

2015



YOUNG FOCUS VOLUNTEERS INFO



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Gandhi

WELCOME TO MANILA!

On behalf of all the staff of Young Focus we welcome you to the Philippines!

We hope you will have a wonderful stay with us! The Young Focus staff are ready to support and assist you during your time with us.

If you are reading this manual before you arrive: This

information is intended to help you in your preparations, but if you still have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us before you leave home for the Philippines!

(info@youngfocus.org)

PAUL & ANN



What does Young Focus do?

- **School Sponsorship**
Sponsorship and coaching of elementary school, high school and college students.
- **Love2Learn:**
Special elementary education for 'out-of-school' children (with a feeding program).
- **Fair Jewelry:** Micro-finance and job skills training for students to (financially) support them and their families.
- **Child Care:**
Nutrition and medical care for malnourished babies (0-3 yrs old).
- **Child Care PLUS:**
Nutrition, life skills, play and basic education for preschoolers (3-5 yrs old).
- **Family Care:** Social support, counseling, training and assistance for families to enhance their individual and collective well-being.
- **Health Care:** Health assessment and assistance and teaching on nutrition, hygiene, health, education and family planning.

To volunteer is to contribute your goodness and works to humanity unselfishly, without seeking any rewards.

- Dennis E. Adonis

BACKGROUND

Young Focus International (YFI) was founded in the Netherlands in 1992 by Paul and Ann van Wijgerden. It began financing educational aid programs for a partner organization working in Manila among young people living in the slums and garbage dump area 'Smokey Mountain'. Young Focus found sponsors in the Netherlands and facilitated the donations to partner organizations who were running school sponsorship programs.

This changed in December 2007 when Young Focus expanded and established itself in the Philippines with a new local entity: *Young Focus for Education and Development*. Young Focus is now an NGO - non-governmental organization - running its own programs (see column on the left), through the support of Young Focus volunteers in the Netherlands.

Currently Young Focus has several centers in the Philippines where the foundation facilitates its programs. Besides a 4-floor Student Center, it also has two other small centers: one for malnourished babies and the other is a kindergarten.

Paul van Wijgerden remains the Managing Director, working with 20 full-time staff who oversee the different programs of Young Focus in the Philippines.

There are three boards: one Filipino board in Manila; the other two in the Netherlands and in Canada, managing their volunteer teams, donations and fundraising.

Vision & Mission

Young Focus' vision is to improve the mental, physical and social well-being of young people in poor communities by means of education, health care and personal support.

Young Focus gives underprivileged children and young people the chance to develop themselves intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually by means of education and personal coaching. The organization wants to see young people developing their hidden talents and gifts and, in doing so, escape the vicious circle of poverty.

Young Focus is based on Christian values, and not only believes that God gives talents to every individual, but also that we have the responsibility to offer the opportunity to discover and develop these talents.



HELP YOUNG FOCUS AS A VOLUNTEER!



Volunteers, a precious resource we can not afford to lose.

- Denise Penn

There is lots of work involved in running all of Young Focus projects, so Young Focus has plenty of opportunities to help - for volunteers from the Philippines, as well as from abroad.

To put it in more concrete terms, this means Young Focus has opportunities for volunteers who would like to roll up their sleeves and get actively involved, who have something to offer to the young children and students from the slum areas. Here are some examples of how you can help us:

- You have a certain profession, skill or talent which you can pass on to others and/ or you can give workshops on your specialty.
- You need somewhere to do your internship/ college or university field placement for a certain time, for example for social work, therapy, education, etc.
- You want to experience Community Development and learn more in your chosen field of study.
- (For those coming from abroad) You want to experience what it means to work in, live in and adapt to another culture.
- You have a real passion for the poor and you want to commit yourself and your talents to serving them and learning from them.

Young Focus can offer you a place where you will be working with a team of enthusiastic Filipinos who have a heart and passion for what they do.

If needed Young Focus has a small furnished guest apartment (see pictures on the right). The costs for volunteering with Young Focus is in Philippine Pesos (PHP) 3,850 per week (about € 75 or \$ 90). This includes your stay at the guest apartment (also water and electricity - even air-conditioning!) but excludes meals. There are facilities nearby where you can buy food at very low prices.

The apartment has no internet, but there is a small internet cafe next door. The guest apartments are located across the road from the Young Focus Student Center - which has wifi.

