

Guatemala mission reaches remote destinations, treats over 1,000 patients



Guatemala 2020 was a two-week project servicing San Gabriel and remote villages in the Rio Dulce region of Guatemala during February of last year. ICD Canadian Fellows worked in partnership with [Health Outreach](#), a Canada-based international health organization.

San Gabriel, a village located in the Escuintla region, is composed of many single mothers that have been victims of abandonment or domestic abuse. Many in this underserved community salvage from the local landfill as a means to survive. A field dental clinic was set up central to this location in San Gabriel for the week, providing many in need with dental treatment.

The project also served the Rio Dulce region, which is home to indigenous Mayan children. Living conditions in this area are poor; access to medical and dental care is difficult due to high costs, far commuting distances and no road system in place. The team traveled to new locations daily by houseboat, which was converted to a floating dental clinic. A field dental clinic was set up near the boat at each location to treat the children onshore before packing up at the end of each day to move to the next site.

Guatemala is a very poor country with more than half of the population below the national poverty line; many live in extreme poverty. After two full weeks, 1,346 patients, primarily children, were seen in nine villages and approximately \$400,000 worth of dental services were provided. The mission was funded in part by a grant from ICD Section II Canada's [William J. Spence ICD Memorial Foundation](#), which supported travel and supplies for the a patient-treating team.