



## Ecuador, 2019



*The Healing Hands Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to providing medical, dental, and surgical care to people in need around the world.*

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## The Foundation

The Healing Hands Foundation (THHF) is a non-profit organization founded in 2007 that provides medical services to children and adults around the world. The THHF mission is to provide high quality surgical care to children and adults with complex congenital malformations in areas lacking resources and expertise. The highly skilled medical staff of THHF has decades of combined experience, and its doctors and nurses have practiced medicine in countries around the world, including Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala, Panama, Dominican Republic, Laos and Sierra Leone. THHF is proud to have the ability to further its mission, due in part to their amazing volunteers, which now includes a core group who are committed to yearly missions in Ecuador and Guatemala



Latacunga, Ecuador Volunteers 2019

## Latacunga Medical Mission Summary

In June 2019, The Healing Hands Foundation (THHF) visited Latacunga, Ecuador to provide surgical and medical care for people in the central highlands. Patients traveled several hours to receive care at the Hospital General Latacunga in Latacunga. During the 3 days of service, the medical team triaged 99 patients and performed 41 procedures on 25 patients ranging in age from 2 months to 52 years. The most common surgeries performed included cleft lip repairs, scar revisions, syndactyly repairs and ear deformation repairs.



### Medical Volunteers

Twenty-three THHF volunteers traveled from five states for the 2019 Latacunga mission. Working with staff at the Hospital General Latacunga, and local volunteers, the THHF team was able to provide pre-op, anesthesia, surgical, post-op, and non-medical support services to patients across the area.

Members of the THHF medical team have practiced medicine on missions around the world. Many of the talented team members participate annually in THHF missions, often in both Ecuador and Guatemala. 75% of THHF volunteers return to participate in more than one mission.

*Table 1: Medical Volunteers*

<b>Volunteer Role</b>	<b>Number of Volunteers</b>	<b>Volunteer Role</b>	<b>Number of Volunteers</b>
Plastic Surgeon	2	CRNA	2
Pediatrician	1	OR Nurse	4
Physician Assistant	1	Nurse Assistant	4
PACU Nurse	3	Executive Director	1
Scrub Tech	2	Other Volunteers	3

## Picture of Health in Ecuador

Ecuador has a comprehensive national health system that provides medical care to all residents regardless of income. It's estimated that the Ministry of Public Health provides healthcare services to 30% of the Ecuadorian population. However, even with this system in place, Ecuador still has shortages in staff, medicine and hospital equipment to adequately treat all members of their population<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, health status varies dramatically by geographic region, social and economic status where “indigenous, low-income, and rural households are particularly limited in their ability to access healthcare services” leading to continued healthcare disparities throughout the country<sup>2</sup>. By providing quality medical care to at-risk populations in rural areas, the Healing Hands foundation can heal the world, one child at a time.



Given the importance of ranching and agriculture to the economy, it is not surprising that approximately 43% of Ecuador's population resides in these underserved rural areas. As Latacunga is a plateau town sitting at the confluence of two rivers, it serves as an important agricultural hub for the areas that surround it. It is also home to large populations of Mestizo and indigenous peoples. The realities of poverty, lack of access to clean water and inadequate sanitation systems are prevalent in the rural and indigenous communities within and surrounding Latacunga.

## Providing Quality Care

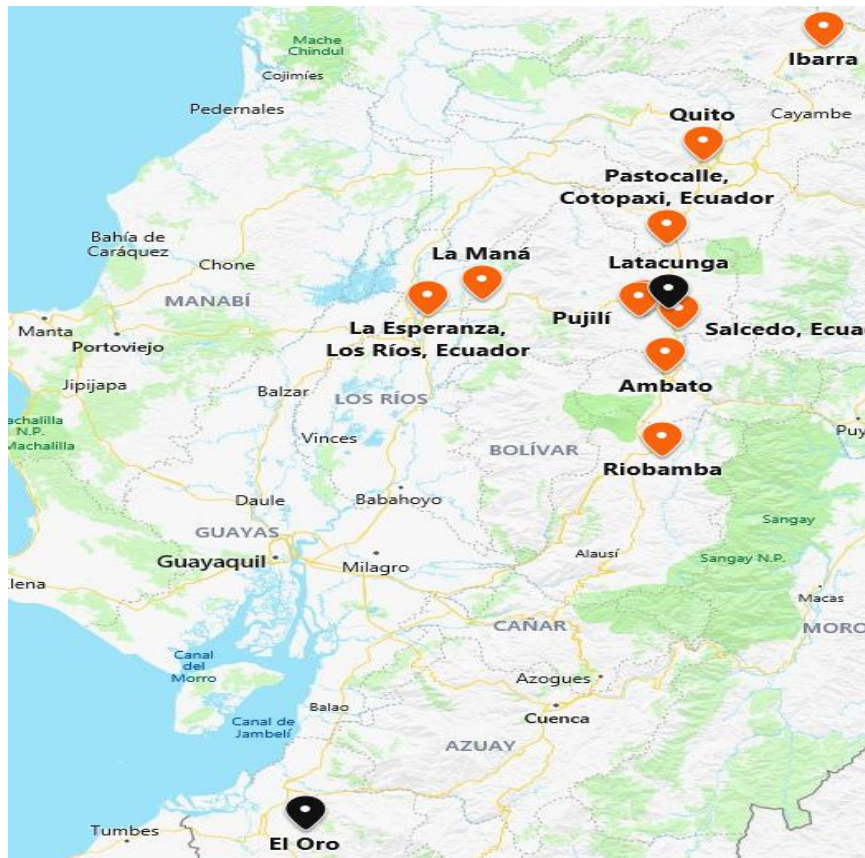
Patients traveled across Ecuador to seek care from THHF volunteers. Although many of the patients served during this trip resided in Latacunga, or in neighboring cities, 40% of patients seen traveled an hour or more to receive care. The average travel time to receive care was 1.95 hours and one patient traveled 6 hours from La Esperanza and one patient traveled 10 hours from Provincia El Oro. The modes of transportation used to get to the hospital included cars, buses, and taxis.

