



VOLUNTEERS' GUIDE

For a successful volunteering in The Philippines

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

FRANCE VOLONTAIRES

About us	1
Volunteering schemes	2
Our mission	3
Our services	4

2

VOLUNTEERING IN THE PHILIPPINES

PNVSCA	6
FV and you	7
Hosting organisations in the PH	8

3

PHILIPPINES

History and people	10
Geography et climate	11
Filipino cuisine	14
Tourism	15

4

FRENCH INSTITUTIONS

Embassy	20
Other French Government Institutions	21
Other French Institutions	22
in the Philippines	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5

RECOMMANDATIONS

Political unrest	24
Crime	24
Terrorist risk	25
Sea piracy	25
Cyclone risk	26
Seismic risk	26
Volcanic risk	26
Areas of vigilance	28

6

ADVICES

Transportation	31
Telecommunications	33
Food	34
Accomodation	36
Banking	39
Social life	41
Visa	42

7

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF FILIPINO VALUES IN THE WORKPLACE

“Kapwa”	44
“Hiya”	45
“Utang na loob”	47

ABOUT US

France Volontaires is the French platform for international volunteering, exchange, and solidarity. It was established in 2009 as an association and is now a public interest association known as “GIP France Volontaires”.

As a French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs operator recognised as of France’s public development aid stakeholders by the Law of 4 August 2021, France Volontaires is the result of a shared project that brings together the State, local authorities and associations around **a public interest mission: the development and promotion of international exchange and solidarity volunteering (VIES – *volontariat international d’échange et de solidarité*)**.

The platform relies on representations in France (mainland and overseas territories) and a network of Volunteering Centres in Africa, Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, the Middle East, and Oceania.

In the Philippines, France Volontaires established its presence in 2013 and was registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission in 2015. It was accredited by the Philippine National Volunteer Service and Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) - the government agency mandated to promote and coordinate volunteer programs and services in the Philippines, as an International Volunteer Service Organization (IVSO) in May 2017.

France Volontaires Philippines is an attached agency of the Embassy of France to the Philippines and Micronesia.

VOLUNTEERING SCHEMES

1

Skills-based Volunteering

- International Solidarity Volunteering

Initiation & Exchange Volunteering

- Civic Service International
- International Workcamps
- Solidarity & Youth Exchange (JSI/VVV-SI)

2

3

Expertise Volunteering

- Solidarity Leave Volunteering
- Senior Volunteering

Reciprocity Volunteering

- International Solidarity in Reciprocity
- Civic Service in Reciprocity

4

- *Volunteers under the platform of France Volontaires are collectively referred to as Volunteers for International Exchange and Solidarity (V.I.E.S)*
- *For the complete information on all the volunteering schemes listed above, visit: <https://france-volontaires.org/les-differents-dispositifs-de-volontariat/>*

OUR MISSION

Mission 1

Design, in a partnership approach, **volunteer projects** that meet the expectations of all stakeholders, respecting their rights, cultures, beliefs, aspirations and equal human dignity;

Mission 2

Help people wishing to volunteer abroad **to understand** the meaning of their commitment and to define their projects;

Mission 3

Promote access for all to responsible, high-quality volunteer work;

Mission 4

Prepare volunteers and partners for intercultural encounters and **support them** throughout their project;

Mission 5

Guarantee a secure framework and conditions for volunteers and partners;

Mission 6

Accompany volunteers on their return, encouraging them to make the most of their experience in their professional and civic life; **facilitate their professional reintegration** through the valorization of their acquired experience, and encourage them to make their experience part of their civic life;

Mission 7

Open up volunteering to greater reciprocity;

Mission 8

Develop partnerships and support national volunteer networks worldwide.

OUR SERVICES



International volunteers are required by the Philippine government to arrive with a **47(a)(2) Special Non-Immigrant Visa**. This can be obtained and processed by a registered IVSO of the PNVSCA to which FVP is accredited since 2015.



Volunteers' security is at our paramount, therefore, FVP in coordination with the Embassy provides **security briefing** to volunteers for them to be informed about the threats, natural disaster, emergency procedures.



Upskilling sessions are organised to equip volunteers with hard and soft skills that aims to contribute on the success of their respective volunteer missions.



In order to support the volunteers in their adjustments in the cultural context, FV organises **cultural immersions, discovery weekend, and language lessons**.



To protect and promote the mental health of the volunteers, an online private **psychological counselling sessions** are organised semiannually & free of charge.



Social gatherings are organised in order for volunteers to meet and connect with their co-volunteers such as apéro, cocktails, and French cultural activities among others.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE PHILIPPINES



Axel (VSI)
France Volontaires



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE COORDINATING AGENCY

The Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) is the government agency mandated to promote and coordinate volunteer programs and services in the Philippines.

PNVSCA closely works with other government agencies, non-government organizations, the academe, the corporate group, the media and other partners in converging and linking the different volunteering efforts and resources so that they are aligned with national priorities and assist especially the marginalized sectors and communities. PNVSCA takes the lead in advocating and recognizing the contributions of volunteers to nation-building and international cooperation.

The International Volunteer Program is one of the major components of the National Volunteer Service Program being implemented by PNVSCA. Through this program, technical assistance is provided by foreign volunteers to national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), academic institutions and non-government organizations (NGOs) in the spirit of technical cooperation and cultural sharing.

For further reading, please refer to the Republic Act No. 9418 or the Volunteer Act of 2007 available at :https://www.pnvsca.gov.ph/?page_id=344

France Volontaires and You

- France Volontaires Philippines serves as the representative of its members and sending organizations who don't have any representations in the Philippines.
- FV as an attached agency to the French Embassy in the Philippines coordinates with the Embassy regarding French volunteers' welfare and security among others.
- As an accredited IVSO to the PNVSCA, volunteers (and their dependents) under the platform of FV can avail exclusive services such as issuance of 47(a)(2) Special Non-Immigrant Visa - a multiple-entry visa valid for 1 year (renewable).
- FV links its volunteers in the Philippines through events, networking, social groups and provide necessary services.
- FV Coordinates with other authorities on behalf of the volunteers and their respective host organizations most notably for administrative, security, and visa matters.

