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Ecuador Street Children Care And Education

Adventure Relaxation Culture

Trip Name: Ecuador Street Children Care And Education **Trip Code:** ECST **Duration:** From 2 weeks

Trip Highlights

- See the difference your hard work can make to the lives of some of Ecuador's poorest children
- Live in beautiful Quito, the leading destination in Latin America!
- Gaining confidence with the children and watching their little personalities grow
- Alleviate some of the poor conditions, helping children and their families build a better future for themselves

Overview

Teach in Ecuador as a volunteer on this programme and work in the poorest areas of Quito, helping to make a difference in the society. We work with a day-care project in the North of Quito, which provides children with education, care and meals.

Your placement or the extent to which you will work will depend on availability, the time of the year and the length of your stay.

Destination Info

Ecuador is located in the northwest of South America between the Pacific Ocean and the Amazon jungle. Ecuador was named after its position on the Equator and is bordered by Colombia, Peru and the Pacific Ocean.

The capital of Ecuador is Quito. The ancient capital of the northern realm of the Incan Empire, Quito lies at 2,800 metres above sea level in a high valley at the base of Mount Pichincha approximately 15 miles south of the equator. Quito is surrounded by mountains with three snow-capped volcanoes visible on clear days. Quito has plenty to offer culturally; cinemas, theatres, concerts, bookstores, discos, museums, art galleries, craft stores, tourist attractions, restaurants and even western-style bars.

Itinerary

This day care centre was first opened to the children in the April of 2005 after it initially started as a small kids club for the children from the area surrounding the dump site and recycling centre. In 2005 the club was developed into a day-care centre that is now maintained by non-profit organisations and fully funded by generous donations. The centre is there to provide a clean, safe environment for the children whose parents work nearby in the city dump. Before, parents had to leave younger children in boxes by the site as they worked while the older children were left to wander around.

Some 35 children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years old now attend the day-care centre on a regular basis, although during June and August, the school holidays, the num,ber lowers to about 20. They receive one balanced meal and two nutritious snacks, as well as clean clothes, baths and basic pre-school education. The centre is closed for the last week of August.

Volunteers will be helping at the day-care centre giving support in educational activities, arts and crafts, games, songs, serving meals, taking care of the younger children and more! Volunteers can choose if they'd prefer to work with the smaller children, older children or in the kitchen, or do a bit of everything! The children need all the help, love and attention they can get. Volunteering on this project could be a life-changing experience!

- Provide care and support for the children and make sure they stay with the group.
- Bring educational material, there is the option to teach some English and it is appreciated if volunteers can teach at least one educational activity while at the centre.
- Ensure the children adhere to the programme rules.

- Supervise the children and play with them when they arrive in the morning.
- Aid the teachers with in class activities.
- Ensure all children wash their hands.
- Aid the staff during snack and meal times and with the preparation of meals.
- Organise the children to clean up at the end of the day.
- Help keep the centre clean; sweeping and cleaning, ensuring toys are put away, etc.
- Take the children to the park.
- Help to ensure the children stay clean.

The number of volunteers at the centre varies throughout the year depending on the number of participants in the programme.

The hours are very flexible, the centre is open from 8am until 5:45pm. You can stay all day or, if preferred, go for the morning or the afternoon. More help is usually needed in the morning. Volunteers can have lunch at the centre if they wish.

Are there any requirements to volunteer?

A basic level of Spanish is recommended to be able to communicate with the children and the people who work at the centre, who speak Spanish, or a willingness to learn the language.

Volunteers are expected to be flexible with their responsibilities and provide support in whichever area it is required most.

Other than that, all that is required is that volunteers enjoy working with children and have a sense of fun!

This programme was founded in 2003 by a Dutch woman who travelled to South America and worked in Ecuador as a volunteer. It offers education services to under-privileged children and works in accordance with the department of Social Welfare. Classes, homework supervision sessions, educational activities and more are offered to children of marginalised areas. The children at the centre are happy, playful and enjoy working with the volunteers. You may help plan activities in areas such as Art, Painting, Music, English Reading and Writing and will be playing an active role in these activities.

