

ECUADOR CAN- GO REPORT

Trip Location: Ecuador, Morona-Santiago Province

Trip Dates: May 31 May – June 17, 2022

Written by: Ken Comfort

C for Champions:

Before:

- José Olivas, Juarez Friends Church
- Grace Anderson, Newberg
- Abby Schmelzenbach, Meridian / Newberg
- Gisseli Pati, Junta Mensual Nueva Esperanza, La Paz, Bolivia(not yet confirmed)
- Zulma Flores, Junta Mensual (JM) Vida y Paz, El Alto, Bolivia (not yet confirmed)
- Tania Colque de JM Tabernáculo, El Alto, Bolivia (not yet confirmed)
- Josue Chavez JM Peniel, Bolivia (not yet confirmed)

During:

- Jerry And Kerri Clarkson, Meridian Friends, Meridian / Nampa, Idaho (Summers and retirement)

A for Affirmation:

Before and During:

- AMEE (Asociación Misionera Evangélica Ecuatoriana, an umbrella organization for missions to the Shuar in Ecuador, Association of Evangelical Missions in Ecuador)
- Patrico y Andrea Leon, Macas
- Dario Salazar, Sucua
- Vincente Vinuesa Pozo, Cayambe, former missionary/pastor in Tiwintza
- Carlos Tivi, Macuma
- Cristina Mendez, (From Macas and Mendez)
- Denis, Macas
- Andy Comfort (Quito Quest)
- Charles Milton (22 years Export Certifier of Shuar grown produce, with many connections to government and Indigenous Federations in Ecuador and the Amazon basin)
- INELA Bolivia
- INELA Peru
- Junta Anual de México
- NWYM
- EFM Mid America

Observations of Advantages and Challenges within affirming this as a field as we traveled:

Advantages	Challenges
A culture of relationships and talking with strangers. The people are curious and willing.	Paternalism
AME partnership	Many communities are resistant to change.
Many Shuar communities have not been evangelized, taught, or disciplined.	The community leader (Sindico) must approve work and activity in the community.
There are some established communities with pastors and discipleship.	Spiritual warfare due to animistic Shuar beliefs and practices.
Most communities are seeking economic, social, and educational development.	Machismo but also a female driven culture. Some dangers for women.
If the Sindico (community leader) is Christian or open to Christianity, the people will readily follow.	Lowland hot humid climate.
Many communities are asking for more training.	Travel distance between rural communities.
Many young adults and children	Dangers of travel
Positive reception in villages including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tawasap with Tigre (Stalin) Tzamarenda and sons ○ Nantar ○ Achunts 	Lack of district or regional fellowship of churches (development needed, an opportunity)
Transportation is available in cities and between cities and roadside villages.	Transport is difficult in some areas.
	There are a lot of closed towns further in (need seeds sown for the first time contact)

Other Key Moments

- We sang with the kids before worship time Thursday night in Achunts.
- We felt the work of God everywhere we went—believers were everywhere.
- We blessed Charles Milton, Sr. Rodrigo and wife Yolanda, and Teresa at our hostel in Puerto Morona
- God accommodated when we weren't ready.
- The Achunts believers memorized verses and sang songs with us in Spanish, English, Aymara and Shuar.
- We had many personal conversations in many places, special moments to know new people and how God has worked in their lives.
- We prayed that God would stop the rainstorm and He did, the morning of leaving with the boat.

- We learned: Pass the tests and the doors will open – Become Shuar to the Shuar.
- We encouraged village churches and leaders, especially Achunts.
- Pablo (the musician) was great, asked lots of questions and asked for prayer.
- Many sisters in the faith in Achunts also asked for prayer.
- We received many requests for pastoral and discipleship training, including in Tawasap, Nantar, Sucua, and Achunts.

N for Need:

The Shuar are one of a few jungle tribes living in east Ecuador in the Amazon basin up to and beyond the border of Peru. This tribe is one of the least reached people in Ecuador and the world. The population may be up to 250,000 people in Ecuador and 150,000 in Peru.

Although some evangelical churches are established among the Shuar, at every meeting in every Shuar village, the people expressed the need for pastoral training, leadership training, and discipleship. Many communities are still very remote with little or no contact with the gospel. Dario Salazar told us that along the western side of the province from the Upano river to the Andes, about 10% of the people are evangelical Christians. Beyond the river to the next mountain range about 5% of the people are Christian. Through the next valley and range 3% - 5% are Christian. From there to the Morona River 3% - 1% are Christian. Beyond the Morona to Peru less than 1% are evangelized. Many have never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel because they live in remote villages that still practice tribal ways.

The primary ministry needs are pastoral and leadership training with emphasis in discipleship and spiritual formation. From this base the gospel could spread beyond the established evangelical churches to more and more communities in the east of Shuar territory. Working with established Shuar pastors for evangelism between villages seems to be the best method of sharing the Gospel and starting churches. This may not necessarily be a work of Friends only but a work in conjunction with other AMEE affiliates, especially in the beginning stages.

We were offered the possibility of establishing a training center in Sucua in partnership with AMEE. The ground and facility are already there. From this center additional training centers are needed in Tiwintza or Puerto Morona, Palora, and Taisha (covering the four corners of the province). From Palora, Tiwintza, and Taisha are the best possibilities of advancement of evangelism.

G for Gifting:

Who is expressing interest? (See Champions list for locations/yearly meetings.)

Before and During:

- Grace Anderson
- Abby Schmelzenbach
- Clarksons
- Gisseli Pati

- Zulma Flores
- José Olivás
- Tania Colque
- Josue Chavez

During:

- Clarksons
- The People of Nantar (Near Palora)

What gifts or skills might be required?

