



BUILDING **BRIDGES**
TO NEW **HOMES**
AND **HOPE**

Volunteer Handbook



August 4 – 10, 2013

Tien Giang Province, Vietnam

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Welcome from Habitat for Humanity Vietnam



Dear volunteers,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Vietnam. We are excited about your commitment to partner with us in the Mekong Big Builds to work alongside families in need of decent housing, and safe water and sanitation facilities.

Tien Giang is located north of the Mekong Delta, alongside the Tien River. It is bordered by Long An province and Ho Chi Minh City to the north and northeast and Dong Thap province to the west. Tien Giang is prone to flooding each year and many families who live in thatched houses with dirt floors simply cannot afford to make the constant and costly home repairs. The Mekong Big Builds will assist 25 families build new homes of their own; many will be having secure, decent houses for the first time in their lives. Whereas before these families were living in insecure, degraded and substandard housing and lacking access to clean sanitation, this building project—with your support—will help transform lives and a community. The homes will use disaster-resilient construction such as raised foundations as a preventative measure against flooding and be environmentally sound with ventilation features designed to reduce electricity consumption.

But more importantly, you are not just building a house; you are building a home which will provide a family with stability, dignity and hope for a brighter future.

I wish you a very safe and inspiring time while you are with HFH Vietnam and the Mekong Big Builds. I thank each and every one of you for your support in creating a world where everyone has a decent place to live.”

Thank you! *Cảm ơn bạn rất nhiều!*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Koch".

Kelly Koch
Country Director

A. Maps Vietnam



B. Country Information

Vietnam is officially called the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia, bordering China, Laos and Cambodia. With a population of more than 91 million people, Vietnam is the most populous country among the mainland Southeast Asian countries. The capital Hanoi is located in the north.

The country is approximately 331,688 square kilometers (128,066 square miles) in area, which is slightly smaller than Germany. To the east and south lies the East Sea. Mountains and hills cover four-fifths of Vietnam's territory with the Truong Son range stretching over 1,400 km. The northern part of the country consists mostly of highlands and the Red River Delta. Mount Fansipan, located in Lao Cai province, is the highest peak on mainland Southeast Asia at 3,143 meters (10,312 feet). The south is divided into coastal lowlands, Annamite Chain (central mountains) with high plateaus, and the Mekong River Delta.

The most populated areas in Vietnam are the Red River Delta in the north and the Mekong River Delta in the south, which form around Vietnam's two largest rivers. Vietnam's 3,444 km coastline features beautiful beaches like Tra Co, Lang Co, Nha Trang, Vung Tau, and Ha Tien. National parks include Ba Vi, Cat Ba, and Cuc Phuong in the north, Ke Bang, Bach Ma in the center, and Cat Tien in the south.

Tien Giang is located in the southwest of Vietnam. It is one of nine provinces in the Mekong River Delta. It is bordered by Long An province and Ho Chi Minh City to the north and northeast; Ben Tre province to the south, Dong Thap province to the west and 32 km away from the South China Sea to the east. The province is home to Tien and Vam Co Tay rivers which provide good conditions to develop aquaculture. The terrain is divided into three distinct regions: orchards along the banks of Tien river, plains and seaside.

The population of Tien Giang comprises Kinh (ethnic Vietnamese), who account for 90 percent of the province's dwellers, and Cham (ethnic minority descended from the Hindu kingdom of Champa), Hoa (ethnic Chinese) and Khmer (ethnic Cambodian).

Tien Giang is located in a humid, tropical area. It has two main seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season is from May to November and the dry season lasts from December to April next year.

History

A brief history of Vietnam is as follows:

Pre-history: From 400,000 years (Paleolithic) to 4,000 years (Neolithic) ago, cultures in the area included Son Vi, Hoa Binh, Bac Son, Ha Long, and Hoa Loc.

Proto-history: According to legend, Vietnam originated in the seventh century B.C. when the Hung Kings founded the state of Van Lang. In the third century BC, King An Duong founded the Au Lac state and ruled until Chinese domination in 111 B.C. From the second century B.C. until 938 A.D., Vietnam was occupied and ruled by various Chinese dynasties.