And of course, we would appreciate it if you could do a bit of promotion/ fundraising for Young Focus, and use the opportunity to communicate what you are doing with your family and friends. Our programs in the Philippines are costly and any support would be more than welcome! Feel free to contact Paul if you have questions about this: paul@youngfocus.org



Where to stay

The costs for volunteering with Young Focus is in Philippine Pesos (PHP) 3,850 per week (about € 70 or \$ 90). This includes your stay at the guest apartment but excludes meals.

BEFORE YOU COME...

Prepare yourself as much as you can!

Please read this manual from the beginning to end...



Getting a Visa

When coming to the Philippines for less than 30 days, you will be issued with a tourist visa upon arrival (for most Western countries – check your country's immigration department website for confirmation). If you're staying for longer, this can be extended at the Department of Immigration Head Office, located in Intramuros here in Manila.

For Dutch volunteers: Alternatively, while still in the Netherlands, you can apply for a longer stay at the Philippine Embassy in the Hague or the Philippine Consulate in Amsterdam. However, there are a few more processes you need to go through. For the embassy in the Hague you need to take the following documents: passport, two recent passport photos, about 30 euros in cash (debit/credit card is not possible) and a completed visa form (available here: www.philembassy.nl). Furthermore, it is important that you bring a copy of your application form from Young Focus and an invitation letter from Young Focus Philippines.

For the consulate in Amsterdam you need to make an appointment. This can be done through www.assurance.nl or call 020-7147100.

Again, it is possible to extend the 30 days visa to 59 days when you are here in Manila. This process will take you a few hours. It is a bit more expensive than in the Netherlands. After that you can extend it every month or 2 months. When going to the Immigration office in Manila, don't forget the 'dress code' there: Shorts are not allowed for guys, neither are short shorts for girls!

Vaccines

Check with your local travel doctor to get the recommended vaccines and medication for visiting the Philippines. The following vaccinations should be obtained:

- DTP (diphtheria, tetanus and polio)
- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid (if advised by your doctor)

There are no requirements in terms of vaccinations for getting a visa. Malaria is not present in Manila, however, it seems to be present in certain rural areas, so be prepared if you plan on a lot of traveling. On the other hand, many travelers do not take malaria medicines as it is not a common sickness; many tourist areas in the Philippines are malaria-free. Certainly mosquito repellent is always advisable and widely available in the Philippines ('OFF')!

Electricity

The Philippines uses U.S. plugs with two flat prongs. The voltage is 220 volts (sometimes 110 volts). Adaptors are available here if needed.

Clothes and Feminine Hygiene

See further in this manual: you may want to buy certain items in your home country before you come over.

Money

No need to bring Philippine pesos in cash. Right at the airport you will find an ATM. With any credit card or qualified bank card with PIN options (Maestro, etc) you can withdraw from ATM machines in Manila. There is an ATM machine near our Student Center at the Metro Bank – However, do be careful about withdrawing money there at night for safety reasons. It is always wise to have someone with you. Check with your bank at home if your card will work abroad.

At the time of writing this manual the peso rate is PHP 59 to 1 euro. Withdrawing from an ATM costs money though. For every withdrawal the local bank might charge you 200 pesos, so the best way to lessen these expenses is to withdraw the maximum amount in one go (PHP 10,000) from an ATM

Local SIM card

It is easy, handy and cheap to have your own local prepaid SIM card if needed. In case you have an old mobile/

cell phone at home, just bring it and load for less than a euro with a local SIM card.

Traveling

Most volunteers want to see more of this beautiful country. If you come over for 4 weeks for instance, we would recommend one week vacation. The best time would usually be during your last week here. Prepare yourself before you come over and check the internet.

You can look at www.cebupacific.air.com / www.philippinesairlines.com and www.airasia.com to check out cheap flights in the area. The sooner you book, the cheaper.

What to bring

- Besides 'normal' shoes it would be helpful to have a pair of older shoes
- Slippers/ flip-flops
- Swimsuit
- All manner of light cotton clothing, that is modest and practical, including (for girls) t-shirts covering the shoulders; more on pages 8 & 9
- Enough underwear for a week, laundry can take a few days
- Sunscreen
- Face wash
- World travel adaptor
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Simple mobile phone (optional, but very helpful for local SIM card)
- Basic medicine kit (see page 9)

ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines consists of three main geographical areas : Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Luzon is the northernmost portion. The Visayan region has about 6,000 islands including major islands such as Leyte, Cebu, Bohol and Samar. The Mindanao region has about 400 islands. These islands are divided into provinces - ruled by a governor.

The Filipinos are originally from Malaysia but colonization and trade, among others (Spanish, Chinese, Arabs and later Americans) have left behind a very diverse nation.

