

THE PHILIPPINES



Capital:
Manila



PHILIPPINE PESO

POPULATION OF
109 MILLION



298,170 SQ KM
IN LAND SIZE

MAJOR INDUSTRIES:
TOURISM
AGRICULTURE
MANUFACTURING

5.6%
ISLAM

5.6% OTHER

RELIGION

8.2%
PROTESTANT

80.6%
CATHOLIC

LANGUAGES

FILIPINO
(+170 DILECTS)
& ENGLISH



26.1% DO NOT HAVE
ACCESS TO PROPER
SANITATION



FAVOURITE SPORTS:
BASKETBALL
BOXING
BADMINTON



THE PHILIPPINES



Children playing around.



Children buddying up.

Geography

The Philippines is an archipelago in South East Asia made up of more than 7000 islands, of which about 2000 are inhabited. It is located along the Ring of Fire, a belt of active volcanos and earthquake epicentres that border the Pacific Ocean (up to 90% of earthquakes and 75% of world's volcanoes occur within this area).

The Philippines has a tropical marine climate and is the world's most exposed country to tropical storms – on average there are nine typhoons each year, and five of these are destructive.

History

The Philippine Islands became a Spanish colony during the 16th century and was named in honour of King Phillip of Spain. The islands were ceded to the US in 1898 following the Spanish-American War. In 1935 the Philippines became a self-governing commonwealth but in 1942 fell under Japanese occupation during WWII, and US forces and Filipinos fought together during 1944-45 to regain control. In 1946, the Republic of the Philippines attained its independence. From the 1960s, it was ruled for 21 years by Ferdinand Marcos, which ended in 1986 when a "people power" movement forced him into exile.

Culture

The Philippines islands are categorised into three main clusters – Luzon in the north, Visayas in the centre and Mindanao in the south. The island clusters vary in terms of cuisine, religion and culture.

The country is also linguistically diverse, with eight major dialects and more than 170 languages. The official language is Filipino, which is mainly Tagalog (the dialect from central and southern Luzon) combined with words from various other languages. For example, English is widely spoken throughout the Philippines, and it is

common to hear Filipinos use a mixture of English and Tagalog (known informally as 'Taglish') in everyday conversations. As a way to retain their local identities, many Filipinos will often choose to speak in their regional languages and dialects – it is common to find Filipinos who are from different parts of the Philippines conversing in English rather than in Filipino.

Given the diversity of the Philippines, the unifying element of Filipino culture is a complex matter. A sense of national identity emerged out of the long-standing struggle for independence but this is fragile, with loyalty residing firstly to their kin group, province or municipality.

AMS Projects in The Philippines – Kuya Centre for Street Children

Orphaned, abandoned and runaway children are among the most destitute in Filipino society. Surviving as best they can on the streets in the heart of Manila, they are highly susceptible to abuse, exploitation and malnutrition. Staff from the Kuya Centre for Street Children work with young people living as vagrants, using games and drama to focus on topics such as substance and drug prevention, child rights, sex education and life skills.

Wherever possible the young people are encouraged to reconcile with their families. At the Centre they can take part in a number of programs and choose from a range of educational options. Regular schooling is offered to those of normal school age and attainment; accelerated education to older boys with low attainment levels; while evening classes are held for young adults. The Centre's residential program provides food, clothing, shelter, medical care, including detoxification if required, psychological assessment, counselling and safety for 30 boys.

Further reading/resources:

SBS Cultural Atlas (www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au)

World Atlas (www.worldatlas.com)