INFORM US OF THE FOLLOWING



Arrival and departure to and from the Philippines



Expiration, renewal, and lost passport



Transfer of area of assignment



Completion / pre-termination of volunteer assignment

ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING



Attend the required orientations by PNVSCA, FV, and Embassy.



Accomplish IVR form and ACR I-Card form upon arrival



Registering French nationals living outside France



Accomplishment report by PNVSCA

Hosting organisations in the PH



PHILIPPINES



Quiapo, Manila



Festival in the Philippines

History & People

The Philippines is the third largest English speaking country in the world. It has a rich history combining Asian, European, and American influences. Prior to Spanish colonization in 1521, the Filipinos had a rich culture and were trading with the Chinese and the Japanese. Spain's colonization brought about the construction of Intramuros in 1571, a "Walled City" comprised of European buildings and churches, replicated in different parts of the archipelago. In 1898, after 350 years and 300 rebellions, the Filipinos, with leaders like Jose Rizal and Emilio Aguinaldo, succeeded in winning their independence.

In 1898, the Philippines became the first and only colony of the United States. Following the Philippine-American War, the United States brought widespread education to the islands. Filipinos fought alongside Americans during World War II, particularly at the famous battle of Bataan and Corregidor which delayed Japanese advance and saved Australia. They then waged a guerilla war against the Japanese from 1941 to 1945. The Philippines regained its independence in 1946.

Filipinos are a fun-loving people. Throughout the islands, there are fiestas celebrated everyday and foreign guests are always welcome to their homes.



Batad Rice Terraces, Ifugao

Geography

The Philippines stands at the crossroads of the developed western world and the Orient. It lies in the heart of Southeast Asia, stretching more than 1,840 kilometers. Composed of 7,641 islands, the Philippines is readily accessible to the different capitals of the world. Its three main islands are Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The Philippines has 82 provinces.

The South China Sea washes its western shores. Taiwan, China and Hong Kong are northern neighbors and further north is Japan. To the west lie Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. An arm of the archipelago reaches out towards Borneo and at its feet stands the chain of Indonesian islands. To the east and south, the waters of the Pacific Ocean sweep its headlands, looking out towards Micronesia and Polynesia.

Its unique location has made the Philippines the commercial, cultural and intellectual hub of Asia from the dawn of history.

Climate

The first half of the year, from January to May, is the best time to visit the country. November to February is cool, while March to May is hot and dry. June to October is rainy, with the months between July and September characterized by typhoons. Average temperature is 78 degrees F/25 degrees C; average humidity is 77%. Some parts of the country such as Cebu, are warm and comfortable in all seasons and can be visited throughout the year.







Filipino Cuisine

Philippine cuisine consists of the foods, preparation methods and eating customs found in the Philippines. The style of cooking and the foods associated with it have evolved over several centuries from its Austronesian origins to a mixed cuisine with many Hispanic, Chinese, American, and other Asian influences adapted to indigenous ingredients and the local palate.

Dishes range from the very simple, like a meal of fried salted fish and rice, to the elaborate paellas and cocidos created for fiestas. Popular dishes include *lechón* (whole roasted pig), *longganisa* (Philippine sausage), *tapa* (cured beef), *torta* (omelette), *adobo* (chicken and/or pork braised in garlic, vinegar, oil and soy sauce, or cooked until dry), *kaldereta* (meat in tomato sauce stew), *mechado* (larded beef in soy and tomato sauce), *pochero* (beef in bananas and tomato sauce), *afritada* (chicken or pork simmered in a tomato sauce with vegetables), *kare-kare* (oxtail and vegetables cooked in peanut sauce), *crispy pata* (deep-fried pig's leg), *hamonado* (pork sweetened in pineapple sauce), *sinigang* (meat or seafood in sour broth), *pancit* (noodles), and *lumpia* (fresh or fried spring rolls).

Traditional Filipino dishes are often served in *Carinderia* (sometimes spelled as *Karinderya*) - a common type of eatery in the Philippines. *Carinderias* are known for their affordability, making them accessible to a wide range of customers, from students and office workers to taxi drivers and construction workers. The low cost of meals is one of the main reasons why *carinderias* are popular among Filipinos.



LOVE THE PHILIPPINES

Tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the Philippine economy. The country boasts of rich natural beauty in its many spectacular beaches, sunny weather and rich bio-diversity. More than that, the Philippines' unique and complex culture, as exemplified by its people, cuisine and lifestyle, attracts many people to visit the country.

- Intramuros, a walled city in Manila, was built by the Spanish in the 16th century. Originally, Manila's boundaries were the city walls. But due to the growing size of the city, newer buildings were built outside these walls. As of today, Intramuros contains museums, churches and an old fort.
- Somewhere in the archipelago, there is at least one fiesta (festival) being celebrated 365 days a year (By the third week of January head off to Kalibo for the Asia's version of the Mardi Gras). Manila, Cebu and Boracay are the ground zero for parties - pool parties, yacht parties, rave and fashion events.
- Makati City is the modern face of Manila, in complete contrast to Intramuros. Major malls, business centers, hotels are situated in Makati City. Lined with modern high rise buildings, the Makati skyline is the best in the country.
- Aklan is one of the most visited provinces in the Philippines not only because of its beaches but also of its popular yearly colorful event which is the Ati-Atihan Festival in Kalibo.



