

# Sonrisas (Smiles) for Guatemala: Reestablishment of an Outreach Initiative Post-COVID

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## INTRODUCTION

The Guatemala Global Service Learning Trip stands as one of two opportunities available to Dugoni students for providing care and enhancing oral health abroad. These ventures faced a pause amidst the pandemic, but in 2023, the Guatemala trip was reestablished. Student leadership drives all global trips at Dugoni, typically comprising two senior trip leaders responsible for organizing and coordinating the trip, alongside two junior leaders-in-training who observe the senior trip leads. Faculty members attend to supervise clinical procedures, and the trip is supported by administrative oversight. In 2023, the recultivation of this particular outreach initiative was spearheaded by the trip leaders Kayla Hunt and Hwajeong Kim, whose leadership played a pivotal role in re-establishing the trip and ensuring its success upon its return after a two-year hiatus.

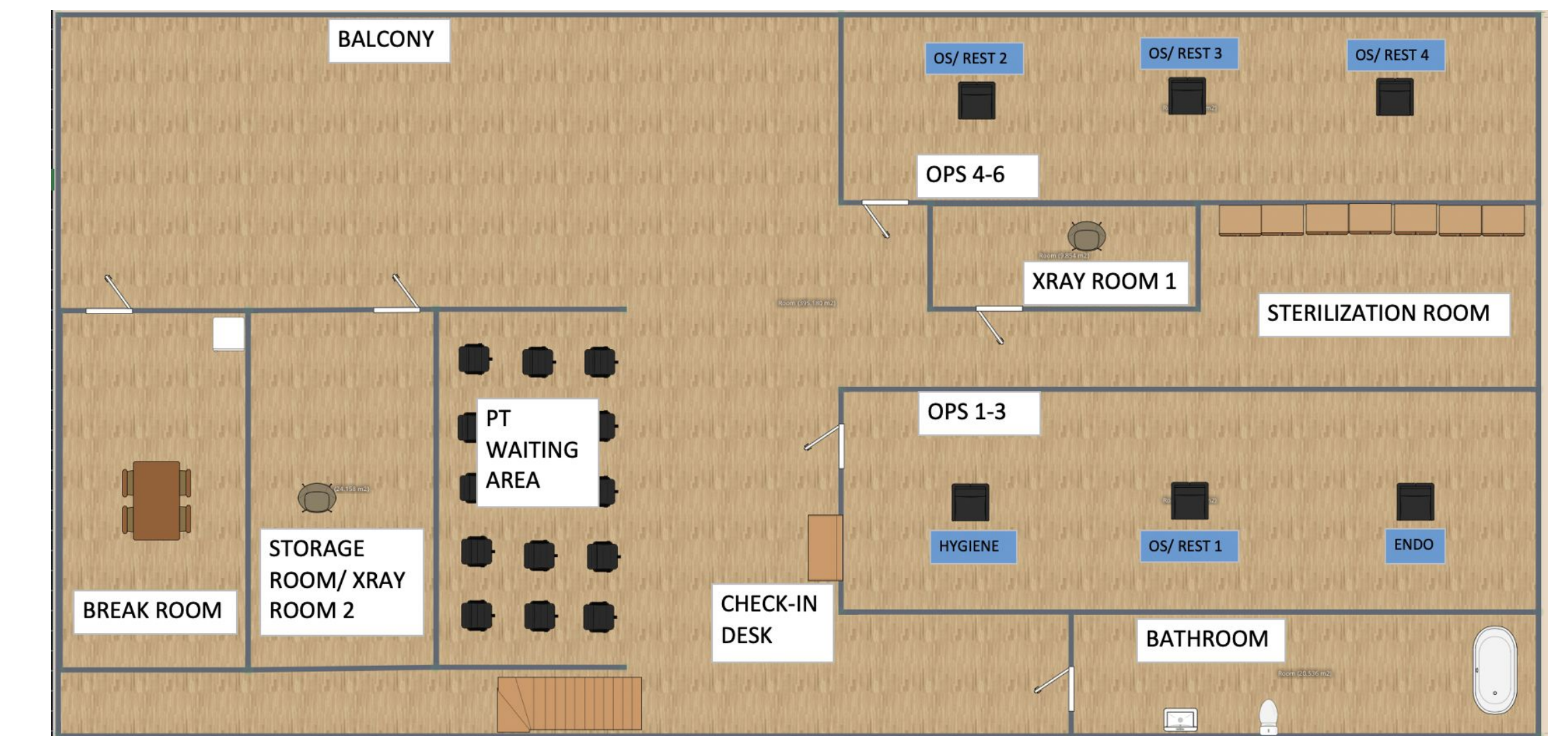
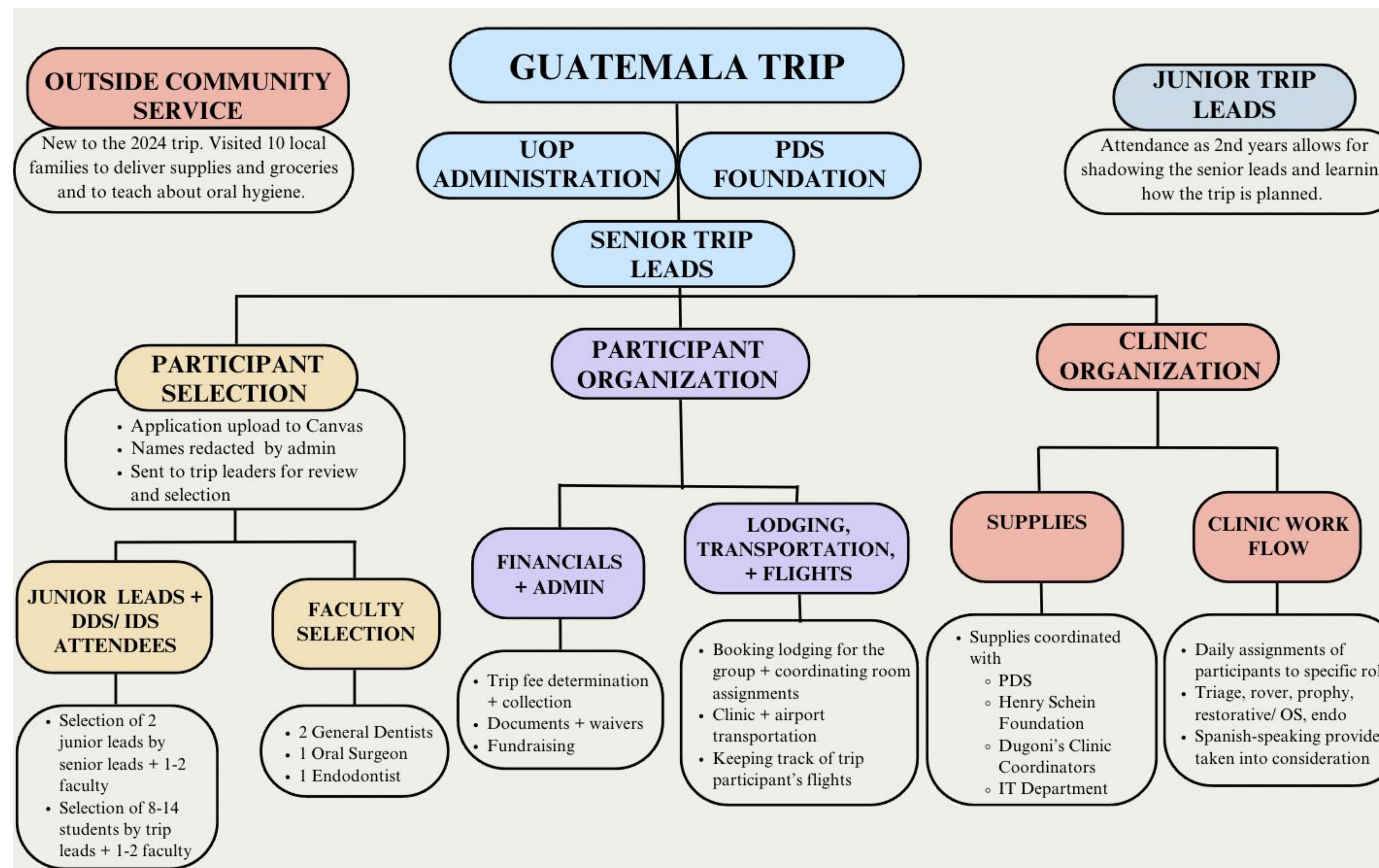


