

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT TRIP

TENA ITINERARY



Dear MEDLIFERs,

Thank you for joining the MEDLIFE Movement via a Service Learning Trip with us! Here at MEDLIFE, our mission is to build a worldwide Movement empowering low-income individuals in their fight for equal access to healthcare, education, and a safe home. As an SLT participant in Tena, Ecuador, you are joining that worldwide Movement!

The following is a sample travel plan for you to review. Please go over it before your trip and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. Thank you for joining the Movement, and we can't wait to see you in Tena!

Overview:

This Community Empowerment Trip takes place in **Tena**, a vibrant urban center in Ecuador's Amazon rainforest. As the main economic and governmental hub for surrounding Indigenous communities, Tena plays a crucial role in the region. However, isolation and limited infrastructure continue to restrict access to essential services like healthcare, education, and safe housing. Many families in nearby communities depend on traditional practices and local resources due to ongoing service gaps.

Additionally, the region faces serious environmental threats from large-scale industrial extraction in the Amazon. These activities have led to widespread ecological damage and health complications, including higher rates of cancer and skin diseases among local populations. During your trip, you'll work alongside MEDLIFE staff, visit partner communities, and witness both the beauty and the challenges of life in the Amazon. It's a powerful opportunity to understand health and social inequities firsthand, while discovering how you can contribute to lasting change.

Highlights of the Week:

- City tour of the capital of Ecuador, Quito
- Reality Tour in MEDLIFE's partner communities
- 1 day volunteering on a Development Project
- 2 days volunteering on a Mobile Clinic
- Talks and educational discussions with MEDLIFE HQ team
- Visit to Baños

Key Pillars

- **Service:** By volunteering on a Mobile Clinic and Development Project, you'll directly help bring accessible medical care, health education, and a safer home to the marginalized communities you visit.
- **Education:** Learn about the historical, political, and economic factors that have shaped Ecuador. Deepen your knowledge of global health by shadowing healthcare professionals.
- **Life-changing experiences:** Through eye-opening experiences and building human connections, a MEDLIFE Community Empowerment Trip will deepen your passion for building a world free from the constraints of poverty.

Detailed Itinerary

DAY

Saturday

1

Arrival at Airport

Arrive at Mariscal Sucre International Airport (UIO) between 5pm and 11pm. A MEDLIFE representative will be waiting for you in the International Arrivals area with a MEDLIFE sign. They will help you check-in and answer any questions you may have about your upcoming week.



Overnight
Quito MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY

Sunday

2

Journey through history

Today we will start with a Welcome Meeting to see the week at a glance and reminders to be most prepared for the activities and days ahead!

The day begins with a visit to the Basílica del Voto Nacional, one of Quito's most iconic landmarks. This neo-Gothic church, the largest of its kind in the Americas, is famous for its gargoyles carved in the shapes of native Ecuadorian animals — including tortoises, iguanas, and condors — in place of the traditional European gargoyle designs.

From there, we will enjoy a chocolate experience, which starts with a guided tour of a chocolate workshop explaining the history of cocoa in Ecuador, followed by a chocolate tasting.

Next, we will head to the city's impressive colonial center for a walking tour, the reason Quito was the first city to be named a world heritage site by the United Nations. First on the agenda is a walk through the main plaza, the "Plaza de la Independencia", where you will see the Government Palace, the Cathedral, and some of the most important churches built around the XVI and XVII centuries,



including the San Francisco Monastery, a building begun only 5 days after the founding of the city.

After the walking tour, we will head out to the "Mitad del Mundo"; a site located 45 minutes north of Quito, where a monument marks the equator at its closest point to the city. Archaeological evidence shows that both pre-Inca and Inca civilizations recognized and celebrated the equinox, the day the sun is directly over the equator.

Upon arrival, we will visit the "Ciudad Mitad del Mundo", a group of buildings designed to explain the significance of the site, as well as the Ethnographic or Intiñan Museum, located right on the Equator. Here you will have the chance to plant your feet in two hemispheres at the same time. Lunch is included.

We will then make our way back to Quito, arriving at the hotel with time to rest and get ready for the week.

Dinner is not included today, however your Trip Leaders and chaperones will decide together on a restaurant experience nearby!



Overnight
Quito MEDLIFE Hostel

DAY

Monday

3

Transfer to Tena

After breakfast in the hostel, we'll board the bus for Tena, with a scenic stop at the Papallacta hot springs, where you can relax in natural thermal baths nestled between Volcano Cayambe and Volcano Antisana. After arriving, we'll have lunch and enjoy some time to relax and settle in at the hostel. You can even go for a dip in the pool! The evening will be dedicated to an orientation meeting where we will cover what to expect for the week and review

safety precautions.

Afterward, we'll head out for a short guided visit to Tena Pueblo, giving you the chance to explore the town and begin connecting with your surroundings.



Overnight
Tena MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY

4

Tuesday

Reality Tour

Kick off the Reality Tour with a visit to the Community of Ahuano where you'll meet a local family. We will learn about the importance of traditional medicine and discuss the education system as we visit a school.

After lunch, we'll stop by the Monkey Park, a local sanctuary where rescued monkeys roam freely. It's a great opportunity to observe these playful creatures up close while learning about conservation efforts in the region.