- Chocolate Hills are limestone hills that turn brown during the summer. Chocolate Hills are found in the island province of Bohol, which is also the home of one of the smallest primates in the world—the Philippine tarsier.
- The Hanging Coffins of Sagada and the Banaue Rice Terraces (a UNESCO World Heritage) site are worth a visit in the Northern Philippines. The rice terraces were carved out of mountains thousands of years ago and by far the most extensive of its kind in the world with sophisticated irrigation and engineering that was unthinkable during the time it was built.
- Taal Volcano, one of the smallest active volcanoes in the world, sits on a lake and is just an hour away from Manila. The fresh cool air off the Tagaytay Ridge provides a spectacular view of the lake and the volcano. Visitors should confirm whether hiking to the crater is safe or not before attempting to do so.
- North of Manila, take the rough road and go to Mt. Pinatubo, the volcano which caused a massive eruption in 1991. Now you can marvel at the volcano up close and swim inside its crater. The last eruption was one of the biggest during the last century and lowered the global temperature by at least a degree.
- The Hundred Islands, also located in the Northern Philippines, is a group of more than 400 islets with coral reefs surrounding the islets. These islands are famous for their beaches and the coral reefs, which can be explored by snorkeling.
- The province of Palawan is one of the most beautiful islands in the South China Sea. Palawan has natural gas fields on the northeastern part of the island but the beautiful beaches around the island remain pristine. The island is home to the spectacular Tubbataha Reef and the breathtaking Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, both UNESCO World Heritage sites.





- Boracay Island is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. The island boasts a 4-kilometer stretch of white sand beach, considered to be the best beach in Asia and one of the top ten beaches in the world.
- The gateway to the natural wonders in the Central Visayas, Cebu is a top tourist destination in the Philippines. The country's oldest street and city are found in this bustling metropolis where the urban sprawl is ever growing. Many tourists, who wish to stay away from the metro's hustle and bustle, are drawn to Cebu's hidden secrets: amazing dive sites, island resorts, white-sand islets, waterfalls, lakes, springs, mountain trails and countless wonders, all of which are a short bus ride away.
- Surfing in the Philippines is comparable to the best in the world – with the world-famous cloud 9s off the island of Siargao facing the Philippine Trench in the Western Pacific as well as the surfing destinations of La Union and Zambales (facing the South China Sea).
- The Philippines is one of the top three best diving destinations in the world. The archipelago is one of the top biodiversity hotspots in the world, with the most number of species concentrated in one area. The best dive sites in the Philippines are located in Anilao, Boracay, Malapascua, Apo Island, Balicasag, Pamilacan, Tubbataha, Palawan, and Puerto Galera. Subic Bay, home of a former American naval base, is also known for World War II wreck dives.





Batad, Banaue



Batanes



Chocolate Hills, Bohol



Boracay, Aklan



El Nido, Palawan



Siargao



Oslob, Cebu



Coron, Palawan

FRENCH INSTITUTIONS





**AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
AUX PHILIPPINES
ET EN MICRONÉSIE**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

The Embassy manages France's bilateral relations with the Philippines, as well as with 3 Pacific states: Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau.

One of the Embassy's departments is the Service de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle (SCAC), which serves as a platform for promoting Franco-Philippine exchanges and partnerships in the Philippines. The SCAC organizes projects not only in Manila, but also in the main cities and islands of the Philippines, as well as in three Pacific states: Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau.

SCAC coordinates with France Volontaires for the follow-up of French volunteers and Franco-Philippine NGOs.

The French Embassy in Manila is open from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm Monday to Thursday and from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm on Friday. The consular section is open daily from 8am to 12pm by appointment on +632 8 857 6900.

Chancellerie

Ayala Triangle Gardens Tower 2, 21st fl.,
Paseo de Roxas cor. Makati Avenue,
Makati City, 1226, Metro Manila
+632 8857 6900 (Consular)
+63 9175320756 (only in case of
emergencies)
<https://ph.ambafrance.org/>

Consulat honoraire de France à Cebu

M. Lhuillier Building, B. Benedictos
Street, North Reclamation Area, Cebu
City
+632 380 3000 poste 11615
fr.honoraryconsul.ceb@mlhuillier.com

Other French Government Institutions



The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Group funds, supports and accelerates the transitions to a fairer and more sustainable world. AFD's action in the Philippines focuses on the fight against climate change and the resilience of Filipino people in the context of just transitions. It also gives priority to territorial approaches. AFD mainly carries out its operations through sovereign loans and technical assistance programs.

34th Floor - Units A&B - Rufino Pacific Tower
6784 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, 1200, Metro Manila
+63 2 800 3456 | afdmanille@afd.fr



Expertise France is the French public international technical cooperation agency. Its role is to help implement French policy on cooperation, development assistance and economic influence. Expertise France designs and implements projects which aim to contribute to the balanced development of partner countries, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda and the priorities of France's external action.



Campus France supports the attractiveness of the French higher education sector and promotes it among foreign students. The agency is also responsible for managing recipients of scholarships from the French and foreign governments, facilitating the creation of personalized scholarship programmes and supporting foreign students and researchers.

209 Nicanor Garcia Street, Bel-Air 2, Makati, Philippines
manille@campusfrance.org

Other French Institutions in the Philippines



Alliance Française
Manille - Philippines

A non-profit organization committed to promoting French language and culture, AFM encourages friendly relations between Filipinos and the French through intercultural dialogue, hosting artists and intellectuals.

<https://www.alliance.ph/>



Alliance Française
Cebu - Philippines

Alliance Française de Cebu organizes various cultural events such as French movie nights, French speakers gatherings, art exhibits, cooking classes, Bastille Day, Fête de la Musique.

<https://alliancefr.ph/>



Its mission is to serve its members (over 100) and enhance business relations between France and the Philippines. The Chamber is composed of a dedicated team mixing French speaking and Filipino professionals.

<https://ccifrance-philippines.org/>



The Chamber's FPYP serves to engage and support young individuals starting their careers or are in the early stages of professional development. Through networking and exchanges, the FPYP strengthens the ties between young professionals in both countries and fosters collaboration in various professional domains.

