Handbook for Host Families of Indonesian Participants

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Acknowledgements

This publication is made possible through support from the United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. http://exchanges.state.gov

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Pictures courtesy of Bonnie and Phil Duyff, Mary Ann Offer, Karen Powers, Jennifer Little, the Geoffrey Family

Cover design by Andi Anugerah

Indonesian Culture Quiz

Perhaps you already know a lot about Indonesian culture. Or maybe you only know a little. In either case, you may find the following questions interesting. After you have answered these questions, check the answers which follow. Regardless of whether you got the answer right or wrong, you'll want to read the sections referenced in the answer sheet.

Questions:

1. T/F - Sambal is a traditional Indonesian dance.
2. T/F - Indonesians usually eat with chopsticks.
3. T/F - Soup is often eaten for breakfast in Indonesia.
4. T/F - In Indonesia, teens usually are expected to cook and clean up.
5. T/F - Indonesians, in general, are uncomfortable discussing religion and politics.
6. T/F - In general, Indonesian children are taught to speak up and to question their parents when they disagree.
7. T/F - Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world.
8. T/F - If your Indonesian student answers "yes" to a request, you can be sure it will get done.
9. T/F - In Indonesia, respect for teachers is typically as high as respect for natural parents.
10. T/F - Since the vast majority of Indonesians value social interaction, your student will likely be accustomed to dating.
11. T/F - To your Muslim exchange student, a "clean" place to pray usually means a room that your pet dog is not allowed to enter.
12. T/F - In Indonesian schools, extra-curricular activities, such as journalism, are common.
13. T/F - In Indonesia, parents tend to follow their child's homework and grades very closely.
14. T/F - Jamu is the name of a popular killer whale at the Jakarta zoo.
15. T/F - You will probably need to remind your student to bathe regularly.
16. T/F - When you assign chores to your newly arrived Muslim student, you should include caring for the dog.
17. T/F - Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population.
18. T/F - A Muslim high school student must attend an Islamic secondary school.
19. T/F - As a predominantly Muslim country, Indonesia does not allow women to be President or run for public office.
20. In what year did Indonesia become an independent country?
    a. 1892
    b. 1917
    c. 1936
    d. 1945

Answers:

1. Sambal is a traditional Indonesian dance.
   False. Sambal is a spicy condiment made of chiles, brown sugar, herbs, spices, and perhaps other ingredients. (See Food, Mealtime, and Table Manners.)

2. Indonesians usually eat with chopsticks.
   False. Indonesians usually use a fork and spoon. (See Food, Mealtime, and Table Manners.) In some regions of Indonesia, it is usual to eat many traditional foods with one's right hand.

3. Soup is often eaten for breakfast in Indonesia.
   True. Soup is common for breakfast; rice is a breakfast mainstay, too! A morning meal may also be leftovers from the night before. (See Food, Mealtime, and Table Manners.)

4. In Indonesia, teens usually are expected to cook and clean up.
   False. In Indonesia, mother typically does the cooking, often with a house helper. Children and teens may set the table, but they usually don't cook or help with clean up. (See Food, Mealtime, and Table Manners.)

5. Indonesians, in general, are uncomfortable discussing religion and politics.
   False. Most Indonesians are happy to discuss their religion, and to learn about others' beliefs. They tend to discuss politics openly, yet not to the point of argument. (See Communication.)

6. In general, Indonesian children are taught to speak up and to question their parents when they disagree.
   False. Children are generally taught to listen to their parents and not to question or argue. (See Communication and Relationships.)

7. Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world.
   True. After China (1.3 billion), India (1.2 billion) and the U.S. (312 million). Indonesia's population is more than 242 million people. (See Overview.)

8. If your Indonesian student answers "yes" to a request, you can be sure it will get done.
   False. Many Indonesians often use an indirect communication style and say what they think you want to hear, in order to "keep the peace" and "save face." (See Communication.)

9. In Indonesia, respect for teachers is typically as high as respect for natural parents.
   True. (See Schools.)

10. Since the vast majority of Indonesians value social interaction, your student will likely be accustomed to dating.
    False. Indonesians tend to be very interested in making friends of both sexes, but often are not ready for dating. (See Communication and also Relationships.)

11. To your Muslim exchange student, a "clean" place to pray usually means a room that your pet dog is not allowed to enter.
    True. In general, cleanliness of a place to pray relates to the absence of dogs, not visible "dirt." (See Relationships.)

12. In Indonesian schools, extra-curricular activities, such as journalism, are common.
    True. However, most extracurricular activities are held on Saturdays. See Schools.

13. In Indonesia, parents tend to follow their child's homework and grades very closely.
    False. Parents in Indonesia tend to let the teachers and students handle school work; therefore, you will probably need to explain that your interest in grades and assignments is part of the usual U.S. family relationship. (See Schools.)

14. Jamu is the name of a popular killer whale at the Jakarta zoo.
    False. Jamu is a traditional medicine in Indonesia (See Health.)

15. You will probably need to remind your student to bathe regularly.
    False. Indonesians usually bathe twice a day. You may need to discuss water conservation, dry skin in colder climates, etc. to help your student adapt. (See Hygiene.)

16. When assigning chores to your new Muslim student, you should include dog care.
    False. For religious reasons, Muslims do not usually have dogs as pets, so it may take your student time to get accustomed to a family dog. (See Relationships.)

17. Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population.
    True. About 86 percent of Indonesia's population is Muslims.

18. A Muslim high school student must attend an Islamic secondary school.
    False. Students may attend an Islamic boarding school, Islamic high school, Catholic school, non-religious private school, or public school. (See Schools.)

19. As a predominantly Muslim country, Indonesia does not allow women to be President or run for public office.
    False. Like several other significantly Muslim countries, Indonesia has elected a woman president. Megawati Sukarnoputri served as President from 2001-2004.

20. In what year did Indonesia become an independent country?
    d. 1945.

Forward

Thank you for volunteering to welcome a young student from Indonesia into your home, family, and community. The coming months will present a multitude of learning opportunities for you and your participant.

Objectives of Handbook

This Handbook for Host Families of Indonesian Participants is directed toward you, the host family. You represent one of the indispensable ingredients required for an international exchange program to be successful. The information contained here also will be shared with exchange program support volunteers so that they, too, will better understand the Indonesian student's world view and will be able to provide culturally sensitive and appropriate support to both the hosted student and the host family.

Awareness of the existence of cultural differences and how to deal with these differences can have a profoundly positive impact on the quality of your relationship with your participant and on your entire family's hosting experience. This handbook is designed to help you learn about both the Indonesian **and** U.S. cultures by examining a number of cultural topics in contrast with each other. We hope that you find these topics and others in this handbook to be interesting and informative:

- Predominant communication styles in the U.S. and Indonesia;
- Indonesian family life and relationships;
- Indonesian cultural norms regarding personal appearance and religion;
- Key differences between the U.S. and Indonesian school systems;
- The general Indonesian and U.S. American views on concepts such as time and space.

Of course, you are not expected to read through this Handbook in one sitting! At first you will probably want to familiarize yourself with its contents, read intensively those areas of special interest to you and then during the coming weeks continue to refer back to the various topics as situations occur. We hope that you will enjoy yourself as you and your family join together with your Indonesian student in this cultural exchange.

Participant Selection Process

If your student came to the U.S. on the YES Program, he or she was selected by AFS, but you as a host family may be participating through AFS, ACES, AIFS Foundation, CIEE or PAX. If you are an AFS host family you may be hosting a non-YES student. For more information please see the Appendix.

Overview of Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelago of 17,508 islands, 6,000 of which are inhabited. It straddles the equator, and is on or along the major sea lanes running from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Its nearest neighbors are Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and Australia. [1]

Indonesia has a population of 242 million people, making it the fourth-largest population in the world. Jakarta, on the island of Java, is the national capital, with a population of approximately 9 million people. Java is home to 60 percent of Indonesia's people, and it is the most populous island in the world.[2] More than 44 percent of the Indonesian population lives in an urban setting, but many people live in small villages, as well. In size, the land mass of Indonesia is slightly less than three times the size of Texas. [3]

Religions of Indonesia

- Muslim 86.1 percent,
- Protestant 5.7 percent,
- Roman Catholic 3 percent ,
- Hindu 1.8 percent,
- other or unspecified 3.4 percent (2000 census)[4]

[1] CIA Factbook, Indonesia; https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html
[2] Java, Wikipedia; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java
[3] CIA Factbook, Indonesia
[4] Ibid

A Brief History of Indonesia

Indonesia has a long and interesting history, well-presented by the Indonesian Embassy in Washington, DC, on their website: http://www.embassyofindonesia.org/about/history.htm

Some highlights of that history are:

- Indonesia was inhabited by human-like "Java Man," *Pithecanthropus Erectus,* more than half a million years ago.
- The Buddhist-Hindu kingdoms were the main form of government and society from about 100 – 1500 AD.
- Islam was introduced by Gujurati (Indian) and Persian merchants in the 13th century, AD
- The Portuguese arrived in search of spices in 1512.
- The Dutch organized the Dutch East Indies Trade Company in 1602, and soon thereafter managed to win a monopoly on the spice trade.

The Dutch began to colonize Indonesia in the early 17th century; Japan occupied the islands from 1942 to 1945. Indonesia declared its independence after Japan's surrender, but it required four years of intermittent negotiations, recurring hostilities, and UN mediation before the Netherlands agreed to transfer sovereignty in 1949. Free and fair legislative elections took place in 1999 after decades of repressive rule. Indonesia is now the world's third most populous democracy, the world's largest archipelagic state, and home to the world's largest Muslim population.

Current issues include: alleviating poverty, improving education, preventing terrorism, consolidating democracy after four decades of authoritarianism, implementing economic and financial reforms, stemming corruption, holding the military and police accountable for human rights violations, addressing climate change, and controlling infectious diseases, particularly those of global and regional importance.

In 2005, Indonesia reached a historic peace agreement with armed separatists in Aceh, which led to democratic elections in Aceh in December 2006. Indonesia continues to face low intensity armed resistance by the separatist Free Papua Movement.

Excerpt, CIA Factbook, "Indonesia," https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html

Culture

What is Culture?

Cultural experts have defined culture in the following ways:

> *Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.*
>
> *— Geert Hofstede*

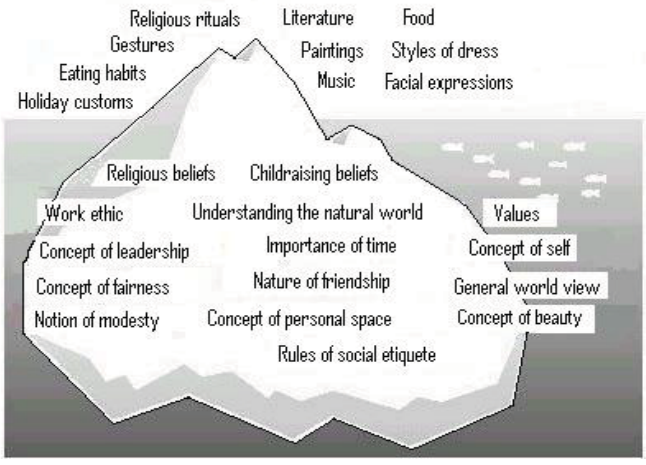
> *That whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, laws, morals, customs, and any capabilities or habits acquired by one as a member of a certain group. It is passed on from generation to generation, and it shapes our behaviors and structures our perceptions.*
>
> *— Donna M. Stringer and Patricia A. Cassidy*

Culture is a set of behaviors, values and beliefs created by groups of people, giving them a sense of community and purpose.

Cultural rules often are followed unconsciously. A person may belong to any number of cultures, such as a workplace culture, faith culture, generational culture, and/or geographically defined culture. Each culture has its own set of characteristics that gives those within it a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves or, on the other hand, of being different from the norm for that culture.

The Cultural Iceberg

One way to understand the various parts of culture is by thinking about culture as if it were an iceberg. The iceberg shows that some elements of culture are above the surface of the water and are visible. People are aware of these aspects of culture because they are reflected in our **behaviors**. Other cultural aspects that lie under the water line are invisible, and they aren't obvious to us. These are what noted anthropologist Edward T. Hall calls the "hidden dimensions" of culture, and they include our **values, norms and beliefs**.

