



## Kindergarten & Teaching projects



**Capacity:** Kindergarten: up to 10 volunteers at a time; General Teaching: up to 10 at a time

**Availability:** Kindergarten school: 9 months of the year (Jan, Feb, March, June, July, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov and Dec); General Teaching: available all year round. During April and May alternative teaching projects in the community will be organised.

**Project Start & End Days:** Saturdays

**Project Work Days:** Monday to Fridays (weekends are free)

**Support Provided:** Program Manager provides detailed introduction and culture training on arrival along with an area orientation tour. Teaching Coordinator gives project-specific training. Our teaching staff also assists participants with lesson planning, guiding them on the specific curriculum to follow each week and conducting daily/weekly meetings to monitor progress.

Participants also have access to our in-house teaching library consisting of manuals, books and various teaching materials to help with lesson planning and providing general guidance.

**Age Requirement:** Must be 16 years or over

**Nearest Airport:** Cochin International Airport

**Location of Project:** Kindergarten class is held at a local government school (about 10 min from our volunteer house). General teaching project is held in two schools - (both 10 min from volunteer house)

**Accommodation:** You will be living in the gorgeous town of Fort Kochi in our volunteer house with other volunteers. All rooms are shared and will have fans and en-suite bathrooms. For those who want to upgrade, the option of private accommodation will also be available at an extra cost. Your volunteer home will have a lounge area, dining area and comes equipped with WiFi. For your safety we have fire extinguishers, security cameras, first aid box, and a safe in our office which is in the premises as well. In general Fort Kochi where your home is a very safe residential as well as tourist area with low crime rates. You will be walking distance to ATMs, supermarkets, local cafes and restaurants, shopping as well as hospitals.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner will also be taken care of by our chef. All food will be freshly cooked local Keralan meals. A typical breakfast can be dosas, puttu or Keralan style pancakes. Lunch and dinner are usually curries prepared with seasonal vegetables. Kerala curries are delicious, light and healthy – usually infused with coconut milk or grated coconut making it truly tropical to taste.

Please note that during busy times we may house you in alternative accommodation near our volunteer house.

**Meals Provided:** Breakfast, lunch and dinner

**Background to this Program:** In the Fort Kochi and Mattanchery area, there are a number of government schools, ranging from primary to secondary, that cater to children of varying ages. Public (or government) schools provide free education to children, and are therefore in greater demand, especially for parents from poorer communities that lack the resources to put their children in private schools, for which they have to pay extra. The unfortunate reality of the situation is that the difference in quality of the education received from a public school, more often than not, pales in comparison to those received by better-funded private schools, particularly as it relates to a foreign language like English. Hence, there is a strong need to develop English skills (speaking, reading and writing) in public schools, where

teachers are not as well equipped, and this is where our main focus lies.

## **What our Volunteers do on the Project:**

We work with three public schools in our area - both with kindergarten school and secondary school. Both are not well-funded and in need of help, hence the impact our volunteers make there is substantial and very much appreciated.

For the Kindergarten program, our volunteers assist the local school teachers with the day-to-day running of the classes. The classes are held in the mornings for 2 hours per day (10 am-12 pm) for children aged from 3-6 years old and then again in the afternoon for 1.5 hours (2- 3.30pm). Typical activities include teaching basic English (reading and writing), playing educational games, occasional singing and dancing and caring for the children by giving them attention and warmth in an intimate environment.

For General Teaching, the school we work with two public schools with a session in the morning from 10-12 pm and an afternoon session from 2-3.30pm. Both are minority public schools, where the children do not have as many opportunities for growth and development compared to others in the region. This is a highly impactful class run solely by our volunteers (with guidance and support from our local team) as the school lacks adequate English teachers to teach the language. Our volunteers work in small groups to teach English at a basic to intermediate level here for children aged 8-12 years old. Typical class size ranges from 10-20 students.

One of the main reasons we established our own Teaching Program in Fort Kochi was to cater to the and children of our immediate neighbourhood, where the need and desire to learn English is very high.

As with all teaching projects, lesson planning is a key part of the daily tasks, which can take up to 1-2 hours each day. Volunteers are expected to conduct this on their own with guidance from our local team.