Monarchy: From 938 to 1884, Vietnam was ruled by successive Vietnamese feudal dynasties.

French domination: France occupied Vietnam from 1884 to 1945.

Independence: The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was founded after the 1945 August Revolution, when President Ho Chi Minh declared independence. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam has been the official name since 1976.

French War: Vietnam battled French colonialism from 1858 until the August Revolution in 1945 and from 1946 until the victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

American War: Vietnam fought American forces from 1955 until Ho Chi Minh's victory on April 30, 1975.

From 1975 until now: Vietnam has been working toward development and success.

Time Zone

Vietnam has one time zone and is seven hours ahead of GMT: GMT/UTC +7

Currency

The local currency is the Vietnamese dong. The current exchange rate is US\$1 = 20,800 dong (approx.) Exchange rates can be obtained from www.oanda.com. Vietnamese currency denominations are 1,000; 2,000; 5,000; 10,000; 20,000; 50,000; 100,000 and 500,000. You can exchange your home currency into dong at money changers when you arrive at the international airport in Ho Chi Minh City or at money changers or banks in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. You can also ask staff at the hotel where you are staying for help if necessary. Western Unions, banks and ATMs are found throughout the cities of Vietnam. Credit card acceptance, especially for Visa, is becoming more common in higher-end hotels, restaurants, and shops in big cities. However, it is not advisable to rely on credit cards as they are not accepted in rural areas.

Climate

Vietnam's climate varies a great deal from north to south. Northern Vietnam has four distinct seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. In the north, summers are hot while winters are cool and misty. Southern Vietnam is hot all year-round, with temperatures typically varying by just three degrees Celsius. Tropical monsoons occur from May to October in the north and south, and from September to January in central Vietnam.

Economy

Vietnam joined the World Trade Organization in November 2006 and is presently the second fastest-growing economy in Asia. About 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas and works in agriculture. Although Vietnam is classified as a lower middle income country by WTO, more than 33 million people still live on less than US\$2 per day. (Source: World Bank)



Photo: HFH Vietnam

Culture

Officially, 80 percent of the population has no religious belief. Major spiritual influences in Vietnam are growing and these include Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and native religions (ancestor worship and mother goddess worship). Christianity arrived in the late 18th century and now has the second largest following after Buddhism. Other religions practiced include Islam and Cao Dai.

There are 54 ethnic groups living in Vietnam. The Kinh (or ethnic Vietnamese) people account for 88 percent of the country's population and are mostly concentrated in the lowlands. Most of the 5.5 million people from ethnic minority groups live in the mountainous areas. These groups include the Tay; the Nung; the Thai; the Muong; the H'mong; the Dao; the Hoa; the Khmer; the Bana; the Gia-rai; and the Ede.

Vietnamese is spoken by the majority of the people while students have to learn English in schools. French is still spoken by some older people but is losing its popularity. In recent years, Chinese, Japanese and English have become the most popular foreign languages.

Food

Vietnamese cuisine is very healthy and flavorful, using very little oil and many vegetables. Rice, soy sauce, and fish sauce are the staples of Vietnamese meals. The characteristic flavors are sweet (sugar), spicy (serrano peppers), sour (lime) and savory (fish sauce) enhanced by a variety of mint and basil.

A typical meal is *pho*, a noodle soup that can be eaten any time of the day especially for breakfast. Spring rolls served fresh or fried are a specialty. They are often eaten as a snack and served with *nuoc mam* (fish sauce). There is a great variety of fresh vegetables but ensure they are washed with bottled or filtered water. Do not eat fruit unless you have peeled it yourself.

Chopsticks are used though spoons and forks are usually available.



Photo: HFH Vietnam

Coffee is enjoyed throughout the day and can be served iced or hot. A splash of condensed milk is usually served with your coffee so there is no need to add sugar! Please note that those who are not used to Vietnamese coffee may find it too strong. We recommend that you do not drink fresh milk because it may not be pasteurized. Soft drinks are also readily available.

Please do not drink from the tap. It is recommended that you drink only bottled water which can be purchased from supermarkets, sidewalk vendors, restaurants, cafes, some hotel lobbies and convenience stores. Not all hotels provide complimentary bottles of water in the room.