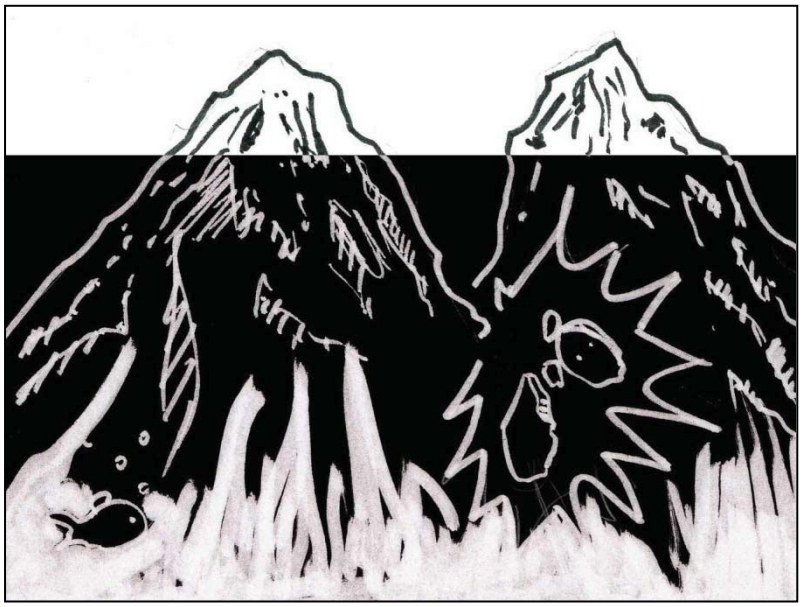


(http://www.uop.edu/sis/culture/File/sec1-1-1h1.htm)

The visible and invisible parts of culture interact with each other in ways that you probably don't normally stop to consider. For example, a common nonverbal behavior such as waving good-bye is visible, but what that gesture means is invisible. In one culture it could mean “good-bye,” in another “come here,” and yet another “go away.”

When two cultures, like two icebergs, collide, the real clash occurs not in those visible differences but rather below the surface where values, beliefs and thought patterns conflict.

During the hosting experience you and your hosted participant may feel uncomfortable with a situation but don’t quite know why. Chances are good that you are experiencing cultural differences “below the surface of the water.” Being aware of this dynamic and the potential for learning that exists within it are a huge part of the cultural learning process.



Art by Michael Capozzola www.Capozzola.com

While your hosted participant is the newcomer in this scenario, as a host family member you too will have the opportunity to gain a new perspective on both Indonesian and U.S. cultures. This process of mutual enrichment and learning is what thousands of participants, host families, and natural families will tell you is at the heart of the hosting experience.

You may be wondering, “How can I learn about myself through contact with someone different from me?” It is most often through the contrast between the two that new awareness and knowledge arise. In other words, you may not be aware of your own values, beliefs, and customs until you come into contact with someone whose values, beliefs, and customs differ from your own. The goal of this handbook is to help you build awareness of your own and your participant’s culture in order to help you have a more enjoyable and educational hosting experience.

Generalizations and Stereotypes

To help you along in this process of mutual discovery which the hosting experience presents, it is often useful to look to **cultural generalizations.**

Cultural generalizations are defined as the tendency of the majority of people within a culture group to share certain values, beliefs and behaviors. Generalizations do not apply to all people within a culture group, and so should be used only as a guide to understanding the group.

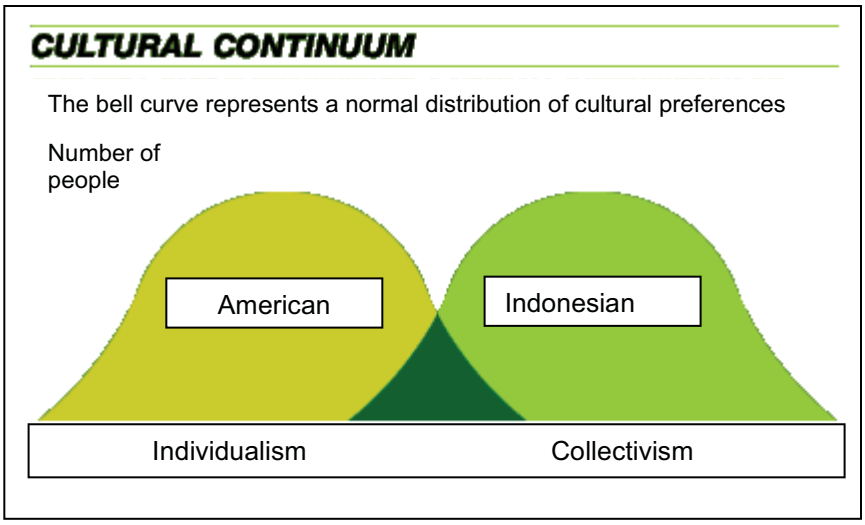
An example of a cultural generalization is the strongly held U.S. **American value of individualism**. Americans tend to like to do things themselves and see themselves as responsible for their own lives. These things are reflected in popular expressions such as "pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps." Even the Nike slogan, "Just Do It," suggests that Americans control their own destiny. But this doesn't mean that all Americans value individualism in the same way and to the same degree. Rather, on average, Americans hold this value, and their culture views this as a positive.

Cultural generalizations must not be confused with cultural stereotypes, which are fixed ideas or exaggerated beliefs about every individual in the culture group. They are often negative in nature and not tested.

An example of a cultural stereotype would be U.S. Americans are materialistic.

To better understand the difference between cultural generalizations and stereotypes, please refer to the figure on the following page. On the left side, **individualism** (emphasis on well-being of the individual) is displayed, and on the right side is the value of **collectivism**. A collectivist culture is one in which the interests of the group, whether it be family, classmates or community, are given priority over those of the individual. Unlike in the U.S., people from cultures that value collectivism tend to avoid confrontation and directly revealing negative feelings. Maintaining harmony within a group is very important in a collectivist culture. Family ties also tend to be stronger than those in individualist cultures (see *Communication*).

The mid-point of the bell curve for U.S. Americans shows that, on average, individualism is the dominant cultural value. However, the curve also shows that some U.S. Americans are much closer to the collectivist value. Conversely, collectivism is the norm in the Indonesian culture, but some Indonesian people can be found on the individualist side.



The bell curves show that there is a great deal of value diversity within each culture group, while at the same time there is a preferred or dominant cultural value.

The shaded area shows how some U.S. Americans and Indonesian people may be more like each other on this trait than they are like the average U.S. American or Indonesian . For example, a U.S. teen from a rural community might have more in common with an Indonesian teen from a rural community than a U.S. teen from an urban area. In fact, you may find that many similarities and differences that you and your student may encounter are related to general characteristics of urban versus small town life.

Our student grew up in a very rural area and had experience on his grandparents' farm so he fit right into our family and living arrangements. He had chores at home like our children did. We clearly talked about our expectations and asked him for input on anything he didn't understand.

– U.S. Host Parent

Exchange students tend to be outside the norm for one or more cultural traits in comparison to their peers. Simply leaving one's family for a year to study abroad is highly unusual in Indonesian society. And acting as a host family is not very common in the U.S. You and your participant are likely to have in common an open mind and an interest in learning about other cultures. These are key elements of a successful hosting experience.

It is also important to keep in mind that culture is not the only factor influencing behavior. People can differ in many other ways, such as their likes and dislikes, personalities, and life experiences. (See left side of Figure 1 below). The situation at hand can also have an impact on how people behave. For this reason, cultural generalizations should only be a starting point for exploration and discussion on how your cultural values may be similar to or different from those of your exchange student.

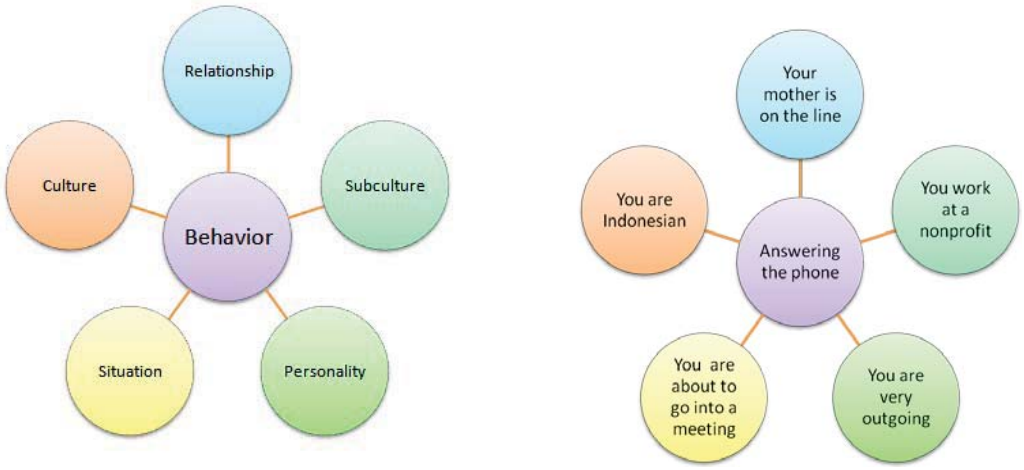


Figure 1
Factors that may influence behaviors

Consider that you are an Indonesian person whose mother called just before your work meeting. In the scenario on the right in Figure 1, an Indonesian person would most likely take the call and converse with his or her mother for several minutes (colleagues would not object nor think it inappropriate), reflecting the strong family ties that are the norm in Indonesia. Change any factor in this situation and the behavior in the center may change.

While many things can influence one's behavior, cultural generalizations serve as a basis for comparison and exploration of cultural differences and similarities.

Reaching an accurate understanding of the reasons behind any behavior that may seem puzzling or unusual to you (or your student) will require effective communication between each other. We hope that this handbook will serve as a starting point for this dialogue!

Culture and Perception

Culture shapes your perception in the same way that the color of the lens in your glasses changes the way you see. For example, if you were to look at a yellow car while wearing a pair of blue-tinted glasses the car would appear green. However, if you were to view the same yellow car through pink-tinted glasses, it would appear orange. Similarly, you and your participant may see the same situation with two different "cultural lenses" or sets of values, norms and beliefs. If you are not aware of the color of each other's lens -- in other words, the cultural context of a given situation -- conflict and misunderstandings are more likely to occur.

Take, for example, the **task vs. relationship** value contrast. In general, U.S. Americans place great importance on speed, efficiency and "getting the job done." Great importance is placed on deadlines and schedules; being punctual is a sign of respect for others. U.S. Americans tend to view achieving a particular task in a timely manner more important than maintaining or developing relationships with those involved in helping achieve that task.

On the other hand, in Indonesia a more relaxed attitude toward time generally exists. The norm is to strive to maintain harmonious relationships with those involved in a shared task. For example, it would be a sign of disrespect to those present to cut one meeting short for the sole purpose of being on time for another. This is changing somewhat, however, in Jakarta and other large cities in Indonesia, where the digital age and other influences have resulted in a new generation of multi-tasking, iPhone savvy urbanites, the likes of whom can be found in any major city in the U.S. or abroad.

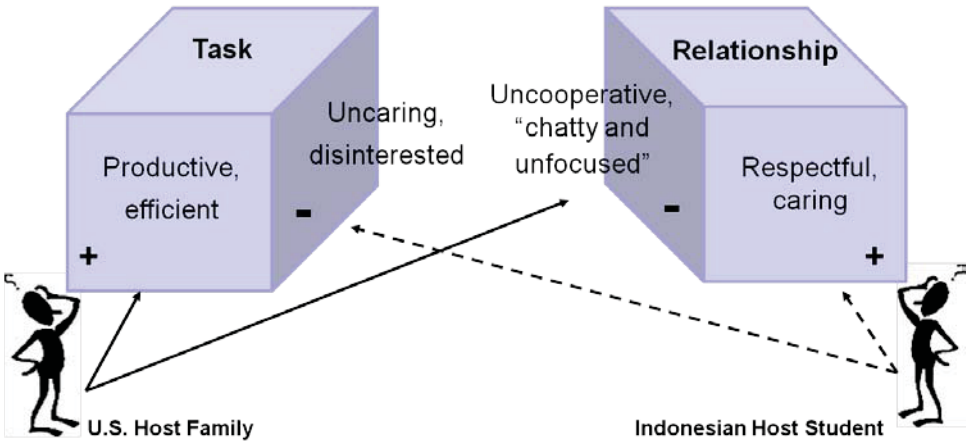
How might these differences play out in your hosting experience?
Here is one possible scenario:

> *It's a typical, busy, weekday afternoon shortly after the arrival of your student. Family members are now returning from school, work and various other activities. You need help unloading groceries; the dog needs to be fed. One sibling goes to her room to do homework, and the other sits himself down in front of the computer. You get a call from your spouse who is running late. You say a quick "hello" to your student and ask him to unload the groceries so that you can begin to prepare dinner. In your opinion, he is dilly-dallying, moving at a snail's pace, asking you about your day, telling you about his, wanting your advice on what he should wear to the assembly the next day. The phone rings, and you move to another room to take the call so you can take notes on what you are expected to prepare for the next PTA meeting. He follows. You point in the direction of the car outside, gesturing as if carrying groceries. Your student looks confused, retreats to his room, and emerges looking glum when called for dinner.*

What happened here? How might the student perceive your behavior, how might you perceive the student's behavior? Figure 2 below provides a likely explanation.