## OBJECTIVE

Due to limited resources available from trips prior to the COVID hiatus, the student leaders were left with the responsibility of laying down the foundation from which the future trips would be constructed. Several aspects of the trip that were rebuilt include the reestablishment of communication between the partner organization, Pacific Dental Society, and Dugoni, the organization of the clinic flow, supply list, lodging, and transportation, as well as the implementation of financial protocols and a new application process. With all the foundational blocks established by the two trip leaders in 2023, we decided that we wanted to ensure the success of future trips by creating a guidebook for future trip leaders to reference.

## METHODS

The preparation for this service learning trip heavily relied on consistent communication between the team leaders as well as with the PDS coordinators and UOP administration.



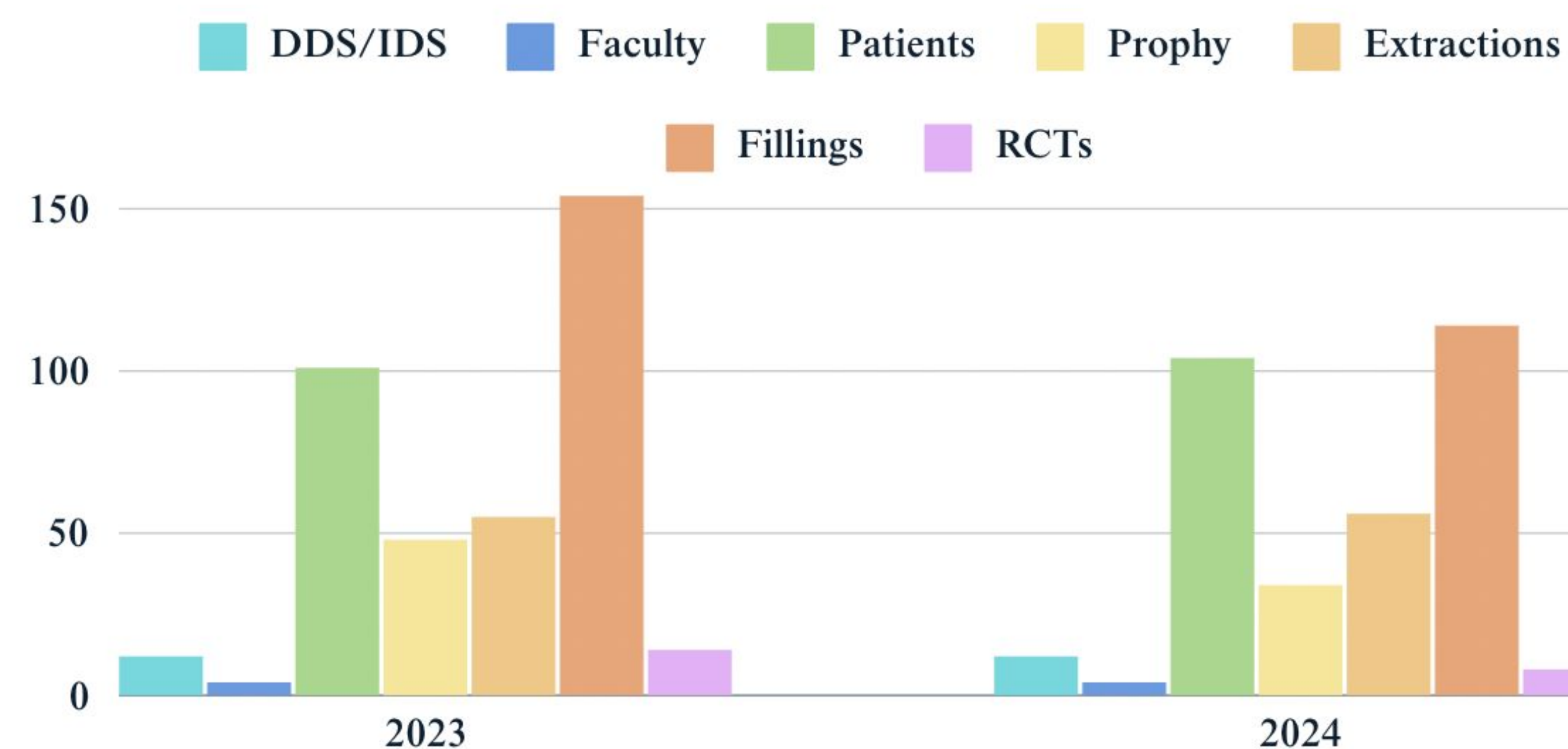
## CONCLUSION

Due to the meticulous planning of details, schedules, logistics, supplies, and many more moving parts, the return of the Guatemala service learning trip was greatly successful in 2023. This further pushed the next team forward to return the following year, and countless patients have had their oral care needs met with cleanings, extractions, fillings, and even root canals. The Guatemala service learning trip continues to not only leave a profound and tangible impact on a population that does not have routine access to dental care, but it provides an incredible opportunity for students to work with an underserved community and to treat different populations of various SES levels. Participants who have attended these trips have returned with a broadened understanding of the diversity of their patient base and a newfound appreciation for the power of dentistry.

After the first Guatemala service learning trip was successfully completed, the foundational framework that was established by the trip leaders was pivotal in the composition of the current Guatemala Service Learning Trip Guidebook. This resource serves as a testament to the work that was pioneered to aid successive generations in not only efficient and successful implementation of future Guatemala trips, but in hopes of each team achieving greater milestones than the year before.

## RESULTS

Planning any of the global service learning trips takes a significant level of organization, but to restart a trip is a whole different matter as there are so many moving parts. Fortunately, all our efforts as second year leaders allowed us to create a strong foundation on which we were able to make adjustments to unforeseen circumstances for the 2024 trip. Typically, the Guatemala trip takes place during Spring Break, but due to Semana Santa, a religious holiday, we were forced to expedite our trip timeline, resulting in only having one senior trip leader that year. Despite this minor setback, we have led two successful trips resulting in the treatment of over 100 patients per trip addressing a range of dental treatments.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# OKU Sutro Excellence Day Project Cover Sheet

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