Electricity



The voltage in Vietnam is 220V / 50Hz. There is a variety of sockets used in different buildings, so it is best to bring a universal adapter.

Entertainment

Cinemas: There are several movie houses in Ho Chi Minh City screening English language films but no such amenities in Tien Giang.

Shopping: Ho Chi Minh City is an excellent shopping destination with many markets, department stores and street vendors selling lacquer ware, dishes, paintings and clothing. Ben Thanh Market is a popular tourist shopping center specializing in all kinds of goods. Don't forget to bargain for the best price on shoes, clothes, handbags and souvenirs! Saigon Square, Saigon Tax Centre, Diamond Plaza, Cho Lon Market and Dong Khoi Street are also popular with shoppers.

Shopping is best done in Ho Chi Minh City though you may find some knick knacks in Tien Giang which is largely rural.

Restaurants: There is a good variety of international cuisines available in Ho Chi Minh City with enough choices to suit every taste. Food is reasonably priced and well prepared.



Photo: HFH Vietnam

Safety and Security

Travelling in Vietnam is relatively safe; however, there are certain nuisances and hazards which tourists need to be aware of. Most crime is opportunistic so you can take measures to reduce risk. When out shopping, it is advisable to buy products from established shops. Never take a tour with someone you meet on the street. Always go through an official tour agency/office. Taxis are not required to have a meter; so we advise using Mai Linh or Vinasun taxis. Ask the staff at your hotel's front desk to help you call for a taxi or to negotiate the rate and to help organize other transportation that you might need outside of the Mekong Big Builds schedule.

Make a photocopy of your passport and keep it in a separate place from the original, preferably on you. Keep your valuables stored in the hotel's safe deposit box. Your passport will be kept by the hotel until you are ready to check out because this is Vietnamese protocol. Don't worry, it's safe! Do not bring items of any significant value as you may risk losing them if you are not attentive.

It is advisable to register your travel details with your respective embassy or consulate. Give your contact details in Vietnam to a friend or family member.

Do's

- Be patient. Vietnamese people do things at a different pace. No matter how frustrating things can get, don't lose your temper. Showing anger is seen as a sign of weakness.
- Be flexible, especially during the build week when tasks may be changed.
- Always check that a bottle of water is properly sealed before opening it to drink.
- Dress modestly to respect others and the culture.
- Always ask before you take someone's photo and ask for their permission again before snapping a picture. If you wish to photograph or film a child, first seek the parent's or guardian's permission.
- Remove your shoes when entering someone's home. Wearing sandals or other easily removable footwear makes it easy to observe this tradition.
- Once your bottle of water is open, keep it near you or label it with your name so others do not use it. This also cuts down on unnecessary wastage of water.
- If you would like someone to come over to you, motion with your whole hand held palm down.
- If you use a toothpick after a meal, it is considered polite to cover your open mouth with one hand while picking the teeth.

Don'ts

- Avoid discussions on religion, politics or the Vietnam and United States war.
- Do not litter and refuse plastic shopping bags whenever possible.
- Do not wear tight or revealing clothing. It is always best to be more covered than not, especially within Tien Giang and rural areas. Male volunteers are requested not to take off their shirts at the work site even if it is hot.
- Do not take pictures of government offices and temples.
- Do not touch people you do not know well as this may be seen as disrespectful. Intimate gestures between the sexes are not appropriate in public.
- Pointing can be offensive. Never point your finger or the soles of your feet toward a person. Extend a flat hand to bring attention to a place, person or item.



Photos: HFH Vietnam

Communication

You can find internet cafes in most parts of Vietnam including Tien Giang. Prices usually range from US\$0.50 to US\$1 an hour. You can make international calls at post offices around the country. Long-distance calls can also be made from your hotel for a fee. Alternatively, you can buy a local SIM card for your cell phone from shops in Ho Chi Minh City or Tien Giang. Make sure that you first unlock your cell phone.

Greetings and Gestures

The traditional greeting is to press one's palms together in a prayer-like gesture and bow. Nowadays, the practice of shaking hands has become more widespread. Please note that it is considered culturally unacceptable for a male to embrace a female companion in public.