Many value differences influence the situation. However, the focus of this example is that the host parent is trying to accomplish the task of unloading the groceries so that she can begin making dinner. The student is seeking to connect with her by asking about her day, sharing what happened during his day, and eliciting advice from her. Having "dilly-dallied" and not retrieved the groceries, she perceives his behavior as uncooperative and "hovering." In contrast, since she did not take the time to chat with him on her return home, he perceived her behavior as uncaring and disinterested.

Task vs. Relationship Value Orientation



Neither the student nor the host parent intended to displease the other, but not understanding the motivation behind the other's behavior led to negative perceptions on both sides. The goal of this handbook is to bring to light differences you may encounter, generate understanding of these differences, and explore practical tips for dealing with them. That way, both you and your student may have more enriching and enjoyable experiences together.

Communication

Developing good communication skills in English is an important part of an educational exchange program for Indonesian high school students. Learning to listen actively and thoughtfully, being able to express themselves easily both verbally and non-verbally, being able to converse with a wide range of people, and being able to speak with confidence in front of a large group are all worthy goals. In order to help your student develop these skills, it is important to consider the contrasts in communication styles between the U.S. and Indonesia.

Greetings and Respect

Indonesians usually shake hands when they meet, and may follow a handshake by touching their right palm to their hearts in a show of friendship. When meeting for the first time, Indonesians often bow their heads slightly.

A girl wearing a hijab (head scarf) may not want to shake hands with a man. If she is comfortable shaking hands, she will extend her hand; if not, she may just move her hand to her heart. Some men may also choose to do this in place of shaking a woman's hand.

He was not used to hugging as part of a greeting or departure. He watched us for a while then decided it was ok to hug.

– U.S. Host Parent

Indonesian society is very hierarchical, based on age, education, work, and much more. Older people are greatly respected in Indonesia. Rather than use your first names, your student may want to call you "Mom" and "Dad." These titles are a sign of respect in Indonesian culture.

He deferred to adults under all circumstances, even when adults were wrong.

– U.S. Host Parent

Indonesian children are taught to accept decisions made by the parents. Our Indonesian daughter was amazed by the choices we gave our 4-year-old!

– U.S. Host Parent

"Communication precedes trust; trust precedes communication."

– Indonesian Host Parent

It is very important to form a personal relationship with your Indonesian son or daughter early on. Indonesians show they care by asking questions, and they expect the same in return. Ask questions

about your student's family, home, hobbies, and school. In this way, you'll form a bond that allows communication – and leads to trust.

If you don't ask about his or her family, your student may assume you don't care.

In speech, most Indonesians are polite, discreet, calm, refined, and soft-spoken, often appearing shy. Some regions of Indonesia cultivate a more forthright demeanor -- but a quiet, reserved voice is the national trait. Host parents may interpret this soft-spoken nature as an inability to speak or understand English. Often this isn't the case.

As a parent, you need to build a relationship before your student will speak freely. Ask questions, tell the student about yourself, and be sure your student knows that it is okay to speak up.

Communicating as a parent helps build trust. Indonesian students expect you to act like a parent, not as a friend. Your student's love and loyalty will come naturally if he or she feels that you are a good parent.

Begin your parenting communication by showing your student how to live in your home. Show your student how to use appliances, and review the questionnaire in the *Host Family Handbook*. This communicates that you care and can be trusted.

Indonesian proverb: "Air tenang Meghanyutkan." It means, "Never underestimate a quiet person, for he may have qualities that belie his quiet nature**."**

It may seem like the student reads English better than he or she can speak it, so you may be tempted to write things down for your student. However, this may appear that you don't want to speak to your student because you are angry. Instead, be patient and speak to your student often, building a comfort level over time. Indonesians value relationships very much, though it may take a while to form them.

We had to be patient and show him that we are his family, too.

– U.S. Host Parent

Direct and Indirect

Direct communication is like "reading the headlines."
Indirect communication is like "reading between the lines."

In general, U.S. Americans consider themselves direct in their communication style. A **direct** style of communication is one in which the meaning of what is said is found primarily in the words that are spoken. We generally like to think of ourselves as "telling it like it is." In an **indirect** style of communication, the meaning is more often derived from factors other than what is said. Some of the factors that can influence the meaning could be:

- perceived status of the speakers
- context of the situation
- body language
- level of familiarity (The more familiar and comfortable the situation, the more likely an Indonesian student will use a direct style of communication.)

Though communications styles vary among host families in the U.S., Indonesian students tend to use a more indirect communications style than host families use. This can cause discomfort and misunderstanding by both parties unless it is discussed and an attempt is made to understand the different styles.

Imagine you are having coffee in the home of a friend. The kitchen window is open, and you feel chilly. Which are you more likely to do?

a) Ask your friend, "Is it ok to close the window? I'm a little cold."

b) Say with sincerity, "My, don't you feel cold?"

To get the message across in a culturally-appropriate way, most people in the U.S. would choose the first option, but many people in Indonesia would choose the second option in order to find consensus from others. This is a simple example of the direct vs. indirect style of communicating, as illustrated in Figure 3 that follows.

She was not used to direct communication, and we had to really check with her since she also did not want to cause any trouble for us. She would do without, at first, rather than ask.

– U.S. Host Parent

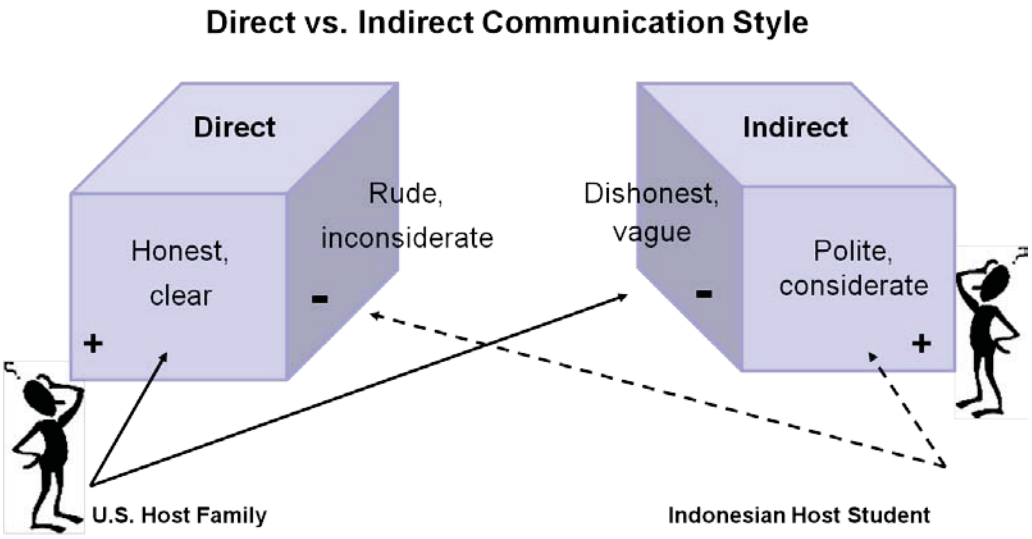


Figure 3

It may help to understand why Indonesians use the indirect communication style. Their society is sensitive to the interpersonal needs of others, perhaps more so than is often the case in the U.S. Indonesians are always trying to "keep the peace," never wanting to cause anyone in the group an inconvenience. Therefore, they expect everyone to feel the same way they do -- to be looking out for the comfort of others, and to realize what they need without words.

In the example above, the Indonesian who's feeling chilly would work to achieve consensus by asking if the other person was uncomfortable.

You don't need to change your communication style to accommodate your Indonesian student. But it helps to point out the different styles.

Here are some things you can do to help your student use a more direct communication style while he or she is in the US:

- Let your student know that it is acceptable to directly say what he or she needs.
- If you don't understand what you student is trying to say, paraphrase what you believe he or she is trying to say. Get confirmation of his or her understanding.

For example:

- Point out that any family member may request that the TV channel be changed.
- Mention that the food was prepared for everyone to eat, that you'll only offer food once, and that it's acceptable to take it the first time it's offered.
- … And say that it's okay to close the window, rather than expect that the other person feels chilly, too.

During the first few weeks, your student may use indirect communication, so be aware of facial expressions, posture, and gestures as a means of communication. Model the appropriate U.S. American

behavior, point out your "direct" style during the first few weeks, and ask your student to communicate more directly. Most students adapt and slowly change to a more direct communication style.

It's important to recognize and praise any efforts your student makes to be more "direct."

More Indirect Communication: The "Go Between"

Indonesians sometimes use a "go-between" when trying to communicate something uncomfortable. An Indonesian father might use an "intermediary" rather than confront family members directly. For instance, he might tell his wife what he wants his son to do, knowing that the word will get back to his son.

For the same reason, if your student needs toothpaste, or wants to attend the mosque, he or she may tell a younger family member, rather than you, the host parent.

Communicate that it's okay to talk directly to you, the parent. Praise your student for trying this new communication style. You might use an indirect style yourself sometimes. For example, if you want to communicate something uncomfortable to your Indonesian student, perhaps to take shorter showers or to encourage going to the prom, try telling your own son/daughter. Let him or her communicate it to your student.

Eye Contact and Personal Touch

Students from the urban areas are more accustomed to making eye contact during conversation. Students from other areas and/or the Pesantren (Islamic school), however, may feel uncomfortable with constant direct eye contact as you talk together.

Until the discomfort with direct eye contact passes, try looking at the student's chin, and then back to his or her eyes while you're speaking.

In Indonesia touching someone while talking is reserved for family and for acquaintances of the same gender. Except for small children, Indonesians do not touch each other on the head. It is considered rude.

Communication Taboos

Although your student will probably realize that you mean no disrespect, you may cause your student discomfort if you don't heed the following:

- Indonesians don't give or receive with their **left hands**, since it is considered impolite. It is their custom to use the left hand for "toilet" purposes.
- Standing with your **hands on your hips or in your pockets** indicates defiance or aggression.
- While discussion of **religion** may be considered somewhat "taboo" in the U.S., it is not in Indonesia. Most people identify with a religion, and about 86 percent of Indonesians are

Muslim. Their religion is very important to them, and they generally are willing to discuss their beliefs with you.

Indonesian Muslim exchange students, like many Americans, may not be able to explain "why" their religion requires or prohibits certain behaviors (such as not touching dogs or not swimming during Ramadan). They comply because it is part of their life and their culture, too, not only for religious reasons.

- **Sarcasm** generally is not understood by Indonesians. If you say sarcastically, "Well, isn't *that* a great idea," your student will think you are serious.
- **Religious jokes** are never appropriate in Indonesian culture.
- **Sex** education begins in grade six and usually is discussed in a religious context. However, discussion of anything sex-related (except menstrual periods) may be uncomfortable, even with teen peers. (See *Hygiene*.) These topics are discussed easily among married adults in Indonesia, but are avoided by parents talking to their children or among unmarried persons.
- S**i**nce the 1970s, the Indonesian government has tried to control population growth. (Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world). Therefore, discussion of **contraception** isn't taboo in Indonesia. Many married women use contraceptives and discuss the topic openly.
- Discussion of **money** is uncomfortable in the U.S. and in Indonesia. It is best to be very clear with your student about what expenses are his or her responsibilities. Keep in mind that students don't know what it costs to join the soccer team in the U.S. or go to Disneyland. You must discuss costs like these so they can plan ahead. Be aware that in Indonesia, the person who invites pays; prepare your student for "Dutch treat."
- Students on the YES program receive a stipend each month. The amount is approximately equal to the monthly salary of a clerical or retail employee in Indonesia, so it will seem like a great deal of money to your student. This amount won't go very far, so encourage your student to save part of it for expenses that will arise later in the year, such as for prom or a school trip. While perhaps uncomfortable, it is important to discuss money. You can use the questionnaire in the *Host Family Handbook* for this purpose.
- **Politics** is not a taboo subject among Indonesians. People in Indonesia who are interested in politics may discuss it openly, but rarely come to the point of argument, as might happen in the U.S.
- While **homosexuality** is tolerated and openly discussed in many U.S. families, it will probably not be a comfortable topic for Indonesian students, at least when they first arrive.

Your explanations and demonstrations of caring and interest will go a long way to help your student feel comfortable and help him or her understand that any "offense" s/he may perceive from you is unintentional and simply results from another way of viewing the world.

Conflict Resolution

The Qur'an directs Muslims to show respect to parents: "Say not even 'Fie' unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word."

[Qur'an 17:23-24]

Indonesians in general avoid confrontation, especially any spoken disagreement with someone older than themselves. Children, especially, are taught to listen, and not to explain or argue with adults.

If your student is unhappy with you, it is unlikely that you will hear about it directly. Indonesians generally won't talk to you if they are having problems with you! If your student is quiet or stays alone for long periods of time, you should "check in" to find out why. State that you care, that you've noticed a silent period, and that you wonder what's wrong.

