

Visión y Compromiso™



21st Annual Conference Report

NOVEMBER 16-18, 2023

LOS ANGELES, CA



During November 16–18, 2023, Visión y Compromiso hosted its 21st annual conference “El cambio soy yo.” This one-of-a-kind conference was a three-day event attended by more than 700 promotoras, community health workers, leaders, and advocates from all over the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, Europe, and Asia. This event continues to expand its presence on a local as well as international level. We welcomed various native languages including Spanish, Cantonese, Russian, and Purepecha, amongst others. The conference engaged promotoras and community leaders who joined their peers in learning new information, expanding their skills, networking, and celebrating their work that is so important to local communities.

Visión y Compromiso’s conference continues to be the largest of its kind, bringing together a predominantly Spanish-speaking workforce who represent many community-based organizations as well as community clinics, hospitals, family resource centers, school districts, county health and behavioral health departments, housing organizations, volunteer promotores, and more.

CONFERENCE GOALS

1. Facilitate networking among promotores, community health workers, program directors, and others interested in their community work.
2. Share resources and best practices to increase the capacity of promotores and community health workers to serve their communities.
3. Advocate for the promotora model as a vehicle for community transformation and development.
4. Strengthen the national movement of promotores, community health workers and other community leaders.



We were delighted to host this distinct event in which our team of conference committee members worked behind the scenes to develop a conference theme, selected relevant workshop presenters and plenary speakers, and built a program agenda filled with activities and celebratory events which further developed the skills, knowledge, as well as relationships for all promotoras, community health workers and other attendees alike. The Conference Planning Committee included staff of Visión y Compromiso and was accompanied by promotoras, program directors and health care professionals from PALS for Health/ALAS Para tu Salud, SC CTSI, Los Angeles Education Partnership, FEAST, ELAWC, and promotores representing the Regional Comités in Visión y Compromiso's Network (Los Angeles, Madera, Orange County, San Bernardino/Riverside, San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego). Expert presenters and facilitators generously provided their time to ensure the exceptional outcome of this event.

Our conference could not have been a success without the efforts of the Visión y Compromiso staff. Together with this year's volunteers, our team provided technical assistance and ensured that each and every conference participant experienced top-notch service so that everyone could enjoy the event to its fullest.

OUR CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

As organizations increasingly incorporate the promotora and community health worker model into their initiatives, our conference simultaneously expands. 82% of our attendees enjoyed the conference in its entirety, attending the event for all three days of its duration. This allowed for guests to take advantage of different benefits and learning opportunities such as our networking event, 40 workshops and two plenaries. We also had a tremendous turnout of new participants: 112 guests

attended the conference for the very first time while others marked their 18th year of attendance. With this expansion we welcomed a larger amount of diversity at this year's event. A wide array of communities including Indigenous, Anglo-American, Black/African-American, Middle Eastern, Asian American, and Pacific Islander groups all joined us for this conference edition. In 2023, our conference participants originated from 18 countries, 17 U.S. states and 32 counties across California. Attendees spoke ten distinct languages including indigenous languages like Purepecha from Latin America. With 79% of respondents identifying as women, the female voice in the promotora movement continues to stand strong. It is also important to note the powerful surge in male representation, with a 15% identifying as men. A larger number of youth groups ranging from 13–24 was also in attendance. We were humbled by youth's commitment towards community transformation through training and education, advocacy, and being part of the Network of Promotoras. The virtual broadcasting of the largest convening of promotores in the U.S. and Latin America via Facebook provided an additional opportunity to increase our reach and engage multi-racial, multilingual and multi-ethnic promotores and community health workers from other countries and communities.



**“To listen to the stories of pioneering leaders.
Let’s unite because ‘¡El cambio soy yo!’”**

—PROMOTORA CONFERENCE ATTENDEE

THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

This year’s conference theme “El cambio soy yo” paid homage to the visionary leaders who came together with a united vision of collective change.