English is one of the two official languages, which is especially useful since there are more than 400 dialects. BUT, that doesn't mean that all Filipinos speak fluent English, nor will they necessarily understand everything you say.

Currently there are approximately 90 million people in the Philippines - nearly 14 million in the capital Manila (Metro Manila). Cebu is the second largest city with approximately 800,000 inhabitants.

Most Filipinos are Catholic, with large groups of Protestants in the cities and a number of Muslim islands in the south. The Catholic faith is often mingled with old folk beliefs.

There are many people groups, including the group who speak Tagalog, the national language Filipino. Filipino is based on the Tagalog language. Other

large language groups: Ilocano, Pangasinanian, Pampangueño, Bicolano, Cebuano, Waray - Waray and Ilongo.

The Tagalogs live in Manila and central and southern Luzon. Although they all speak Tagalog, they do have different pronunciations. In addition to the Tagalogs in Manila there are many people who have brought their own language from the various provinces.

Approximately 1.5 % of the population is Chinese.

There are 65 smaller ethnic groups living in separate areas and in the mountains, including the Muslim group living mainly on the southern island of Mindanao. You also have the tribal groups, most of whom live in the mountain regions of Luzon - each group with their own language.

Both English and Filipino are the official languages in schools and government institutions, especially in the cities. English is mainly used in communication in business - especially among the wealthier sections of the population.

English and Filipino are often used interchangeably in writing and in everyday conversation. This is also called Taglish (Tagalog and English). This can be very useful for the foreigner who wants to learn Tagalog.

Tagalog is a beautiful language of great poetic depth, especially when it comes to emotions and romance.

The Philippines has a tropical climate, in other words - hot and humid. Weather-wise, the best time to be in Manila is between December and February - this is usually the (relatively!) coolest time of the year. The temperature is often below 30 degrees Celsius during the day and can drop to 20 C during the night. In the summer (April and May) it can go up to 39/40 degrees C.

Volunteers are seldom paid; not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

WHAT TO WEAR & WEATHER



The Philippines is known for its hot and humid weather throughout the year with average temperatures between 68°F-85°F (20°C-30°C). There are three main seasons, wet and rainy from June to August, fairly frequent typhoons between August and December, and then the sunny and dry season from December to May, April and May being the hottest months of the year.

So bring light, cotton clothing. Professional dress is formal in The Philippines, and is considered respectful. So do bring with you a couple of smart & casual outfits for formal meetings.

The sun burns brightly; be sure to protect yourself. The wet season means many side roads around our area can turn very muddy, so a sturdy pair of closed toe shoes is recommended.

Umbrellas are a necessity in the rainy season; you can buy great big ones here for a little less than 300 pesos (5 euro).



IMPRESSIONS



WHEN YOU ARE HERE IN MANILA...

About Manila

Metro Manila is composed of a number of cities around the old Manila merged together over the course of many years. The old Manila dates from the time of the Spaniards' 'Intramuros', a fortress with a real wall around it. Here you will see some Spanish style buildings and churches.

In Manila you will see two extremes: the richest of neighborhoods and the poorest of slums. Shopping malls can be very luxurious and most are very large. You will find them in just about every part of the city. Over the last 15 years there has been a mushrooming of malls, high-rise office buildings, condos, and exclusive residential areas, etc. There is a lot of wealth to see and there are a lot of luxury items to buy at relatively affordable prices. Shockingly, you will see abject poverty "on the side of the road" as well. Shacks and slum dwellings along many streets, often inhabited by people who have come from the countryside, trying to build a future for their children in the city.

Arrival at Manila Airport

In the plane you will get two small forms that must be completed for immigration and customs. (It's very useful to have a pen with you!) Manila airport is a lot smaller than other international airports, which makes the luggage pick-up spots relatively easy to find. The luggage is sometimes checked when you go out. There is a sticker that matches a number that is stuck on your passport.

Please note that there are three terminals. These are not linked to each other, so it is important to check beforehand which terminal you will arrive at. Please then pass on the terminal number to the Young Focus staff who will be picking you up.

Terminal 1

When you walk out of the main airport building, cross the road and walk into a tunnel on the opposite side of the road. Go into the tunnel, turn right and walk down the slope. At the bottom of the slope is a waiting area. Young Focus staff will try to spot you there - they will be in

the parking area just across the road from the pickup waiting area. Unfortunately non-travelers are not allowed to enter the airport facility but can only wait across the road from the pick up place.