It can be hard to know what they are thinking or what they really want. This sounds awkward but it probably caused more problems to us than anything, because our student would disagree with something and he would shut down. I don't think that is unusual for kids from Indonesia.

– U.S. Host Parent

After a period of keeping silent about a problem, your student may unexpectedly show anger. Host parents sometimes observe this behavior in their Indonesian student a few months after he or she arrives.

After the holidays, review the questionnaire in the Host Family Handbook again. This is an opportunity to discover something that's been bothering your student, or you, before it becomes an overwhelming problem.

"Saving Face"

As a way to maintain harmony and dignity, "saving face" is very important in Indonesian culture. Indonesian students may try very hard to avoid confrontation in order to "save face." To be polite, your student may say what he or she thinks you want to hear, or just smile. Be aware of this important cultural difference, and use extra care when finding fault with your student.

Consider these tips to help resolve disagreement or conflict, or to help change the behavior of your Indonesian student in a way that "saves face":

- **Never criticize your student in front of others. Always communicate one-to-one or use a go-between when there is something that may seem like a criticism.**
- **Listen first, talk second. Listen to "why" your student is doing what you object to.**
- **Use a soft, comforting voice, and try not to show anger in your voice or on your face. Since it is rare for Indonesians to directly express anger, upon seeing others do so, your student may misinterpret the level of anger directed at him or her to be very extreme.**

- **Try to express what the student may be feeling. For example, if a student is communicating too much with the natural family, you could say, "You probably feel lonely and want to talk about it, but I don't want you to use Skype to talk to your family every day. You can talk to me. I'm your parent, too."**
- **Discuss options together. Try to find commonality. Perhaps tell the student about a time when you were away from home or didn't do your chores.**

When you stop and think about it, all of the recommendations above apply equally to everyday interactions with family and co-workers in the U.S., not just with exchange students!

Keep in mind that your student is also concerned about saving face for YOU. When your student makes a request, he or she is concerned that you may "lose face" because you've neglected to recognize his/her need.

Family Arguments

Since Indonesians avoid confrontation, especially public displays of emotion, arguments within their U.S. host families are uncomfortable.

The most difficult thing for me so far is watching my family argue. My host brothers sit in the car and argue, and I'm so uncomfortable. I don't fight with my brother in Indonesia.
– Indonesian Exchange Student

Since Indonesians respect their elders, even older siblings are treated deferentially. Older children are expected to care for younger ones. This seems to result in less sibling rivalry and fewer spats among Indonesian siblings.

Parents in the U.S. often argue. Because Indonesian students don't understand what's happening, they tend to be uncomfortable in these situations.

After a family argument, discuss it with your student, explaining that this is your family communication style. Let the student know that your family members love each other, even though you raise your voices.

Ask your student what he or she is thinking and feeling when a disagreement arises. Then you can offer reassurance.

He got upset when my kids argued with me. We had to explain that I wasn't upset and that they were negotiating their rules with me. He learned and my kids learned, and it was positive for everyone

– U.S. Host Parent

"Yes": It Doesn't Always Mean "Yes"!

In the U.S., if someone asks if you want to go to a movie, you feel comfortable saying "yes" or "no," or "I'll call you back," or "How about tomorrow?" Some Indonesians, on the other hand, may want to please you, so they say what they think you want to hear. This can result in many misunderstandings.

When an Indonesian student says "yes" or "okay" to a request, it may mean any of the following:

- Yes, I understand and I'll do it.
- I don't understand or in some way can't comply, but I don't want to bother you (or "lose face") by admitting it.
- I'll do it because I think you want me to (or I must do it), but I don't want to.
- Maybe. That is, I haven't decided whether I'll do it, when I'll do it, or if I'll do it at all.
- And "yes" may even mean, "No, I have no intention of doing what you've asked." This is not considering lying, but rather an Indonesian courtesy to keep the appearance of calm, to avoid a conflict, or to avoid embarrassment.

Remember, Indonesians typically don't feel that they can argue with a parent (S*ay not "Fie" unto them),* so they may feel that it's better to say "yes" and then not comply, than to disagree or argue with you. To you it may appear that they've said they'd do something and then didn't do it; however, to them, it's not deliberately deceptive. It's important to have a serious discussion in cultural terms about what "yes" means in your family.

The best way to avoid misunderstanding is to ask for more than "yes" in answer to your questions. For example, rather than, "Do you want to go out for pizza?" ask, "Would you like to go out for pizza or Chinese food?"

You can ask the student when a task will be completed, how he or she will do it, and what problems he or she anticipates in doing it. The answers will give you an opportunity to "read between the lines" to see whether "yes" really meant "yes."

Let your student know that it's all right to ask "why" you've made a particular request. Encourage him or her to have an opinion and to voice it.

Encourage your student to let the teacher know when he or she needs further explanation – in Indonesia that never happens.

– U.S. Host Parent

Communicating Time, Deadlines, and Assignments

Time and deadlines are sometimes flexible in Indonesia. Your student may operate on "jam karet," which translated literally from the Indonesian language, means "rubber time," or "stretch the time and be late."

Consider giving your student a "be ready" time that's somewhat before the real time you'll be departing – at least until he or she learns how the U.S. and your family define time, deadlines, and schedules.

Indonesians may find it very hard to ask for help or to be the bearer of bad news. For example, rather than tell you that he or she does not understand the geometry teacher, your student may avoid that admission until it's too late. Keep in mind that your student is trying to "save face." You must be pro-active, offering assistance rather than expecting your student to come to you.

For school assignments, as well as chores and other activities that must be done on time, it's always a good idea to check in with your student to see how he or she is doing. If possible, check the student's grades online or talk to teachers.

Indonesian parents generally don't become involved in school matters. Therefore you'll want to discuss your interest in grades, etc. as part of being an American parent.

Tenses

Indonesian verbs don't change depending on tense. To indicate past or future tense, Indonesian inserts an additional word to clarify the time of the action. Your student knows the English past and future tenses, but may forget to use them during the first few weeks, while his or her brain is still translating directly from Indonesian to English. For instance, your student may say, "I sit with Anna at lunch yesterday," or "Josh pick me up tomorrow." With a few gentle reminders from you, your student will catch on quickly.

Communicating About Making Friends

Indonesians are friendly people and generally feel comfortable in groups. However, your student may not know how to make friends with U.S. American teens. In many cases, Indonesian students have shared a classroom with the same group of Indonesian students for the past 10 years. Perhaps your student has never needed to make a new friend!

Explain to your biological children that your Indonesian student may take extra time to make friends of his or her own. Ask your own child to explain the importance of making "small talk," smiling, and making eye contact with new people – and how to do it.

Invite teens in your neighborhood to meet your student before the school year begins. Then friendships can start in a comfortable environment. Perhaps ask someone to sit with your student at lunch until he or she finds a group to eat with.

Indonesian students are often confused by the "superficial" friendliness of American teens. When someone says, "I'll call you, and we can hang out this weekend," your Indonesian student may wait for the call. In fact, some students spend the whole year waiting.

If your student doesn't seem to be making friends, encourage him or her to call a friend to arrange a casual meeting -- and to keep trying if the first attempt isn't successful. Making friends is an important part of the exchange experience, but you may need to give your student a gentle push to begin the process.

On the other hand, some exchange students are content with their social interactions within the family, during the school day and among other exchange students. If you've encouraged your student to bring school friends home or to go out, and it doesn't happen -- and your student is content -- that may be fine.

We found it difficult to understand why our exchange student was not becoming more socially involved. We never did find a way to make that happen. However, he seemed to be alright with his daily routine.

– U.S. Host Parent

Showing Emotion

In Indonesian society, expressing emotions, negative and positive, is rare (except in the presence of family members and close friends) because these displays may disrupt the smooth flow of daily life.

Expressions of love are not acceptable in public, so your student may be confused at first by hugging and other public displays of affection.

Just because your Indonesian student is smiling, he or she isn't necessarily happy. In some cases, Indonesians smile when they are nervous or confused. If offended, Indonesians may compensate with a smile.

Look for other signs of distress if your student's smile seems inappropriate to the situation.

Rather than express emotion, or show it outright, Indonesians may write down their feelings. When they write for their own use, it doesn't feel "wrong," as it does when those emotions are expressed aloud.

Encourage your student to keep a journal, and respect his or her privacy unless you're offered a look at what's been written.

Indonesians typically only discuss emotional topics with those to whom they feel "connected." Therefore it's important to begin building a bond with your student right away. The best way to do this is to use a soft voice. Also, express interest in how the student is doing, and tell him or her that you want to help with any problems. Say it's okay to share concerns and that you won't be angry. If you see sadness, ask, for example, "You seem sad. Is it about school? "

Host parents are advised to restrict the use of the computer and international cell phone, especially early on. Otherwise students will confide their emotions to natural parents back home, where they feel connected, instead of confiding in host parents.

Relationships

Relationships within the Family

In Indonesia parents and elders are highly respected, and children are traditionally taught to listen and obey them with minimum questioning. Children are taught to kiss the back of the elder's right hand ("cium tangan"/"salim") as a sign of respect.

Parents are regarded as leaders in the family, where the traditional roles are: the father is the breadwinner and the ultimate decision maker, and the mother is the "home manager" and general advisor of the family. The mother's role is highly respected in a family. There is an Indonesian saying, "Heaven lies under the sole of the mother's foot."

In the U.S. the traditional roles for fathers and mothers were very similar to those of Indonesia. Today, in the U.S. both parents commonly work, and many women earn as much as their husbands do. Their roles are becoming somewhat more equal.

It is important to remember that it may take time for your student to adjust to living in your home and showing affection the way your family does. Your student has been taught to be respectful and may spend some time watching and observing how your family members interact and show respect to each other. As your student becomes more comfortable, he or she may start to show affection in a way that is more familiar to you.

Direct communication may also be difficult for your student to adjust to and will require patience on both your parts as your student learns to communicate with you and your family in more of an American way. Be ready to take time to explain and answer questions to help clarify and reinforce what you are trying to communicate. Remember to speak slowly. Your student will greatly appreciate your patience, support, and encouragement while adjusting to your family.

After dinner, it would be common for Indonesian students to go to their rooms and stay there. Some families in the U.S. might perceive the behavior of retreating into bedrooms immediately after dinner to be antisocial. However, in Indonesia, this is a time to wind down, cool off, and pray since this time would typically be around one of the prescribed five times a day for prayer. Most homes in Indonesia don't have central air conditioning; however, they may have a room air conditioner in the bedrooms, making the bedroom a particularly attractive place to relax in such a hot climate. Be sure to speak to your student about your family's after-dinner habits and how he or she will be expected to participate, especially if that time in the evening is important time for your family to socialize.

Also be aware that because your student may get up very early in the morning to pray, he or she may want to go to bed earlier than your family does. Encourage your student to join in family evening activities, rather than staying in his or her room.

Sleeping alone in a bedroom may be a new experience for your student as it is more common for Indonesian siblings to share rooms. For comfort, offer a night light.

Relationships with Extended Family

Go slow on physical demonstrations of affection. Let your student know by your other actions that you care about him or her. If your family does a lot of hugging, he or she may be ready for it after a while. If your student starts calling you "Mr." or "Mrs.," suggest that he or she may call you "Mom" or "Dad."

In Indonesia the extended family -- grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins -- also plays a big role. Parents will often ask their children to visit extended family. If the natural parents pass away, the extended family will act as a substitute. All family members are expected to attend big family gatherings, such as religious holidays and weddings. All guests, whether family or friends, are highly respected. When visiting someone's home, hosting a guest can expect to be prioritized over other activities.

Remember that your student is adjusting to many new things: you, your spouse, your children, your home, and how family members interact with each other, school, and the U.S. American culture. Be patient, as it will take time for your student to also learn how to interact with your extended family.

Relationships with Teachers

The student was hesitant to ask the teacher to repeat or explain something because, in Indonesia, that's just not done.

– U.S. Host Parent

Students' respect for their teachers is as high as their respect for their natural parents. At school teachers take on the roles of "parents at school." Because of this respect, students are generally taught to listen and obey their teachers, with little questioning. In Pesantren (Islamic boarding school), teachers also act as legal guardians. Students learn to follow and tend to abide by the rules and statements of their teachers, almost word-per-word, most of the time.

Please refer to the section on schools to get tips and a better understanding of how to help your student adjust to the U.S. American high school experience.

Relationships with Peers

She chose to interact primarily with girls as her friends, although she did not exclude boys, just kept those friendships more distant.

– U.S. Host Parent

In Indonesia, it would be common for girls to hold hands with other girls and for boys to sit close to other boys or put their arms around each other if they are close friends. Teenagers may feel more comfortable sharing their feelings and stories with their friends first, before going to their parents for advice.

