



FOUNDATION
FOR INTEGRATED
EDUCATION AND
DEVELOPMENT
YACHANA

CLINICAL ROTATION PROGRAM IN THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON

YACHANA AND THE MONDAÑA MEDICAL CLINIC

At the Yachana Foundation, we are dedicated to finding solutions in the struggle between the ideals of rainforest preservation and the realities of life in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Improving the standard of healthcare in the Ecuadorian Amazon is one of our principal goals.

In 1995, Yachana (then FUNEDSIN) and Amanecer Campesino¹ established the Mondaña Medical Clinic. It's the only full-time, fully staffed medical facility in the remote Upper Napo River Region of the Ecuadorian Amazon. The Clinic serves 10,000 people living in 35 impoverished communities that are accessible only by canoe.

To effectively provide healthcare to communities spread across a wide geographic area marked by difficult terrain, we have developed an extensive community-based healthcare network comprised of community health promoters (CHPs), a two-way radio system, and fully equipped medical outposts.

In addition to providing 24-hour attention on-site, medical personnel from the Ecuadorian Ministry of Health and volunteer program participants regularly travel to each of the 35 communities. Scheduled community visits are an integral part of the Clinic's effort to systematically provide medical checkups and administer prenatal care, vaccines, and nutritional supplements to the people of the rainforest.

In 2005, Yachana officially handed the title to the Mondaña Clinic over to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Health in an effort to guarantee long-term sustainability to the Clinic, and to ensure that sufficient medical supplies and staff will be provided to meet the healthcare needs of the local people. The Clinic is now known as the 'Sub-Centro de Salud' and is maintained fully by the Ministry of Health.

AREA OF INFLUENCE AND BENEFICIARIES

The Clinic is located in Mondaña, a small community on the Napo River between Misahualli and Coca. The Clinic serves Mondaña and 34 other rural communities located along the Napo River. These communities are accessible only by motorized canoe and foot. Some of the communities are located several hours up

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¹ Amanecer Campesino is an organization which FUNEDSIN helped to form in conjunction with the construction of the Clinic, and represents 35 communities located along the Upper Napo River. Amanecer Campesino has recently shifted their activities in the region from providing training in healthcare to providing technical assistance to local farmers on improved methods of raising cacao, café and corn. They do not participate in the activities of the Sub-Centro de Salud.

and down river from the Clinic and half a day's walk from the riverbank.

The area has a tropical climate and biogeography characterized by equatorial rainforest and incredible biodiversity typical of the vast Amazon basin.

Approximately 10,000 people benefit from the Mondaña Clinic and Yachana's other healthcare activities. Seventy percent of the beneficiaries are Amazon Kichwa indigenous and 30% are colonists of Spanish or mestizo heritage.

A DIRE NEED FOR HEALTHCARE

A study carried out by the World Bank, UNICEF, and the Ecuadorian Ministry of Public Health ranks the Napo Province among the last of Ecuador's 22 provinces in terms of health, education, and poverty. This study focused primarily on urban areas. The rural area we serve is considerably worse off.

In the rural areas of the Napo Province:

- The infant mortality rate is 70 per 1,000 live births.²
- The maternal mortality rate is between 120 and 140 per 100,000 births.³
- There is no potable water or electricity in any communities.
- More than 95% of the inhabitants suffer from intestinal parasites.
- One in four children under the age of five suffer life-threatening diarrhea every two weeks.⁴
- Only 32.9 percent of children receive all necessary immunizations (diphtheria, measles, polio, tetanus, and tuberculosis) before they reach the age of one.⁵
- Just 24% of babies are born in hospitals and clinics and another 15% in the presence of health professionals working in the field.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Our Clinical Rotation Program is designed to provide public health and clinical experience to enrolled medical, nursing, and public health students, as well as practicing healthcare professionals. Program participants participate in community-based public healthcare activities run by the Mondaña Clinic in the local community, in addition to regular medical interventions to small communities, most of which are indigenous, located in the vicinity of the Clinic. Medical volunteers also spend a good amount of time working with the attending doctors in the Clinic itself.