Surroundings

The guest house and Young Focus Student Center are located in the district of Tondo. Tondo is one of the poorest, most overcrowded and underdeveloped areas of Manila. There is a lot of unemployment. Tondo is also the area where Smokey Mountain 1 (the original garbage dump site) and Smokey Mountain 2 (the current dump site) are located. Smokey Mountain 1 started in the 1950s and was closed down by the government in 1996. The people who lived there were moved to 'Temporary Housing', then later to 'Permanent housing', the latter being a neighborhood of approx. 30 five-floor buildings near the 'old' Smokey Mountain.

The garbage from Manila had to be dumped somewhere and so arose a new Smokey Mountain called 'Sitio Damayan' or Smokey Mountain 2. People continue to scavenge through garbage for their living. In addition, people also make charcoal from old wood. The charcoal is sold in the local markets and is used for cooking.

'Temporary Housing' is now full of people from the provinces - looking for work in Manila. Tens of thousands of other people live in slums on and around the garbage dump.

The guest house and Student Center are on a relatively good street in the area. The local streets are lively and there is usually quite a lot of noise, especially with children playing. People live their lives much more outside in this warm climate. As a foreigner, you will most likely have to get used to lots of people looking at you, but don't worry, they are simply curious and their staring is usually respectful. Children will want to know your name and have a little chat.

More about the guest house

The Young Focus guest house consists of two apartments, each for up



What is very noticeable in the Philippines is the sharp contrast between rich and poor. They often live literally next to each other. In Manila you will see 'our' Tondo with severe poverty and (see below) the 'modern style living' Fort Bonafacio with high-rise buildings and exclusive shops.



to two people. Note: the rooms described below are really small (by Western standards). These apartments feature a living area with sofa, table and a sink with fridge, microwave, cooking plate and kettle. There is a bedroom with a bunk bed. Bed linen is provided.

The apartment has laundry room and a toilet with shower. Tap water is not heated but the local water temperature is not really cold; it is refreshing during hot days! The bedroom has air conditioning. In addition there is a fan in the living room.

Showers & CR

We do have running water at the guest house, however it is cold, so be prepared for cool showers! Most budget hostels won't have hot water either.

Often (also in the guest apartments!) toilet paper should be put in a garbage bin next to the toilet. In many houses the drainage system gets clogged up easily. Drainage pipes are narrower and often have too many sharp bends in the system, making it even more prone to getting clogged.

By the way, many Filipinos are not used to using toilet paper.

The words 'bathroom' or 'toilet' are not used. In the Philippines you use the word 'CR' = Comfort Room.

Water

Do not drink any tap/faucet water in Tondo. Brushing your teeth with the water is fine, just don't swallow it.

Water is different in each house, and you may react differently to it, so use it at your own risk. Drinking water comes in large blue containers, which can be refilled at a water filling station on Vistas Street – you will see lots of containers stacked up here. The water is filtered and fine to drink. Otherwise expect to pay 25-30 pesos for a liter of bottled water at any street stall.

Food

In Manila there is a pretty broad choice of dishes. You can find European, Australian, American and of course Asian style eating places all over the city - especially in the malls.

There are stalls selling eggs and seasonal vegetables and fruit, all around Tondo, and you can certainly get a cheap chicken & rice meal (around 1 euro) with some vegetables in a local restaurant.

Sari-sari stores are your best bet for snacks and drinks. They really do sell all manner of things, from packet instant coffee (with milk and sugar mixed in) to small baked goods, candies and cookies, etc. You may even charge your prepaid mobile phone there.

There are several places to eat near by our guest house: *Orange Bite* – run by the delightful *Lola Melly*, who is also the landlord for the guest house. It's located just next door, so an easy alternative anytime.

The other restaurant is *Chef Patrick's* located at 236 Rodriguez St, (+63 2 353 2592), which is just off Honorio Lopez Blvd - a 3-minute walk from the guest house. They serve an array of Chinese/Philippine dishes, great dim-sum and it has good vegetarian options.

Just around the corner is a snack bar type place which opens at 2:30 p.m. Prices are unbelievably low. Next to this snack bar is a '*tapsilogan*': a local eating place where they serve a rice meal with chicken, beef, pork and an egg.

A bit further along that street - at the corner - is a small bakery store. All baked products are made of white flour. Healthy bread products can be bought at *French Baker* - located in most malls.

Electricity

In Manila and Tondo we have electricity 24/7. However, if you're going out of the city to rural areas, many hostels only have electricity for part of the day (usually at night) so be prepared, bring extra batteries and charge when you can!

Laundry

There are plenty of laundry shops along Honorio Lopez Blvd, turn right at the end of Vitas St is your best bet – look for the yellow door on your right. They are very reliable and 'quick', expect a large bag of clothes done in 3 days.