Developing relationships with their peers may be difficult for some students as they maneuver their way, trying to understand cultural differences. Your student will be anxious to develop relationships at school and will appreciate your support and encouragement. Be willing to offer words of understanding and reassurance that it will take time to develop relationships with his or her U.S. American peers.

Relationships between Genders

She was surprised to see the public display of affection. In her country, men and women were not separated, but did not touch each other.

– U.S. Host Parent

Group outings are very common for Indonesian teens. Mutual friends may act as matchmakers, helping a boy to "save face" if rejected when showing interest in a girl. Matchmaking may also help a girl who is waiting to be asked out. As a relationship becomes more serious, it may shift to individual dating.

Relationships with Pets

There are many misunderstandings about dogs in Islam. In most Muslim communities dogs, if any, serve as watch dogs rather than domestic pets. They are not treated as family members, as is often the case in the U.S. Dogs are generally not allowed in the house; the saliva is considered unclean and should not touch the clothing or skin. Your Indonesian student may be uncomfortable with or scared of a dog for this reason. He or she may want a "clean room," which means a bedroom in which the dog is not allowed. Often by the time Indonesian students are ready to return to their home country, their comfort level with and perception of dogs have changed.

If you have a dog and your student is uncomfortable with your pet, discuss the issue. Determine ways to keep your dog out of your student's bedroom. Understand that your student may not want to pet your dog. At least at first, you might not ask your student to do chores associated with dog care, especially walking or cleaning up after it. Please refer to the *YES Host Family Handbook* for more about dogs or pets.

Food, Mealtime, and Table Manners

"Makan ga makan asal kumpul."

Translation: "Whether you eat or not, being together is the most important thing."
– Indonesian Saying

Food is among the first things that come to mind when starting to focus on the culture of another country. Besides providing nourishment and familiar flavors, food choices and mealtime are associated with many traditions, habits of daily living, social interaction, and emotional experiences. Each of these helps define the food culture of your Indonesian student – and your own food culture, too. These same factors affect the nutrition and health of those who live in these countries.

As a host family, take time to enjoy food experiences with your student. It's a great place to start learning about one another by identifying the similarities and differences between your meal patterns, traditions, and everyday food habits. By cooking and eating together, and perhaps shopping for food together, too, you not only get to know more about each other's families and cultures; you'll also bond as a family and build mutual respect and understanding – in a delicious way!

Foods and Flavors

Indonesian foods and cooking styles differ from those of the U.S. Meals in Indonesia include more varieties and amounts of vegetables and fruits. Portions of meat, chicken, and fish (often shrimp) are smaller, often served in mixed stir-fry dishes. Rice is the mainstay, served separately and in rice-based mixed dishes. Noodles may be served as a side dish.

Is there a national Indonesian dish? Nasi goreng (fried rice cooked with cut-up vegetables and meat) is enjoyed throughout the country. However, there is no single "Indonesian" cuisine. Just like the U.S. is proud of its New England chowder and its Texas barbecue, different regions and islands of Indonesia are known for their own unique ingredient combinations and ways of preparing food. This diversity was created by regional Indonesian cultures and foreign influences. For example, Sumatran foods are spicy and made with lots of coconut milk.

For many Indonesians, no meal is complete without rice! Often last night's leftover rice turns into nasi goreng or another rice dish for breakfast. Even sweet, sticky cakes, wrapped in banana leaves, are made with rice and enjoyed as snacks. Rice is a comfort food for Indonesians. Having rice available at mealtime can help your Indonesian son or daughter feel at home, especially in the early weeks. If rice isn't available, bread, potatoes, or pasta (noodles) might provide a similar satisfaction. Indonesians use various types of rice, both regular and sticky, depending on the dish. Jasmine rice, commonly available in U.S. American supermarkets, may be similar to the rice to which your student is accustomed. Rice-a-Roni has also been well-accepted by some Indonesian students.

To cook rice easily, get an inexpensive rice cooker. Asian specialty stores sell them. Added benefit: the rice cooker is a perfect way to have rice ready for an early morning meal, especially during Ramadan.

Krupuk has been called the “bread” of Indonesia. It’s a crisp, cracker-like food made of flour and flavored with fish or shrimp, then deep-fried so it puffs to many times the original size. It‘s often served with a meal. (Look for krupuk in an Asian store to fry at home – it’s fun and easy to make.) Soft, leavened bread (the kind used to make American sandwiches) isn’t part of traditional Indonesian food culture, although some families buy white bread. Whole grain bread likely will be a new food to Indonesians.

Hot, hot, hot: Most Indonesians like hot, spicy flavors! Sambal -- a spicy condiment made of chiles, brown sugar, herbs, spices, and perhaps other ingredients -- is used like ketchup or salsa. The hot chiles in sambal "spark up" the flavor of rice and many other dishes.

Keep hot sauce or another spicy-hot sauce on the table or in the 'fridge for your student. Asian food stores likely sell different kinds of sambal; sambal oelek (ulek) is popular among Indonesians.

We weren’t insulted when she put spicy sauces on many American foods at the table. We understood that American meals seem very bland to most of the world, especially Indonesians … gradually she learned to eat less spicy food.

– U.S. Host Family

The unique flavors of Indonesian foods come from their remarkable use of spices ("bumbu" in the Indonesia language), herbs, aromatic roots such as ginger, and shrimp paste. Each region of Indonesia uses spices to flavor its own unique dishes. If you cook Indonesian food with your student, many of these spices may be familiar: cinnamon, coriander, cumin, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, and turmeric. For some others -- perhaps laos, lemongrass, and tamarind -- you'll need to go to an Asian store. Coconut milk is a cooking essential; palm sugar (somewhat like brown sugar) is the common sweetener.

Encourage your son or daughter to cook Indonesian foods for your family -- it's great! You may need to substitute creatively for hard-to-find Indonesian ingredients.

– U.S. Host Family

Indonesians cook on stovetops or hot plates. Large ovens aren’t common, although some homes have small countertop ovens. That’s why stir-frying or frying is the typical way to cook; palm oil, readily available, is the common cooking oil. Many dishes are grilled, simmered, steamed, or stewed (usually in coconut milk), as well.

Try a favorite grilled dish that’s easy to make and likely familiar to your own family: Indonesian “sate” or “satay”. It’s chunks of marinated meat, poultry, or seafood, threaded onto skewers and grilled over a fire, and served with a peanut dipping sauce (available in many U.S. supermarkets). If your student is Balinese, the meat is minced, not in chunks.

Our fried chicken was a lot like the chicken he ate at home. He loved spicy foods so he put hot sauce on it.

– U.S. Host Family

Tell your student that it's okay to let you know what foods he or she likes or dislikes. It's not considered rude. American families expect that.

– U.S. Host Family

Tap water (from the faucet) isn't drinkable in Indonesia; bottled water or boiled tap water is used instead. Your student may be surprised that you drink from almost any faucet.

Fresh milk is not common in most Indonesian households; instead milk usually is reconstituted from powdered milk and then sweetened. Since fresh milk may be a new experience for your student and may be considered tasteless at first, you might offer strawberry or chocolate milk. He or she would likely prefer whole milk. Whole milk may not be available as a milk choice in a U.S. school. Sweetened tea is another drink option.

Assure your student that water from your tap at home and from the water fountain at school is safe to drink. There's no need to buy bottled water.

Religious Food Practices

Whether your Indonesian student is Muslim, Hindu, Christian, or of another faith, religion may affect everyday food practices or those observed during religious holidays.

Islam has laws regarding which foods can and cannot be eaten, and also on the proper method of preparing an animal for consumption. Food that is prepared in accordance with Islamic law is called "halal" food. Most Muslim students have been warned that halal meat is not always available in some parts of the U.S., and they may adapt accordingly. However religious dietary observance may be extremely important to your student. The laws of Islam prohibit the consumption of pork or pork by-products; animals that were dead prior to slaughtering; animals not slaughtered properly; carnivorous animals and birds of prey; land animals without external ears; blood and blood by-products; alcohol and food cooked with alcohol. Shellfish such as shrimp is okay to eat.

Talk with your student about his or her religious food practices, food preferences and restrictions, and how strictly he or she follows these practices.

Be aware that many popular U.S American foods often are made with pork products: for example, pepperoni pizza, sausage and bacon, hot dogs, baked beans, potato salad, food made with gelatin such as marshmallows. Easy substitutes can be turkey bacon or pepperoni, and kosher marshmallows. Some students may want to try pork, while others will find it unacceptable and unappetizing. Be aware that using the same utensils to prepare pork for your family and an alternative food for your student may be an issue; wash the utensils after preparing a food with pork.

Learn to always check the ingredient list on food packages for pork and pork by-products. Foods labeled as "halal" or "kosher" are approved under Islamic dietary laws. You may find them in your supermarket, perhaps in a halal and/or kosher section, or find them in an international food store.

Ask about what he can and what he can't eat. Also ask about his likes and dislikes. If he's a Muslim, ask about his meat preferences -- and be meticulous and cautious when ordering food from a restaurant or buying any food that's already prepared … Having a pet near the table, or feeding table scraps to the pet, may be an issue, especially for Muslim kids.

– U.S. Host Family

From the beginning we promised not to serve pork to our student, but we didn't change our own eating habits. When we had planned pork for dinner, we always had an alternative for her. We took her grocery shopping to help find other options.

-- U.S. Host Family

Our Muslim students learned quickly that the high school students who were vegetarians were very helpful to them in figuring out whether they could eat some of the school lunch menu items.

– U.S. Host Family

During the holy month of Ramadan Muslims need to fast from sunrise to sunset. For this very special time, find ways to make fasting easier and to make this time away from family and friends special. Join your student in a pre-sunrise breakfast or with fasting (even a day or two) if you can -- it will mean a lot to him or her**. (**See Appendix E, YES Cultural Tip Sheet, "Religion," for more information.)

During Ramadan have food ready for early morning; preparing food the night before or using leftovers to reheat for a Ramadan breakfast might be most convenient. Providing steamed rice is recommended to help them feel full longer and power through days of fasting.

Break the fast together by eating the family dinner after sunset if you can. Invite friends and relatives over for a special meal. This might be a great time to prepare an Indonesian meal together. That's especially important for Eid al Fitr, the holiday that marks the end of Ramadan.

Ramadan was really hard because it started right after his arrival [and during the long days of summer] ... He was exhausted and hungry. Get the right foods (dates, fruit juice) for breaking the fast and look into other foods that your student loves because it makes a big difference.

– U.S. Host Family

For more about Islamic dietary practices throughout the year and during Ramadan, see the *YES Cultural Tips Sheet* noted in the Appendix or the YES Host Family Handbook.

If your student is Balinese Hindu, beef may be restricted. As you learn about his or her food preferences, practices, and traditions, ask about the many ways food is used in daily and festival religious offerings.

Indonesia also has a significant Christian population, especially from the islands of Borneo and Sulawesi. If your student is Christian, find out about any religious practices he or she may have related to food, too.

Family Meals and Snacks

"Selamat makan,"
"May you have a pleasant/tasty meal"

– Indonesian Saying

As in the U.S., Indonesians eat three meals a day -- breakfast, lunch, and dinner -- so that pattern won't be new to your student. For them, dinner is usually the big meal, typically rice with several cooked vegetable and meat dishes. Families usually sit down and eat together at dinner time. In contrast your student may be surprised that many U.S. families "eat on the run" -- and often not at the same time.

Indonesians view time somewhat differently. So if you do set a time for family meals, be clear about your expectations. (See *Communicating Time, Deadlines, and Assignments.*)

If your family meals are "eat and run," work out ways to help your student fit healthy meals into busy family schedules and his or her sports or other after-school activities. You might need to practice with some easy foods, such as a sandwich or hearty salad that he or she can prepare.

For Muslim students, be aware of prayer times as you prepare and serve family meals. Perhaps keep a prayer schedule on your refrigerator.

Sometimes her prayers were right before meals, and lasted a few minutes, so they never really imposed any difficulty for our lifestyle or our family mealtime.

– U.S. Host Family

Breakfast

Indonesian breakfasts are generally more substantial than many U.S. breakfasts. Unlike in the U.S., there are no specific breakfast foods. A morning meal can include leftovers from the night before, chicken porridge, or bread with butter and chocolate sprinkles. Instant noodles (either fried noodles or noodles in broth) are common for breakfast, too, and rice is a mainstay! A U.S. American breakfast of cereal and milk, toast/bagel and juice, or yogurt and a granola bar, may be unfamiliar and may leave an Indonesian student feeling very hungry by mid-morning. Yogurt is sold in Indonesian supermarkets; however, yogurt may not be as available or familiar to Indonesian students from smaller towns.

