FOCUS OF THE YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAM AS AN AID TO HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY FRANCISCO OF PAULA SANTANDER OCAÑA

ISBELIA KARINA RINCON¹, SIR-ALEXCI SUAREZ² & ALBERT MIYER SUAREZ³

^{1,2} Engineering Faculty, University Francisco of Paula Santander Ocaña, Colombia

³ Faculty of Engineering and Architecture. University of Pamplona, Colombia

ABSTRACT

This research presents the analysis on the focus of the Youth in Action program, in order to know if students from the most vulnerable regions are as beneficiaries of the program, by reviewing if it corresponds to the social strata with less purchasing power, which is the priority of social prosperity. It relates the social stratum, the focused region and the academic program that the student is taking. The importance of the analysis is to know if the process is working according to the guidelines for which it was created or if attention is being paid to areas that are not focused and are within the margin of vulnerability.

KEYWORDS: Youth in Action, Benefiting Higher Education, Social Prosperity

Received: Nov 28, 2020; **Accepted:** Dec 18, 2020; **Published:** Dec 26, 2020; **Paper Id.:** IJMPERDDEC202062

1. INTRODUCTION

University entrance in South America is a constant problem due to the socioeconomic condition of the students, and the permanence in a university career depends largely on the help of the governments. And with the effect of the pandemic the effects are greater than could be predicted at the outset. One of the factors is the dropout due to the lack of quality education due to the implementation of virtual platforms, without being prepared for it [1]. Although some countries had already had models that allowed for semi-presential education, such as the University of Guadalajara [2], the conclusion was that distance education does not replace face-to-face education and the effect on education after the pandemic is over will be enormous [3]. Not only is it a problem for the students, but it also hits hard on the teachers, who are used to their classrooms and have little knowledge in the implementation of virtual subjects [4]. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has already published that before the pandemic, problems in Latin America were increasing due to poverty [5]. However, benefits have been found with the isolation of students, for example, academic performance has been increased, even improving the grades they obtained in a research conducted by the Autonomous University of Madrid in Spain [6].

Colombia has 32 departments, among them is the Department of Norte de Santander located in the east of the country, and has three public universities. In one of the zones of the armed conflict is located the University Francisco de Paula Santander Ocaña with more than 6000 students with very low economic strata, located in the stratum 1 and 2, the zones where they live in many occasions do not have an adequate internet service or electricity, in addition the students did not have computer equipment and plans that allowed a connection to the classes. The university implemented virtual classes through the Moodle platform and videoconferencing at Meet and Zoom, in order to mitigate isolation and prevent contagion, and the impact of the Youth in Action program was measured with 8.5% of students who had to leave the university [7], while the Generation E program granted by the government

allows each student to pay tuition, showing coverage of 66 to 78 percent [8].

One of the drawbacks of many students who finish high school, finding obstacles that are mainly due to socio-economic status, is that the government created the Youth in Action program [9], which helps young people in poverty and vulnerability conditions by providing four payments a year, two payments for permanence and two for academic performance and achievement. However, student dropouts continue or in some cases are not adequately targeted according to the area where each one lives. This process is carried out in most cases by consulting the Sisben, which collects socioeconomic information in all departments of the country [10].

This article presents research to measure the focus of the Youth in Action program which allows many students to continue their studies through the aid granted by the national government, and to know if they are reaching the right students according to their location.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Youth in Action pre-registration and registration process

The pre-registration process begins with an activity developed by the University where each student from all academic programs is summoned to receive training. The University has 12 academic programs and 4 faculties: Civil Engineering, Mechanics and Systems, Business Administration, Day and Night Accounting, Technology in Commercial and Financial Management, Day and Night Law, Social Communication, Animal Science and Environmental Engineering. The training is based on the explanation of how to enter the program, how to maintain it and when the intervention in the program ends. Afterwards, the pre-registration process begins by entering all the student's data in the platform, as long as he or she is reported in the Sisben database with a condition of poverty and vulnerability.

Registration is successful after all student data has been confirmed by Youth in Action, and the student remains in the beneficiary database to begin receiving financial aid. Figure 1 shows the process implemented by the government for each of the students.

Figure 1: Process of students in the program. Source: Youth in Action

2.2. Student Population

The country has 32 departments, and the university has a record that students come from 29 departments, as seen in Table 1 with a total of 3194 students benefiting from the program and 5,793 in total. In Table 2, the number of students per academic program can be seen.

Table 1: Number of students per department

Department	Number of students	Department	Number of students	Department	Number of students
Antioquia	11	Cordoba	6	Putumayo	5
Arauca	8	Cundinamarca	9	Quindio	1
Atlantico	52	Guainía	9	Risaralda	2
Bogotá	62	Huila	3	Santander	96
Bolivar	82	La guajira	13	Sucre	5
Bolivar	1	Magdalena	38	Tolima	3
Boyaca	3	Merida	1	Valley	3
Caldas	2	Meta	8	Vichada	1
Caquetá	1	Nariño	1	(Blank)	2
Cesar	881	Norte de Santander	1885		

Table 2: Number of students by academic program

Academic Program	Total students
Environmental Engineering	552
Civil Engineering	616
Mechanical Engineering	456
Systems Engineering	446
Daytime Public Accounting	568
Nightly Public Accounting	192
Daytime Law	858
Night Law	364
Social Communication	579
Zootechny	377
Technology Commercial and financial management	255
Business Administration	530

According to the records, the students are located within the municipalities that must be targeted to be beneficiaries of the Youth in Action program.