Internet

We are very lucky to have wireless internet in the Young Focus Student Center. However, remember, you're not at home... The internet is far from perfect; it is slow and the speed is inconsistent. So please don't go downloading lots of TV series, movies, etc. Many restaurants downtown, in Makati and Pasig have wifi, and many restaurants around the country in tourist destinations as well, so give it a try there.

Hygiene

It is good to use cleaning alcohol or gel all the time. Bugs and bacteria seem to grow faster here in the heat and humidity. Wash your hands often - especially before eating.

Of course, in a climate like this you need showers at least twice a day and you need to change your clothes every day. Deodorant is a necessity, not a luxury item here...

Phones / Communication

The Philippines are great when it comes to mobile communication. SIM cards are cheap and easy to buy. The best option for short term visits is to buy

a prepay SIM card and load it when you need it.

There are two main carriers, Smart and Globe. Smart is linked to Sun, a smaller carrier that uses the same reception towers. TM is linked to Globe in the same way. Sending messages to one carrier from the other, say Smart to Globe may sometimes incur a delay, and is slightly more expensive. Check this out for more info on mobile communication:

- Smart: <http://www1.smart.com.ph/corporate>
- Globe: <https://www.globe.com.ph/>

Getting around/ transportation

In Manila you can get around in different ways:

- *The metro train system*: locally called LRT1, LRT2 and MRT3. This is a cheap way of transportation: for only 15 pesos you can basically travel across the city. It is often overcrowded though. On the LRT1 male and female are separated in different parts of the train.

Plans are being made to extend and improve the LRT/MRT system.

Be aware of the closing hours.

- *Train*: an old and slow PNR train is suppose to move from south to north, but unfortunately it does not yet cover the whole area. It is unclear when or if that ever will happen.

- *Taxi*. For a few euros you can get a long way through the city. Most taxis have air conditioning and have a meter. In the event that the driver '*forgets*' (because you are a foreigner) just ask him politely to turn on the meter - rather than making a deal. Note that taxi drivers don't like to go to 'our' area (Tondo), so promising a tip might be helpful in such cases (50-100 pesos). You can say, e.g. "Meter plus 50."

Otherwise, a favorite taxi driver of Young Focus is *Kuya Mike*, who lives nearby and is very reliable. He always uses his meter. His number is 09 1720 30650. When using a taxi, you can ask the driver to slow down if you don't feel safe.

- *Jeepneys* have a fixed route. You can stop wherever you want along that route. A jeepney ride costs 8.5 pesos.

You pay by passing money to the driver via the other passengers. You do that by saying 'Bayad po' ('The fare please'). If you want the jeepney to stop you may say 'Para po' and knock twice with your fingers against the roof of the jeepney. The direction will be written on a sign on the windscreen, or on the side of the Jeepney, or just ask the driver for confirmation.

- *Pedicabs/ tricycles* take you from A to B in a neighborhood usually. You just step in and say where you want to go. Don't hesitate to give them a tip as well. They are poor people.

- *Motorized tricycles*: an extended motor bike with seats on the side. These operate in a wider neighborhood area. Unfortunately they make a lot of noise and are (like the jeepneys) real air pollutants.

Security

Levels of social tension and crime in Tondo are reputed to be higher than in other areas of Manila, however, this is largely isolated to targeted crime between local gangs/youth. Our staff and volunteers generally feel very safe in this neighborhood. However, do avoid going out alone at night.

The major safety/security risks is pickpocketing. That is an issue anywhere; but especially in overcrowded areas like Divisoria market - people master pickpocketing techniques. Do not bring more items that needed when you go out and do not keep a wallet in your back pocket. Do not bring more credit cards or finances than you need when you go out to these crowded places. When you go to places like Divisoria just leave your jewelry and watch, etc at home and keep an eye on your camera if you bring it along.

In the Student Center and Child Care and Child Care PLUS centers please keep 'attractive' items secured or out of sight when not in use.

Lock your apartment always and clear up your items. You may secure your passport and finances in the office of the Student Center if you wish.

Clothes & swimming

Normally speaking you will not need anything with long sleeves as it is always warm... unless you are planning trips into the mountains! In January and February you might like long sleeves in the evening when you are outside the city of Manila. Long sleeves may be also useful where there is strong aircon, e.g. some cinemas, churches, and long-distance buses.

Filipinos dress properly. This applies particularly in corporate settings. When you work in an organization *it is advisable to have the shoulders and the upper legs covered* (Both for girls and boys). In this culture how you dress is seen as a way of showing respect to the people you work with.

