

## PERU CONSTRUCTION & COMMUNITY PROJECT

- Join us on our longest running project in the heart of one of Latin America's largest shanty-towns – Villa Maria.
- Help build much needed homes for families who currently live in shacks
- Assist with after-school activities for local disadvantaged children
- Work in our primary school giving essential support to the local teachers

Families who come to Villa Maria with literally nothing are forced to find an area to build a shelter, making it with any spare piece of material available – cardboard, plywood, plastic - anything to help keep out the elements. In time, the Peruvian government will help by granting the family title deeds to the land they are on, but there is no support to actually help them improve the home itself.

If you want to make a real and tangible difference to those who need it most, join Quest Overseas on this incredibly worthwhile project, helping to build homes for the most disadvantaged families in Villa Maria. No construction skills are necessary; all you need is plenty of energy and enthusiasm!

**Activities:** Building simple but sturdy houses for disadvantaged families, sourcing local building supplies, playing with and supervising children after-school, organizing family fun-days, small-scale infrastructure projects e.g. repainting kindergarten facilities.

**For:** Gap Year and university students.

**Duration:** 4 weeks

**Departs:** Mid to late July each year; contact the office for more details.

**Cost:** £1000 + £700 project donation.  
*Includes all accommodation, food, travel insurance (excluding baggage), in-country travel, local tipping, airport transfers, in country support, contribution to your project to cover short and medium-term costs and long-term ongoing support. Excludes international flights.*



## Project details

Villa Maria is Quest Overseas' longest running project with nearly ten years under its belt. The project focuses on improving the lives of children and families within the communities of Villa Maria. During the school holidays the project offers the children a much-needed programme of cultural and recreational activities and during term time it offers educational support to build bonds within communities whilst helping to prevent them from becoming victims of poverty and drug abuse. The project has now been extended to include the construction of simple, pre-fabricated houses for some of Villa Maria's most needy families.

## Project History

In 1996 Michael Amphlet (Quest Overseas Founder and Director) met Alejandro Menéndez, who was then an outreach worker for an organisation called CEDRO that was working to help young people escape the prevalent drugs culture in deprived areas of Lima. Alejandro saw the need for projects that worked with children before they became involved in drugs, or ended up on the streets - a project that could provide alternative activities for young, bored children. Unfortunately CEDRO simply did not have the funding to target this population, and this is where Quest came in.

As the years have passed and the project has grown, so have the relationships with the communities themselves. This in turn gives the project greater scope and potential, and we have been able to work alongside the communities to establish where the greatest areas of need are, and how our (and your) support can best be focused. One particular area of need is that of providing adequate housing for some of the more disadvantaged families within the communities. Each community rallies round to give support to the poorest families in the area (generally abandoned single mothers with many children) but of course the amount of support they can provide is limited. This is where Quest Overseas volunteers come in.

As well as their time, volunteers will also bring a financial commitment to Villa Maria in the form of volunteer donations (that all volunteers make) that provide short and long term resources (to buy building materials, paints for faces, footballs, skipping ropes, maintain the complex, and help to fund the nursery school) that make your and Quest's involvement in Villa Maria a genuine and long term commitment.

## Where?

With a population of over 8 million Lima is the capital and largest city in Peru. It lies on a coastal desert alongside the Pacific Ocean and is the cultural, industrial, financial, and transport hub of the country. Volunteers will live in the heart of Villa Maria, shopping in the same markets as the locals and experiencing a side to Peru that most tourists are oblivious to.

## Spanish

Volunteers do not need to speak any Spanish, although learning some before you depart will certainly enhance your experience.

## Food and Drink

There is a two-ring gas stove, which you can use to prepare meals each day. Volunteers eat as the locals do, shopping at the colourful food market. Food is generally simple and you will be cooking as a team, learning Latin American recipes with the most basic and traditional ingredients. Whilst living in the school building, you are likely to be sharing the cooking with the local staff, some of whom also live in the school. Bottled water is readily found in shops outside of the complex but volunteers must still remember to bring water purification.

## Accommodation

Volunteers stay in the Quest Overseas pre-school building, in the heart of Villa Maria. The building is comprised of three storeys, with the first two storeys being the school itself and the third storey being dormitory accommodation, with 2-3 bunks in each room. The building has running water, electricity and toilets, and a small communal kitchen.

## Weather

Peru's capital, Lima experiences fairly mild winters, which are often affected by a regular sea mist coming in from the Pacific Ocean, you should bring some warm clothes if travelling during this time (May-November).

## Leader

You will have one leader with you for the Project. They are there to make sure everything runs smoothly, safely and to give maximum reward to all those involved. We are incredibly picky about selecting our leaders and you can guarantee that they will be some of the most experienced, passionate, enthusiastic and up for it people you will ever meet. They are also a really good laugh and have heaps of knowledge that you can tap into. Leaders receive Quest training every year. All leaders are Wilderness First Aid trained and our Expedition Leaders having a minimum of Summer Mountain Leader training.

## Preparation

Quest Overseas provides all volunteers with a fully comprehensive pre-departure pack, which contains information on the countries to be visited, the project background, kit needed, cultural awareness etc. Quest also provides Pre-Departure Training in the UK for all team members. It covers Responsible Travel, Cultural Awareness, Health & Hygiene, Risk Assessment, Teamwork and Onward Travel. It also provides you with the opportunity to meet the rest of your team and your leaders before going overseas.

## Vaccinations

Quest Overseas keeps up to date with the latest recommendations on all medical considerations relating to your time with us. We will pass these on to you in good time before your departure overseas.

## Responsible Travel

Responsible Travel is an ethos that should be at the heart of all travel. For all of us at Quest it is about making a tangible 'positive impact' on both man and the environment with everything that we and our clients do. We ensure that we make a positive impact on communities and environments that we are lucky enough to visit.

## Recommended Reading

**Lonely Planet Peru**, by Sara Benson, Paul Hellander, and Rafael Wlodarski, 2007.

**Peru (Footprint Travel Guide)**, by Ben Box, 2005.

**Inca Kola: A Traveller's Tale of Peru**, by Matthew Parris, 1993.

**Touching the Void** by Joe Simpson, 1998.

**The Silver River** by Ben Richards, 1999.

**The Motorcycle Diaries** by Ernesto "Che" Guevara



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