

## Ecuador Info Sheet:

Ecuador is considered an Open Country, where we are free to evangelize and plant churches.

Yet, there are still things to consider:

### Safety and security:

- There has been isolated religious persecution in the past.
- There is a travel advisory – Level 2 (exercise increased caution) issued June 22, 2023- due to civil unrest and crime.
- Chone is a Level 3 (reconsider travel) issued June 22, 2023- due to civil unrest and crime (however, it has been reported that Chone is safer now than it was in June 2023).
- We feel called to plant churches in Sigchos and surrounding areas, and Chone and surrounding areas.
- Do not wander off by yourself/ always travel with at least 2 people.
- Do not wear expensive jewelry or accessories that may draw unnecessary attention to yourself or our team.
- Be careful with your money: keep your money in your front pocket, only pull-out small amounts when purchasing something, do not draw attention to your money in public places, maybe divide your money in several locations on your person, consider using a neck wallet or money belt to wear under your clothing.
- You may want to divide your team money between several team members.
- Keep your passport safe, give a photo copy of your passport to your team leader to keep, put a photo copy of your passport in each of your travel bags.
- When it comes to posting photos, ministry activates, and prayer requests on social media; follow the lead of our national partners and missionaries. They too are currently posting their ministry activities online. However, we do not want to assume it is okay. The climate could change, between trips. **Always ask permission** before taking photos, or posting someone's image on social media. In addition, some indigenous groups in the Andis believe a photo will take their soul. It is polite to ask permission first, before taking someone's photo or posting images on social media.

### Health

- Tap water in Ecuador is not safe to drink, and is the number one reason travelers get sick. Do not use ice or drink juice, unless you know they have used bottled water to make it. Make sure your glasses and utensils are dry, before using them. Brush your teeth and rinse with bottled water. Only drink bottled water, **but drink plenty of it**. Stay hydrated.
- Do not eat from street vendors. Careful choice of food and beverages, helps prevent Travelers D.
- Wash hands before meals if possible or use hand sanitizer.

- Use sunscreen and hat to protect you from the UVs. The Sun is closer and more direct, due altitude and equator.

## Culture/Customs

- Clothing-
  - Sigchos
    - The Quechua are traditional in their outfits. Women often wear hats and traditional wear.
    - The Mestizos are less traditional in their outfits and are more western in their dress.
    - For our teams:
      - There is no need to over dress for church. Many of the folks we minister with only have a few outfits. They do look nice.
      - Women if you wear skirts or dress, make sure they are long.
      - Dress in layers to stay warm, but peel off as the day warms.
      - Do not wear shorts to do ministry in Sigchos.
      - Wear comfortable shoes, as you will climb up and down a lot!
      - It is a good idea to wear hats and sunscreen as protection from the sun.
      - It could rain a lot, so be prepared.
      - Nights are cold.
      - When packing, bring enough underwear, socks, and shirts for each day.
      - You can get by with wearing pants and layers multiple days.
  - Chone
    - Folks dress more casual at the coast. It is okay to wear modest shorts in Chone, but not during church service. You will also see business outfits in Chone.
    - For our teams:
      - Dress in nice short sleeve shirts and pants for ministry.
      - Wear comfortable shoes or sandals for walking.
      - It is warm and humid throughout the day.
      - It is a good idea to wear hats and sunscreen as protection from the sun.
      - It could rain a lot, so be prepared.
      - There could be flooding at times.
- Greetings-
  - The Ecuadorian culture is very hospitable. It is not unusual to be greeted by a cheek-to-cheek kiss (lips do not touch the skin, but kiss the air). Many men will shake with their right hand. Women will give hugs.

- When someone from Ecuador enters a room, they take time to greet everyone (even if the meeting has started). In the same way, as we encounter a group (at a home or church), take time to greet each person in the room. Make an effort to know each person in the places you visit.
- Important: Listening is a sign of respect. While people are speaking or interpreting in Spanish within a group session, you may be tempted to start talking to the person next you. Resist the temptation. There will be plenty of opportunity to hang out.
- It is really important **not** to make promises:
  - Do not agree to sponsor or host anyone to visit the US.
    - Sponsorship goes along with financial obligations if they are not able to support themselves.
  - Do not agree to give money.
    - We are there to help plant self-sustaining, reproducing, indigenous churches. We do not want to do anything to jeopardize that mission. If there is ever a need that comes up, it is best to ask the host missionary what to do before acting.
  - Do not give out candy or gifts, unless you have enough to go around.
    - Always ask the host missionary if it would be okay.

### **Team member responsibilities:**

- Be prepared to share the Gospel. Familiarize ones-self with gospel tract. Practice on one-another and non-believers before leaving for trip.
- Be able to share testimony in 3 minutes.
- Pastors may be asked to preach in a church service.
- Be prepared to disciple believers.
- There will be opportunity to work with children.
- You may be asked to lead a team devotion.

### **Types of ministries:**

Each team has unique gifts and abilities. Each trip will have different ministry opportunities, depending on the needs and growth of the work we are assisting. We will try to use the gifts that God has given each believer and match them with the ministry needs for that trip.

Possible ministry opportunities:

Evangelism, discipleship, children's ministry, youth ministry, physical labor, leadership development, ministry training, healthy Church growth, Church planting opportunities.

This is not an exhaustive list. There may be more opportunities they arise.

**Remember:** plans change. We must remain flexible and be available to serve to meet needs as they change.