Tourist Attractions

Vietnam is one of the oldest countries in Southeast Asia and offers an interesting variety of historical sites and cultural experiences. The major centers for tourism are:

- Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, is in the far north and boasts both colonial and traditional architecture as well as museums, temples and a tradition of puppetry. Other regions of interest in the north are Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with 3,000 islands, and the mountain village of Sapa with its spectacular scenery.
- In central Vietnam, visit the Imperial City of Hue and enjoy the relaxing old world atmosphere of Hoi An. China Beach, Danang and the Cham ruins in My Son are also of interest. The best beaches are found on the south central coast and include Nha Trang, Mui Ne and Phan Thiet. Dalat, known as the honeymoon capital, is located in the central mountainous region and has a cooler climate for growing coffee, tea and flowers.
- The gateway to the southern region is Ho Chi Minh City, a bustling economic center with good shopping and a big city buzz about it.
- Cai Be, a district in the west of Tien Giang, is an important center for the distribution of agricultural products, especially tropical fruit for the region and the whole country. Cai Be resembles a miniature Mekong Delta in its river networks, floating market, cultural charms and warm hospitality.

More information on Vietnam can be found on sites such as www.lonelyplanet.com.

If you wish to take a tour of Vietnam before or after the Mekong Big Build, our volunteer coordinator can assist by providing contact details of some tour operators in Ho Chi Minh City.

C. About us



Photos: HFH Vietnam

Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing organization dedicated to eliminating poverty housing and homelessness in the world, and to making a decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat was founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a simple, decent, affordable place to live in dignity and safety regardless of race or religion. Habitat welcomes volunteers and supporters from all walks of life to work together in partnership to help build houses with families in need. Since 1976, Habitat has served more than 600,000 families by building and improving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions.

Our Vision

A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Mission Statement

Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

Mission Principles

1. *Demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ.*

We undertake our work to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus, acting in all ways in accord with the belief that God's love and grace abound for all, and that we must be "hands and feet" of that love and grace in our world. We believe that, through faith, the miniscule can be multiplied to accomplish the magnificent, and that, in faith; respectful relationships can grow among all people.

2. Focus on shelter.

We have chosen, as our means of manifesting God's love, to create opportunities for all people to live in decent, durable shelter. We put faith into action by helping to build, renovate or preserve homes, and by partnering with others to accelerate and broaden access to affordable housing as a foundation for breaking the cycle of poverty.

3. Advocate for affordable housing.

In response to the prophet Micah's call to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God, we promote decent, affordable housing for all, and we support the global community's commitment to housing as a basic human right. We will advocate for just and fair housing policy to eliminate the constraints that contribute to poverty housing. And, in all of our work, we will seek to put shelter on hearts and minds in such powerful ways that poverty housing becomes socially, politically and religiously unacceptable.

4. Promote dignity and hope.

We believe that no one lives in dignity until everyone can live in dignity. We believe that every person has something to contribute and something to gain from creating communities in which all people have decent, affordable places to live. We believe that dignity and hope are best achieved through equitable, accountable partnerships.

5. Support sustainable and transformational development.

We view our work as successful when it transforms lives and promotes positive and lasting social, economic and spiritual change within a community; when it is based on mutual trust and fully shared accomplishment; and when it demonstrates responsible stewardship of all resources entrusted to us.

Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal of Habitat for Humanity is to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the face of the earth by building adequate and basic housing. Furthermore, all our words and actions are for the ultimate purpose of putting shelter on the hearts and minds of people in such a powerful way that poverty housing and homelessness become socially, politically and religiously unacceptable in our nations and world.



Photo: HFH Vietnam

Habitat for Humanity Vietnam

HFH Vietnam is a branch office of Habitat for Humanity International and began operations in 2001 in Da Nang in the central coastal region of the country. HFH Vietnam serves families in several ways: through new houses or house repairs or upgrades; access to water and sanitation facilities; and assistance with obtaining secure land tenure; and technical support. HFH Vietnam mobilizes resources (construction materials, labor and financing) to provide support to economically marginalized households who are willing to partner by physically participating in their home construction and paying toward the cost, typically through a housing microfinance mechanism. Since 2001, HFH Vietnam has helped support over 11,400 families with construction interventions such as building new homes, repairing houses and repairing and/or upgrading water and sanitation facilities. HFH Vietnam has also provided over 51,200 individuals with technical training.