ADVISORIES



Cebu City, Cebu

Political unrest

The Philippines has a high level of political violence throughout the country. This violence mainly targets Filipinos involved in politics and journalists, as well as human rights defenders and legal professionals, and not foreigners, except in the conflict zones of Mindanao (see paragraph on terrorist risk).

Political gatherings during election campaigns should be avoided.

Crime

Crime and kidnapping are on the increase in the Philippines. Private militias operate violently in certain regions and municipalities. Extra vigilance is advised in tourist areas, both in the city and along the coast. In Manila, avoid the port area in particular, especially the Tondo district and the surrounding shantytowns.

The main risks are snatching and burglary, especially in budget hotels. As a general rule, it is advisable to carry only the bare necessities, to keep scanned copies of identity papers and airline tickets, and not to leave personal belongings unattended. Online or SMS scams, phishing and bank data theft are commonplace, and facilitated by the illegal dissemination of personal data. We recommend that you pay particular attention to any suspicious proposal, especially by SMS, and avoid sharing personal data unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

In recent years, there has been a growing number of cases in the Philippines of travellers suffering loss of consciousness and sexual assault after consuming drinks containing willpower inhibitors, particularly in Manila and in some remote tourist areas. It is advisable to accept a drink only if it is served in front of you by an employee of the establishment, never to leave your drinks unattended and, as far as possible, only to go out in bars and discotheques accompanied by a trustworthy person.

Assaults and robberies under threat have been reported in cabs. It is advisable to avoid taking cabs "on the fly" and to use a well-established VTC (chauffeur-driven car) company (e.g. "Grab").

Terrorist risk

Armed Islamist movements, notably the Daesh-affiliated Abu Sayyaf group, are active in western Mindanao, Basilan Island, southern Palawan and the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelagos. Like criminal groups, they engage in violent kidnapping and extortion of foreigners. Several cases have been reported since 2009, both on land and at sea, as these movements and groups have the capacity to act outside their bases.

The guerrilla New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is present in large parts of the country, notably in northern and central Luzon, as well as on the islands of Samar, Leyte, Masbate, Negros and Mindoro. Violent clashes between the NPA and Philippine security forces are a regular occurrence.

Although this group does not generally target foreign nationals, it is advisable to check with the authorities throughout the country before taking isolated routes in rural areas.

On view of the continuing high threat of kidnapping by terrorist and criminal groups in Mindanao (particularly in the western part of the island) and in the Sulu Sea, and to a lesser extent in Palawan (southern half of the island and around the capital Puerto Princesa), We advise you to exercise extreme caution and vigilance when traveling by land or sea, to pay close attention to the safety instructions issued by local authorities, and to refrain from visiting areas where travel is inadvisable (orange or red zones - see map below). In addition, these terrorist and criminal groups have projection capabilities that are likely to bring them sporadically into the southern Visayas (southern coasts of the islands of Cebu and Bohol).

Sea piracy

Piracy by terrorists and criminals is endemic off the western coasts of Mindanao, as well as those of the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelagos. Pleasure boating is therefore formally discouraged in the southern Sulu Sea and the northern Sulawesi Sea, and extreme caution is recommended beyond.

Cyclone risk

The cyclone season extends from May to December. Typhoons particularly affect the Visayas region and the island of Luzon, although their paths are difficult to predict.

Every year, rainfall causes landslides and deadly floods in rural areas. To reduce the risk, avoid flood-prone areas and hillsides.

The arrival of typhoons is usually announced several days in advance by the Philippine institute PAGASA. It is advisable to heed these announcements and to stay in a safe shelter during their passage, and to refrain from going out, especially at sea.

Seismic risk

The country lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire, at the crossroads of several tectonic plates, and is crossed by several major faults. The Philippines is therefore subject to strong and regular seismic activity.

The risk of very strong earthquakes is high throughout the country, including in metropolitan Manila and other major urban areas.

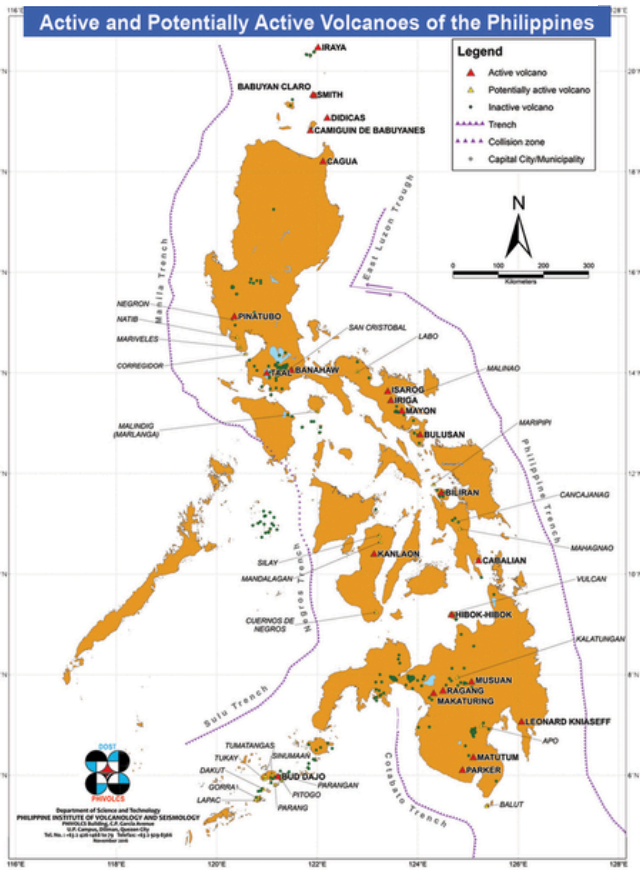
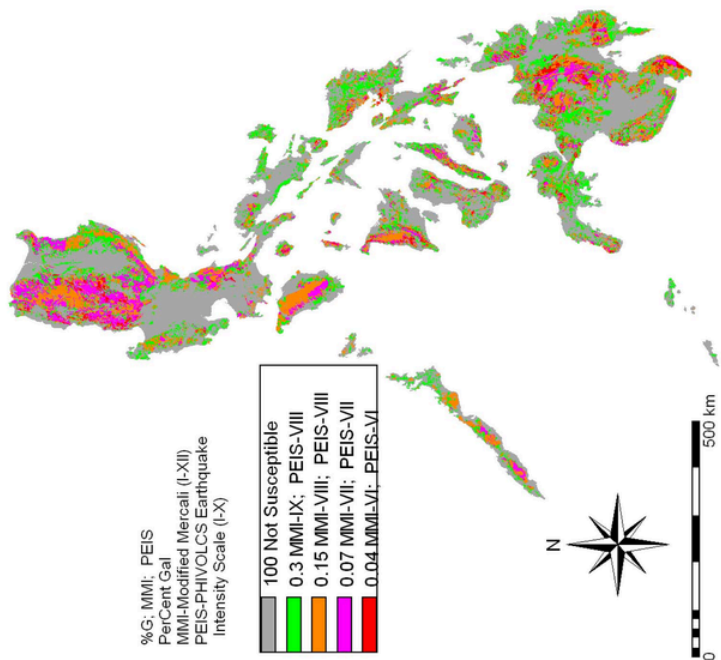
Volcanic risk

