

Field Report: HEALTH OUTREACH

*A report written by Project Leader Ramzi Haddad and Timothy Lee
February 28, 2020*

“Guatemala 2020 – Rio Dulce”

Health Outreach

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“ **Guatemala 2020** ”, follows a successful project in this past February when 26 Canadian volunteers cared for **1346 patients primarily children** over two weeks .Once again Health Outreach participated in a joint program with the University of Toronto, working with the Faculty of Dentistry to place 4th year students in their [International Student Outreach Program](#). Two senior students travelled with experienced Health Outreach volunteers for a week-long immersion into the world of outreach dentistry.

Health Outreach also carried out a medical program concurrently with the dental program. Up to four nurses travelled to remote villages to provide medicine and care to those living in remote villages.

The two communities chosen by Health Outreach were **San Gabriel and the Rio Dulce** region of Guatemala.

G2020 OBJECTIVES

- . 1) Provide Dental Emergency services in general for children 18 years old or younger;
- . 2) Service the communities surrounding San Gabriel, Esquintla and the Rio Dulce region, Guatemala, seeing as many children as possible;
- . 3) Carry out a Preventative Program including dental sealants and fluoride for 18 years old or younger;
- . 4) Leadership Training for Health Outreach Projects;
- . 5) Continue medical Needs Assessment in the. Rio Dulce region

“Guatemala 2020 Rio Dulce”

- **Partner** (Joint Venture Participant) Week #2: **Asociación Ak ‘ Tenamit**

An indigenous community development organization that promotes long term solutions to poverty through education, health care, income generation, and cultural programs. The Ak' Tenamit community has a boarding school that supports 523 students from 100 villages, including 224 girls; a 24 hour medical clinic that serves more than 25,000 people; a floating dental care boat; a restaurant for vocational training and several women's cooperatives.

- **Founder Asociación Ak' Tenamit:** Steve Dudenhoefer

- Website: www.aktenamit.org
- Email: duden@aktenamit.org , duden1@me.com
- Phone: 22541560, 22543346
- Cell: 56056991, 54601535

Association Ak' Tenamit staff and executive:
Graciela Coy, President Ak' Tenamit

Maria Bolom Nurse

Juan Shol :Operations Manager

Miguel Rax :has over 10 years training as a dental technician

Martin Coc: Health Promoter;

Rene Maquin :Captain of boat

Ezequiel Pop Figueroa: Captain of boat

Contacts

Mr. Real Desrosiers Country Director, Health Outreach

Isela Vega ,Representative Adventure Travel Center

Team Rio Dulce

Fourteen Canadian and American team members formed “Guatemala 2019 Rio Dulce”, in the second week of “Guatemala 2018”. They continued the project from San Gabriel, who had a successful week at a new medical clinic in San Gabriel. All Team Rio Dulce volunteers met at Atlanta in a stopover before arriving at Guatemala City airport on February 10th. All volunteers carried on them an official letter with volunteer names, cargo contents, and medicine endorsed by the Guatemalan Consulate in Canada. Prior to Health Outreach’s arrival, our partner Ak’Tenamit announced our upcoming visit to communities and sent us an itinerary.

OPERATIONS

Day 1 (Friday Feb. 1)

On this trip there were a few changes to previous trips:

1) The departure was on Friday instead of a Saturday. The advantage was that there would be more leisure time at the beginning of the trip, and more time instead of the usual rush to travel to Rio Dulce. There is also more time to connect with both team 1 and team 2. However, the disadvantage is that it is another day off work for most people.

2) The flight was (on Aeromexico), through Mexico on this trip instead of the usual USA route. The advantages were that it was a cheaper flight, it was a later departure (at 9:00 a.m. instead of 6:00 a.m.) and there would be no check in and check out at the connecting terminal. However, it turned out that even through Mexico we still had to check out and check in, except for the luggage, which was checked in to Guatemala direct, which was still better than going through USA.

We arrived in Guatemala late afternoon. There were no lost items and the exit was smooth. Health Outreach volunteers from both teams met in Antigua at Hotel de Posada Don Rodrigo.

The evening was a free night for the all volunteers. Most felt tired and went to bed early.