In addition to rotations at the Mondaña Clinic, we can help coordinate an urban rotation at the Hospital San Jose Obrero, a public hospital in Quito that serves the city's marginalized populations. Many volunteers choose to complement their work at the rainforest clinic with a rotation at the city hospital. The experiences are very different. The clinic was constructed as part of a community-based healthcare program and the hospital is a stand-alone institution that treats patients as they come in. Both experiences are worthwhile.

² Centro de Estudios de Población y Desarrollo Social, Ecuador (CEPAR) 1998.

³ The maternal mortality rate in the Napo Province is 107.3 per 100,000 births. And though there is no official data, medical professionals working in rural areas of the province estimate that the number is between 120 and 140.

⁴ 2000 Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Materna e Infantil (ENDEMAIN III), Centro de Estudios de Población y Desarrollo Social, Ecuador and Center for Disease Control and Prevention, United States.

⁵ 2000 Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Materna e Infantil (ENDEMAIN III).

Please clearly indicate in your email and cover letter which program you are interested in, or if you would like to participate in a combination of the two.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Mondaña Clinic runs a community-based medical program. During your rotation, you will participate in community interventions almost every day. The interventions require our medical team to travel to rainforest communities located along the Napo River. The goals of community interventions vary, but typically they involve the administration of vaccinations, oral rehydration therapy, and micro-nutrient supplements, as well as health education and medical examinations of school children. During your rotation you may also be asked to collect information about one or more of the communities and the health problems that they face. This data helps us serve the area better. On weekends and possibly on some weekdays, you will attend patients at the Clinic in the presence of a supervising doctor. You will likely see routine ailments as well as the more infrequent emergencies resulting from snakebites, complicated pregnancies, and/or traumatic injuries.

If you choose to volunteer at San Jose Obrero, you will have the chance to accompany a family practitioner on her morning rounds, work with at-risk youth and elderly patients interned at the hospital, and, in the case of participants that have clinical experience, attend patients under the supervision of an attending physician. Students will work at the hospital in the mornings Monday through Friday, with the option of continuing their rotation through the weekend. They will have the afternoons off to study Spanish or enjoy Quito and its surroundings.

STUDY SPANISH

Many volunteers choose to study Spanish while they are volunteering at the Clinic or the Hospital San Jose Obrero. Yachana's volunteer coordinator will assist you in making arrangements in advance.

TIME OFF & FREE TIME ACTIVITIES

Because of the remote location of the Field Station, our personnel do not work a typical work week, but rather they work for 21 days and have 7 days off. Long-term volunteers (those who volunteer for several months) typically follow this schedule while short-term volunteers usually do not. Each volunteer should work this out with the volunteer field coordinator when he or she arrives at the Field Station.

Studying Spanish is just one of numerous activities you may enjoy during your free time while you are at the Clinic. You may also play volleyball or soccer, swim in the Napo River, hike in the rainforest, go bird watching, learn to weave baskets, relax in a hammock, etc.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Yachana's Clinical Rotation Program is open to enrolled medical, nursing, and public health students, as well as practicing healthcare professionals. Volunteers must be in at least their **third year** of school. Applicants in their first or second year will not be accepted.

Program participants must be proficient in Spanish. This means that they speak conversational level Spanish well enough to communicate with the Clinic staff and patients. The staff at the Clinic does not speak English and at least half of the patients speak Spanish as a second language, Kichwa being their native tongue.

Applicants should be in good health and must provide for their own health insurance coverage. Applicants should refer to the center for communicable diseases for recommendations regarding vaccinations and prophylactic medications.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

All applicants are asked to fill out Yachana’s Clinical Rotation Application. Completed applications should be e-mailed to volunteer@yachana.org.ec.

Upon acceptance, applicants must pay a \$50.00 processing fee. Charging a processing fee is how we pay the administrative costs associated with running the Clinical Rotation Program. Once you have received a letter of acceptance, you have the option to pay your program fee (see prices below) prior or upon your arrival in Ecuador. The daily fees are used to pay for room and board, materials and staff time dedicated to the Volunteer Program.

The flight to Coca and canoe transportation to Yachana Lodge cost \$136 round trip. You are not required to use this service though we do recommend it.