“El cambio soy yo” also honors the unwavering diligence of today’s network of promotoras who go beyond the title of “outreach workers” to improve the conditions of their community by providing vital resources, establishing connections, and linking people to local opportunities. This theme resonated with attendees of our conference where we celebrated promotoras as champions of change. We hosted two plenaries, more than 40 workshops, and guest speaker Jeffrey Reynoso, DrPH, MPH, the Region 9 Director for the Department of Health and Human Services. An overwhelming amount of enthusiasm was felt by sponsors, speakers, and exhibitors who participated and shared vital information throughout the three days.

During this year’s conference we had the pleasure of welcoming all of our participants to a new venue and location. This year, we hosted our annual conference at the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel and Conference Center located in Pomona, California. This convenient location allowed for our workshops and plenaries, sponsor/exhibition/mercadito area as well as a celebration hall to be located under one accessible space.



♥ RECOGNITION AND CELEBRATION

The Corazón Award honors individuals who have made significant contributions and consistently support the promotores movement. The award recognizes all of this year’s recipients and their exceptional qualities at both a personal and professional level. Assemblywoman Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Dr. Sergio Aguilar Gaxiola, MD, PhD, Dr. Michael Campos, PhD, Dr. Hector Flores, MD, Dr. Pooja C. Mittal, MD, Gema Perez, and Dr. Robert Ross, MD, were all honored at this year’s conference with this prestigious accolade which celebrates a commitment to servicio de corazón (service from the heart).

We also had the privilege of presenting two individuals with the “María Luisa Limon Legacy Award.” Named after the late promotora María Luisa Limon whose passionate work in the promotora movement built bridges needed to move the promotora movement forward, the award honored promotores Laura Hernandez and Adolfo Martinez whose perseverance and commitment helped to create una vida digna y sana for their communities.





♥ ENGAGING AND INFORMATIVE WORKSHOPS

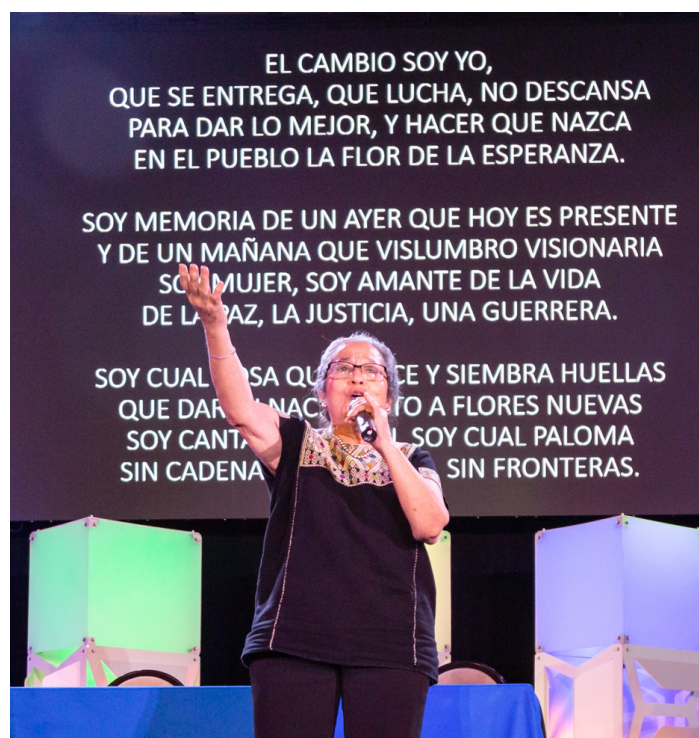
Together with our Programs Committee, Visión y Compromiso curated an array of different workshops for this year's event. We tackled topics ranging from professional skills and environmental health to financial literacy and advocacy efforts to address the needs of vulnerable communities, among others. Thanks to the participation of more than 50 expert speakers, we were able to dive into aspects of physical, emotional and environmental health. In tailoring our workshops, we prioritized relevancy, skills, and knowledge vital for the powerful workforce that is the promotora movement. We also collaborated with many promotoras, community health workers, and other healthcare professionals to incorporate their insight when planning our agenda.

These ideas were brought to and considered by a subcommittee composed of dedicated program directors and promotores. Selected workshops were designed to build participants' skills as local community resources and increase their knowledge about best practices. Workshops were organized into five learning tracks related to individual, family, and community needs across the lifespan including: advocacy, workforce development, environmental health, mental health, physical health, and research. An interactive conference program design provided participants with information about the workshops in Spanish and English. Our conference is designed for promotores and community health workers; however,

because more administrators attend the conference each year, we also include workshops to increase the capacity of program managers, directors, and supervisors to integrate the promotora model into their work.