Day 2 (Saturday Feb. 2nd)

Some debriefing occurred early in the morning with a transfer of information between volunteers and Team Leaders, in regards to their primary and secondary duties. The Project Leaders, Ramzi Haddad and Dan Lee met and reviewed issues such as money, inventory, and equipment needs.

Dan Lee reported that there was no major breakdown in equipment and there was no need to take anything back to Toronto.

It was a free day for the volunteers where everyone did some kind of shopping.

In the evening there was a dinner at the Hotel de Posada Don Rodrigo where both teams attended. There were speeches from the president Pravir, from Tim Lee and both team leaders.

Dan Lee was honored for his 10-year participation with Health Outreach. A slide show was shown and Pravir gave a presentation.

Day 3 (Sunday Feb. 3rd)

At 6:00 two vehicles from Adventure Travel arrived at the hotel, one vehicle was a Van driven by Carlos. The equipment for Team Rio Dulce was already packed in a van. That van had traveled to San Gabriel to pick up the dental equipment after the first team was finished. Equipment was then stored on overnight. As a result, this equipment didn't need to be reloaded for Week 2.

All the members had breakfast at the hotel at 5:30AM. Breakfast

was included in the room rate. Personal luggage was loaded on a passenger van driven by Carlos at about 6:00 a.m. The vehicle left at 6:15 a.m. Before we left Vicki had labeled all the personal luggage with an orange ribbon so we can we

The road to Rio Dulce town was not so good. There were many small delays on the way but about halfway there was a big accident that kept us at a standstill and delayed us for one and a half hours. We made one more stop to do some grocery shopping. Dragana purchased refreshments for the team since Rio Dulce offers very few opportunities to stock up on refreshments. Ramzi reviewed primary and secondary duties with each volunteer on the way.

We arrived at Rio Dulce town at about 1:30 PM. The dock for the transfer was at Brunos Marina, where we had lunch at the restaurant. There were two boats waiting for us. One boat was loaded with clinic equipment and the other for personal luggage only. The labelling of the personal luggage was very helpful as it made loading the boats much quicker. Loading was very efficient with the help of Ak'Tenamit staff and all the volunteers. Lunch was ordered from the bus prior to loading the boats so that we could maximize our time.

We were dropped off at the cabins to prepare our beds mosquito nets and luggage. The dental boat was parked at Ak'Tenamit site 2 ready. So we walked over to the site and prepared the boat and a set up under the covered area close to the boat stop.

There was an Official Meeting #3 held by Ramzi after dinner at Cafe Tatin. HO team members were introduced to Ak'Tenamit management and staff. The planned itinerary was discussed.

Day 3 (Monday Feb. 4th) Ak'Tenamit Site#2

In the morning the team walked from the cabins to the restaurant Café Tatin. Breakfast was served at 7:00 and we finished at 7:30. Then we headed to the boat where we had prepared everything. The boat was packed by Miguel the night before. We set up two restorative clinics on the boat, one surgical chair on the deck, a triage chair and two restorative clinics on the island where there was a covered up roofed area. The teams were as follows:

1. Triage: Ramzi and Miranda with Rolando assisting in the translation and completing the forms.
2. Boat Clinic: Gerard and Tracy; Alex and Vicki; a chair on the deck with no assistant, for extractions only.

3. Yvonne was at the sterilization station and managed to deal with all the demand. Miguel was assisting in that area too.
 4. Sandra working with Dragana as a restorative hygienist and Lucie assisting under the covered area, outside the boat.
- We had Rolando and Onofre as translators.

80 students were seen, 39 extractions and 196 restorations were performed. The set up worked out great. There were new children at the school and we saw everybody that came in that day. There were some older children 19 and 20 years old. They were in the same group so they were not turned away. A lot of these students were screened by Miguel before we came and were advised to come in for treatment

We had lunch at Café Tatin which was ordered the night before. We finished at about 4:00 and we walked back to the cabins. We had to wait for the boat to pick us up for dinner. The boat then arrived, and we were picked up at 6:30 and took us to Finca Tatin where we had dinner.

Day 4 (Tuesday Feb. 5th) Ak'Tenamit Site #2

We had breakfast at café Tatin at 7:00 am and then we headed to Ak'Tenamit site 2. We kept up the same set up as the day before three on the boat and three on land.