Several dangerous volcanoes are active in the Philippines and could erupt at any time. These eruptions can be of high intensity and long duration, such as the eruption of Taal volcano, located 60 km south of Manila, between February and March 2020.

The PHIVOLCS Institute has established exclusion zones around three volcanoes: the island on which the Taal volcano crater is located, 6 km around the Mayon volcano (Albay province); 4 km around the Bulusan volcano (Sorsogon province).

Approaching certain volcanoes is permitted, but can be particularly dangerous, especially in certain weather conditions. Lahar flows (ash muds) are to be feared in case of bad weather.

Earthquake-triggered Landslide Susceptibility Map Based on Critical Acceleration Values and Earthquake Intensities



Cette carte est indissociable du texte qui l'accompagne.

- Formellement désconseillé
- Déconseillé sauf raison impérative
- Vigilance renforcée
- Vigilance normale

AREAS OF VIGILANCE

Most of the Philippine territory has been placed under heightened vigilance.

Areas formally advised against

The island of Basilan, the archipelagos of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. In western Mindanao: the Zamboanga peninsula (provinces of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay), Misamis Occidental, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato (excluding the town of General Santos), Sarangani, Compostela Valley and the island of Samal.

The sea area from the southern half of Palawan to the Sulu archipelago.

Areas not recommended except for imperative reasons

The southern half of the island of Palawan.

In Mindanao, the provinces of Del Norte (except Davao city), Davao Oriental, Agusan del Sur, Misamis Oriental (for the portion of territory west of Cagayan de Oro), Bukidnon and Surigao del Sur.

General recommendations

Do not carry all your papers and money in a single bag, and take only the bare minimum with you (money and passport should be kept in a safe place, e.g. in your hotel room safe).

EMERGENCY HOTLINES

Respondents	Hotline	Type of Service
Emergency	911	Emergencies
Philippine National Police	911	Emergencies
Bureau of Fire Protection	911	Firefighting
Philippine National Red Cross	143	Humanitarian & Medical
Department of Health	8711-1001 to 02	Health
Department of Social Welfare & Development	8931-8101 to 07	
Bantay Bata	163	Children's Welfare
NDRRMC	8911-1406 8911-2665 8911-5061	Calamities
PAG-ASA	8927-1541 8926-4251	Weather & calamities
PHIVOLCS	8929-8958 8426-1469 to 79	Volcanic eruptions and earthquake
Philippine Coast Guard	09177243682 09189674697	
Department of Tourism	151-8687 09958355155	Tourism
National Center for Mental Health	09178998727 989-8727	Mental health crises

TIPS





TRANSPORTATION

By land:

- Jeepsneys and buses are use for commuting within one city or even intercity and interprovince. Signboards are displayed in front of the vehicle to indicate their specific routes.
- Note that public utility vehicles don't have specific schedules imposed.
- Alternatively, trains such as MRT3, LRT1, LRT2, and PNR are also available all with respective routes within Metro Manila (and other provinces for PNR).
- For faster and more convenient commute you may ride a cab or book a motortaxi via JoyRide, Angkas, or Move-It or Grab Car.

By sea:

- Should you wish to travel from one island/mainland to another you may ride a Ferry or RoRo (roll-on, roll-off boats, which allow cars to be driven aboard so you can drive them at your destination) available in different ports and various destinations. Majority of the ferries are anchored at Batangas Port.
- You can book online, or directly at the company counter. Even if you book online, you may have to go back to the ticket counter to get your final ticket.
- *You can view the route on [12GO](#) and then book directly with the transport service provider.*

Ferry : [Montenegro](#), [2GO Travel](#), [Island Water](#), [OceanJet](#)...



By air:

- Major airlines in the Philippines are the Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific and AirAsia. International airports are available in Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao City, Puerto Princesa, Kalibo, Laoag, Clark, and Iloilo among others.