HFH Vietnam has won recognition from the Vietnamese government and its partners for providing decent, affordable housing. Habitat currently has projects in Hai Duong, Thai Binh and Hoa Binh provinces in the north; and Dong Nai, Long An, Tien Giang, Ba Ria–Vung Tau and Kien Giang provinces in the south. Disaster response projects have been undertaken in Ha Tinh and Dong Thap provinces as well as in central Quang Nam province. HFH Vietnam has offices in the cities of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Rach Gia; and Que Son in Quang Nam.

To learn more about HFH Vietnam and for regular updates on the Mekong Big Builds – Vietnam, please visit www.habitatvietnam.org.



Photo: HFH Vietnam

D. Mekong Big Builds 2013 — Vietnam

Habitat for Humanity Vietnam with its local partners will provide low-income families with decent homes and sanitation facilities to help break the cycle of poverty in Tien Giang province, south of Ho Chi Minh City. The province is prone to disasters such as flooding and drought. Many families, who are living from hand-to-mouth, have hardly any money to make house repairs after disasters, let alone have savings to build secure homes. In August 2013, the Mekong Big Builds will bring together Habitat volunteers and 25 families to build new homes in Cho Gao district. Tien Giang, which means “The River in Front”, is located in the Mekong Delta region in southern Vietnam. The province is divided into distinct fruit-growing, lowland and coastal regions.

With people from rural areas seeking better job opportunities in the cities, increasing urbanization in Vietnam has led to a lack of access to basic facilities such as toilets and clean water; shortage of decent housing; and environmental pollution. The week-long Mekong Big Builds will see approximately 300 international volunteers—just like you—join Habitat partner families to build 25 houses in Cho Gao district, Tien Giang. You will be helping HFH Vietnam to support economically marginalized households to live in security and dignity along with improved social status through quality housing and community capacity-building.

Before you arrive

Travel arrangements: Volunteer travel arrangements will be coordinated through team leaders and your local Habitat for Humanity office.

Passport and visa requirements: All international volunteers must travel with their passports. Remember that your passport should be valid for six months after August 2013.

Please check with your local consulate or embassy for the most updated information on visas to Vietnam.

Immunizations and health reminders: Contact your doctor and/or visit the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention website at cdc.gov/travel for traveler’s health information, recommended preparations and vaccinations.

Medical insurance: All international volunteers are required to have appropriate travel insurance. This mandatory insurance coverage is recommended by Habitat for Humanity International’s legal department and provides protection for Habitat for Humanity volunteers.

Packing suggestions: We would advise that you travel light and bring only what is necessary for the trip.

Recommended attire includes:

- Work-appropriate footwear such as work boots or closed-toe shoes.
- Long pants for the build site. Shorts are not recommended for men and women
- Lightweight cotton T-shirts with sleeves that cover the shoulders.
- Wide-brimmed hat (a small towel, dampened in cold water, will also provide some relief from the heat).
- Sturdy protective gloves (HFH Vietnam will provide volunteers with cotton gloves).
- Wet wipes (useful for wiping off perspiration before re-applying sunscreen).
- Insect repellent to protect yourself from insect bites and calamine lotion for skin rashes or irritation.
- High SPF sunscreen anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, lip balm.
- Voltage converter and adaptor plugs (e.g. A, C, G). Standard voltage in Vietnam is 220V.
- For prescription medicine, please carry it with you and do not leave it in your carry-on luggage.

Habitat for Humanity's gift-giving policy: During the build week, you may want to give gifts to the families you work with, but it is important that you realize the negative impact a gift can have on Habitat for Humanity's greater goal of empowering families and communities. Habitat provides opportunities, not a hand-out. Gift-giving creates dependence rather than a sense of responsibility and motivation. It may also lead to tensions within a community between those who receive gifts and those who do not. Habitat for Humanity has more than 30 years of experience working in these situations; the most powerful contribution you can give to the families is additional funds for Habitat to build more homes.