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<sup>1</sup> Pacific Prime. (2019). *Healthcare in Ecuador*. Retrieved from <https://www.pacificprime.com/country/americas/ecuador-health-insurance-pacific-prime-international/>

<sup>2</sup> Lopez-Cevallos, D. and Chunhuei, C. (2012). *Inequity in Health Care Utilization in Ecuador: An Analysis of Current Issues and Potential Solutions*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3287454/>

## *Map of Patient Travel Locations*



*Table 2: Patient Travel Statistics*

<b>City</b>	<b>Number of Patients</b>	<b>Duration of Travel</b>
Ambato	2	40 minutes – 1 hour
Ibarra	1	5 hours
La Mana	5	2.5 hours – 4 hours
Latacunga	5	10 minutes – 20 minutes
Pastocalle	2	45 minutes
Pujilí	3	40 minutes
Quito	1	1.5 hours
RioBamba	2	2.5 hours
Salcedo	1	30 minutes
San Juan	1	30 minutes
La Esperanza	1	6 hours
Provincia el Oro	1	10 hours
<b>Average Travel Time</b>		<b>1.95 hours</b>

*Table 3: Patient travel Times*

Travel Time	Number of Patients
1 hour or less	14
1-5 hours	9
6 hours	1
10 hours	1
Total # of Patients	25



During the Latacunga mission, 99 patients were triaged the day prior to the surgery days. Of the 99 patients triaged, 27 patients were selected for surgery. 1 patient did not show up for their scheduled surgery and 1 patient had a medical event that prevented her from receiving treatment at that time. There were 41 surgeries performed on 25 patients in 2 days. 11 patients received surgeries on the first day and 14 the second day. Skin grafts and Z-Plasty accounted for over 36% of the procedures.

Of the 25 patients that received surgeries, 20 patients (80%) were 18 years or younger, and 5 patients were 19 years or older. The youngest patient treated was 2 months old while the oldest patient treated was 52 years old. 17 of the patients were male and 8 were female. The THHF medical team feels privileged to have met and provided care to the 2019 Latacunga Mission patients.



*Table 4: Patient Age Breakdown*

Patient Age	Number of Patients
2 years or younger	4
3 - 10 years	9
11 - 20 years	7
21 - 30 years	2
31 - 40 years	2
41 -55 years	1
Total Patients	25

Table 5: Type and Number of Surgeries

Type of Surgery	Count
Cleft Lip	5
Ear Implant	1
Ear Repair	4
Excise Burn Scar	1
Eyelid Repair	2
Frenulum Release	1
Hand Contractile Release	1
Hand Repair	3
Lip Revision	1
Nose Revision	3
Rhinoplasty	1
Scar Contracture Excision	1
Scar Revision	2
Skin Graft	8
Z-Plasty	7
<b>Total Procedures</b>	<b>41</b>

## Volunteer Experiences

*“I was very excited to learn that I was chosen to participate in the Healing Hands 2019 Ecuador trip. Little did I realize what a lifechanging experience it would prove to be. I almost feel guilty that as a volunteer, I feel as though I receive more in return than what I gave. I watched surgeons and their staff work tirelessly for over 12 hours a day, taking small breaks for food and water. While I do not speak Spanish, I learned that the language of love has no restrictions and I felt it. It was loud and strong and palpable. While listening to those giving their thanks, although I didn’t understand the language, I somehow knew exactly what they were saying. I saw families and communities giving thanks in every way they possibly could. They showered us with homemade gifts, music, food, dance, beautiful shawls, ponchos and scarves. They allowed us to see a glimpse of their culture and it was beautiful. If I could go back next month, I would do it all over again in a second. I will never forget my experience and sincerely hope to be able to join another Healing Hands group in the future.”*

*“To see the amazing volunteers do amazing things for people in need was very special and priceless. I am very lucky to be a part of this team and be able to contribute to the success of the 2019 medical mission in Latacunga, Ecuador. I am looking forward to returning to Ecuador in the near future. Thank you THHF for all you do for people in need.”*



## Acknowledgements

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