For Driver's License:

- Conversion of foreign driver's license to philippine driver's license including renewal of expired philippine driver's license with a valid foreign driver's license. [HERE](#)

Other:

- Be aware that driving in the Philippines can be chaotic. Drivers often switch lanes abruptly, and traffic rules are not always strictly followed.
- Expect frequent honking as it is commonly used to signal presence, overtake, or express frustration.
- If stopped by traffic enforcers, be aware that legitimate fines should be paid at designated offices, not directly to the enforcer.
- Some enforcers may attempt to ask for money to "settle" a violation on the spot. Politely decline and insist on receiving an official ticket.
- Traveling across the Philippines can be unpredictable due to traffic, the stopovers or weather conditions. Therefore, plan extra time for your travels.
- Don't forget to bring a sweater or jacket when traveling by plane or bus. The air conditioning can make it quite chilly.
- Consider renting a scooter (motorcycle) or car for your adventure. It offers flexibility and convenience for exploring at your own pace.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

SIM Card:

- Upon your arrival you may purchase prepaid SIM such as SMART, GLOBE or DITO - all of which offers flexible SMS, calls, and mobile internet plans. Note that you have to register your SIM through the registration link provided by your SIM provider. Foreign nationals should provide their full name, nationality, passport number, proof of address in the Philippines. (≈5€ /24go a month)

Others :

Here are the different ways volunteers can register with the various Embassy registries in order to receive information and safety instructions by e-mail or SMS.

For volunteers staying less than 6 months in the Philippines:

- you can register on the “[Fil d’Ariane](#)” ;

For volunteers staying more than 6 months in the Philippines :

- you can register on the “Registre des Français établis à l'étranger”, which also enables you to exercise your right to vote and request identity documents (see [page 7 “Performing the following actions”](#)).



FOOD

Be Cautious with Street Food:

- Choose busy vendors for fresher food.
- Avoid raw or undercooked items.
- Start with cooked options like isaw (grilled chicken intestines) or banana cue (caramelized banana skewers).

Drink Safe Water:

- Stick to bottled or filtered water.
- Avoid tap water and ice made from it.
- Bottled water is usually distilled rather than mineral, which can lead to a deficiency of essential minerals. It's important to take steps to ensure you're getting enough minerals.

Respect Dietary Restrictions:

- Clearly communicate any dietary needs (You can ask no spice, no meat for example).
- Learn basic Tagalog phrases for your restrictions.
- Many restaurants offer vegetarian and vegan options, but these might be limited in rural areas.

Embrace the Rice Culture:

- Rice is a staple in the Filipino diet:
- Expect rice to accompany almost every meal.
- Try different types of rice dishes, such as sinangag (garlic fried rice) and biko (sweet sticky rice).



Supermarkets and Grocery Stores:

- Visit major supermarket chains like SM Supermarket, Shopwise, Robinsons for a wide range of products.
- For international products (Cheese, wine...), check out specialty stores like S&R Membership Shopping, Santis, Landers, and Brera.

Local Markets:

- Explore local wet markets (palengke) for fresh produce, meat, and seafood at lower prices.
- Convenience Stores: 7-Eleven, MiniStop, and local convenience stores offer basic groceries and snacks.



Medical Center

HEALTHCARE

General :

- In the Philippines, health problems (and the quality of medical services) vary from region to region. Large cities are often very well equipped (see medical centers and hospitals).
- In more remote areas, volunteers are often afraid of infectious diseases, which rarely lead to serious problems. Nevertheless, few provincial hospitals accept insurance cards or credit cards. So remember to bring cash.
- Abortion is illegal in the Philippines, as is emergency contraception. Please take every precaution in this regard.

Feminine hygiene :

- Sanitary tampon is extremely hard to come by. A few stores sell them for an exorbitant price, but these are rare.
 - So it's a good idea to bring along a sufficient stock or a menstrual cup system.

Vaccinations :

- Given the higher prevalence of infectious diseases in tropical environments, strict adherence to the vaccination schedule is justified. Some of these diseases, which have become rare in Europe, are still relevant in the Philippines. Tuberculosis and tetanus, for example, are still common, and warrant proper immunity.



ACCOMODATION

Facebook Groups:

- Join local Facebook groups dedicated to housing and rentals in specific cities (e.g., "Apartments for Rent in Manila" or "Cebu Housing").
- Post your requirements and browse listings posted by others.
- You'll find many agents who have a good view of the local market, so don't hesitate to ask.

Colocation:

- Websites like Craigslist and local Facebook groups often have listings for roommates.
- Ask fellow volunteers or colleagues if they know of any shared housing opportunities.

Visiting in Person:

- Once you arrive, take time to visit neighborhoods and facilities.
- Talk to locals & expats to get recommendations/insights about the area.
- Check for signs of dampness or pests (cockroaches).

Temporary Stays:

- Consider starting with a short-term rental while you search for a long-term place.
- This gives you time to explore different areas and find the best fit for your needs.



Securing Long-term Rentals:

- Landlords may be open to negotiating the rent for long-term stays.
- Make sure you understand the lease agreement, including the duration, deposit, and any other fees (a one-month advance and a two-month deposit are regularly requested).
- Check for essential amenities and ensure the area is safe and convenient for your daily needs.
- Don't be too far from work if you want to get there on foot, as the heat can reach +40 degrees during the dry season or be blocked by the heavy rains of the wet season.
- Prices vary by region. In Metro Manila, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment can range from 15K to 40K PHP per month, while in rural areas from 5K to 10K PHP.

Electricity and water:

- During the dry season especially in the Philippines, some areas may experience scheduled electricity and water shut downs due to increased demand and reduced water supply. It's important to be prepared for these interruptions by keeping a supply of bottled water and having alternative lighting options such as rechargeable lamps or flashlights. Staying informed through local news or community announcements can help you manage these temporary inconveniences effectively.
- In the Philippines, tap water is generally not safe to drink. It is recommended to use bottled or filtered water for drinking and cooking to avoid potential health issues.



Booking:

- Use platforms like Booking.com, Agoda, and Airbnb for reservations.
- You can call the accommodation directly to take advantage of better prices (payment will usually be in cash).
- After booking online, contact the property owner directly via their personal number to confirm your reservation.
- Inquire About Amenities: Ensure the accommodation has essential amenities like Wi-Fi, air conditioning, own bathroom.
- Special Requests: If you have specific needs (e.g., early check-in, late check-out, special dietary requirements, or if they can keep your luggage after you check out), contact the property in advance to make arrangements.
- They can also help you find your way from the station/airport to their accommodation or **directly organize the transfer**. They can help you book tours of the surrounding area.