SCHEDULING

The Clinical Rotation Program operates year-round, and applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Please apply at least six weeks before your desired start date. If your program includes time at the Mondaña Clinic between June and November, the most popular months, apply early in the year to secure a slot. To ensure that you get the most out of your time, our programs at the Mondaña Clinic and Hospital San Jose Obrero accept only three participants at a time, and vacancies tend to fill up quickly.

The Mondaña Clinic and the Hospital San Jose Obrero are in operation 7 days per week throughout each month. We have found that volunteers who stay for the minimum 14-days are just getting comfortable when they have to leave.

ORIENTATION

All of our medical volunteers must go to our Quito office prior to traveling to the Mondaña Clinic or before they begin their rotation at San Jose Obrero.

The following fees are charged per night for each participant in the program:

Volunteer Contribution

Week	Price Per Night
Less than 28 nights	USD 42.50
More than 28 nights	USD 35.50

While in Mondaña, the program fee covers:

- A single bed in our volunteer bunk-housing (Casa Quest);
- Three meals a day in the staff dining room. Box lunches will be provided on all day trips. On overnight trips, you will eat in the host community;
- Yachana Lodge activities. You may participate in activities scheduled by Yachana Lodge. This will help you understand the integrated nature of Yachana's projects. These activities may include hikes in the primary rainforest, visits to project sites, a cleansing ceremony with a medicine man or shaman, lectures about the flora and fauna of the Amazon Basin, and much more;
- Supervision by the Clinic's medical staff;
- Rubber boots for sizes up to size 12 US and life jackets for use during your rotation;
- Program coordination and assistance.

If you are participating in a rotation at Hospital San Jose Obrero, please note that the hospital runs a volunteer operation entirely separate from Yachana (we assist in the application stage and with initial coordination of volunteers), and that the hospital's fee is around \$20 per diem (this is subject to change and volunteers need to check in with the hospital's volunteer program coordinator when they arrive in Quito). This fee covers:

- Housing either with an Ecuadorian family (based upon the family's availability to receive guests) or in a dormitory room at the hospital;
- Breakfast and dinner at the family's house (in the case of a homestay). It may be more convenient for you to eat lunch out, but if you don't want to, staff can arrange for you to eat with the family;
- Supervision by the Hospital's staff.

This fee does not cover:

- International airfares;
- Airport transfers;
- Transportation in Ecuador, except for canoe transportation from Agua Santa or Los Ríos to Mondaña if you choose to travel to the Clinic using public transportation;
- Medical insurance;
- Independent travel;
- Food and lodging before or after the rotation.

PAYMENT

The application-processing fee may be paid online using PayPal. This fee must be paid before we will review your application.

The program fee must be paid before volunteers begin their volunteer program. Payment can be made from the volunteer's home country or upon their arrival in Ecuador, and some volunteers choose to pay a 50% retainer of their program fee in advance in order to secure their slot. Acceptable forms of payment include wire transfer, travelers cheque, credit card (visa or mastercard), or cash. The *entire* cost of the program, including transportation, must be paid before you may begin your program.

Cash payment must be made in US dollars because local banks will not exchange many foreign currencies.

Contact your Volunteer Coordinator with any questions.

CANCELLATION

If you leave prior to your scheduled departure for reasons other than emergencies, we will refund 50% of the cost of the remaining time. If you leave because of a verifiable emergency, we will refund 80% of the cost of the remaining time. You agree to this arrangement by signing your application.

TERMINATION

Yachana may terminate a volunteer's rotation at its discretion. For example, Yachana may terminate a volunteer's stay if it deems that the volunteer's presence is disrupting the proper functioning of the Field Station or Hospital San Jose Obrero. In the event that Yachana chooses to prematurely terminate a volunteer's work experience, it will refund 100% of the cost of the volunteer's remaining time. In other words, payment for the time he or she has already stayed and the application-processing fee are not refunded.

TRANSPORTATION TO THE FIELD STATION

We offer transportation to and from Yachana Lodge. The trip takes approximately four hours in total: a 30 minute flight from Quito to Coca, a town located on the banks of the Napo River, and two and a half to three hours by canoe from Coca to the community of Mondaña. The flight/canoe transportation costs \$136 round trip.