3. RESULTS

The University located in the department has several students who come from the rest of the country, of which 59% belong to the region, making it an almost national institution, so the real percentage of benefits do not remain in the region, adding to the focus of other departments in the country (see table 3).

Table 3: National focus

Department	Total
Antioquia	11
Arauca	8
Atlantic	52
Bogotá	62
Bolivar	82
Bolivar	1
Boyaca	3
Caldas	2
Caquetá	1
Cesar	881
Cordoba	6
Cundinamarca	9
Guainía	9
Huila	3
La guajira	13
Magdalena	38
Merida	1
Meta	8
Nariño	1
North of Santander	1885
Putumayo	5
Quindio	1
Risaralda	2
Santander	96
Sucre	5
Tolima	3
Valley	3
Vichada	1
(blank)	2
Total	3194

In table 4, it can be seen that the focus made by the program Youth in Action together with the University Francisco de Paula Santander Ocaña headquarters, has more than 50% in the stratum 1 with which it is reaching the most vulnerable students, maintaining an effectiveness in the whole process that makes.

Table 4: Number of Students in Stratum 1

Municipality of birth	Quantity
Unknown	5
Abrego	117
Bucarasica	1
Cachira	3
Chinacota	2
Convention	83
Cucuta	48
El carmen	40
El Tarra	19

Gramalote	1
Hacari	26
La esperanza	7
La playa	26
La Vega	1
Los Patios	1
Ocana	98
Ocaña	962
Pamplona	4
San Calixto	30
Sardinata	2
Teorama	39
Tibu	5
Villacaro	1
	1521

In table 5, the program's benefit for stratum 2 is still high, and it can be seen that in table 6, the benefits are lower for the higher strata.

Table 5: Number of Students in Stratum 2

Municipality of birth	Quantity
Unknown	1
Abrego	16
Convención	12
Cucuta	10
El Carmen	2
El Tarra	6
Hacari	3
La Esperanza	1
La Playa	6
Ocana	29
Ocaña	257
San Calixto	2
Teorama	2
	347

Table 6: Number of Students in Stratum 3

Municipality of birth	Quantity
Convencion	1
Cucuta	3
Ocaña	12
Santiago	1
	17

The importance of the focus of the program Youth in Action and the data of beneficiaries, demonstrate the good work of Social Prosperity and the process for the benefit to reach the neediest students.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Youth in Action program was created to help the most vulnerable students to continue their university studies. The purpose is for the beneficiary to be located or reside in one of the regions targeted by the program according to his/her socioeconomic status. That is why the analysis of the beneficiaries of the University Francisco de Paula Santander Ocaña, remains within the guidelines of social prosperity where more than 50% belong to the stratum 1, 2 and 3, being effective in attracting students who need the aid most.

REFERENCES

1. A. Cohen, "Analysis of student activity in web-supported courses as a tool for predicting dropout," *Educ. Technol. Res. Dev.*, vol. 65, pp. 1-20, Apr. 2017, doi: 10.1007/s11423-017-9524-3.
2. E. R. G. Barajas, J. M. R. Ariza, and D. G. P. Banda, "El difícil tránsito hacia la semipresencialidad en la Educación Superior: un ejemplo Iberoamericano," *Cuest. Pedagógicas Rev. Cienc. Educ. Cienc. Educ.*, no. 25, Art. no. 25, Jan. 2016, doi: 10.12795/CP.2016.i25.06.
3. D. González, "Educación superior en Latinoamérica en una economía post-COVID," *Rev. In Latin America. In Latin America*, Jul. 2020, doi: 10.14482/esal.8.378.8.
4. M. Flores and A. Swennen, "The COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on teacher education," *Eur. J. Teach. Educ.*, vol. 43, Sep. 2020, doi: 10.1080/02619768.2020.1824253.
5. CEPAL, *Education in the time of COVID-19*. CEPAL, 2020.
6. T. Gonzalez et al., "Influence of COVID-19 confinement on students' performance in higher education," *PLOS ONE*, vol. 15, no. 10, p. e0239490, Oct. 2020, doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0239490.
7. I. K. Rincon, S. A. Suarez, and A. M. Suarez, "Impact of the youth in Action Program on student desertion in times of Covid-19," *Rev. Espac.*, vol. 41, no. 42, 2020, [Online]. Available: <https://www.revistaespacios.com/a20v41n42/20414225.html>.
8. A. M. Suarez, I. K. Rincon, and S. A. Suarez, "Impact of the Generation E program on Higher during COVID-19," *Rev. Espac.*, vol. 41, no. 42, 2020, Accessed: Nov. 29, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.revistaespacios.com/a20v41n42/20414226.html>.
9. JEA, "Youth in Action - Conditioned Transfers of Social Prosperity," *Social Prosperity*. <https://prosperidadsocial.gov.co/sgpp/transferencias/jovenes-en-accion/> (accessed Nov. 29, 2020).
10. Ó. Fresneda Bautista, "Focusing on the subsidized health regime in Colombia," *Rev. Salud Pública*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 209-245, Dec. 2003.