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Vietnam Childcare Volunteers

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



Trip Name: Vietnam Childcare Volunteers **Trip Code:** VICWH **Duration:** From 1 week

Trip Highlights

- Work with disadvantaged children, and make them smile!
- Live in the lively Ho Chi Minh
- Explore the city's markets - a typical Vietnamese experience
- Stay at a family run hotel and experience Vietnamese hospitality



Overview

Want to make a difference by working with children abroad? Head to the buzzin' Vietnam to the heart of Ho Chi Minh, and get stuck in with some volunteering work on our childcare projects.

By lending a hand on our projects in Ho Chi Minh, you'll be contributing towards the children's development- by either giving the little ones advice on how to improve their english, by being creative and getting stuck in with arts and crafts or simply by being on hand to dish out extra hugs! The full time carers on site are there to provide stability and a routine, and by being around to provide extra support, you'll be making a massive difference to these children's lives.

Destination Info

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the 13th most populous country in the world and is one of the 'next eleven' economies. Despite its troubled past, Vietnam is a beautiful country and has more than its fair share of stunning coastline (we're not a tiny bit jealous!).

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The Vietnam War undeniably had a huge impact on the country, but nowadays it's a peaceful, fast developing state that it perfect for backpackers to explore. In the north Hanoi and Halong Bay are widely visited, as is Ho Chi Minh, the country's capital- in the south.

Itinerary



Situated within the heart of Ho Chi Minh, our childcare projects are dotted around the city. The children who live at the orphanages are both male and female and range between the ages of 1-18, so if you're looking for a project where you'll be able to interact and volunteer with children of all ages, this one's for you!

As we work with a variety of different orphanages, you'll be helping out at the project which needs a hand at the time. They completely vary in size (50 to 500) but please bare in mind we also help out at orphanages which have children who have special needs, so the main thing is that you're flexible, hard working and eager to help out!



Be prepared to roll your sleeves up Real Gappers, you're certainly going to be kept busy! The children have a routine, and the full time members of staff at the projects are there to provide the children with stability. Really, your most important role will be to give the children love and attention (aka, be prepared to give out lots of cuddles!)- but of course you'll also be on hand to help the children improve their english skills, whilst getting involved with other activities. Arts and crafts are always popular, as is song and dance, and of course- play!

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If you'd like to work at more than one orphanage in another part of Ho Chi Minh, then let our team know and we'll try and sort that out for you!



On the first day of your programme you'll have an ace orientation which will really help you get settled in to life in Ho Chi Minh. The orientation will cover all of the things you need to know- and if you have any burning questions, this'll be your chance to ask them! You'll also get shown around the orphanage and have the chance to become familiar with your new surroundings. Our team are there to help so if you do need any assistance, please feel free to ask!

You'll spend five days a week volunteering, and during the weekends you'll have the time to explore and experience other parts of Vietnamese life. Exciting stuff!

There's so much to see and do in Vietnam, so make sure you make the most of your free time! It's definitely worth taking a wander around the streets of Ho Chi Minh- the streets are busy 24/7 and there's always something to see and do.

Make sure you check out the markets and the gorgeous food... and if you're into your history then the War Remnants museum and FITO museum are always worth a visit!

Accommodation

You'll be staying in a hotel in the main backpacker area of the city (District 1). Real Gappers will share a room with a fellow volunteer (up to 2 people per room) and each room has a private bathroom. There is a lounge area with sofas and a TV for you to relax in the evenings and you are walking distance from the main backpacker area where you will find bars, restaurants and internet cafes- so basically everything you need!

Meals

Food is not included in this trip; you should budget around US\$50 per week for meals based on cheap local food and for Western food or restaurant meals it will be considerably more. It will be around US\$1 for breakfast, \$2 for

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lunch and \$3 for an evening meal based on local food and more for western fare. You will find plenty of places to eat in District 1 from cheap local food to more expensive options.

What's Included

- Accommodation
- Airport Transfer Upon Arrival
- Orientation
- 24/7 emergency support



What's Not Included

- Flights
- Return Airport Transfer
- Tourist Visa



Is This Trip For You?

If you want to get stuck in to some volunteering work and enjoy working with children, then you'll love this project!

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.

Free Time

During your free time, you'll be able to explore as you wish. We really recommend getting to grips with Ho Chi Minh, mainly so you can learn about the Vietnamese culture, and really make the most out of your experience.

Minimum Age

18

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

Arrange your flights to arrive into Ho Chi Minh City Airport (SGN), and if your flight arrives on the start date of the programme, your pick up will be included in the trip cost.

If you can't arrive on the start date, please feel free to discuss an alternative pick up with the Customer Operations team.

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

The official currency is the Vietnam Dong (VND). Coins come in denominations of 200, 500, 1000, 2000 and 5000 Dong. Banknotes in the following values: VND 20,000, 10,000, 500,000, 50,000, 100,000 and 200,000, which exist both in the new polymer form and the old normal paper notes, these should be accepted by most businesses.

Credit cards and the US dollar are accepted in most major cities and tourist centres, though smaller businesses will usually only accept VND in cash. ATMs are only accessible in cities (you are unlikely to find ATMs in rural areas) but only give VND at around a 3% transactional fee.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant 3.96 \$
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) 0.97 \$
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) 0.41 \$
Water (0.33 litre bottle) 0.31 \$

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

You should ensure that you have a full passport that is 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 provided 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.