If for some reason you cannot or do not want to use this service, you may travel to Yachana Lodge on a public bus. The trip takes approximately eight hours from Quito and costs \$10 - \$15 each way. You must first travel 5 hours from Quito to Tena, a small jungle city and capital of the Napo Province. From Tena you take another bus to the community of Los Ríos located on the banks of the Napo River. A canoe will pick you up in Los Ríos free of charge. It's a 20-minute canoe ride from Los Ríos to the lodge.

Our staff can assist you in making these travel arrangements in advance.

Please indicate clearly if you would like to purchase a one-way or round-trip ticket between Quito and Coca, as flight reservations are difficult to change once they have been made.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Since Yachana is a full-service tour operator, we can arrange for airport transfers upon request. We recommend this option for late night arrivals. For \$20 a professional driver will pick you up at the airport in Quito and take you to the hotel of your choice. On the website of one of our other agencies, you will find a list of recommended hotels (<http://quito-hotel.com.ec>). For your convenience, bookings can be made online.

PACKING LIST

Mondaña

Lightweight quick-drying clothes, at least one long-sleeved loose fitting shirt (long-sleeved button ups are recommended), loose-fitting pants (no jeans), a light sweater (it gets surprisingly chilly in the rainforest, especially on boat trips), bathing suit, a wide brimmed hat, poncho that fits over you and your pack (the cheap plastic knee-length type coats are better than Gore-Tex, which will soak right through in a real rainforest deluge), bandana, lots of socks, Teva-like sandals or sneakers for around camp (we provide rubber boots), insect repellent, sun block, a good book(s), flashlight, extra batteries, camera, film, walkman and music, prescription and/or uncommon medications (the clinic has most common medications), binoculars (invaluable in the rainforest - it's worth spending a bit of extra money to get a good pair; 8 x 40 are excellent for poor light conditions under the forest canopy), deck of playing cards, and your favorite snacks.

Medical supplies: scrubs (more than one pair is recommended), stethoscope, otoscope (only if you have one), examination gloves, penlight, hand sanitizer, alcohol wipes, needle-stick medication, small first-aid kit, and "treats" for kids (balloons, stickers, lollipops, etc., are useful during the vaccination campaign).

For overnight trips, you should also bring a sleeping sheet, **mosquito net**, water bag, and water purification tablets.

Quito

Days in Quito can be warm and nights are usually cool. You should pack clothing that is appropriate for spring and early autumn weather. You should also pack a raincoat. During the rainy season, from late October through May, it typically rains several times a week.

PREPARING FOR YOUR ROTATION

You should brush up on your Spanish in the weeks or months preceding your rotation. You should also familiarize yourself with the most common medical problems seen at the Mondaña Clinic. These are:

- Parasites and treatment of parasitosis
- Diarrheal illnesses and dehydration
- Respiratory infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Prenatal care
- Snakebites (anticoagulant toxins)

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Many of the cultures and traditions that you will find while volunteering at the Clinic will be very different than your own. We ask that you approach your volunteer experience with an open mind and that you not be too quick to judge. Your time at the Clinic will offer you an amazing learning opportunity, both professionally and culturally. Don't pass it up!

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Many students ask about research projects. We are open to research projects but our medical staff must approve them prior to your arrival in Ecuador. If you are interested in conducting your own research while at the Clinic, please submit a detailed description of the research you would like to conduct. Our staff will assist you, but please note that such assistance is secondary to their primary function, which is to serve the people of the rainforest. Also, please be aware that the only means of travel in the region is by canoe and it is very expensive! If your project requires canoe travel outside of that programmed by the Clinic staff, we will ask you to pay for it.

COMMUNICATION AT THE CLINIC

There is 24-hour phone communication between the Clinic and Yachana's Quito office. There is also a phone available at the lodge, which is available at a charge for incoming and out-going calls. Cell phone service is available in certain locations around the lodge property and Mondaña community where the clinic is located.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

We can arrange tours and assist you with any additional travel you want to do in Ecuador, including trips to the Galapagos Islands. The cost of independent travel is not included in the program fees.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Yachana and our education, conservation and sustainable development activities, please visit our websites: <http://yachana.org.ec>, <http://yachana.edu.ec> and <http://yachana.com>.

CONTACT US

Please contact us with any questions or concerns you have during the application process or prior to the start of your program.

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