A normal day may start at 8am and finish at 4:30pm, however, there is an option for volunteers to do a half day, with the afternoon off. The programme price will remain the same with this option. The children have three meals a day with an afternoon nap after lunch. There are five groups within the school and one volunteer is assigned to each group where there is an accredited and educated teacher already placed.

The programme has been created to provide children with strong educational support, which many families cannot provide themselves and is also proud to provide a programme for mothers who make crafts that are then sold in the Netherlands, the profit of which goes back into the project.

A lot of the families are not even aware of the importance of education. Many live in poverty and face problems, such as illiteracy, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, violence and migration and are therefore incapable of providing adequate care for their children.

You will help to give these children a chance to enjoy learning and to keep up in school. This will also show the parents that there are positive results from their children receiving a good education.

Volunteers are expected to be flexible with their responsibilities and provide support in which ever area it is required most.

- Take a daily attendance
- Improve hygiene by ensuring all children wash their hands and brush their teeth
- Ensure the children adhere to the programme rules
- Help children with assignments and homework
- Choose and create activities for children to do once homework is complete
- Supervise children during break time and ensure they do not distract other children who are still working
- Organise the children to clean up at the end of the day
- Communicate with parents about the progress of their children

If you choose to do 8 weeks or more on option B you will also have the opportunity to take part in following project as well.

Street Children Outreach Programme

The outreach programme is an important project, which assists children and their families, who live or work in the streets and who are socially disadvantaged. Most of the parents' time needs to be spent selling products in the street markets of Quito, as a consequence the children become neglected and get little attention, you will help to provide the children with the chance to play and develop to their full potential. Volunteers are essential to the success of this project, as they have the ability to give the children the care and attention that they really need.

As a volunteer you will be placed at one of the four different markets that we are involved in. Each market may take three to five volunteers at any one time and is focused on community service, education, psychology and the local clinic. Through activities, such as teaching moral values, painting, playing games, and providing medical support and education, you will provide the children with the chance to play and develop to their full both at elementary and high school levels. This excellent programme may also give you the opportunity to work in the local clinic and dental surgery and work in a programme for kids with behavioural problems. Some of your time will also be spent communicating with the children's parents and informing them of their children's rights and the obligations that they themselves have as parents. The aim is that eventually the children and parents will have a better relationship.

*Please note that during the summer months the children tend to be between 3-12yrs and during the academic year they may be younger.

Accommodation

During your time at the project you will be staying in a house owned by a local host family and in a safe and conveniant area. There may be other volunteers living in the same house. You will have a shared room and bathroom facilities, single rooms are available for an extra cost and subject to availability.

Programme Services and Facilities

Internet

You will have plenty of access to the Internet in Quito, so keep an eye out for the nearest Internet café, or ask one of our on-site staff. There are a lot of these cafés around the Mariscal area of the city. Due to the large amount of competition expect to find prices as low as $0.50 an hour. In fact, Internet is now available in most places, right down to remote villages, so there are no excuses not to e-mail, especially seeing as you are unlikely to be charged more than $3 an hour wherever you are!

Telephone

Try the local Internet cafés for phones and cheap calls home. Your mobile phone will not work at all in Ecuador, as the frequency is different. If you would like to have a mobile while you are out there, then you can buy one locally.

The international dialling code for Ecuador is +593. To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44

for the UK followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap dial +44 1892 516164.

Laundry

There are laundry facilities in your accommodation, though you may need to take/buy your own washing powder. Some families would rather you don't use their washing machines in case they damage your clothes, if this is the case then they will show you to laundry facilities close by. You should budget a few dollars each week if this is the case.

Meals

Two meals a day, breakfast and dinner, will be provided, as you will usually be out at the project during the day. You will be able to pick up lunch from some of the many stores/restaurants near to the project location.

What's Included

- Accommodation
- Breakfast and Dinner
- A detailed orientation on arrival
- 24 hour Emergency help
- Full support prior to departure from your personal travel adviser
- Detailed information pack prior to departure
- Arrival airport transfer

What's Not Included

- International flights
- Return airport transfer (budget approx $35 USD)
- Travel insurance
- Lunches
- Items of a personal nature
- Additional activities over and above the planned itinerary inclusions
- Visa extensions

Is This Trip For You?