1. Triage: Ramzi and Miranda and Rolando assisting in the translation and completing the forms.
2. Boat Clinic: Gerard and Tracy; Alex and Vicki; Chair on the deck with no assistant, for extractions only.
3. Yvonne was at the sterilization station and Miguel was assisting in that area too.
4. Sandra working with Dragana as a restorative hygienist and Lucie assisting under the covered area, outside the boat.

We had Rolando and Onofre as translators.

The set up pretty fast, as we kept the same set up. There were too many patients and we couldn't see all because of the time limit. We therefor limited the treatment to students under 18 years of age. This meant we had to turn away some patients based on age.

We had lunch at 1:00 at Cafe Tatin again, where food was

ordered the night before.

We saw 86 patients 24 extractions and 178 procedures were performed which included 4 root canal treatment (hence the lower number of procedures, but higher number of patients from the previous day) We finished at 4:30. We went back to the cabins to change. The boat picked us up at 6:30 and took us to the El Viajero restaurant for dinner.

Day 5 (Wednesday Feb.6th) Lampara

Lampara is an area where we can service three villages. We had breakfast at Café Tatin at 7:00a.m. and were on the boat and on our way to Lampara.

Once we arrived at the site, Miguel had already removed the equipment from the boat and set up the generator and the compressor at the right distance from the clinic site.

The area was not flat and slightly muddy, which was challenging to find the right spot for to set up the other clinics. However the area was found and covered up with tarp by our helpers from Ak'temait.

Again the same set up was arranged:

1. Triage: Ramzi and Miranda and Rolando assisting in the translation and completing the forms.
2. Boat Clinic: Gerard and Tracy; Alex and Vicki; Chair on the deck with no assistant, for extractions only.
3. Yvonne was at the sterilization station and Miguel was assisting in that area too.
4. Sandra working with Dragana as a restorative hygienist and Lucie assisting under the covered area, outside the boat.

We had Rolando and Onofre as translators.

All the patients were seen in the morning and we had a good flow of people coming from Lampara village. Lunch was in the form of sandwiches brought from Café Tatin in the morning. In the afternoon very few people came even though Miguel had given them notice that we will be there!!!! We still managed to see 75 patients with 98 extractions and 53 restorations, and 1 RCT performed.

We finished at 3:30 as all the children, and a few adults had been seen. Since we finished early, we headed to the hot springs and we had a swim there. We also met up with Nasha and Tim who came

back from their overnight mission. We all had dinner there too.

Day 6 (Thursday Feb.7th) Lampara

We had breakfast at Café Tatin dining area, took the lunch sandwiches with us and then headed to the same place exactly and arranged the same set up as the day before. Three on the boat and three on land. The weather this day was a little cooler than the day before. Tim managed to be with us for the day. The set up was exactly the same :

1. Triage: Ramzi and Miranda with Rolando assisting in the translation and completing the forms.
2. Boat Clinic: Gerard and Tracy; Alex and Vicki; a chair on the deck with no assistant, for extractions only.
3. Yvonne was at the sterilization station and managed to deal with all the demand. Miguel was assisting in that area too.
4. Sandra working with Dragana as a restorative hygienist and Lucie assisting under the covered area, outside the boat.

We had Rolando and Onofre as translators.

Again in the morning it was steady and we saw all the patients that came from the other village by noontime. There was a lull at that time and to prevent a repeat from the previous day Tim and Onofre went to the village of Lampara and persuaded some more people to come by. That filled our afternoon and we worked steady until 3:30.

We got back to the cabins and got ready. The boat came early at 5:00 and took us to Buga Mamma for dinner.