Offer breakfast foods that are more filling, such as eggs, a peanut butter sandwich, or perhaps leftovers from last night's dinner. You might have rice available, too!

Our Indonesian son was very hungry by mid-morning. That distracted from his school work. We needed to find easy ideas for a more substantial breakfast.

– U.S. Host Family

Lunch at School

Lunch hour is a challenging time for any new student, especially for exchange students during the first few weeks! Food choices are unfamiliar. The cafeteria line differs from the canteen common in an Indonesian school. And finding friends to eat lunch with isn't always easy.

Food choices during the school day are more limited in Indonesia. In the United States, most schools provide a hot lunch or salad bar, and à la carte options. In Indonesian public schools, students may be accustomed to a carried lunch. In private Islamic schools (often boarding schools), meals are provided. (Refer to *School* for more about school lunch.)

Suggest a carried lunch the first few weeks so your Indonesian daughter or son can spend time making friends at lunchtime, instead of worrying about the lunch line.

For a carried lunch, go to the supermarket together to find lunch foods that he or she would like to pack and carry. Keep those foods on hand and within easy reach If you expect your student to make his or her own lunch.

If you and your student opt to buy school lunch, it helps to have an American teen show him or her how the lunch line, including the salad bar, works. In the beginning, go over the school menu together to identify foods that fit into Islamic food practices (and those to avoid) if your student is Muslim.

Snacks

Indonesian teens often snack after school before going home. They typically buy a snack – often more like a mini meal -- near the school from a small food vendor. Snack drinks are water and iced tea. Typical U.S. snacks, such as chips, cookies, fast food fries, and carbonated drinks, are not common in some parts of Indonesia. Indonesian snacks served at home in the late afternoon are often sweet rice cakes and sweet tea.

Talk about the foods your Indonesian son or daughter would like to snack on after school. Encourage healthy options, and keep them on hand. At first, your student may not be comfortable helping himself or herself to snacks. If it is your family custom to "help themselves," tell your student that he or she is welcome to do so, too.

Dinner

In Indonesia, dinner is served in the early evening, perhaps later than in many U.S. families. It is the main meal of the day, with food usually prepared at home from scratch, rather than serving convenience foods or take-out foods.

An Indonesian dinner usually includes rice, meat or fish, vegetables, sambal, krupuk, pickled cucumbers and carrots, and beverage (usually water). Many of these foods are in mixed dishes, such as stir-fries or in a hearty soup. Dessert is most often fresh fruit, along with sweets made of sticky rice flour, coconut milk, coconut, and palm sugar. In contrast, a typical U.S. meal -- meat, potatoes, vegetables, and salad – probably will be something new. Also unfamiliar: a meal of pizza, burritos, or burgers.

Until your student learns to enjoy foods you prepare, you might serve familiar with unfamiliar foods. The easiest familiar food: rice!

U.S. American meals are typically planned as salad, main dish, side dishes with dessert served later; for special occasions an appetizer or soup may be served first. In contrast, Indonesian foods are generally mixed dishes served on the table all at once. Indonesian meals are generally served "family style;" people help themselves. Rather than passing serving dishes around the table, in Indonesia food is placed in the center of the table with a serving spoon. The portions taken are usually small; people take seconds if they're still hungry. Your student may be overwhelmed by the large portions often served on individual plates in the U.S.-- and may feel bad if he or she can't eat the amount served.

Let your student serve his or her own portions. Explain that he or she can have more if he or she is still hungry.

Your student may not be used to drinking milk with a meal.

Kitchen Tasks

In Indonesia, the mother typically does the cooking, often with the help of a house helper. When the mother works, the house helper may do all the food shopping, cooking, serving, and clean up. Children and teens may set the table, but usually they do not cook or help with clean up, such as washing dishes or removing kitchen garbage.

Most Indonesian teens won't be used to preparing meals by themselves. Your student may be surprised in the U.S. if teens are expected to share kitchen tasks, especially if both parents work.

Share your family expectations about kitchen tasks and responsibilities, including clean-up and recycling from the start. Remember he or she is a family member, not a guest!

Start with simple mealtime tasks, such as table setting. Be aware: the table is set differently in Indonesia. Don't be surprised if plates and utensils are turned face down the first time. If your student is expected to prepare any meals, perhaps breakfast, or to heat leftovers, show him or her how, and when to do so.

Our student had grown up with two housekeepers. She hadn't learned to shop for groceries or to clear her dishes from the table and to then put them into the dishwasher ... once she learned our expectations she no longer left her dirty dishes on the table.

– U.S. Host Family

Indonesian kitchens are equipped differently from typical kitchens in the U.S. An oven isn't common. Instead cooking may be done on a cook top or kerosene burner. Refrigerators are typically smaller since fewer perishable foods are kept on hand, and cooked leftovers are typically kept on the counter or table, unrefrigerated and covered by a netted "tent," ready for the next meal or for family members to eat when hungry. For your student, this means he or she needs to learn different food safety rules: e.g. putting perishable foods in the refrigerator. Most Indonesian homes don't have an automatic dishwasher.

Take time to show your student how to safely use appliances in your kitchen. This may include how to load the dishwasher or use a microwave oven.

Even though you keep perishable foods in the fridge, let your student know if it's okay to snack on refrigerated leftovers, fruit, and raw veggies if he or she is hungry.

Cooking together develops relationships between your family and your hosted student -- and teaches students about American foods, how they are prepared, and far more. Foods commonly prepared in U.S. kitchens, such as meat loaf, tacos, lasagna, even chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies, differ from familiar Indonesian foods. Preparing them together can make unfamiliar American foods more appealing. On the flip side, learn to cook Indonesian recipes together. A familiar dish is a great comfort food to an exchange student -- even if it's not perfectly prepared, with all the right ingredients.

Invite your student cook with you. He or she may even like to cook some traditional, Indonesian food with your family. This gives your student chance to share the differences in food in a non-verbal way, and it can help to bring the student into your family life.

Especially if your student is feeling a bit homesick, make an Indonesian dish together. Gado gado salad (steamed vegetables, topped with sliced hard-cooked eggs and a spicy peanut sauce), nasi goreng, and sate take prep time, but are easy to make. Find Indonesian recipes on line, or get a cookbook with Indonesian recipes.

Our student was a Muslim vegetarian. We accommodated him as best we could. He proved to be an excellent cook. I enjoyed cooking along with him. I rather liked the vegetarian diet although I'm more of an omnivore.

– U.S. Host Family

Our student had never worked in a kitchen and needed to be taught. She was willing, as long as the dishes had no pork …Baking cookies was a new experience; in Indonesia they're usually store-bought.

– U.S. Host Family

Table Talk, Table Manners

Family mealtime is valued in Indonesia, as it is in the U.S. In both countries, busy schedules --and in Jakarta, time spent in traffic -- often compete with time for family meals, especially in urban areas. That said, the value of family mealtimes can't be overemphasized, as a time of family bonding with your student and a time to discuss the day. Dinnertime may be the only time that U.S. American families get together to catch up on family news.

If your family says a prayer before a meal, let your student know. Because Indonesian teens are accustomed to waiting for older family members before they start eating, taking a moment for your family to say grace won't be an issue.

Indonesians eat together, too, but generally don't linger at the table or engage in lengthy table talk. Some families eat quietly, even silently, and many take conversations elsewhere after the meal. Children are taught from an early age to be quiet while eating because they might choke if they talk and eat; talking may be considered impolite. Your student may be especially uncomfortable when serious family issues are discussed at mealtime.

Discuss your custom of table conversation. Encourage your student to share the table talk -- but start with casual topics, perhaps about school activities. Be aware that your student will expect parents to lead the conversation and may view host siblings' direct table talk as impolite. (See *Communication*.)

Her quietness at the table was sometimes viewed as indifference ... but was really typical of her family meals in Indonesia.

– U.S. Host Family

Indonesians use a fork and spoon at the table (not chopsticks, unless in a Chinese restaurant). In some regions of Indonesia it is very common to eat almost all foods with fingers rather than with utensils. Using a table knife may take some practice by your student. Table knives generally aren't needed in Indonesia because vegetables, meat, poultry, and fish are cut in small pieces before they're cooked. Don't be surprised if your student doesn't know how to handle a four- or five-ounce piece of meat on the plate! The U.S. practice of cutting with the dominant hand, then switching the fork back and forth, may seem strange and inefficient.

Show your student how to comfortably handle a table knife if needed.

Serving fried chicken or other finger foods? An Indonesian student may be used to having a finger bowl on the table to use before and after eating. You might have a damp cloth ready – or several paper napkins.

Both Indonesian and American children are often taught to clean their plate so they don't waste food and to show food tastes good. To signal that someone is done eating in Indonesia, the fork and spoon are placed on the plate with fork tines and the bowl of spoon facing down.

Some Indonesian table behavior that may be considered rude and surprising to U.S. Americans:

- Reaching across the table for something, perhaps in front of others, rather than asking that it be passed to him or her.
- Using a toothpick at the table. In Indonesia toothpicks are usually on the table.

Some U.S. table behavior that may be considered rude and surprising, even shocking, to Indonesians:

- Putting feet where food might be placed, such as on a coffee table.
- Using your left hand to handle food. In Indonesia only the right hand and fingertips are used to eat food. Food is passed with the right hand too. The left hand is considered unclean. (See *Hygiene.*)
- Giving table scraps to a dog at the table.
- Having kids start to eat before the father or oldest male does.
- Arguing, even polite disagreements, at the dinner table, especially between children and parents.

Explain proper table manners in your family – and be patient as you help your student adapt. If kids must ask to be excused from the table, and if the TV and cell phones must be turned off during mealtime, say so.

Buying Food

While urban areas have supermarkets, most Indonesians buy food – fresh vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry, and fish, as well as packaged products -- from small vendors in local markets, and from street vendors who roll food carts into their neighborhoods. In fact, shopping for food begins in early morning; fresh markets, including street vendors, open before 6:00 am and may close by 7:30 am. Indonesians buy small amounts of food at a time and may shop every day. They keep less food on hand in their kitchens than most U.S. families do.

Your student may be surprised by how much food U.S. American families buy on a single shopping trip. He or she may be surprised by so many convenience foods and overwhelmed by so many choices – even when buying a familiar food, such as hot sauce or soy sauce.

Early on, go grocery shopping together. Buy some foods that are familiar, and some he or she would like to try. This may be a time to try tropical fruits that are exotic to you, but familiar to your student: perhaps mango, papaya, or starfruit. Your student may be surprised to see so many different kinds of pizza!

Show your student how to add foods – perhaps for a carried lunch, for snacks, or when friends come over -- to your grocery list. That may be more comfortable than directly asking you for foods he or she would like.

Eating Out

Typical Indonesian "fast food" is different from the many fast-food chains in the U.S. Instead, street stalls and food carts provide an amazing variety of food, often prepared on the spot. It's a great place for

Indonesian teens to buy an inexpensive, after-school snack. Larger cities have some U.S. American fast-food restaurants, but food sold there costs significantly more. If your Indonesian student wants to buy a snack at a fast food place or convenience store, he or she may be surprised by the cost and often limited choices in the U.S.

In Indonesia popular restaurant drinks are iced, and made with different fruits, including avocado, and often with coconut milk, tapioca, or sticky rice. The closest drink in the U.S. is a fruit smoothie.

If restaurant food isn't spicy enough, suggest taking a small bottle of hot sauce along. However, so your student can experience the flavors of different foods in the U.S., encourage him or her to skip the hot sauce sometimes. The many ethnic restaurants in the U.S. – Italian, Mexican, others – will likely be new food experiences, too.

He loved trying things he had always heard of...American football, tennis, and a banana split!

– U.S. Host Family

School

Introduction to School

School is the biggest part of an exchange student's life. Through the process of being selected to become an exchange student, your Indonesian student has demonstrated very strong academic proficiency. Your student has studied English for many years and has been very successful in school. The culture of U.S. American schools is very different from the school culture in Indonesia. Before school starts, you can prepare your student for what to expect, and how to succeed, negotiate challenges, and have a good experience at school. Follow up on a routine basis, once school has begun.

This may be one of the first times your student has been completely on his or her own. Most students are looking forward to the opportunity of structuring the experience the way they want it to be. As host parents, it is important for you not to take the control away or try to micromanage the exchange year. However, you can offer suggestions and show that you are willing to help. Keep a positive attitude and encourage your student to do the same. Help your student see challenges at school as part of the adventure of being a foreign exchange student!

Supporting Your Exchange Student at School

Have several conversations before school starts, then follow up on a weekly basis. Let your student know that you will routinely talk about the past week and will plan the coming week. Saturday or Sunday may be the best time for this conversation. Ask your student specific questions about teachers, classes, homework. Talk about success at getting to know other students and about experiences at extra-curricular activities. Help your student deal with challenges. Consider these techniques to help your student resolve problems and confront challenges.