When you go down town in your free time you may take more 'freedom', but generally speaking, the Philippines is more modest/conservative than Western countries. So why be more noticeable than you are already!? :-)

In public swimming areas, resorts and on many beaches girls don't swim in bikinis but wear T-shirts over their swimming outfits! In more luxurious and Western style resorts you may see girls in bikinis.

Sun protection

The sun is very bright in the Philippines. It is advisable to bring (or buy here) sunscreen with a high factor (factor 50 and above), especially if you have a light skin type or when you come straight out of a winter.

Medical Care & Medications

Go to a drugstore/pharmacy like *Watsons* or *Mercury Drug Store* (present in most malls) or to a big grocery store in a mall and buy mosquito repellent (e.g. OFF) and anti-itch/after-bite.

Make sure you also buy there some pain relievers (e.g. paracetamol), cold medicines and something to help you when you have an upset stomach. See below (*)

If you need a doctor, please seek advice from the Young Focus staff. Note that you have to pay the doctor cash when you have a consultation. The fees are low though compared to the Western countries. A consultation at a good hospital won't cost you more than 600 pesos (10 euro).

(*) Protect your tummy... The use of probiotics, also known as lactobacilli tablets/capsules (also called *yogurt tablets*) are preventive and curative when you have a sensitive stomach. It is a concentrate of the same bacilli found in yoghurt and Yakult drinks. You can buy probiotics in most Western countries. Probiotic capsules are also available at some *Mercury Drug Stores* and *Watsons* in Manila.

Small cuts and wounds can get infected much faster here than in colder climates. So keep your wounds clean - however small. (Keep cleaning a wound, many times a day!) If you see any infection an anti bacterial ointment is available in the drugstores here. Ask Young Focus staff when you need it.

Feminine Hygiene

It is possible to get limited types of feminine hygiene products in Manila but you won't find tampons easily, so bring

these along with you. We ask that in the guest house you dispose of these in plastic bags, well wrapped and do not flush them down the toilet.

Tips

- Always keep your mobile/cell phone with you. Preferably a cheap one with a local prepay SIM card
- In case of emergency it is helpful to have a minimum of 1,000 pesos; but don't bring a lot of money with you
- Remain polite and respectful to everyone. Raising your voice is not acceptable. Smile... as much as you can :-)
- Be more careful when taking public transport at night; avoid traveling alone. Ask taxi drivers to use their meters, they are legally obliged to do so.
- Generally speaking, picture taking is not a problem, but if you take pictures ask for permission first.
- Don't attract unnecessary attention by visibly showing expensive items such as a camera, smartphone, tablet and computer in public places rather than safe places like Starbucks etc.
- Do not consume alcohol in public vehicles
- Please do not drink alcohol or smoke in Young Focus Student Center or in the centers on the garbage dump.
- Drink a lot... You will be sweating a lot! But only drink bottled water/drinks.
- Try this delicious national dish: Chicken or pork adobo!



A SMALL TASTE OF FILIPINO CULTURE

Of course, we won't be able to give you a complete picture of the richness and beauty of the Filipino culture, but here below are some 'bits & pieces' that might help you understand the Philippines a little better...

Family members often live together in one room or house. Children are not often seen alone. Family members are interdependent. A child has a deep respect for both parents.

They also show respect to an older brother or sister who is not always mentioned by name but by the word 'kuya' (older brother) and 'ate' (older sister).

Other family members are called nanay (mother), tatay (father), lola (grandmother), lolo (grandfather)

In many cases adult children live with their parents. Many married couples even live in the same house as parents and siblings

Nursing homes and homes for the elderly are basically non-existent in the Philippines. Taking care of your parents is considered not only an obligation, but also an honor.

Each Filipino is part of a large interconnected family - from parents to many nieces and nephews, etc. If you have an argument with someone, it could lead to greater conflict with the rest of their family, i.e. their relatives. Therefore, much of this family-centered culture is focussed on how you interact with each other. This is more important than what your opinion happens to be. Individuality and independence is valued less here than in Western cultures.

The role of women is very important. Her role is primarily to be responsible for the family, but she is also equal to her husband. Most women have jobs and are often in (family) businesses.

The father is usually the main breadwinner. He is the caring father and disciplines the family.

Godparents are chosen when a child is born.

Losing face in front of others is seen as very painful, therefore avoid any confrontational arguments.

You might notice Filipinos responding to a sad event with a smile or laugh. A Filipino might be laughing as he tells you about the misery in his family. Though it may be very hard for us as Westerners to understand this, they are not in any way mocking the situation. You can see it as a way of dealing with the confrontation of the sadness.

