

Final report NPH Parramos, Guatemala



Team Elenbaas, 01-06-2025 – 20-06-2025

Introduction

In June 2025, we went to Parramos, Guatemala to provide dental care at the NPH home. Our team consisted of Leslie Elenbaas (Dentist), Jeske Smedema (Dental Hygienist) and Josephine Timmermans & Jade Pot (both dental students in their final year of ACTA).

Preparations

Before departure, many things had to be arranged. Most important was to collect enough dental supplies for the treatments we were going to perform. Therefore, we send many e-mails to dental clinics, dental depots and to the University of Dentistry (ACTA). Many replied with great enthusiasm and willing to help. Below you can find a list of participating clinics and depots. Furthermore, we read the report from the previous team, which helped us a lot. Additionally, we asked our family and friends to donate money. We posted everything on social media to raise awareness for our project. Fortunately, the hard work paid off. Before departure we had managed to collect almost €2855,00 in donations and in addition 2 suitcases of 30 kg with dental materials.

After many hours of preparation, it was finally time to take off. Jeske & Leslie left for Guatemala City from Amsterdam on the 30th of May and Josephine and Jade departed from Chili on the same day. We met each other in Guatemala City, where Annie (the visitor coordinator of NPH and our point of contact/translator during our stay) came to pick us up and brought us to Antigua where we would spend the first weekend.

The NPH home

On Sunday, June first, we were picked up at our hostel in Antigua. After 30 minutes of driving, we arrived at the NPH home in Parramos. During our 3 weeks stay, we would spend the weekdays at our private(!) house on the grounds of NPH. The house

was well equipped and when the weather was good, we had an amazing view on the surrounding hills. We all had a private sleeping- and bathroom. The house had a big kitchen and a sitting area. The first few days we were accompanied by a lady from the Netherlands who had been working for NPH for a long time. That was really nice because she provided us with a lot of information and insights about NPH before the start of our project.

The next day we were given a tour of the NPH grounds by Annie & Tio Santiago. NPH provides children at social risk and in extreme poverty a comprehensive education in a healthy and safe environment. Were very impressed by all the facilities and the warm and sincere welcome from all the other staff members and volunteers. We were shown all the different houses where the children live, the different schools and even the daycare centre they have. Parents in the nearby areas can bring their children to the daycare centre for a very small amount of money, so that they can go to work. Besides all the buildings, NPH has a large area where they grow their own vegetables and a smaller garden where the kids plant and grow avocado trees. There is a chapel where they have a mass once a month and a communal kitchen that provides food for the children and all the staff members and volunteers. The tour ended at the medical clinic. In addition to the physiotherapist, occupational therapist and a general practitioner, the dental practice is also located here.

Once we arrived at the dental clinic, we were pleasantly surprised by how many dental materials were already available and how well the dental clinic was equipped. There is a dental chair with a dental unit, a sterilization unit, a curing blue polymerization light, a working computer and even a dental X-ray unit. There were also a lot of other materials, left by previous teams. However, we were glad we brought our own supplies, because not only wouldn't we have had enough, in this way were also able to add new materials to the clinics existing inventory. For a more detailed list of materials we brought, and materials already present in the clinic, please refer to the attached document 'Material List'.



Working Method

Finally, on Monday the 2nd of June our work was about to begin. Since we were going to stay 3 weeks, we were able to see a lot of children. Each week followed the same structure, with a different group of children. On Monday we would perform check-ups.

Any treatments following these check-ups were scheduled within the same week, on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday (we did not work on Fridays).

On the first day, we had to find our rhythm a little, but we quickly established a good division of roles. Two of us carried out the check-ups, one at the main chair and the other at the foldable chair. One person handled the assisting tasks, and another scheduled the follow-up appointments with the children. We took turns performing the different tasks throughout the day. Each child received an appointment card with the date and time they were expected for their follow-up appointment. For our own administration, we kept a paper schedule in which we wrote down when each child would return, what treatment they would receive, and how long the appointment would take. This system worked surprisingly well.