Then, we'll head to the community of Shiripuno to learn more about the local culture of Tena. We will visit a women's co-op, view a traditional dance, learn how to make chocolate from cacao, and find out more about the local culture and dress of the Amazonian rainforest.

Return to the hotel and have some time to rest and relax.



Overnight
Tena MEDLIFE Hostel

DAY

5-7

Wednesday to Friday

Mobile Clinics & Development Project

Mobile Clinics are held at a different community each day of the week. The communities we work with are between 30 minutes and 2 hours away from the hostel, depending on traffic.

Upon arriving in the community, volunteers will unpack all medical supplies from the bus and meet the health professionals who they will be assisting that day. After unloading all Mobile Clinic supplies, volunteers will report to the Mobile Clinic station that they have been assigned to that morning. A brief training session will be provided by the health professionals at each station, and the clinic will begin accepting patients between 8-9am.

Patients will first visit the Triage Station, where volunteers will assist in taking each patient's vital signs. From there, patients will listen to educational talks provided by MEDLIFE nurses in the Education Station, while volunteers hand out educational pamphlets. Patients will then move to either the General Medicine, or OBGYN Stations to receive a medical consultation. Within all medical consultation stations, volunteers will have the opportunity to shadow the physician and learn how the physician works with the patient to evaluate what the patient has presented with, provide a diagnosis, and devise a treatment plan. Finally, patients will be directed to the Pharmacy Station where volunteers will assist nurses to fill the prescriptions that patients have been given during their medical consultations.

Volunteers will stay at their assigned station until they are relieved for lunch by their Trip Leader at around 11:30am. Enjoy lunch on the bus and then report to your second station assignment for the afternoon. Finally, Mobile Clinics will close anywhere from 1-3pm, depending on the amount of patients that day.

During the week, you may have the opportunity to assist in the construction of a community Development Project such as wells, school renovations, or bathroom complexes. Development Projects will vary, depending on community needs.



In the evenings, volunteers will meet in the hotel conference room at 5pm for interactive Post-Clinic Activities before dinner. On days when no activities are scheduled, volunteers are free to explore the city.



Overnight
Tena MEDLIFE Hostel

DAY

8

Saturday

Baños & the waterfall route

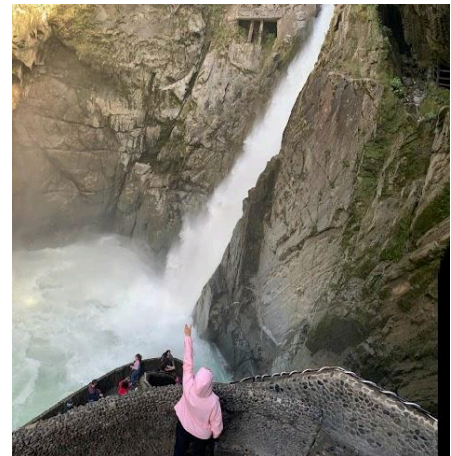
Early this morning, we will head from Tena for a three-hour bus ride to Baños; a small vibrant city at the foot of the Tungurahua Volcano south of Quito. Nestled into the mountains where the Andes meet the Amazon, the area is a remote paradise home to sweeping views, extreme sports, and plenty of local tradition.

Officially named Baños de Agua Santa, meaning baths of sacred water, the area is renowned by locals for its natural hot springs which are said to have healing properties thanks to various minerals, and visits from the Catholic Virgin Mary. This morning, you will board a Chiva, which is a colorful, open-air tourist bus that will take you on the Route of the Waterfalls, La Ruta de las Cascadas. The road connects Baños to the Ecuadorian jungle city of Puyo, and has spectacular views of prominent volcanoes, low valleys, and rushing waterfalls.

Adrenaline-pumping adventures

You'll then continue for a ride on the Swing at the End of the World, Casa del Arbol. Located atop a mountain, the swing offers a wonderful view between peaks and valleys. Adventurers of all ages can feel the wind rush against their face as they soar over the cliff's edge. After that you will have lunch (included) at a nice restaurant.

Upon arrival back at the hotel in Quito, the hotel will



have dinner ready for the group (included).

DAY

9

Sunday

Departure Day

On departure day, we will visit a local handcraft market where you can explore and purchase handmade items from local artisans.

Afterward, we will begin our journey back home, reflecting on the experiences and the impact made during the trip.

INCLUDED

- ✓ 8 nights dorm room accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast, lunch, and dinner from Monday to Friday
- ✓ Transportation to and from the airport (within the established schedule), and to SLT activities
- ✓ English-speaking Trip Leader
- ✓ Safety equipment (including face masks)
- ✓ Medical insurance

NOT INCLUDED

- ✓ Flights
- ✓ Volunteer Visa
- ✓ Tips
- ✓ Pre or post-trip accommodation
- ✓ Optional excursions
- ✓ Non specified meals
- ✓ Cancellation insurance

Travel Advisory

All volunteers require a valid passport of at least 6 months from the SLT start date. You can register for the MEDLIFE SLT without a passport, but you must submit the info at least 2 weeks before the trip. You must ensure your passport validity before departure.

Visit your doctor: MEDLIFE does not require any vaccinations. However, you should follow all CDC requirements and any advice from your medical professional.

If you're not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, you may need a visa to enter certain countries. It is your responsibility to determine if you need a visa and make appropriate arrangements.