- It would be best to begin this work with those who already speak Spanish.
 - Shuar could be the primary language emphasis.
 - This is not prerequisite: discipleship training
- Adventurous people, adaptable to outdoor conditions, willing to eat strange food, able to deal with humidity and heat, (Bathroom facilities are non-existent)
- Individuals who enjoy talking to new people and who are willing learners
- Good at working with kids and youth (much of the Shuar population is young)
- Gifts of hospitality and accepting hospitality
- Ability to support other team members and to work with other team members.
- Ability to homeschool or work as a parent with Ecuadorian schools

How many people will it take to begin this work?

- At least two households
 - Encouragement is important
 - Can work in different places but should meet together frequently
 - Need to have a very focused purpose, goals, and methods
- Each team member must know their strengths and weaknesses to complement each other
- Tons of prayer support at home - According to EFM, at least 500 committed prayer partners per team member, registered

O for Opportunity:

Is the soil ready for sowing the Good News?

- Yes! In many places it has already been sown—the people want and need training and discipleship.
- The possibility of Summer Visits (up to two months)
- Edwin: D for D (the version used in Mexico)

Who welcomed you or provided hospitality? Did you find a person of peace? Did you receive an invitation to bring the Good News to an area not yet reached?

- Quito

- Andy Comfort
- Charles Milton
- Tawasap
 - the Síndico (tribal leader) Tigre Tzamarenda
 - His parents specifically invited us to start a church there to tell the children about Jesus.
- Nantar
 - The community leader Martin
 - Pastor Ramón
 - The previous pastor Daniel
 - Several from the congregation
- Macas
 - Patricio (Pato) and Andrea Leon
 - Rodrigo and Yolanda (hostel owners)
 - Sandro Juanga (in San Joaquin - church with all the children)
 - Various church groups
- Sucúa
 - Dario Salazar
 - Suni and her husband and their congregation
- Achunts
 - Carlos
 - Pablo
 - Daniel
 - Vinicio
 - We are also quite certain that many seekers were present in the meetings who have not yet accepted Jesus.
- Puerto Morona/San José
 - Various people we met on the street

Share any opportunities that God may be presenting to you.

- Jerry is thinking of:
 - A wiki type database for learning Shuar
 - Developing Discipleship and training material in Shuar using the Shuar Bible, the database, and native speakers as much as possible.

Partnerships

- AMEE

Is this a CAN GO for EFM at this time?

Among the Shuar people are many definite possibilities of extending the Gospel and working with local leaders in planting new churches. Many local community leaders, pastors, and church leaders would reach communities beyond the reach of EFM missionaries. Working with and gaining the trust of the Síndico is vital. Even though the culture is managed by males,

it is actually the women who make the decisions and approve what happens. This may be a cooperative work establishing churches with generally evangelical doctrine rather than an exclusive Friends work (at least at the beginning).

Which of the five criteria is the weakest?

Champions (confirmed champions)

Which of the five is the strongest?

Need

Describe some of the specific affirmations or stories when God's call to this field was affirmed before and during this trip.

This vision began more than 10 years ago in NWYM and continued with placing the Badgley family in Macas. Even though the Badgleys were unable to remain in Ecuador, the vision continues strong with many people from NWYM. Local Ecuadorian Evangelical leaders with strong callings to minister to the Shuar Nation are also inviting us to minister alongside. This trip has come to confirm the needs, opportunities, and affirmation of local Shuar and non-Shuar people. Several individuals gave their hearts to Jesus through the ministry of this team.

Luke 10 Team Recommendation to EFM

Whereas many Shuar people in readily accessible areas have accepted Jesus as their Savior and are meeting in established churches, the field is yet very ripe for harvest reaching just across the river from Sucúa or from Achunts and into more remote villages. Each area and village that we entered has great need for discipleship and spiritual development. Although those from outside of the local culture should not go to the remote villages without direct invitation, discipleship of Shuar people should facilitate the evangelism of other villages and the invitation for work deeper into the jungles with continued evangelism and discipleship.

Our next steps must be:

- Confirming those called by God to work among the Shuar.
- Establishing a system of discipleship in Spanish and translated to Shuar is an evident next step.
- Implementing discipleship, evangelism and encouraging evangelism
- Discipling or encouraging discipleship among new believers, new communities, and new churches should be the result of this effort.

Addendum: Team Recommendations for First Time Missionaries

- Always be observant – Blend with the culture (drink a little chicha, eat the grubs, inhale a little cleansing liquid, accept any hospitality graciously).
- Shuar prefer open honesty. Keep your hands on top of the table. Keep your word. Don't make promises that can't be kept.
- Always travel in pairs until you are traveling with close local companions. Always travel as a pair (couple, two men, or two confident women) when visiting new villages even if with local companions. Luke 10
- Shuar exhibit a dual layer power structure. While men may compose the village council, the women meet casually, constantly, and control the home and the men.
- Personal transportation may not be necessary at first while adapting to local transportation. Personal transportation may be convenient but also requires a fenced driveway, garage, and local storage or garage rental in villages.
- Repel mosquito wipes are handy and convenient bug defense. Flea collars, worn around one's ankles, fend off foot and leg bites from many fleas of the many town dogs and the beds in low cost lodging.
- Vitamin B Complex tablets taken daily also repel bugs that bite
- Always take a gift to anyone that you visit. This may be a food to share personally or with a community, children's materials for a church, discipleship materials, or anything of use to the person or community to visit. Avoid taking gifts that would not be of natural use in the community (candies not usual to the community, etc.)
- Transportation: Check with local village leaders as well as with AMEE missionaries. Local villages that have electricity by wire also have a trail to town and to the next town along the powerline (visible on Google Earth / Maps). Once well introduced in a village and the surrounding and approaching villages, a motorcycle might be a good means of local transport allowing for visiting several villages. Weigh this against forming relationships with locals by using local and canoe transport.