each of them brings a specific expertise: for instance, those from Flavors applications (yogurt, candies making) and Fragrances (soaps making), those from shared services such as EHS (what to do when there are alarming symptoms with children and in case of accidents) and Human Resources (how to introduce yourself in a job interview). Other employees will also help in children's workshops and distribute the baskets.

In order to ensure a rotation of volunteers we have set up an Excel spreadsheet shared with all employees where they can sign up for the upcoming workshops. This allows giving everyone a chance to participate and at the same time it helps in sharing the workload.

How do you choose the topics that will be covered during each workshop?

At the beginning we met with the Bambi Foundation to understand the needs and see which topics we could cover. For the second year we had identified what topics the beneficiaries liked and also what we could teach based on the knowledge from within each of our departments.

The workshops for parent and children are prepared separately: we may cover the same topic, but the focus will change. For example we do a healthy nutrition workshop (healthy recipes) for parents; and on their side children learn about why it is important to eat fruits and vegetables, through a painting workshop for instance.

Tell us about a typical day where a Family Nutrition workshop is taking place?

We leave Givaudan offices at 7 am and arrive at 8 am at the Bambi Home. With the help of Bambi Home staff we organize the classrooms and we prepare the baskets that will be distributed at the end of the day's activities. We carry out the adult and children's workshops at the same time in separate rooms and with different facilitators. Once the workshop ends each

participant and child receives a snack and each family is given a card to claim a basket (toiletries or food). Parents line up and come to the Givaudan volunteers who exchange the baskets against the vouchers. It is a precious moment of interaction with the families for the volunteers that do not participate directly in the workshops.



Who are the project's beneficiaries?

The Project is aimed at families from a neighborhood in the southern part of Bogotá, a neighborhood of families with limited economic resources. Around 100 families have benefited from the project so far and we believe we can cover 60 new families each year.

We have conducted surveys at the end of the project's first year and the parents' comments were very positive. They said they had learned a number of things they did not know that help them in their family life and also in their business endeavours.

Why did you choose to apply for a grant with the Givaudan Foundation?

We requested the help of the Givaudan Foundation, because we felt we needed more resources in order to organize the workshops and finance the food or toiletries baskets.

We knew that the project was closely linked to the purpose of the foundation. In addition, it relies heavily on the participation of Givaudan employees who are the ones who prepare the workshops' topics, the workshops themselves and conduct them. With all these criteria being met we thought we should apply. And we did well!

What is the most challenging of this project?

The next challenge would be to expand the program to include not only the parents, but also the adolescent siblings who have and influence on the younger children and are not yet part of the program. It would also be good to replicate this initiative in other Bambi homes, since we believe

that at Givaudan we are very lucky to have a knowledge that is worth transmitting.



What is the most rewarding and motivates you to carry on with it?

When we finish each workshop, we leave pleased to see happy faces (parents and children), and know that we made a contribution towards a better world, of more values and better family ties. I believe that all of us who participate leave with a full heart, positive energy and hopes for a better world.

**GIVAUDAN GREEN
TEAM COLOMBIA**

September 2019