All donations should be given directly to HFH Vietnam for equitable distribution.



Photos: HFH Vietnam

Upon Arrival

Early arrivals: The Mekong Big Builds event officially begins on Sunday, 4 August 2013. International volunteers should try to arrive on 3 August (Saturday) in Ho Chi Minh City.

If you arrive earlier than 3 August, please make your own arrangements for accommodation and airport transfers. Please ensure your team leader is notified of your whereabouts and the time you will report to the allocated hotel for the build.

At the airport: You will arrive at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City. After arrival you will first pass through immigration where your visa will be checked. The process takes very little time and is hassle-free provided you already have your visa. You will need to collect your checked-in luggage downstairs after passing through customs. Please make sure that you keep the luggage stamps for exiting. You may need to get your baggage examined through the X-ray machine before you get to the arrival lounge.

There are currency exchange counters after the baggage claim area. Please note they do not accept debit or credit cards, only cash exchange.

It can be very busy when you arrive at the airport and there may be many people offering to take you into the city or carry your bags. We advise you not to take up these offers.

When you arrive on 3 August, you will be received by an HFH Vietnam representative holding a Habitat sign at Column 13-14 of the airport and be directed to your pre-arranged transportation to the hotel.

If you are arriving before 3 August, we suggest that you take a taxi from one of these companies: Mai Linh taxi company (green and white cabs) or the Vinasun taxi company (green, red and white). Their taxi fares will be by the meter and the taxi drivers also know their way around the city.

To get to the taxi queue, walk out of the international terminal, turn right and walk about 200 meters to the domestic terminal. Opposite the domestic terminal is a car park where you will see a green umbrella. Wait underneath the umbrella for either a Mai Linh or Vinasun taxi.

It will take 20-30 minutes from the airport to the city center and cost around 180,000 to 200,000 dong (about US\$8.50 to US\$9.50).

Meals

The meals covered as part of the event begin with the welcome dinner on 4 August (Sunday) until breakfast on 10 August (Saturday). Meals before the welcome dinner on 4 August are at your own cost. A list of recommended restaurants will be provided when you check in at the hotel. Meals vary in price, ranging from an average of US\$10 to US\$15, but most are very affordable.

Breakfast will be at your hotel every morning. Lunch will be at the build site. Dinner will be at the hotel or surrounding restaurants throughout the week. During the build week, there will be two dinners—on 6 August (Tuesday) and 8 August (Thursday)—which you have to arrange for at your own cost (*a list of recommended restaurants will be included in the welcome pack*). Water will be available on-site and at your hotel (if it provides complimentary bottles of water) at all times. Please use bottled water conscientiously. This water is available for drinking purposes only. There will be hand-washing stations available at the site.

Transport to Tien Giang

There will be two (2) departure times for buses leaving from Ho Chi Minh City to Tien Giang on Sunday afternoon, 4 August—one at 1pm and the other at 3pm. For those volunteers who will be arriving in Ho Chi Minh City after 4 August, HFH Vietnam can assist with private airport transfer directly to Tien Giang at your own cost. It takes approximately 1.5 to 2 hours to reach Tien Giang.

Transport to and from the build site

Transport from your accommodation to the build site and vice versa will be provided. The travel time will take approximately 20-30 minutes for a one-way trip.



Asphalt road to the build site



Rural track to home partners' houses

Accommodation

Lodging will be arranged for seven (7) nights: one (1) night in Ho Chi Minh City and six (6) nights in Tien Giang.

Your accommodation in Ho Chi Minh City will be in District One in the center of the city. Rooms will be simple twin-share.

In Tien Giang, the volunteers will be staying at several hotels that are within five-minute walking distance from each other. The rooms will be simple, basic and twin-share. While hot water is available, please be aware that the temperature may drop quickly depending on the number of hotel guests who are using it. There may be short power outages so it's best to keep torchlight handy. A small safe, usually kept in the hotel's office, will be available for the use of the volunteer team. Wifi is also available in your hotel; however, once again, this may be limited at times due to power outages and connectivity may be weak at different times of the day/night. Internet cafes are numerous in District One.