Day 7 (Friday Feb. 8th) El Cedro

We had breakfast at 6:30 as this was a new area for us and we wanted to get there early. At breakfast the project leader gave out responsibilities for each member to pack and do an itinerary for their packing, to make it more efficient. We left at 7:00 and the ride very foggy but very scenic. The area was ideal for a set up outside the boat. There was a covered deck that was large enough to set up two restorative chairs and two triage chairs. The set up therefore was quick and efficient. The patients started coming in from the village at 8:00

We worked at a rapid pace, as we had until 11:45 to complete our

work. There were many patients but also there were many people who were there but refused treatment. (For the future a session of education to that village would be helpful in bringing in more patients)

We packed all equipment on the boat and followed the assigned responsibilities. This made it quick and efficient. Some disposable items were left on the boat, and gifts were left for the children along with toothpaste, toothbrushes, and dental floss. Many disposable items with an expiration date were left and given to Miguel. There were two boats waiting for us. We packed the boat with the transfer cargo, which was going to the hotel with us. And we hopped onto the other boat to get back to the cabins. This was done very quickly and efficiently.

We had decided the night before to have lunch first and have the presentations before going to the cabins. So, we had lunch at Café Tatin and took some time to thank those Ak'Tenamit colleagues who were instrumental in preparing for our project as well as those who helped us with the project. Health Outreach volunteers were called upon one by one and thanked for their participation. The director of Ak'Tenamit also presented us with certificates and with the use of translators thanked every member of our team.

So we completed the presentations, and then went to the cabins where we packed and then boarded our boat. The cargo was packed from the dental boat before so the two boats were ready to go. We departed from the cabins at Rio Dulce to the hotel Nana Juana. Because we were efficient in the packing, and the speed of getting ready after the presentations we arrived early we had time to relax and have some leisure time at the hotel. The bus for the cargo arrived just before dinner and Tim had arranged with the hotel for helpers to pack the bus. so we had little to do with the packing.

Day 8 (Saturday Feb.9th)

We woke up early packed the van, and left at 5:00 a.m. with personal effects, and departed for Guatemala City. We stopped 2.5 hours into the trip to break at a restaurant for half an hour for breakfast since we thought we had plenty of time. There was a lot of traffic and had quite a lot of delays. This left us with 1 hour and 15 minutes to check in. However, it did go smoothly, and we boarded

the plane on time. In Mexico where we connected. Unfortunately two volunteers did not make the connecting flight back to Toronto. One volunteer misplaced his Immigration paper and could not board the plane. The other volunteer was delayed getting through customs, by misplacing a document, and was too late to board. PL Ramzi was also detained at customs because apparently someone with his name was on a list of high risk individuals.

DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

I CLINICS: DESCRIPTION

CLINICS :The clinics on the Dental Boat was similar to previous years which served our team well.

We were short of dental assistants this year as we had four operating dentists, two assistants, one hygienist, and three restorative hygienists. Some hygienists Vickie and Lucie had to work as dental assistants. Ramzi had to work on triage but trained Miranda on the first day. So between Ramzi and Miranda triage was well covered.

This way the boat allowed 3 operatories, one chair without assistants. There were two triage station. 2 chairs close to each other for restorative work so they can share the one restorative tote. Sandra worked with a Dragana a restorative hygienist and Lucie as an assistant (a Hygienist working as an assistant)

This arrangement worked very well in all sites.

ELECTRICITY: As last year, a Yamaha Ef7200e generator was once again borrowed from the Ak'Tenamit Buga Mama restaurant to run our equipment. This generator served all of our power needs.. we had no breakdown of generators or compressors.

5 ADEC units: Our gas-powered compressor had 2 pressure outlets.

One for the boat and one for the land clinics. All in all, the equipment functioned quite well.

COMPRESSORS:The Ak'Tenamit generator and compressor and our compressor were adequate for running five ADEC units. There was

another large black compressor as back up.that was not used.

HOSE AND CABLING: The set up varied for all five days. The hoses performed well. The set up was restricted primarily by the length of pressure hose from the boat to the compressor on land. This hose determined how far the boat could be moored from land. The electrical cables functioned well.

The set up included one main hose over water to the boat splitting off to three other shorter hoses. Another main hose goes from the compressor to the two land clinics. That compressor served the purpose very well.

STERILIZATION: The boat workhorse sterilizer served flawlessly for the week. The extra Prestige sterilizer was also used. The use of two sterilizers made it adequate to service all chairs. There was enough demineralized water for the week. One sterilizer was not working before the project was repaired in time by Juan. It failed on the last day despite us changing the seal.