You may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. However, you will still have the full support of your in-country team and those at the project. If you are looking for a group volunteering experience we have plenty of options for you to consider.

Additional Information

Orientation

You will be given an orientation upon arrival, which will include detailed information about Ecuador and the surrounding area. The orientation will also cover all the relevant information about your project, including safety issues, to ensure that you feel safe and secure.

Throughout your stay in Ecuador you will have the full support and guidance of the project staff. You will be provided with competent assistance and help with any questions, or advice, you may need during your stay.

What to Pack

Please note that this list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore you may not need all of the listed items on your travels. In addition, it is worth noting that you can buy lots of the above in Ecuador and at a very cheap price and there will be opportunities for you to shop in local markets and towns.

Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- Cash for airport departure tax (around $42)
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)
- Guidebook on country - recommended Lonely Planet or Footprints

General

- Camera / Film / Batteries
- Notebook and pen / diary
- Torch / Extra Batteries
- Sunglasses
- Pocket-knife (comes in handy for general use)
- Water bottle - at least one litre
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- A 3-Season sleeping bag (especially useful when on weekend excursions)
- Mosquito Net (if required)
- Personal Toiletries (deodorant, soap, shampoo, toothbrush etc)
- Books, cards, music etc.
- Spanish dictionary, verb book etc

Clothing

- Hat
- Comfortable walking shoes
- A pair of thick socks for walking
- Sandals
- Waterproof Jacket
- Fleece/pullover (for cool evenings)
- Long trousers
- Warmer clothing for winter
- Swimwear
- Towel

Medical Kit

- Personal medication
- First Aid Kit (e.g. Antihistamines, Anti- diarrhoea tablets, headache tablets)
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito and insect repellent

Minimum Age

Minimum age 17 years with parental consent, maximum decided on health of potential participant.

Minimum Numbers

There are no minimum numbers on the trip.

Please note: you may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us

Flights

Your flight to Ecuador should arrive at Quito Airport on your programme start date, and your return flight should be arranged for Sunday, your programme end date.

To book your flights, please contact your travel advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

Please note: If you are flying to Ecuador via the USA you will need to obtain Travel Authorisation by registering online through the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) no later than 72 hours before departure. This is compulsory and will cost USD$14 to register. To register, please visit: www.esta.cbp.dhs.gov

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your Online account, or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

In Ecuador the currency is the US Dollar (USD; symbol $), which is divided into 100 Centavos (the same value as the US Cent). The coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 Cents and 1 Dollar. Notes come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Dollars.

Though the denominations and values are the same as the US Dollar, Ecuadorian coins do differ in appearance and bear the images of famous Ecuadorians rather than US presidents. Make sure you change your bills at banks where you can as loose change can be hard to come by when you're out and about.

Credit cards are accepted in larger towns and cities (only MasterCard is accepted on the Galapagos) and ATMs are available almost everywhere. Bancos del Pacífico and Bancos del Pichincha have MasterCard/Cirrus ATMs. Bancos de Guayaquil and Bancos La Provisora have Visa/Plus ATMs.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant $4.29
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) $1.00
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) $0.85
Water (0.33 litre bottle) $0.51

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays of up to 90 days, citizens of most European countries, the USA, Australia and New Zealand are not

required to hold a visa.

For all other nationalities and queries on longer stays or for the most up to date information on passportsand the Reciprocity Fee, please consult your nearest Ecuador Embassy or High Commission.

Cultural Considerations

Greetings

Pleasantries are taken seriously in Ecuador, despite the fact that greetings are usually informal. It is polite to always say “Buenos Días” upon entering a building or when meeting somebody, and to say “con permiso” when leaving or passing someone. You should address people in the polite “usted” form and show additional respect for older people. If you know the person then it is customary to shake hands or kiss in greetings. Any kind of conversation is usually preceded by small talk, and being able to speak at least basic Spanish will go a long way with the locals and demonstrate your keenness to fit in.

