



## Construction Project



**Availability:** All Year

**Project Start & End Days:** Mondays

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

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

**Location of Project:** All construction sites will be in local government primary schools in the Fort Kochi and Mattancherry area. Accommodation will be within 10-15 mins by tuktuk from the project site.

**Background to this Program:** In the Fort Kochi and Mattancherry 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 cater to the poorer sections of the community. Whilst teachers salaries, school lunch and some maintenance money comes from the government, often these schools lack resources and funding is never enough for the upkeep of the school. Classrooms are not equipped well with enough furniture, fans, lights or basic teaching tools like whiteboards, projectors or computers. Most government school buildings are old and facilities like bathrooms, play areas, library areas and classrooms are very basic, missing or not suitable.

**Meals Provided:** Breakfast, lunch and dinner (Except Sunday dinners)

**What our Volunteers do on the Project:** : We work with a few public schools in the Fort Kochi and Mattancherry area - both with kindergarten school and secondary school. Both are not well-funded and in need of refurbishment, hence the impact our volunteers make there is substantial and very much appreciated. Projects will be for 4-5 hours Monday to Friday.

For the school painting program volunteers will be focused on repainting classroom walls or school building walls and making murals or beautification to make the school look inviting and appealing for children and staff attending this. A lot of children come from poor families and many do not have the motivation to study or attend school at times. Their homes are small, dull and most end up playing on the streets as they do not have toys at home. If their school looks and feels beautiful, their desire to attend school and study will increase. The teachers will also feel motivated to teach if their working environment is improved and classrooms are made brighter and learning conducive. Volunteers should come with an open mind and no one needs to be an artist to paint walls! This program is possible year round.

For the gardening and play area program volunteers will be helping to improve facilities in the school for children by creating a play area and a garden with herbs, vegetables and flowers. Volunteers will use locally available materials for creating a play area and garden that the children can enjoy. We would like volunteers to come up with creative ways to improve play facilities without the use of scrap and industrial waste like old tyres etc. This program is not possible during monsoons in the months of June, July and August. Minimum of 6 volunteers would be useful for this program.

**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.

## 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.