I(ii) CLINICS: ANALYSIS

CLINICS: The number of patients booked for the teams on each day was very good. The first two days servicing Ak'Tenamit kept us very busy and steady. Working at Lampara was challenging because of lack of patients. On each of the five days we were able to see all the children booked for us. We also saw some older patients when we were finished with the under 18.

There were different challenges at each location at each site:

Monday Feb. 04: Ak'tenamit 2

This site is the most familiar site we worked on. Outside the boat, we worked under a covered area close to the taxi boat stop. The area was roofed and relatively clean to work on. Even though they were far from the boat this was not an issue in any way. We have tried different areas in the past, but this was the best area. I would recommend this for the future. The children are very well behaved, and the teachers kept them very organized. Working was efficient and we saw all the children that were scheduled to be treated.

Tuesday, Feb. 05: Ak'Tenamit 2

This was the same set up as the previous day so there were no issues whatsoever. There were too many patients and we had to turn some away mainly over 18 years of age, even though they were students at Ak'Tenamit.

Wednesday, Feb. 06: Lampara day1

This site was very small. The area for the boat is tight and the area outside the boat is rough, with an uneven surface, and small. This was a bit of a struggle to set up. It is also open to the sun. Even the tarp did not provide full coverage as the shaded area was changing throughout the day.

The area was supposed to service three villages. However, in reality only Lampara provided most of the patients we saw. The other two villages were not serviced well. Either because of the travel distance or because of lack of education and information. The patient flow was good in the morning but in the afternoon it was slow.

Thursday, Feb. 07: Lampara day2

It was convenient to use the same site as the day before as the set up was quick and easy. The same challenges with patient flow as the day before. The patient flow was sparse in the morning, so Tim decided to walk up and speak at the school in Lamara or Creek Maya. Miguel suggested going to Lampara since it was much larger community. Tim, Miguel and Onofrie walked 45 minutes and spoke to the teachers and students. Within 45 minutes, 3 lists of students were provided to Tim and students began walking to the shore. The reluctance apparently was because the students were uncertain and nervous. Miguel had indeed promoted the project in the prior weeks.

Friday, Feb. 08 – El Cedro

This site was probably the best site we worked on!. Outside the boat, the area was spacious, stable, roofed and relatively clean to work on. However it seems that this was a popular stop for other volunteer groups. There were three boats that came in but could not moor. However it was not detrimental to their needs. Working was efficient and we saw all the children that were scheduled to be treated. Even though this was half a day we managed to see quite a few patients because of the set up. At the end we saw some adults

The day went very smoothly. The decision to have lunch first and then go back to the cabins was great as it saved a lot of time.

Dental Equipment and Supplies

All the equipment worked well and served us well. One Adec unit was not working well and had to be taken back to Toronto.

The supplies were adequate, We had some shortage of supplies with bonding agents. Otherwise adequate.

There were two compressors not used at all, including the spare gas-powered compressor and the black Ak'Tenamit compressor.

II PATIENT POPULATION: DESCRIPTION

The patient population was appropriate on this project. There was a good mix of children including children under ten years of age. The two consecutive days we set up at Ak'Tenamit Site 2, was a very useful plan, as it saves up time and effort in setting up and packing up. Here there were a lot of older students(18 -20) from the school classrooms.

The dentists were booked up every day. Very few patients had to be turned down because of time restraints.

II(ii) Patient Population: ANALYSIS

Approximately over 90% of the patients seen were under age 18. This was a same percentage as in the past.

Ak'Tenamit provided us with the most steady number of patients and in a very organized fashion. Having two consecutive days was very helpful.

At Lampara the flow was very sporadic and unpredictable. It was frustrating as we are not very well informed on the status of the patient flow. Although these villages were informed there was no follow up on the attendance of people. If there are ways to improve this, we would be much more effective

III COMMUNICATION: DESCRIPTION/ ANALYSIS

Our own phones were used, which was the better way than previous years where we were using local phones.

IV TRANSLATION: DESCRIPTION/ ANALYSIS

Rolando, Onofre and Martin were all helpful in helping as

translators. Onofre was invaluable at completing the medical questionnaires. Having Alex, a member of our team speak Spanish is invaluable as it was helpful in communication with all the children especially the nervous ones.