Take Notes. You might want to keep a little notebook and take a few notes when talking with your exchange student about how school is going. Encourage your student to do the same.

Address Questions and Issues

Invite your student to write down questions about school and things the student wants to work on. Answer those questions. Invite your student to suggest ideas for how she or he can deal with issues that come up at school. You can also offer some ideas, but remember that it is your student's exchange year, so the decisions are not yours to make.

Set Goals. Invite your student to set goals while going through the year. It can be a good idea for your student to set two or three big, long-term goals. Smaller goals each week will help your student stay on track to reach big goals. Be sure to write down things you agree to do to help your exchange student with personal academic, social, and extracurricular goals at school.

Role Play

If it is comfortable for you and your exchange student, role play situations to help the student understand possible things to say or do. For example, before talking to a teacher about an upcoming test, your student may want help practicing the way to approach the teacher and ask direct questions.

Introduce Your Exchange Student to Other Students

If you know any students who attend the school your exchange student will attend, you might consider inviting them to your house to meet your student before school starts. If not, students who attend other schools are also a good resource for general questions your student may have about school.

Call and e-mail your student's teachers to introduce yourself and your exchange student. You can help your exchange student get off to a good start by letting the teachers know a little bit about her or him before school starts. Establish a relationship early in the year and continue to follow up as the year progresses.

It's Not Good, It's Not Bad, It's Just Different.

Your Indonesian exchange student may experience culture shock in reaction to all the ways in which U.S. American schools differ from schools in Indonesia. You can help with weathering the transition by working with your student to be informed about some common areas of most challenging difference.

Orient your student to the school customs, academic program, class enrollment, and schedule. Suggest he or she check the school's website before arriving in the U.S.

In Indonesia, as in the U.S., schools are run in various ways. Still, there is no doubt that your exchange student's American school will be very different from almost any Indonesian school.

Composition of the Student Body

Similar to an American high school, schools in Indonesia consist of several grades. However, Indonesian students normally do not attend classes in which students from various grades are mixed. Indonesian schools are more stratified by age. Explain that students from 9th (or 10th) through 12th grade attend the school and that people from all grades will be together in some classes.

Daily and Weekly Schedule

Your Indonesian student is probably used to taking many classes in a single term--as many as 14. At the end of 9th grade, all Indonesian students take an exam that determines whether they will be in a science or social studies track throughout high school. Students do not choose the classes they want to study. Choosing classes will be a new and exciting experience for your student! Indonesian students have some classes every day and others, two or three times a week. Go over the daily and weekly schedules with your student including such details as "A" day and "B" day schedules, first and second lunch schedules, and assembly schedules.

Rotating from Classroom to Classroom.

Your Indonesian student is used to staying in one classroom all day with the same group of students, all of whom are in the same grade and taking the same classes. All the teachers come to this classroom to provide instruction. Explain that everyone moves from class to class, with a different group of students in every class. Taking your student to school to practice moving from class to class in the correct order can be helpful when navigating an unfamiliar building.

Planning a Course Schedule

Meet with a guidance counselor to plan your student's schedule. Remind the guidance counselor that your exchange student will be enrolled only for a year. Some flexibility for required classes may be possible. **Advocate for your student!** Seek your student's input on elective classes. Some classes have a prerequisite. If your student expresses interest in taking one of these classes, see if the school will waive beginning courses. There may be local course requirements from your exchange organization for your student. Check with volunteers when picking these classes to help find which ones have good teachers. Avoid enrolling your student in an ELL (English Language Learner) program. Your Indonesian student has been studying English for many years and now wants to be immersed in an English language environment at school.

Dress Code

Every school has a dress code of some kind. If school uniforms are required, ask the school's parent organization whether there is a source of used uniforms. If uniforms are not required, review the student dress policy with your student and check for appropriate clothing, including required clothing for physical education. Your Indonesian student may prefer to wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers, or skirts over trousers, and a headscarf (hijab) to school. You should respect these preferences. In the unlikely event of resistance to a hijab at your student's school, advocate for your student.

Lunch

In an Indonesian school, it is common for students to buy food and snacks from a cafeteria. There are small breaks in between classes when some students might buy a small treat, and then a longer lunch break when food vendors come into the schoolyard and students can buy a full meal. Many students also bring food from home, so discuss your student's preference. When you visit the school, show your student where to go to eat lunch. Remember that your Indonesian student likely does not eat pork products. Be supportive and accommodating if your student prefers to bring lunch to school. (See *Meals and Snacks*.)

Lockers and Hall Passes

Lockers are uncommon in Indonesian schools. Show your student how to lock and unlock his or her locker; practice finding it and opening it a few times. If students are required to keep backpacks in the locker, make sure your student understands how to drop it off every morning and to return to the locker between classes to trade out books and notebooks.

Talk to your student about the school policy regarding leaving the room during class and leaving campus during school. Show what a hall pass looks like and role play how to ask for one.

Pledge of Allegiance

If students at your school routinely or occasionally recite the pledge, explain what it is to your student. Make sure your student understands proper pledge etiquette. Explain that reciting the pledge is neither mandatory for U.S. Americans, nor appropriate for foreign students. But it is considered polite to stand as a gesture of respect to the host country.

Extra-curricular Activities

In Indonesian schools, extra-curricular activities happen on Saturdays in place of regular courses and can include traditional dance and music, journalism, English club, futsal (soccer-like ball game for boys), basketball, and photography.

- Let your student know that many of the same extra-curricular activities will be offered as in Indonesian high schools, as well as many others. Encourage your student to try something that's unavailable in Indonesia. He or she doesn't need to excel in the new activity; there's success in just trying.
- Explain that club meetings and team practices may be held every day after school. Help your student develop good time management between extra-curriculars and regular schoolwork.
- Encourage your student to tell you about her or his interests and to choose one or more clubs to join. Help to find out when the clubs meet. Call the faculty advisors to tell them about your student.
- Encourage your student to try out for a school team. Contact the coach to let him know that an exchange student is trying out. Your student may want to try out for a sport he or she is already good at, such as soccer, or may be interested in learning a new sport such as softball, volleyball, track, or golf.
- Encourage your student to go to athletic events, dances, and other activities.
- Encourage your student to talk to you about the clubs, school athletics, dances, games, assemblies, and other special events at Indonesian high schools.

Because sports teams can be so competitive, it is a good idea to advise your student to try out for other kinds of extra-curricular activities, such as theater, music, art, dance, or track and field. These activities tend to be more accepting to a wider range of students, and it will be easier for your student to find a place within the group. Unlike sports such as U.S. American football, these activities also require no previous training.

Participating in extra-curricular activities is a great opportunity for your student to interact with other young people, to use English, and to make friends.

Making Friends

Your Indonesian exchange student likely has been in a class with the same group of students all day back home, advancing from grade to grade together for years. Talk to your student about the fun of moving from class to class and having a different group of friends in every class. When it comes to making friends, some Indonesians may wait for people to approach them. Emphasize to your student not to

wait, but to start up a conversation with someone! Tell him or her that it's okay to just go ahead and talk. Encourage your student to say "hello," smile, introduce herself or himself, and learn other students' names. Many times the student is simply afraid that he or she will be rejected. Assure your student that he or she doesn't need to be shy. Role-play meeting other teens with your Indonesian exchange student.

Classroom Dynamics

In Indonesian schools, having class discussions is almost unheard of. Indonesian students are used to receiving a lecture from the teacher and not asking many questions. Explain that in U.S. American schools, raising a hand to ask a question is not only acceptable, it is encouraged if there is something a student does not understand. Tell your student that if he or she is confused, there is no reason to be afraid. He or she should ask if something isn't understood! Also, as mentioned in "Communicating Time, Deadlines, and Assignments," Indonesians often have a relaxed perspective on time. For an Indonesian student, showing up 30 minutes late to a class would not be a big deal. Clarify the rules of your school, including time and tardiness. For example, it may be okay if a student is five minutes late, depending on the school, but not 30 minutes late.

Homework

The amount of homework in the U.S. may be heavier than in Indonesia. And in Indonesia homework may not be turned in for a grade, as it usually is in the U.S. Your student may need your help completing assignments and projects. You could also suggest that your student work with friends who take the same classes, or find out about after-school tutoring opportunities.

If help with homework is available at your student's school, show where the homework area is, the hours for help, and what kind of help is available. Some schools allow students to have a study hall period in their school day; for many exchange students this is a welcome opportunity to get work done and to get help from a supervising teacher there, especially during the first grading period.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Teacher-student relationships in the U.S. are much less formal than they are in Indonesia. For example, students in some places in the U.S. may be accustomed to calling some teachers by their first names. To your student, this could seem completely rude and out of line. Explain that this may be normal, and he or she may even end up adopting this same practice, if acceptable to the teacher.

Unfamiliar School Aspects

Several elements of U.S. American schools may be unfamiliar to your Indonesian student. Some include:

- It is uncommon for **students with disabilities** to attend a mainstream school in Indonesia. Usually, they go to special schools and aren't in mixed groups with other kids. Share with your student that U.S. American law requires easy accessibility and equal education for those who have disabilities, and they have the same opportunity to go to the same schools.
- Students may not be accustomed to **parental involvement in their academic life**. If you intend to check your student's grades online, explain your intentions early on so that it doesn't appear

to be a lack of trust. Explain that it is a way to support the students; your student need not be afraid if you look at his or her grades.

- Your student may be uncomfortable with the **physical examination before going out for a sports team**. Explain to your student that our laws require a pre-sports physical exam.
- Your student likely will be completely shocked by the **public displays of affection** (such as kissing in the hallway) that are so common for American teenagers.
- For girls who wear a *hijab*, **bullying** can sometimes happen. Make sure your student knows this, particularly if you have an exchange student daughter who wears *hijab.* Let her know that, although this reaction is very rare, it can happen and if it does, she should not be afraid or at all hesitant to say something to someone in authority, like a guidance counselor or administrator.

Health & Hygiene

The Concept of Cleanliness

One area with some surprising differences between U.S. American and Indonesian cultures is hygiene. While both cultures place a high value on cleanliness -- and it is considered a very important topic by most Indonesian and U.S. American teens -- how cleanliness is defined and achieved differs fairly significantly between the two cultures. It may help you to first understand the reasons behind those differences, so that you may then gently help your hosted student with any necessary adjustments and also come to appreciate another way of thinking.

Indonesia's climate is a big factor in the Indonesian understanding of cleanliness. In Jakarta the average temperature varies from a low of approximately 73˚F to a high of 88˚F. Relative humidity in the mornings ranges from 90-95 percent. Using a scale provided by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), measuring "Discomfort from heat and humidity," this translates to a "high" level of discomfort from heat and humidity almost every day of the year. Other cities vary somewhat from Jakarta's heat and humidity. However, everywhere in Indonesia, a "high" heat and humidity level is common. With weather like that, everyone ends up feeling hot and sticky, so it is normal for Indonesians to take at least two showers or baths daily, year-round.

In comparison, Houston, considered by many to be one of the U.S.'s most hot and humid cities, only rates a "high" level of discomfort from heat and humidity for four months of the year, and even then, heat and humidity levels are lower than those of Indonesia.

Water is essential for achieving cleanliness in Indonesian culture: for bathing, for ritual washing before prayer, and for cleaning oneself after using a toilet. (Toilet paper is not commonly used.) For Indonesians, going without water for personal cleaning may feel similar to the way U.S. Americans feel in the absence of toilet paper. Flushable wipes, or other wet wipes and a nearby disposal basket, will be welcomed by many Indonesian students. It is important to explain what may and may not be flushed down the toilet.

Bathing

Because it is so hot in Indonesia most of the time and it is important for Indonesians to be clean, our daughter was used to taking several "baths" every day. I quickly learned that an Indonesian bath is very different from what we think of as a bath in the United States. Our daughter would step into the shower and quickly rinse off and be done in just a few minutes. Since we live in the northern part of the U.S., taking multiple baths did not last long and soon she was on schedule with our own kids.

– U.S. Host Family

It may be surprising to find your Indonesian exchange student taking a shower after every school day, after having already taken a shower in the morning. If this practice of taking multiple showers every day will become a problem for your family, make sure to discuss your family's expectations with your student early so he or she is aware of his or her showering, hot-water use, and time spent in the bathroom.

If you live in an area of colder temperatures in winter, suggest taking fewer showers to avoid itchy, dry skin.

An abrupt change to just one shower a day may be quite uncomfortable for your student as he or she might not feel totally clean at first. Establish guidelines for length and frequency of showers so that your student can be comfortable and your family will have enough water to go around. .

When I talked with my Indonesian daughter about how she could use our bathroom to wash for prayers and keep the water off the floor, she learned quickly and this was not an issue.