You will be allocated a hotel and a room closer to the date of departure. If there are any changes to your room allocation, you will be advised upon your arrival in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, it is common practice for hotels to hold on to the passports of their guests after they have checked in. Hotels are required to let the government know who their guests are. ***Passports will be returned to guests when they check out.***

Check-in and Orientation

Official hotel check-in starts on 3 August (Saturday) and 4 August (Sunday). You will receive a welcome pack containing a daily schedule, important phone numbers, event T-shirt, name tag and more on the first day in Ho Chi Minh City or Tien Giang.

The Build Week

Itinerary for the week

The build week officially starts with a welcome reception on the evening of 4 August (Sunday). Construction work begins on 5 August (Monday) and will conclude in the afternoon on 9 August (Friday) with house dedications and a farewell dinner.

Build week schedule

Please note that the following is only an indicative schedule.

| Date | Activity |
|-------------------------|--|
| Saturday, 3 Aug | Arrive in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam Check-in Ho Chi Minh hotel (as advised by Habitat staff) No formal activities scheduled / Free time Dinner on your own |
| Sunday, 4 Aug | 11.00 am: Hotel check out 12.00 pm: Lunch on your own Afternoon: Team leaves Ho Chi Minh City and travel to Tien Giang by bus Check-in Tien Giang hotel (as advised by Habitat staff) 6.00 pm — Welcome Dinner |
| Monday, 5 Aug | Day One Daily schedule 6.30 am–7.30 am: Breakfast 7.30 am: Bus pick-up from hotel 8.00 am: Arrive at build site 12.00 pm: Lunch 4.30 pm: Depart from build site 6.30 pm: Depart hotel for dinner at advised restaurant |
| Tuesday, 6 Aug | Day Two Daily schedule is the same as Day One (dinner on your own) |
| Wednesday, 7 Aug | Day Three Daily schedule is the same as Day One |
| Thursday, 8 Aug | Day Four Daily schedule is the same as Day One (dinner on your own) |
| Friday, 9 Aug | Day Five (final day on build site) <i>Build for half day</i> House dedication and “thank you” to our home partner communities Farewell dinner; end of formal events for the build |
| Saturday, 10 Aug | Breakfast Check-out hotel (you will need to check out of your room and pay for any extra services that have been provided) Team departs Tien Giang for Ho Chi Minh City Build week concludes |

Safety and security at the build site

Volunteers will assist with completing the construction of 25 new homes. Volunteers will be involved in some, but not necessarily all of the following activities on-site; transporting materials to the build site, laying bricks, mixing mortar, compacting floors, cleaning and painting window and door frames, and mixing plaster etc.

Safety at the build site is our top construction priority. Volunteers with every possible level of construction skills will be working around you at all times. Taking this into account, it is each and every volunteer's responsibility to be patient and sensitive. By following these tips, we can ensure that the week will run smoothly and safely.

- Always be mindful of safety. Above all, know your limits and do not push yourself too hard. Think before you act, and consider the risks that are involved in all that you do. Also, use the 'buddy system'—volunteers should keep an eye on each other. If you notice that your 'buddy' looks ill, help him or her to a place to rest and tell your crew leader. Get medical attention if necessary. If you are unsure how to perform a task, do not hesitate to call upon your crew leader, who will be happy to assist you. Crew leaders and house leaders should make sure that no one is doing work that is inappropriate for their age, strength and skill level.
- Dress with safety in mind. Clothes should fit comfortably but should not be baggy (long sleeves should be buttoned). Volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes on the site. Please do not wear jewelry on the site.
- Survey the area before you start working. Look around your feet and overhead for obstacles and potential hazards. Organize the work space within your reach. Be especially careful when carrying long objects, such as lumber, so as not to hit other people. Keep your eyes open for excavations, openings, edges of slabs and slippery areas. If an area looks unsafe, report it to your crew leader immediately.
- A clean site is a safe site. You should make sure that trash is kept contained. Keep track of your tools. If you see something that does not belong, please put it in a safe spot. Tools should not be placed above people's heads (such as on top of a wall or on a ladder).
- Exercise caution on roofs and ladders. Be aware that you can be severely injured by a fall from even a low height. You should be particularly careful when working at a height of six feet (1.8 meters) or more. When using a ladder, do not use the top two steps, and have a partner hold the ladder to keep it steady. Only one person should go up the ladder at a time. Ladders should be properly stabilized. If the ladder is unbalanced, dig down the higher side to make the ground level, rather than putting a block under the lower side. When working on the roof, move slowly and carefully. Be careful with tools and other objects so they do not fall off.