BANKING

Opening a Bank Account (if required)

- To open a bank account, you typically need an Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR) card (see page 13 to get a free ACR card). Ensure you have this document before visiting a bank.
- Required Documents: Besides the ACR, you might need a valid passport, visa, and proof of address.

Currency and Cash Handling:

- The local currency is the Philippine Peso (PHP/₱).
- Always carry some cash, especially in rural areas where card payments may not be accepted.
- Outside major cities, shops often charge a commission (usually 3% to 6%) for debit/credit card transactions. So be sure to check.
- You can also use the digital wallets app like Gcash or PayMAYA, widely used in the Philippines, which requires transfers from a local bank account or cash top-ups at counters (₱8,000 max per month, free of charge).



ATM Withdrawals:

- **The only bank that doesn't charge withdrawal fees**, aside from your home bank's fees is **HSBC**. Available only in Metro Manila and Cebu. Withdrawal limit: ₱40,000.
- Other Banks: Most ATMs have a withdrawal limit of ₱10,000 and charge 250₱ per withdrawal.
- Exchange rates will usually be better than if you exchange your euros at a counter.

Notify Your Bank:

- Inform your home bank of your travel plans to avoid your card being blocked for suspicious activity.
- Some banks have international options that allow you to pay and withdraw with their conversion rate and without fees (beyond the monthly subscription).



SOCIAL LIFE

Join Local Groups and Organizations

- Connect with other volunteers through local volunteer networks and organizations. (Ask FV Philippines)
- Join expat groups and attend meetups to meet people from various backgrounds.

Language

- Take Tagalog or local dialect classes to better communicate and connect with the community (FV Philippines is actually offering Tagalog and Cebuano lesson).

Utilize Social Media and Apps

- Join local Facebook/Whatsapp groups to stay updated on events and activities.

Explore and Travel

- Weekend Trips: Organize trips to nearby islands, beaches, and tourist spots with fellow volunteers or new friends.
- Travel Groups: Join travel groups or tours to explore different parts of the country while meeting people.

VISA

Les volontaires qui se rendent aux Philippines par l'intermédiaire de France Volontaires reçoivent un visa 47A2 (volontaire) à entrées multiples.

- Les démarches d'obtention du visa sont à réaliser avant votre entrée aux Philippines afin d'éviter tout problème avec l'immigration.
 - Pour en savoir plus, rapprochez vous de votre structure d'envoi.
 - En cas de problème ou de question insolvable par votre structure d'envoi veuillez vous adresser à l'adresse suivante : ev.philippines@france-volontaires.org)
- À votre arrivée, assurez-vous d'apporter tous les documents nécessaires, tels que votre billet de retour et l'approbation du visa. Une fois aux Philippines, **assurez-vous que votre tampon d'arrivée porte clairement la mention 47A2**, qui indique votre statut de volontaire. Vous n'aurez ainsi pas besoin de vous rendre au bureau de l'immigration pour modifier votre visa.
- En outre, **inscrivez-vous au système e-Travel**, 72 heures avant votre voyage pour faciliter votre entrée dans le pays.

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF FILIPINO VALUES IN THE WORKPLACE

(from KJA Society Solutions, 7 November 2023)



Embracing "Kapwa": Transforming Workplace Culture

At the heart of most of our values (if not all) is "Kapwa," a concept deeply rooted in Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology). It's all about caring for others, forming the foundation of "pakikipagkapwatao." That's a mouthful, but it's the collective identity that binds us all.

Imagine a world where everyone sees each other as interconnected, where caring for one another is the norm. Embracing Kapwa means creating a sense of community and belonging.

The Essence of Kapwa in Workplace Dynamics:

It's not just about individual success; it's about lifting each other up. When your colleagues become your extended family, collaboration and innovation skyrocket. It's about turning your workplace into a thriving ecosystem where everyone's unique contributions are celebrated.

Think about it – when we say "family-like atmosphere," we're talking about the essence of Kapwa. It's the secret sauce that transforms coworkers into a supportive community, fostering a work environment where everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued. That's the magic of Kapwa in action!

Now, let's talk teamwork and collaboration, the dynamic duo of workplace success. Kapwa places a premium on cooperation – the understanding that together, we achieve more. When you infuse your team with the spirit of Kapwa, you're not just solving problems; you're creating a powerhouse of creativity and productivity.

But it's not just about the warm fuzzies. Kapwa is a catalyst for open communication and feedback. In a Kapwa-inspired workplace, every voice is heard, and every idea matters. It's the fuel that propels your team toward higher engagement and better morale.

Now, let's talk conflict – because let's face it, no workplace is without its challenges. But fear not, Kapwa has your back. It's all about resolving conflicts respectfully. When you approach disagreements with the spirit of Kapwa, stress levels go down, and positivity soars. It's a game-changer for workplace harmony.

Unveiling the Power of "Hiya" for Inclusive and Respectful Workplaces

Now, what's the deal with "Hiya"? It's more than just a feeling of shame or embarrassment; it's a cultural compass guiding our actions to ensure we don't inadvertently cause offense to others. Understanding Hiya is like having a secret decoder for navigating respectful communication and fostering harmony in the workplace.

Understanding "Hiya"

"Hiya" is a complex concept encompassing shame, propriety, and social responsibility. It guides Filipinos' actions to ensure respectful exchanges and avoid causing offense to others. It's like an internal compass that promotes mindful communication and fosters harmony in the workplace.

Picture a workplace where every interaction is steeped in a deep sense of respect – that's the "magic" of "Hiya".