Gestures

Many gestures are used in Ecuador. A common one is the lifting of the chin to indicate "up the street" when giving directions, and the lowering of the chin to indicate "down the street" - useful for any traveller to know! Body language is considered an integral part of speech in Ecuador, so it is a common and often fundamental part of everyday speech, which can sometimes be hard for foreigners to understand. It is important to remember that as a general rule, Ecuadorians tend to be much more physical than other cultures and greetings generally involve a lot of body contact.

Saying “no”

A Latino always wants to help you and it’s considered impolite to say ‘no’ or ‘I don’t know’. Whatever you ask, always expect to get an answer, even if it is not correct. The best thing to do is to ask three different people the same question and if you always get the same answer it’s probably right!

Taboos

Latinos are not used to discussing ‘sensitive’ subjects with strangers (a stranger is anyone who is not family or they haven’t known for ten years). Although nosiness is common, certain subjects are taboo, for example: abortion, casual sex, social politics, etc. Listen first to get used to the norms.

Social Hierarchy

The family is hugely important to Ecuadorians. Elderly people often live with the youngest son and his wife, and it is common for three generations of families to be living together under the same roof. It is a way to increase the household income and to help one another. Can you imagine living with all of your relatives every day? As you would expect, older people are treated with great respect.

Women are traditionally responsible for bringing up the children, although this has begun to change in recent years. However, men are still very proud of their machismo and view whistling at women as a compliment. Ladies, take it in your stride. You may be subjected to catcalls and the best way to deal with these is simply to ignore them! Dress more formally than you would normally or even wear a wedding ring and talk about your husband.

Religion

In Ecuador the predominant religion is Roman Catholic. The Indigenous population blends Catholicism with its traditional beliefs.

Clothing

It is important to remember, especially for female travellers, that the kinds of clothes you feel comfortable wearing in your own country may not be an acceptable form of dress in Latin America. Short skirts for example, will invite unwanted attention. Just use your common sense and adapt your style in accordance with your surroundings. In Quito for example, and at the project, you should avoid wearing shorts, flip-flops, tank tops, and so on. Cover up for your own safety, and in respect of the local culture and customs.

On the Galapagos Islands you can expect to dress as you would for the beach e.g. flip-flops, shorts etc. - however even this should be more conservative beachwear. Avoid really short shorts and tops.

With the warm climate and humidity, we advise that you pack a selection of lightweight layerable clothing. As the evenings can get quite cool, a jumper or jacket is advisable. Always bear in mind the activities you will be doing when you are packing.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in Ecuador and readily available. However, please respect other people. Smoking is not permissible in volunteer apartments or the host families' homes. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact upon any volunteer work you undertake. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated.

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into Ecuador. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, Ecuador has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including "soft" drugs like marijuana, are ILLEGAL. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling – it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the project.

Tipping

A 10% tip is customary at restaurants and hotels and is usually included in the bill. Tips are not necessary (but always welcome) in small restaurants or for taxis. Hairdressers expect 20%, and a couple of dollars is normal for airport/railway porters.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or

anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

Although Ecuador is safer than other countries in the region, there have been reports of increased problems as a side effect to drug trafficking in Colombia. The majority of Ecuador is safe to a traveller who uses common sense. Pickpocketing is common in crowded places. Armed robbery is still unusual, but parts of Guayaquil have a reputation for being dangerous.

Here is a list of general precautions:

- Don't walk around alone after dark
- Don't carry valuables
- If your luggage is ever searched by the police make sure you are present
- Make sure your luggage is locked when travelling by bus or aeroplane. Don't leave unlocked valuables in your hotel room.
- Always carry your passport or a copy of it with you because sometimes the police make passport checks
- Avoid taking night buses through the Guayas province unless you have to. Armed robberies occur a couple of times every year.
- In Quito, don't walk up the series of steps and paths to the Virgin (the Pancillo), since assaults are common. Take a cab and don't take any valuables.