- Take care when lifting and carrying. When lifting, stand close to the load, bend your knees, grasp firmly and then lift by straightening your legs. Keep your body vertical. Get help with heavy or long loads. Do not lift beyond your strength. Select the correct tool for your work. Carry only what you need.
- Always speak up for safety's sake! If something looks unsafe, speak up so that it can be corrected immediately. Report all injuries and accidents to a house or crew leader.
- First-aid is available. Medical care is available on the build site at all times. If you cannot walk to the first-aid station, have a staff member or your house leader contact the first-aid personnel and they will come to you.

In-country Emergency Contact Numbers

Emergency Police (dialing from Tien Giang):..... +84 (0) 73 113

Emergency Ambulance (dialing from Tien Giang): +84 (0) 73 115

Emergency Fire (dialing from Tien Giang): +84 (0) 73 114

Medex:..... 0014104536330

Habitat for Humanity Vietnam:

➤ Ho Chi Minh City office: 53/10 Tran Khanh Du Street, Tan Dinh Ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City. Tel: +84 (8) 3526 5005

- **Binh** Nguyen (Mr) Senior Program Manager Mobile: +84 (0) 918.769.850
- **Mai Anh** Ho (Ms) Volunteer Program Manager Mobile: +84 (0) 122.889.7879
- **Xuan** Ngo (Ms) Volunteer Program Coordinator Mobile: +84 (0) 906.786.803
- **Kelly** Koch (Ms) Country Director Mobile: +84 (0) 902.311.172

E. Appendix

Basic Vietnamese Phrases

The Vietnamese are delighted when foreigners try to speak their language—even if it is only a few words. Locals will be happy with your efforts and eager to teach you.

Greetings

| English | Vietnamese | Pronunciation |
|-----------|------------|---------------|
| Hello | Xin chao | Sin jòw |
| Goodbye | Tam biet | Dum beet |
| Thank you | Cam on | Kàmem |
| Yes | Vang | Vang |
| No | Khong | Kom |
| Please | Lam on | Làmem |
| Excuse me | Xin loi | Sin lǒee |

Consulates in Ho Chi Minh City

Embassies are located in Hanoi. Below is a list of some of the consulates in Ho Chi Minh City. For further information, please contact your local consulate or embassy before you leave home.

Australian Consulate

5th Floor, the Landmark Building
5B Ton Duc Thang, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Telephone: +84 (8) 3521 8100
Fax: +84 (8) 3521 8101
Website: <http://www.hcmc.vietnam.embassy.gov.au/hchi/home.html>

Canadian Consulate

The Metropolitan Building, Suite 1002
235 Dong Khoi Street, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel: +84 (8) 3827 9899
Fax: +84 (8) 3827 9937
Website: <http://www.vietnam.gc.ca>

Japan Consulate

13-17 Nguyen Hue
District 1, Ho Chi Minh City
Tel: +84 (8) 3822 5314
Fax: +84 (8) 3282 25316
Website: <http://www.hcmc.gj.vn.emb-japan.go.jp/>

Korean Consulate

107 Nguyen Du
District 1, Ho Chi Minh
Tel: +84 (8) 3824 8531
Fax: +84 (8) 3822 5750
Website: vnm-hochiminh.mofat.go.kr

New Zealand Consulate-General

Suite 804, Level 8, The Metropolitan Building
235 Dong Khoi Street
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel: + 84 (8) 3822 6907
Fax: +84 (8) 3822 6905
Website: <http://www.nzembassy.com/vietnam/about-the-embassy/contact-us>

US Consulate

4 Le Duan Blvd., District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel: + 84 (8) 3520 4200
Fax: +84 (8) 3520 4244
Website: <http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/>