How "Hiya" Plays Out in the Workplace

Ever been attuned to the feelings of your colleagues, clients? That's "Hiya" in action. It means understanding that words have power, and using them wisely is key. If you're Filipino, you might have heard "Hiya" used to accompany being concerned about what others might think.

To truly appreciate how "Hiya" shapes workplace dynamics, it's essential to understand the Filipino cultural context. Filipino values center around maintaining social harmony (which is often called "pakikisama.") Fitting in and caring about what others believe or say is also important. "Hiya" strongly influences social behavior and is a powerful factor in Filipinos' interactions.

In Filipino society, it's considered a serious social misstep to "lose face" or cause embarrassment to yourself or others. "Hiya" acts as a protective mechanism against such situations, encouraging individuals to be mindful of their words and actions to avoid causing offense or disrupting social harmony. This cultural emphasis on preserving face and maintaining social harmony is deeply ingrained in Filipino values, influencing communication styles, conflict resolution approaches, and overall workplace dynamics.

Now, here's the twist. Embracing "Hiya" isn't about being shy or avoiding conversations. It's about creating a safe space for open communication where everyone feels heard and valued.

Hiya in Coaching and Leadership

As coaches and leaders, understanding "Hiya" is crucial for effective communication and relationship building. It helps us approach sensitive topics with care, making our clients and team members feel supported and valued.

We can leverage Hiya to create a workplace where everyone feels comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions

As Coaches, understanding "Hiya" is like a key that opens another door. Understanding that "Hiya" is a cultural value that emphasizes respect and avoiding offense can help you approach sensitive topics with care, ensuring that your clients feel supported and valued.

As Leaders, integrating Hiya into your management style can be as simple as considering it when seeking feedback from your team members and proposing solutions. Think about how this cultural value may come into play. Making the workplace a place where everyone feels welcome to share their thoughts can make a big difference.

Balancing Hiya with Open Communication

While Hiya promotes respectful communication, it can sometimes lead to self-censorship due to the fear of judgment or causing offense. Coaches and leaders should encourage open dialogue while respecting cultural sensitivities. The goal is to create a harmonious workplace that values both respect and transparency.

As coaches and leaders, it's our responsibility to balance cultural values with the need for transparent communication, creating an environment where "Hiya" coexists with a culture of open dialogue.

Embracing Hiya for Inclusive Workplaces

When understood and applied appropriately, "Hiya" can be a powerful tool for fostering inclusive and respectful workplaces. By embracing "Hiya," we can create environments where everyone feels valued, heard, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives.

"Utang na Loob": Cultivating Workplace Reciprocity

Imagine a workplace where gratitude, support, and meaningful connections blend together, creating a beautiful symphony of reciprocity. All thank to "Utang na Loob." It's not just a phrase; it's a profound value that orchestrates the dance of repaying kindness. Applying this in the workplace fosters cultures of support, loyalty, and meaningful relationships. It fuels collaboration, turning your team into a powerhouse of innovation and shared success.

For coaches, understanding "Utang na Loob" is a roadmap for building strong client relationships. Leaders, it's your secret weapon for cultivating a positive workplace culture.

But, and there's always a but, "Utang na Loob" isn't just about blind loyalty. It's about genuine appreciation and acknowledgment. As leaders, it's crucial to foster a culture where recognition is sincere and based on merit. That way, you're creating an environment where everyone feels valued for their unique contributions.

Connecting the Dots: A Workplace Symphony

Imagine your workplace as a grand orchestra, with "Kapwa", "Hiya", and "Utang na Loob" as the conductors.

"Kapwa" sets the rhythm of collaboration, "Hiya" ensures respectful harmony, and "Utang na Loob" fuels the reciprocity that binds us all.

Bayanihan: Collective Success

Let's shift our focus to "Bayanihan" – a collective harmony that transcends individual contributions.

But, what's the buzz about "Bayanihan?" It's more than a cultural practice; it's a way of life that speaks to the spirit of communal unity. "Bayanihan" is about neighbors coming together to move a house – a vivid illustration of what can be achieved when a community works as one. In the workplace, embracing "Bayanihan" means fostering a culture of shared responsibility, collaboration, and collective success.

In the spirit of Bayanihan, we celebrate diversity, creating a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their authentic selves.

Pakikibaka - Overcoming Adversity Together

Now, let's delve into "Pakikibaka" – the art of collectively struggling, sacrificing, and fighting alongside others to achieve a just, righteous, or equitable cause.

"Pakikibaka" goes beyond facing difficulties; it's about working together to reach a common goal. It keeps us going even when things go wrong.

In the workplace, "Pakikibaka" creates an environment where every team member is resilient and ready to tackle challenges head-on. It's about standing together, embracing resilience, and fostering a collective spirit of overcoming adversity.

As we read through "Utang na Loob," "Bayanihan," and "Pakikibaka," remember that these values make relationships at work work. They create a space where thankfulness, togetherness, and strength can grow.

ANNEXES

- **Préparer mon départ**
- **Accompagnement au retour**
- **Sensibiliser aux violences sexistes et sexuelles dans le volontariat international**

Sources:

About the Philippines. Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines. (2023, September 6). <https://philippineembassy-dc.org/about/>

Tourism in the Philippines. (n.d.). <https://guangzhoupcg.dfa.gov.ph/tourism-in-the-philippines>

Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. (2024, March 28). Philippines- Sécurité. France Diplomatie - Ministère De L'Europe Et Des Affaires Étrangères. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/conseils-par-pays-destination/philippines/>

Solutions, K. G. (2023, December 20). Unlocking the power of Filipino values in the workplace. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/unlocking-power-filipino-values-workplace-kja-gaiety-solutions-djt3c>



France
Volontaires
Philippines

8A Sunrise St., La Paz, Makati, Metro Manila
ev.philippines@france-volontaires.org
<https://france-volontaires.org>
+63 (02) 8570-4790