People often say 'yes' even when they are not sure. First of all a Filipino doesn't like to say 'no' - or the question may not be understood.

It gets more complicated when your question has a 'negative approach': 'Don't you understand?' / 'Oh, you don't want to come?'. That might confuse the Filipino (and you with the answer) because the word 'not' is in the question. The Filipino will answer 'Yes'. It's better to ask: 'Do you understand?'

Showing anger and raising your voice is counterproductive. It is considered inappropriate and rude.

Don't underestimate the Filipino dislike of confrontation. Don't underestimate their deep sense of Filipino dignity either. They may be very gracious, kind and humble; they also have a deep sense of Filipino pride.

The pace of life is slower than in the West. Although it looks less efficient it doesn't mean it is wrong. The event is more important than the timing or effectiveness. Arriving on time is therefore not a priority. The event itself is what counts.

Staring at someone is not only rude but also provocative. But, if you, as a foreigner, are stared at this is neither

hostile or rude; it is simply out of curiosity.

As white male you might hear someone call you 'Joe'. This is the 'generic name' for an American.

If you go anywhere you are almost immediately offered food: 'Kain na! This is done with a welcoming gesture. Even though you do not really want to eat, people will still continue to repeat the gesture a few times. Although it might come across as a bit pushy, food is important in this culture. It is not that people always expect you to join them; often it is intended as a greeting. You could answer with: 'Busog na!': (I'm OK/ full already).

Hospitality is vital in the Philippines. People will often welcome you to join them drinking or eating, and they go to great lengths to make you feel at home. Also in the slums, if you're offered a soft drink/soda, you can accept gratefully.

If you are waiting for someone who is late for your appointment, the Filipino will not say that he or she is far away when texting or phoning you. Filipinos don't want to discourage you...

Tipping is always welcome. Salaries in the Philippines are very low so something extra (10% for instance) for the service you get is very much appreciated!

Bargaining is very common in the Philippines, but not in 'official department stores'. Do it in a friendly way, laugh and make jokes. With a smile you can achieve a lot in the Philippines. In tourist places you can bargain more since the prices are higher. When you buy more than one item you might be able to get more discount. Always ask for 'Best Price' or 'Last (-Last) Price'.

When Filipinos refer to a male in a conversation in English they often accidentally use the pronoun 'she' instead of 'he'. In Tagalog there are no male or female personal pronouns; there is only one - 'siya'. Because 'siya' resembles the word 'she', this mistake is easily made.

Tagalog has no 'f' in the alphabet. Often you hear English words with an 'f' that are pronounced as some kind of 'p'.

It is not always appropriate to be exactly on time. In business circles time is taken more seriously of course. However outside Manila there is more flexibility.

Body language plays an important role in the Philippines. A common greeting among Filipinos is done by lifting your eyebrows with a smile. This is a friendly "hello".

You can point at something by 'squeezing' your lips in the direction you are pointing at.

It's rude to point with your finger if you want someone to come over. The appropriate way is to use your hand with the fingers down and 'open and close' your hand.

For the Dutch: the Dutch tend to give kisses on both cheeks when you greet someone you know. This is not a practice in the Philippines: you may shake hands

when you meet someone or a gentle hug when you know the person. However, in certain circles a 'cheek kiss' or 'air kiss' is common.

If you want your bill in a restaurant you can make a figurative piece of paper with your two hands.

You often see men and women walking with their arms around each other or holding hands. There is less physical distance than Westerners are used to among the same sex. On the other hand, in public settings, it is less common to kiss your partner.

Popular themes are romance, family and food. Most Filipinos eat a rice meal three times a day. Besides the three main meals there is 'merienda': this is a snack time between lunch and the evening meal.

Titles are very important. You will hear Filipinos use them a lot. It is polite and customary to mention someone's title like 'pastor', 'doc', 'boss(ing)', 'sir', 'm'am', 'teacher', 'kuya', 'ate', etc. It shows respect, but also his/her place in society.

Filipinos are well dressed. They tend to be very clean - even in the slums. In many offices and shops people are wearing uniforms which helps them to be less dependent on fashion and status in

society. Students also wear uniforms to school.

Many items you can purchase individually. In pharmacies you buy medicines per capsule/tablet/etc. From street vendors people buy one cigarette or one candy. This helps people with a small budget to purchase what they can afford at that moment.

Queuing up/standing in line before getting on a bus or jeepney is not common. Without being disrespectful you can 'manoeuvre' yourself to the front. You will notice this behavior in traffic as well - it is pushy without being aggressive.