Most visitors to Vietnam will need a visa with the exception of nationals of Denmark, Finland and Sweden who do not require a visa for stays of less than 15 days. The most common visa is the Tourist Visa, which can be purchased for stays of up to 30 days or 3 months and is available for both single and multiple entries.

More information please contact your nearest Vietnamese embassy.

Cultural Considerations

You will find most Vietnamese people to be very polite and sensitive, with a casual and friendly manner. They tend to be very close to their families. The Vietnamese tend to be very traditional and conservative in their way of life, and as you are stepping into their land it is appropriate to behave in a respectful way towards them.

Clothing

A note to girls, regarding clothes: You will be staying in area where it can be considered impolite to wear the incorrect clothing. Whilst in Hanoi you can pretty much wear what you like within reason. However when travelling around you should wear long trousers or skirts. T-shirts should cover your shoulders and not be too fitted. Vest tops are inappropriate. Wearing appropriate clothing also applies to men, it is best to dress conservatively when unsure.

Flip-flops are the easiest and coolest footwear to take with you. Whenever you enter houses, temples or home stays you will need to remove your shoes and leave them at the door. This will soon become habit and you won't even realise you are doing it. Remember to take some trainers with you as well for the outdoor activities.

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If you are taking part on the teaching option of this project please note that clothes need to cover your shoulders, mid-drift and back. So make sure your tops are quite long.

Smoking, Alcohol

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in Vietnam 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.

Bathroom Facilities

You will experience a range of different shower and toilet facilities. Unless you are staying in a hotel you will rarely have hot water. The cool water takes a little getting used to but I'm sure you'll find it refreshing after a hot and humid day. Toilets will be a combination of western and Asian. Remember to put all toilet tissue in the bin provided and not in the toilet.

Whilst on excursions you will notice that many places do not have a western toilet and will have a typical Asian toilet; again this is all part of the Vietnamese culture. Also, many places do not have soap in the bathrooms. It is a good idea to take a small bottle of soap gel and keep it in your day bag. This is an antibacterial gel that you don't need to rinse off. These are available in chemists in the travel section.

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

As in most countries, there are people in Vietnam who like to take advantage of tourists. So please take the following advice to help keep you safe:

- Always keep your personal items such as passport, money and camera with you or in a safe place. You can buy mini padlocks to prevent people from going into your daypack without your permission.
- Always walk around in groups
- Never go out alone after dark
- Stick with the escorted trips. If you do go out in the evening unescorted, you do so at your own risk. Please tell the co-ordinators where you are going and what time you will be back.

This information is not intended to scare you. Unfortunately bad things can happen like they do in this country and we want you to be prepared. At the end of the day, we want you to stay safe and have a good time.

The majority of the locals are friendly, warm and hospitable people who love meeting foreign travellers. So please be friendly, respectable and stay aware and you will have a great time.

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.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

Traffic

Traffic in Vietnam is very chaotic! Be very careful with the road traffic, even after a few days and be careful not to be too confident. Traffic moves on the right, although drivers frequently cross to the left to pass or turn and motorcycles and bicycles often travel (illegally) against the flow of traffic. Horns are used constantly often for no apparent reason and sudden stops by motorcycles and bicycles make driving a particular hazard.

Language Guide

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

Hello - *Xin chao*

Thank you - *Cam on*

Sorry - *Xin loi*

Yes - *Vang*

No - *Khong*

I - *Toi*

You - *Anh (male)/ Chi (female)*

Good - *tot*

Bad - *Khong tot*

How much - *Bao nhieu*

Too expensive - *Mac qua*

Food & Drink

Vietnamese food takes influence from China, India, Thailand and France but also has a very distinct cuisine of its own. Food tends to be light and subtle but with a good amount of flavour thanks to the fact that herbs and seasoning are favoured over sauces. Rice is the staple of the cuisine, though noodles are a tasty alternative, which will accompany meat or fish dishes or a vegetable dish. Fish in general is very popular, probably due to the extremely long coastline.

Fresh seasonings are favoured and food tends to not be too spicy, though you can use the accompanying chillies to spice it up if you wish and the use of coconut milk makes food extra rich! The most popular and infamous seasoning is nuoc mam, a sauce made from fermenting fish in salt for a long time, whereas the most famous dish are spring rolls, which tend to differ slightly in the North and the South of the country. Cities tend to have better food than remote locations and western tastes are also well catered for, especially in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh.

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from Vietnamese who use long weekends to get away from the big city.

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

www.worldtravelguide.net/vietnam/public-holidays

Weather

Vietnam's climate is varied as the country itself, ranging from tropical heat in the Mekong Delta to chilly, and sometimes snowy, winters in the northern hills. Year round temperatures average at about 25°C, soaring to a balmy 40°C in the south during the dry season. The biggest thing to watch out for are the monsoons, the winter monsoon hits between October and March and gives the north a few months of wet weather. The summer monsoon usually comes in April or May and stays until October, bringing heat and humidity to all areas not sheltered by mountains. This makes the months of April, May or October the best to travel.

Time

Vietnam is 7 hours ahead of GMT.

Electricity

Electricity in Vietnam is generally 220 Volts and frequency 50 Hertz, though outlets with 127 Volts can still be found in some areas. You will need to either bring devices that accept 220 Volts at 50 Hertz or you will need an adapter. Outlets in Vietnam generally accept 3 types of plug:

Flat blade plug



or

Two round pins



or

Two parallel flat pins with ground pin



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 we make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended 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.

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