V ACCOMMODATION: DESCRIPTION/ ANALYSIS

Hotel Posada Don Rodrigo. This hotel was on the weekend when both teams were in Antigua. The general consensus was that the location, the facility and the comfort were excellent.

The Ak'Tenamit cabins were adequate. They are too small when there are 4 in the cabin. However most volunteers did not seem to mind and mosquito nets were provided. The lighting was solar making it available all the time. There was security at the cabins most of the time, provided by some boys who took shifts during the week.

Hotel Nana Juana, Rio Dulce – there was enough time this year to enjoy the facility and the swimming pool and have some downtime. At check in on the Friday, the hotel staff helped carry most HO equipment from the boats to the truck sent by Adventure Travel. Timing was good and the truck arrived soon after our check in, so we managed to load the truck early on. There had been an improvement in the rooms and the service since the year before.

VI FOOD/BEVERAGES: DESCRIPTION/ANALYSIS

Filtered water was available all of the time, but the nurse commented that the water might not be tolerated well by our volunteers because we were not used to it. Lunches were very good as described by volunteers. The Ak'Tenamit staff did a good job in preparing our lunches and in giving them to us on all days. Beverages were consistently available, and all were well hydrated.

VII BUDGET: DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS

The expenses were tallied and noted by the PL on the return trip to Guatemala City. The fuel costs were less than was budgeted, and there enough to spare. Juan gave us an exchange rate of 7 Quetzals per USD. It would have been good to have Quetzals in the some of the envelopes, as all we had was American dollars. The cabins were given to us for free this year, which was a great help.

VIII CARGO: DESCRIPTION/ANALYSIS

At Rio Dulce the dental items were packed in a separate boat, which left immediately after being loaded. This allowed the items to be unloaded by Guillermo's team. The personal items were packed on the passenger boat. Since the personal was separated from the dental, the passenger boat didn't seem too overloaded. Putting the orange ribbons on the personal luggage was very helpful in identifying them easily, on the way there and back.

IX ILLNESS: DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS

There were no incidents of illness this year.

X STAFFING

We were short staffed on the assisting team this year. There were four dentists and four hygienists . There was no room for dental education team this year. However, we managed to do well as Miranda a restorative hygienist with LA certificate was able to manage triage. The use of Dragana as a restorative hygienist was a good replacement for an operating dentist

XI TIMING: DESCRIPTION

It generally took some time to set up at each site and get patients into the operatories. The set-up speed improved after each day. Patient flow was very good.

The following is a description of the final day's events:

Restaurant for breakfast at 7 AM Clinic finished at 11:45 and went for lunch right away 12:30. The awards and the speeches were given. Boat departure and Cabin arrival at 1:30. Volunteers ready at 2:00 and Boat Departure for Rio Dulce/ Nana Juana hotel Final check of HO equipment at Site 1 dock: 2:30. A lot of free time.

XII FLIGHTS: DESCRIPTION

The departure flight from Toronto was uneventful. We had checked in as a group and paid for extra luggage before check in.

Baggage fees were C\$62 for the extra each which is a little less than last year.

There were no lost bags in Guatemala, and the check out was very smooth and relatively quick.

The flight back through Mexico was a little troublesome. Ramzi was held up because of a name check. Just made it on time for

takeoff. Gerard and Yvonne were not checked in and were not allowed to board the plane. They were delayed and put on the next redeye flight home to Toronto. The delay was because of a slip that had to be kept after custom that had to be shown at the gate. Gerard and Yvonne misplaced these slips! This was a lot of trouble and this must be stressed to all at the next project. However all got on board and got safely home even if late.

RECOMMENDATIONS: SUMMARY

Items brought back to Canada:

Medical Kit, 1 ADEC Unit, Duffle bags, handpieces

(Refer to Inventory of Mechanical Equipment for Health Outreach Feb. 14, 2020)

To Be Considered for G2021 :

Emphasis of the importance of safeguarding Immigration forms when transferring in Mexico

Official Whatsup chat group

Cerro Blanco being a beneficiary community with a team going to the village or the shoreline.

Equipment and Sundry Needs:

New luggage

Organize luggage according to color code.

Less surgical instruments.

More protected and organized packing.

Second working sterilizer