

TASKS

This position has a range of responsibilities and key tasks as follows:

Task
<p>Optical Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consultations and testing to communities in rural and remote locations • Provide optical consultations to residents of facilities run by in country hosts • Consult with the assistance of a translator and/or local partner • Record treatment data • Refer to specialised medical services where available and appropriate • Refer cataract patients to Equal Health ophthalmologists where available • Liaise with other health care team members providing optical opinion and advice where necessary and appropriate • Provide own equipment as outlined in pre departure information • Implement policy, as directed by the Team leader, to encourage community participation in aspects of the treatment process. This includes educating and training locals in appropriate skill sets that are sustainable in the absence of the Equal Health Team
<p>Community Involvement and Socialisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in excursions with residents and staff of partner organisations where planned • Socialise with residents and staff of partner organisations after clinical work where possible • Participate in entertainment skits where such activities are provided • Attend concerts, plays and ceremonies organised by in country hosts • Attend formal dinners, functions and ceremonies planned and attended by in country hosts
<p>Public Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in identifying general public health issues and solutions • Assist in implementing public health treatment such as de lousing and other duties under supervision of medical staff
<p>Team Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend compulsory de briefing sessions at the end of each day • Attend compulsory briefings held at the beginning of each day

Task
<p>Logistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the optical dispensers with recording of daily statistics • Assist with sorting and managing of optical stock • Assist in carrying optical bags and equipment on a daily basis • Set up work environment on a daily basis • Conduct final stock take and sorting of equipment • Assist all team members as reasonably directed by team leader
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete post evaluation questionnaire on the final day of camp • Attend compulsory final optical debriefing • Attend compulsory final team debriefing
<p>Other Duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other duties as directed by the Team Leader

Hours of Work

Volunteers work approximately 8 – 10 hour days. Due to the challenges of the working conditions, volunteers will have schedule work free days.

Position Accountability

Volunteers have a high degree of autonomy and are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and adhere to the Equal Health Code of Ethics. The position reports directly to the team leader.

Key Responsibilities

Volunteers work towards the achievement of Equal Health’s mission and objectives through the above range of tasks.

Working conditions

Each optical team consists of optometrists, optical dispensers and interpreters. The aid you provide will deliver eye examinations and new spectacles to the rural poor. On some of the days you will be working with the entire team at one of the bases and on other days rising early to leave for new remote village locations.

Each morning the group receives a briefing, confirming the day's activities.

Optical teams endeavour to complete eye testing on all of the residents of host organisations.

Each optical team is equipped with a ret bar, flippers, three and six metre illiterate eye charts and near cards in local language and picture format. Each team also has some tools for adjusting frames. Optometrists will need to bring their own an ophthalmoscope and retinoscope.

Local people are usually selected by the interpreter at the start of each working day to record visual acuities. This rarely produces an accurate assessment of the patients V.A.'s, however it slows the volley of people to the optometrists side.

All of the spectacles that are provided are new and fitted with matching pairs of spherical lenses made of hard coated CR39. The powers range from +/- 0.50 to +/- 12.00. You will see aphakic patients, some of whom don't have spectacles, and may never have had spectacles. It's common to deliver spectacles to aphakic people who haven't had a pair of spectacles for many years.

Optical teams administer lubricating drops to patients that are unable to be helped with spectacles. This is to gratify those that may have been waiting for several hours and assists with maintaining crowd control.

Up to 40 patients are transported to an eye hospital in Trichy during each camp for cataract surgery. Most will receive suture-less phaco emulsification surgery. Although the number of patients you see that would be suitable for cataract surgery is quite large, it is always difficult to convince them to have it done, mostly because of fear.

The pressure to accelerate the time you spend with each patient is brought on by the numbers in the waiting crowd. It becomes obvious that the only real benefit the team can be is to find the most appropriate spectacle prescription as quickly as possible. One optometrist may refract around 120 patients per day. Sadly you will provide the only opportunity that many of the people will ever have to own a pair of spectacles.