During our first week, we saw the children who attend school here (both those who live on site and children from the surrounding area). We were amazed at how neatly most of these came back for their appointments. Everyone was on time, and although some were a bit nervous, they all cooperated well and left the clinic with a smile. We were able to complete nearly all the planned treatments.

In the second week, we saw children from the Family Centre, and in the third week, we saw children from the One Family Project. Because most of these children came from areas further away, a lot didn't show up on time or didn't show up at all. Things were a little more disorganized that week, but after some adjustments we were still able to treat a lot of them.

For future teams, it might be helpful to check in advance where the children are coming from and whether it's difficult for them to get to the NPH grounds in terms of transport. It might be advisable to use the foldable chair for the check-ups on the day those are planned and immediately do the necessary treatments in the other chair.

Ages ranged from 3 to 21 years old. The total amount of check-ups and treatments we performed is made visible in the table below.

| Treatments | Amount |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Check-ups | 145 |
| Restorations | 186 |
| Anaesthetics | 122 |
| Endodontic treatment/pulpotomie | 9 |
| Dental Cleaning | 32 (children) |
| Extractions | 40 |
| Sealents | 360 |



Staff

During our working days we had a lot of help from Kimberly. She is the dental assistant here in the clinic. She helped us with finding all the materials, with the cleaning and sterilization process and she was extremely kind and patient to us and the kids when they were scared. The same goes for Luiz. He is a dental student in Guatemala and was here to help us with everything we could possibly need. He had a very calm and warm energy and was incredibly kind to the children. He made them feel at ease and helped translate the treatments when needed. He also co-taught the brushing lessons at school three times together with Jeske. On our first day Daniela (dentist) was also present. She works twice a month at NPH throughout the year.



Challenges:

Although we tried to read all the given information and asked as many questions as possible to the residential dentist before departure, it is always difficult to make a proper estimation of which materials to bring and which materials are already available at the clinic. Therefore, we took a bit more supplies than needed in the end. However, most of them can be used by the next teams that will come. And this ultimately led to a thorough inventory of what is and isn't available in the clinic, and what would be better to order locally, to avoid high transport and purchase costs in the future (see attached document).

Furthermore, the fact that none of us was fluent in Spanish made it difficult at times to communicate everything with the children. Especially comforting words and explanation of certain treatments. However, we had a lot of help from Kimberly, Luiz and of course Annie (who was our point of contact throughout our entire stay). But we also tried our very best to improve our Spanish as much as possible during our stay.

Due to the limited time we had here, it wasn't possible to organize familiarization sessions for the youngest children. That's why we sometimes treated them right away or chose to slightly adjust the treatment when they were very young or scared.

The day before we left to only airroter available stopped working, so that was a big challenge. However, we found a way to adapt to the situation and realized we were very lucky that this only happened on the last day.

Word of thanks

We would like to thank all the people from NPH mentioned above for their support and help during our stay. In addition, we would like to thank Tio Jorge and Tio Daniel for driving us to our trip destinations during the weekends, Tia Alba for her calm energy and making sure we had everything we needed during our stay; all the staff from the restaurant who took care of all the amazing meals we had and last but certainly not least: Annie. She has been our number one help here at NPH. Even in the weekends when we were travelling, she kept checking in on how we were doing. We felt welcome and supported and we are honoured to be off help here.



From the Wereld Ouders organization we would like to thank Margreet for linking us together, providing us with all the information and help us with the set-up of the project. With your help we were able to have an amazing first experience.

Furthermore, we would like to thank our friends and family for the donations. Thanks to the significant amount of money we raised, we were able to buy materials for the project and even donate the rest to the NPH center to be used for education and other facilities.

Finally we would like to thank all the sponsors that helped us with supplies: the DIHN, Henry Shein, Hofmeester, Dental Clinics, ACTA, Septodont, DMG, Tandartspraktijk Diemen Zuid, Tandarts Groot Batravé and Tandstad.

Thank you for the great experience,

Kind regards,

Jade Pot, Josephine Timmermans, Jeske Smedema and Leslie Elenbaas