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk

USA: www.travel.state.gov
Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

Language Guide

Spanish is the official language of Ecuador. Quechua, Jivaro and other indigenous languages are also spoken.

Here are some choice Spanish words/phrases. We also suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

Hello - *Hola!*

Good day - *Buenas dias!*
How are you? - *Como estas? ('Como estas usted?' if you need to be extra formal!)*
Goodbye - *Adios*
Please - *Por favour*
Thank you - *Gracias*
I don't understand - *No entiendo*
I don't speak Spanish - *No hablo espanol*
Sorry/excuse me - *Lo siento*
Where is…? - *Donde esta…?*
The bill please - *La cuenta por favour*

Food & Drink

Lunch (almuerzo) is the big meal of the day. Rice and potatoes are common staples of the diet throughout the country. Local food is usually not spiced, but it's popular to add aji (red pepper sauce) to make it hot. If going to the coast, try some of the interesting coconut dishes.

You should not drink tap water (including ice) unless it's boiled or bottled. Remember, most fruit juices are made with unboiled water. Be careful around dairy products and milk. Hamburger meat is not always safe. Make sure that uncooked vegetables are cleaned with purified water or peeled. Be careful with seafood and avoid undercooked meat. Remember, it's always better to be safe than sorry.

Typical dishes:

Cuy - Whole roasted guinea pig
Locro - A soup of stewed potatoes and cheese topped with avocados
Cacho - A croissant-like pastry
Lechón - Whole roasted pig (also called chancho)
Ceviche - Fish, shrimp, clams or mussels marinated in lemon with popcorn and roasted corn or sliced onions
Humitas - Sweet corn tamales (often served for breakfast with coffee)
Patacones - Fried plantain slices served with fish and rice
Seco Stew - Chicken, beef, lamb or goat served with rice
Yaguarlocro - Potato soup with blood sausage
Llapingachos - Fried mashed potato and cheese pancakes

Remember to let us know before you depart if you have any special dietary requirements.

Drinks

The usual soft drinks as well as local soft drinks and fruit juices are available everywhere (make sure you get jugo puro (pure juice) and not con agua (with water) as the water used is not usually boiled). You will only be able to find decent coffee in the better restaurants. Alcohol-wise the local beers are Club, Pilsener and Malta, which are all good. The local wine, on the other hand, should be avoided; they are often made from bananas! For a less expensive option, go for Chilean, Argentinean or Peruvian wines (rather than European), if it is your tipple of choice. Rum and the local firewater, aguardiente (sugar cane alcohol), are popular and cheap.

Public Holidays

To view a list of the public holidays for Vietnam, please see the link below:

www.timeanddate.com/holidays/ecuador/

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. Many schools, government offices, stores and banks are closed on National Holidays. Please note that there may be slight date variations for some of the holidays each year and that the list is not exhaustive. The Ecuadorian Government have been known to introduce new bank holidays or comemorative days at short notice.

Banks are open from 9am to 1.30pm. Shops are open until 7pm (12pm on Saturdays), but close for lunch from 1pm-3pm.

Weather

Ecuador's climate varies from region to region and can be unpredictable!

Highlands: Rainy season - October to May (heaviest rain in April) with a mini-dry season around Christmas. Dry season - June to October. Quito and Cuenca have spring-like, pleasant temperatures all year round, averaging 15°C-24°C during the day, and 4°C-10°C at night and early in the morning.

Galapágos and Coast: Hot and rainy season is December to May. It doesn't rain all the time but do expect heavy downpours that can cause havoc with communications. Temperatures average around 31°C but it often gets hotter.

The Oriente: Relatively tropical and rain is pretty much a year round constant but temperatures remain high meaning that any time of year is perfect for a visit!

Time

Ecuador is five hours behind GMT and the Galapagos is an hour behind mainland Ecuador.

Electricity

In Ecuador the electric system is 127 Volts and frequency 60 Hertz. If your device does not accept this voltage you will need an adapter.

Outlets in Ecuador generally accept 1 type of plug:

Flat blade plug

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of reommended travel

advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

Phone: 1-800-985-4852
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