On the other hand, there are some queues/lines you need to take seriously, e.g. at a bank or department store - then wait your turn patiently.

Filipino dishes are mild. The main component of a good meal is rice. Fish delicacies include lapu lapu, tuna and spanish mackerel.

Lechon is a roasted 'pig on a stick' served with a sauce of pork liver. Another local delicacy Balut is an incubated, boiled duck egg.

You will also see a lot of Chinese food and (too many) 'fast food' places with all kind of Western food.

Beer, local rum and soft drinks are very popular and cheap.

FILIPINO HOLIDAYS

New Year (January 1)

People Power Day (February 25)

Maundy Thursday

Good Friday

Black Saturday

Day of Valor (April 9)

Labor Day (May 1)

Independence Day (June 12)

Eidul Fitr (August 9)

Ninoy Aquino Day (August 21)

National Heroes Day (August 26)

Eidul Adha (October 15)

All Saints Day (November 1)

Christmas (December 24 & 25 => Young Focus is closed from December 23 up to January 2



NB. We would like to pick you up from the airport and take you to our guest house! When you book your ticket, please avoid arriving on the days mentioned above - and, if possible, avoid the Sundays and Mondays since Young Focus is closed on those days.

TAGALOG = FILIPINO LANGUAGE

Language is intrinsic to the expression of culture. As a means of communicating values, beliefs and customs, it has an important social function and fosters feelings of group identity and solidarity. It is the means by which culture and its traditions and shared values may be conveyed and preserved.

Language is fundamental to cultural identity. This is so for people everywhere. For the Filipino, their unique world is expressed in their Tagalog language.

Although we only share a few words below, the Filipino truly appreciates it if you use some Tagalog in the time you are with us. You will see a smile on their faces and they will comment on the fact that you speak Tagalog. It bridges barriers.

Take some time and familiarize yourself with some words and expressions. If you have an iPhone or an Android device you can download free apps with sound that will help you to hear the words.

All the best!!!

Mabuhay!	Welcome	Lolo	Grandpa
Kumusta ka (na)?	How are you?	Lola	Grandma
Mabuti, salamat	I'm fine, thank you	Kain	To eat
Anong pangalan mo?	What is your name?	inom	To drink
Ako si Manuel	My name is Manuel	Bigas	Rice
Magandang umaga	Good morning	Tubig	Water
Magandang hapon	Good afternoon	Gatas	Milk
Magandang gabi	Good evening	Mamaya	Later
Maraming salamat!	Thank you very much	Hali ka na	Come here
Taga saan ka ba?	Where do you come from?	Doon	There
Ako ay taga Holland	I am from Holland	Diba?	Isn't it? / Right?
Saan ka nakatira?	Where do you live?	Chinelas	Slippers
Pasok po	Come in	Ingat	Take care
Sandali po	One moment please	Banca	Boat
Mahal kita	I love you	Barangay	Local village
Ano ang gusto mo?	What would you like to have	Barong	Filipino formal shirt for man
Upo po	Please sit down	Chismis	Gossip
Saan ka pupunta?	Where are you going? <i>(also a greeting)</i>	Hiya	Shame
Babalik na lang ako mamaya	It'll be back later	Deretso	Straight ahead
Hanggang sa susunod	See you next time	Kaliwa	Left
Hanggang bukas	Till tomorrow	Kanan	Right
Paalam	Bye	Labendera	Washing lady
Hindo ko alam / Aywan ko	I don't know	Lechon	Roasted pig
Ayaw ko	I don't like it	Masarap	Delicious
Gusto ko	I like it	Merienda	Snack
Salamat po	Thank you	Pansit	Local noodles
Oo	Yes	Pinoy	Slang for Filipino
Hindi	No	Sari-sari store	Local, small convenience store
Tatay	Father	Salamat	Thank you
Mama/nanay/ina	Mother	Brown out	Electricity cut
Ate	Sister (older)	C.R.	Comfort room (toilet)
Kuya	Brother (older)	Open/close lights	Turn on and off the lights

MAP OF THE AREA



Note this basic information you need for yourself and for your family and friends once you are in the Philippines...

Young Focus for Education & Development Inc.

ADDRESS:
 284 C. Dayao Street, Balut, Tondo
 1013 Manila, the Philippines
 TELEPHONE: +63 (2) 358 48 22
 MOBILE: +63 (9) 358 48 22
 EMAIL: info@youngfocus.org
 WEBSITE: www.youngfocus.org
 WEB SHOP: www.fair-jewelry.org



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