**Recommended Attire:** A conservative dress code needs to be adhered to while at the project. Knees and shoulders must be covered, as well as any tattoos or body art. Rest of the clothing can be comfortable and casual.

## **Location**

The program is based in Kerala which is South India's tropical gem famously known as 'God's own Country'. Your accommodation, administration, orientation and all programs will be in the suburb area of Fort Kochi or city area of Ernakulum (which are part of Cochin or Kochi). Fort Kochi is a quaint area with delightful lanes filled with influences from different parts of the world hint at a long, eventful history that began with Kerala's flourishing spice trade.

Fort Kochi is a safe and welcoming area and you can enjoy an abundance of activities on the weekends including visiting the local beaches and backwaters that Kerala is known

for. The local team will be more than happy to assist with your excursion plans within Kerala on arrival.

## **Accommodation**

Volunteers in Kerala are accommodated in a volunteer house run by local coordinators. Living is basic but comfortable and you will have access to electricity, **WiFi** and western style toilets. Your showers are cold but being a warm climate almost all year it's never a problem. There are fans provided, however, it is important to be aware that there is no air-conditioning at the accommodation.

All bedding is provided and you can expect to be sharing a room with up to 3 other volunteers of the same gender. Typically mattresses in Asia are a lot firmer than what you may be used to, so please be prepared for that. If you also wish to use a mosquito net over your bed, you will need to bring a pop up net with you. You will be required to bring your own toiletries and towels.

Volunteers can either handwash their clothes in the volunteer house or arrange **laundry service** through the local team for a small fee.

## **Transport**

Volunteers need to arrange their own transport to and from their placements. Some placements are within walking distance but most placements will require a bus or tuktuk ride and the local team will be happy to provide recommendations for reliable tuktuk drivers.

For travel further outside Kochi, it is possible to hire a driver and car, catch a flight, train or bus. India has a good rail network between major cities and this can be an affordable option if you have time and are unable to afford flights.

## **Requirements**

- We request you to wear conservative clothing which means no shorts or sleeveless tops allowed. Your attire must be somewhat professional or formal.
- Feel free to bring resources such as activity or easy reading books, english language games, or art supplies. Any old laptops or ipads in working condition can be brought for donation to the women's project.
- Please keep a small budget for photocopying or any project resources you may need.

## **In your bag**

Casual, modern clothing is ok and normal in India. However, it is advisable to wear conservative clothing that covers the shoulders, chest and legs whilst at your volunteer placement.

- Copies of important travel documents, such as passport, criminal background check, travel insurance, visas, plane tickets and passport photos
- Medical kit with aspirin (or a similar pain reliever), antihistamine for relief from allergies or insect bites, diarrhea 'stoppers' such as Diastop, scissors and tweezers, band aids, antiseptic cream for cuts and grazes, sunscreen, lip balm, insect repellent, and any personal medication
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Clothing - light, cotton clothing that covers your whole body is ideal for sun and insect bites. Smart attire for your time on the placement is expected. Casual attire is fine for weekend travel and time outside of your placement.
- Appropriate footwear for walking
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Rain jacket
- Small padlock for securing bags and valuables
- Day pack
- Books, music and other entertainment for long travel and 'downtime' Travel guide (many volunteers find Lonely Planet to be very helpful for preparation and once they are in India) Journal and pens to keep a diary
- A small gift for the local team and/ or placement staff (optional) - you may like to bring a small gift from home as a token of your appreciation.

## Money

The currency of India is the Indian Rupee – please visit the XE website to check the current exchange rate at the time of your program. We recommend taking some United States Dollars (around US\$200) to keep away in case of emergencies and a VISA or Mastercard credit/debit card to withdraw cash in local currency as you need it.

**ATMs** are easily accessible in Fort Kochi and tourist areas, and hotels, shops and restaurants in Fort Kochi area generally accept credit cards and USD.

## Weekends and free time

Some of the absolute must dos are:

- The backwaters of Alleppey where you can stay for a night on a houseboat and meander through the waterways surrounded by coconut trees.
- Munnar Tea Plantations are simply breathtaking in terms of views and often compared to the Scottish Highlands!
- If you are looking for tan then head to the beaches of Marari or Varkala in the South of Kerala. It is easiest to take a train which is also an experience in itself! There are also great surf spots near Varkala.