



**CONSULTING ABROAD  
PROGRAM  
(VIETNAM)**

A study and service-learning  
experience between tradition and  
modernity



**INSPIRE. EMPOWER. IMPACT**



## CONSULTING ABROAD (VIETNAM)

January 15-26, 2018

### VIETNAM – THE ASIAN DRAGON

Today's Vietnam is undergoing some of the fastest socio-economic changes any country in the world has seen. The *Asian Dragon*, as it is frequently called, is a **major development success story** that has experienced remarkable rates of economic growth since the start of massive political and economic reforms called *doi moi* in 1986. It is now a middle-income country with a poverty rate of less than 10%, massive influx of foreign investment, and booming modern cities that swallow up many of the surrounding villages.

At the same time, the lure of modern living has a deep impact on the traditional networks of family and community that continue to play a pivotal role in Vietnamese society. More than half of the population of over 90 million is under the age of 26. Major developmental challenges have emerged, ranging from rapidly growing inequality to environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources, rapid urbanization and corruption. Especially in urban areas, the Vietnamese **increasingly question the** old Confucian principles upheld in what continues to be nominally a communist society. And women in particular struggle to redefine their place in a country that was traditionally driven by a strong patriarchal system that emphasized male leadership.

Our GEI Study Center in Vietnam is located in **Ho Chi Minh City, the former Saigon**, Vietnam's largest city with almost 10 million inhabitants and the economic and cultural center of the country. Pulsating with energy, Ho Chi Minh City is a place of contrasts. Next to the timeless alleys with Buddhist temples and street vendors are modern designer malls and sleek skyscrapers. Ho Chi Minh City is the perfect embodiment of modern-day Vietnam – and the ideal place to start to explore Vietnamese culture.



### THE CONSULTING ABROAD PROGRAM SERIES

The Consulting Abroad Programs bring **delegations of international students** to selected destinations in Africa and Asia for study and service-learning experience. They are convened under the auspices of the Global Engagement Institute (GEI) in close collaboration with private or public partners as well as with universities and a range of civil society partners at the destinations. The students that are chosen to participate in the programs are coming from various fields such as business, political science, engineering or education.

**Study topics and service-learning projects** are tailored to destination-specific questions concerning the growth of micro-finance and entrepreneurship.



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This program consists of a ten-day Consulting Abroad Project. Such CAPs are **transformational applied learning experiences** that enable students to gain firsthand knowledge in identifying and developing practical solutions in a real-world environment. The unique challenges and opportunities found in emerging markets in Africa and Asia demand new understandings and approaches that challenge students to think innovatively and act collaboratively. Working in small multi-cultural teams, they are connected to local entrepreneurs or civil society leaders in order to help create solutions for a specific business problem.

### CAP IN VIETNAM

In Vietnam, we have a series of long-term partnerships with local grassroots non-profit organizations and SMEs in order to **provide technical assistance** in non-profit management and a variety of income-generating projects. Interests and skills of participating students are matched with concrete business problems. For many projects, we also involve faculty members and students from local universities.

### Prerequisites

English is the working language for all program activities, including the CAP work, so that a good command of the English language is essential. We match students according to their level of studies, their disciplines and the requirements of each project. As a result, students from any level of study and any discipline are generally welcome to apply. Many projects also benefit from interdisciplinary teams. In order to thrive and be able to experience the full benefits of this program, participants should be culturally aware and open-minded.

### Location

Our program gateway is downtown Saigon, the bustling city center of Ho Chi Minh City's District 1. The area is known for its maze of little restaurants, cafés and shops. It is also home to a variety of local guesthouses that are ideal for student accommodation. When placed in Ho Chi Minh City, students will be within easy walking distance of many main attractions such as Ben Thanh Market, the Reunification Palace, Notre Dame Cathedral and the War Museum. The guesthouses feature 24-hour reception and security, free Wi-Fi and a daily breakfast. Rooms are typically equipped with individual air-conditioning, a fridge, TV, phone, small safety deposit box and en-suite bathroom with shower. Laundry and dry-cleaning services are available for a small fee. In some cases, projects are located in other parts of Vietnam, particularly in the Central Highland province of Quang Tri, north of Hue.

A **weekend excursion to the Mekong Delta** includes a river exploration of villages in Ben Tre Province to orchards and honey and coconut candy production sites as well as to the Cai Be or Cai Rang floating markets. The accommodation is in traditional homestays, vetted by GEI.

### Course Work

Students are expected to provide a **final team presentation** to their host organization, in order to introduce the solutions they have identified for the CAP business problem. Additionally, they have to prepare a **final paper** that includes a comprehensive overview of their host company and the business environment in which it operates, as well as a detailed CAP report.



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### INCLUSIONS

- Tuition
- Arrival day airport meet and greet
- Housing
- Transportation from program activities
- Meals: 5 lunches and 4 dinners, all including 1 non-alcoholic drink
- Orientation
- Program related activity and entrance fees
- Full-time on-site coordination and support, 24/7 emergency

### EXCLUSIONS

- International transport (flights, airport taxes, etc)
- Visas
- Travel and medical insurance
- Meals other than stated or extra beverages at the restaurants
- Personal expenses and gratuities

### PRICE

Price per person: US \$1,984

## ABOUT GEI

GEI is a private institute that provides international students and professionals with high-impact education and engagement programs in Africa and Asia. We inspire and empower participants to apply their passion and skills to create positive change in the world.