"I feel seen through the shared stories of other promotoras."

—PROMOTORA CONFERENCE ATTENDEE



♥ THOUGHTFUL PLENARIES

Our first plenary session, “The Past, Present and Future of the Promotora as an Agent of Change” highlighted the incredible trajectory promotoras have been on to make history as catalysts for social change. Through the stories of two promotoras from different backgrounds and different journeys, our attendees connected to how they each have become sources of inspiration for so many that have joined this movement as committed promotores. Most importantly, we connected to how their work has taken them to become change makers advocating for day laborers, braceros, and the rights of immigrants in the United States. Rosa Martha Zarate and Patricia Rizo have led by example and continue their commitment to those they serve. The purpose of sharing their stories was to demonstrate that advocacy is inherent in the work promotores do if we are seeking true change. Our participation is critical to ensure our voices are integrated into social change movements.

Our second plenary, “Building New Pathways Toward Economic Self-Sufficiency for Promotores” was energized by the presentation of Dr. Jeffrey Reynoso, Health and Human Services Region 9 Director. He spoke about initiatives to invest in promotoras and community health workers to sustain their key role of connecting community members to information, resources and civic participation.



We continued with stimulating presentations from key leaders in workforce development speaking about a variety of options for promotores to consider in their journey to become self-sufficient. We had the generous presence of California Labor Commissioner, Lilia Garcia-Brower who spoke about the labor rights of all workers and the resources available to them. Saul Ramos, Co-Executive Director of SOMOS Mayfair in the Bay Area who shared their work in the creation of collectives that support community members to share their talents and services and how this model works effectively in the immigrant communities they serve. Visión y Compromiso's Associate Director of Programs, Melinda Cordero-Barzaga contributed to the presentation by highlighting current issues the mostly women promotora workforce faces on their path towards more sustainable employment. And finally, we heard stories of three promotoras/ community leaders who discussed their lived experience as independent contractors, business owners, and their pursuit to become self-sufficient. A call to action was made to explore pathways to address the various circumstances promotoras face to become financially independent.

Visión y Compromiso will continue to advance key priorities that will uplift the invaluable contributions promotoras make in the lives of the communities they serve and connect the inequities that exist for this workforce by sharing facts and providing recommendations for the change needed.

Visión y Compromiso's 21st Annual Conference would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our sponsors.

We are grateful for your support.

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NEXT STEPS

Following this year's conference, the team at Visión y Compromiso reflected on our victories and ways that we can continue to enhance the event experience for all of our participants. With amplified efforts to increase the voice of promotora and community health workers, we saw many new faces at our conference that are actively integrating the promotora model. Thanks to social media and word of mouth, promotoras spread the word about our rejuvenating and educational conference that is planned, organized, and implemented by and for promotores, helping connect them to a network of people who, just like themselves, are dedicated to the well-being of the communities they serve. It is an honor to witness the expansion of a movement started by a small group of community advocates which today, has become one of the largest, nationwide networks of *luchadores* that passionately fight for their families, neighbors, and community as a whole. Although the work continues, this conference has given us a sense of optimism for the future and the ways that we can make an impact through the efforts of promotoras and community health workers. We proudly support these leaders as they fight to eliminate health disparities and create a sustainable future with community well-being as a key priority.



CLOSING

¡Lo hicimos! We were overjoyed to be in the presence of so many promotores and community health workers who left the conference feeling engaged and motivated. Collectively we hold the power to create the needed change in our communities which will increase access to mental, physical, and social resources. *¡El cambio fueron ellos! ¡El cambio somos nosotros! ¡El cambio soy yo!* Thank you for joining us this year to learn, grow, and celebrate the increasing network of promotores who continue their fight towards *una vida digna y sana* (a healthy and dignified life).

**We look forward to next year's conference
which will be held in-person from
October 3–5, 2024, in Los Angeles, California.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our websites at visionycompromiso.org
and vyconference.org