– U.S. Host Parent

Not just when, but where and how, people shower differs between the two cultures. In Indonesia bathrooms are fully tiled, with a drain set in the floor. The bathing area is unlikely to have a bathtub. Instead it may have a large built-in vat of water, from which water can be poured over the body to get wet and rinse off. Many Indonesian homes now a have a shower. Shower curtains are not used.

Your student may have had little experience with keeping the bathroom dry with a shower curtain. Explain that the shower curtain must be drawn across the space and placed inside the tub -- and that bathmats are used to keep the rest of the floor dry when stepping out of the shower.

Toilet Differences

Indonesians use water to wash themselves after using a toilet. Every toilet, whether a sitting (like those in the U.S.) or squat toilet on the floor, will have a small hand-spray hose or a pail of water with a scoop nearby, so that people can clean themselves. Indonesians use their left hand for this cleaning. They will not use their left hand to pass items to other people as it is considered impolite.

Your student may not feel clean using only toilet paper. Indonesian wastewater systems are not even equipped to deal with toilet paper; instead a typical Indonesian bathroom has a covered container for disposing of used toilet paper and sanitary products. Your student may be more comfortable using wet wipes or baby wipes for cleansing. Remind them that U.S. plumbing systems are not equipped for flushing these items.

Your student may like to have a personal-sized bottle of water available for sanitary washing while in the U.S.

Ritual Washing for Prayer (Muslims)

Water is used for the required ritual washing before every time that Muslims pray. They use water to wash their hands, feet, and face (See *YES Host Family Handbook* for more information) and may need encouragement to leave the bathroom dry afterwards. Prayer and the ritual washing are your student's

personal choice and responsibility; be sensitive to not embarrassing or nagging your student. Students often experiment as they find ways to fit these rituals into an U.S. American schedule.

It is helpful to provide a special towel for ritual washing.

Menstruation

Because Muslim women do not fast or pray during menstruation, they freely mention having their period, even in mixed circles. Especially if your daughter is Muslim, she may not understand the use of tampons nor want to use them. She will almost certainly have been advised that they are inappropriate for unmarried women. Indonesian women use sanitary pads, almost exclusively. It's not appropriate for U.S. mothers, sisters, or friends to encourage Muslim girls to use tampons, nor is it appropriate for them to judge any Indonesian girl who decides to try them.

Laundry

With Indonesia's hot and humid climate, clothing gets sweat-soaked easily, and is not worn a second time. Indonesians wash their clothing daily. Sweaty clothes start smelling objectionable in just a short time. The usual method of drying clothes after laundering is hanging them out to dry. Your student may not have had responsibility for washing laundry because many families, even those in the lower-middle class, may have a house helper who does the laundry.

Some American host parents are overwhelmed by their Indonesian exchange student's laundry piling up with two sets of clothing per day. Be prepared to be very clear about your family's laundry practices and be willing to help your student through the first few times of doing his or her own laundry. Most students will quickly find that their lack of motivation to do frequent loads of laundry will trump their need to have two sets of clean clothes each day.

Everything is highly structured, and they are lost here if you expect them to do things independently. They will do any chores without complaint, but you must tell them to do them each time.

– U.S. Host Parent

Dental Hygeine

Some Indonesian students will have had regular dental care; many other Indonesians only go to the dentist when they have a problem, but not for regular check-ups. This does not necessarily mean that your student will have dental problems while on the exchange. However, it could mean that going to a dentist for an emergency would be a new and potentially scary experience. Routine dental care, including filling cavities, may or may not be covered by the student's medical insurance. If your student requires dental work, check with your student's hosting organization. If you believe that the student's family has limited financial resources, and the student is a scholarship recipient, then it may be possible for you to negotiate a better price with your family dentist.

Herbal Remedies

It is common, especially among women and older girls, to drink an herbal drink called Jamu. This is a traditional medicine or beauty potion with origins in central Java, with recipes often passed down through generations in a family. Many different herbs or roots are possible ingredients, but the most common are turmeric and tamarind, which are both fairly commonly available in the US. Jamu is not a drug, but can be compared to drinking an herbal tea. Your student may arrive with jamu tablets, capsules, or sachets (like tea bags.) He or she may derive comfort from using these familiar products, especially when not feeling well, just as some U.S. Americans feel better after drinking mint, chamomile, or other herbal teas.

Your student may have a small supply of medicines for Masuk Angin, an Indonesian sickness whose only possible counterpart could be having gas. It is commonly believed that masuk angin is caught by skipping a meal or walking around outside at night and being exposed to "bad air." Masuk angin translates to something like "the air entering;" it literally just says, "Enter Air." The theory is that bad air comes inside your body and fills the space in your stomach where the food should have gone and makes you burp and have gas and just not feel so great. You can also catch masuk angin from sleeping on a cold tile floor. Anyway or anytime someone just feels a bit off, they may say it is masuk angin. He or she will drink herbal syrups, take pills (similar to taking a Tylenol or Pepto-Bismol) and drink soda to help it. Just like for jamu, a student who is not feeling up to par may take these harmless remedies to feel better.

– American Exchange Student to Indonesia

Appendix A - References and Further Reading

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Handbook for Host Families of Egyptian Participants, 2010.

Handbook for Host Families of Turkish Participants, 2010.

YES Hostfamily Handbook

Bina Antarbudaya: The Indonesian Foundation for Intercultural Learning; cultural handout

Online resources:

CIA Factbook, "Indonesia," https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html

CultureGrams World Edition – Indonesia; http://online.culturegrams.com/world/world_country.php?contid=3&wmn=Asia&cid=76&cn=Indonesia (password required)

Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia - Washington D. C.; http://www.embassyofindonesia.org/

www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/indonesia.html - use of right hand, gifts, saving face

http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/hall_culture.htm; (E.T.) Hall's Cultural Factors

www.analytictech.com/mb021/cultural.htm - low context and high context; individualism and collectivism; perceptions of Americans

http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/administration/linguistics/intercultural_conflict.pdf

Appendix B - YES Program Overview

Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program was established in October, 2002 after a general recognition that public diplomacy efforts had been neglected in many countries around the world for many years. The effects of this neglect came into stark focus in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. The Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau of the U.S. Department of State (ECA), along with the U.S. exchange community, recognized the importance of youth exchange as a key component of renewed commitment to building bridges between citizens of the U.S. and countries around the world, particularly those with significant Muslim populations.

The ECA joined forces with like-minded, U.S. high school exchange organizations including AFS-USA, the Program of Academic Exchange (PAX), American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) Foundation's Academic Year Abroad (AYA), ACES (American Cultural Exchange Service) and CIEE; as well as Mobility International. Sponsored by ECA this group worked together with Partner organizations in several countries, including Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Turkey to provide scholarships for high school students (15-17 years) from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend up to one academic year in the U.S.

YES Selection Process

Students who participate in the YES Program are selected in an open, merit-based competition and reflect a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds within their own countries. Indian YES participants undergo a very rigorous selection process and come from all over India. Students who are accepted are provided a full scholarship to study in the U.S. The YES Program also welcomes students with disabilities and works with US organization Mobility International to help support students on-program.

AFS Selection Process

A small percentage of the Indian participants hosted by AFS-USA have not received YES funding. These participants also undergo a rigorous selection process as there is less socio-economic diversity within this group. Non-YES Indian participants tend to come from urban, middle to upper-middle class families.

Appendix C - Proverbs

Proverbs expressing Indonesian values:

"Luka di kaki, sakit seluruh badan."

A pain in the feet, the whole body feels it. Expressing the unity of a society, showing a high value for collectivism.

“Asam di gunung, garam di laut bertemu dalam satu belanga."

This translates to "Tamarind on the mountain, salt in the sea meet in the one pot." It means "Even things that are far apart can meet as one" -- a great proverb for the hosting experience!

Proverbs that cross cultural boundaries:

American proverb	means the same thing as	Indonesian proverb
Different strokes for different folks.		Different fields, different grasshoppers.
When in Rome, do as the Romans do.		In a tiger’s cage you roar, in a sheep’s pen you bleat.
No use crying over spilt milk.		The rice has become porridge.
Killing two birds with one stone.		With one row of the boat, you pass two or three islands.

Appendix D – Indonesia at a Glance

Bina Antarbudaya
The Indonesian Foundation for Intercultural Learning

INDONESIA

INDONESIA AT A GLANCE

- Indonesia, the largest archipelago in the world, lies along the equator at the crossroads of Asia and Australia. This strategic position has greatly influenced its cultural, social, political, and economic life
- Indonesian has 13,670 islands stretching over 3200miles between the indian and Pacific oceans, a distance greater than the width of the United States. Its total land area is almost 3 times the size of texas.
- Indonesia has five main islands namely Kalimantan (Borneo), Sumatra, Papua (Irian), Sulawesi (Celebes) and Java those island contain the majority of the population, but Java is by far the most populated.
- 80% of country territory is in fact water, Indonesian refer to their country as Tanah Air or "Our (Nations of) Land and Water"
- Since Indonesian straddles the equator, it experiences the typical year-long hot and humid weather patter of tropical countries. Afternoon thunderstorms are common. Indonesia has only two seasons, and even these are not extremes. The dry season (june-sept), the wet season (dec-march)
- Indonesia is the 4th most populated country in the world-after china, India and USA-its population was estimated in 2000 as 225 million.
- Indonesia is a former colony of the Netherlands. However only older Indonesians have any familiarity with the Dutch language. Although there are over 583 ethnic languages and dialects used daily in the country, Bahasa Indonesia is the official language of Indonesia.
- The most fascinating feature of Indonesia is the incredible diversity of its people. It is a country where more than 300 different ethnics groups speak 250 distinct languages and have their own individual culture and customs.
- Even the physical appearance of the people varies from region to region. They differ vastly in skin and hair coloring, hair type and facial features.

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INDONESIAN CULTURAL VALUES

As Indonesia consists of many different ethnic groups, customs and culture are also vary. However in general, Indonesian values are as follows:

RELATIONSHIPS

- Indonesians are more **Collectivism** rather than individualism.
  - It is extremely important in Indonesia to conform to the group rather than be different. "Doing your own thing," or deviating from the accepted behavior, is considered embarrassing and unnatural.
  - As a result for Indonesian, Group Harmony, Cooperation and Consensus are very important. For example value group harmony rather than individual achievement, and consequently avoid direct conflict. Most major decisions are made by team consensus rather than by the president of the organization.
- Indonesian values **Respect** & **Seniority** (or Hierarchical or High Power Distance), it shows at paying high respect for the boss, teacher, parent, elders, and senior persons. Indonesians show great deference to a superior.
  - Good manner, and courtesy towards other are important. In this regard, term of address should be considered. Indonesian use titles before names when addressing of referring to people as a gesture of respect. When addressing people who are older, respectable or of higher status, be sure to use a title, while when addressing friends or similar of similar age you can omit it.
- **Intimacy** Public displays of intimacy between people of the opposite sex are considered improper, though it is perfectly acceptable for friends of the same sex to walk hand in hand. Kissing in public is taboo.

COMMUNICATION

- Indonesians are generally **indirect in their approach.**
  - Indonesian existence is a calm and peaceful one. When something unpleasant cannot be avoided, however, it is dealt with by maintaining an outward calm.
  - Indonesian **hate confrontation, preferring to hide negative feelings** such as jealousy and anger. They do not complain or shout, but cope with stress by smiling and quietly withdrawing. If pushed

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beyond limits, however, an Indonesian can lose control or even run amok in blind anger, a word that originated in this region.

- The implications of this characteristic in the daily life is that people **tend not to talk, request or refused something directly.** Since it is considered impolite to disagree with someone, Indonesians (mostly Javanese) rarely say no. We are expected to be perceptive enough to differentiate a polite yes (but mean no) from actual yes. Westerners often interpret this as deceit but Indonesians are simply being polite by their own cultural standards.
- In conversation, Indonesian always strive to "maintain the peace". This often means **speaking in a roundabout, indirect manner** – to ask for a glass of water, a person might clear his throat and comment on how dry and dusty the day is; no one would upset a host by refusing an invitation, even if unable to make it to the party.
- **Body language and gestures are important, sometimes is more important than verbal language.** Indonesians of all ethnic groups are comfortable with silence, in both business and social settings. A silent pause allows time for thought; it does not necessarily signal either acceptance or rejection. Westerners often find such pauses uncomfortable.

- **FLEXIBLE TIME** Indonesians have a laid-back approach to punctuality-a person can arrive between an hour to three hours late without causing offense.
- **BATHING** Indonesian bathe at least twice a day, and the more water splashed around, the cleaner the better. In a typical bathroom one does not climb into the stone water storage basin or mandi. Icy cold water is splashed from this mandi over oneself for an invigorating bath, which leaves everything soaking wet. Most rural homes do not have toilets and one simply uses a nearby stream. A squat toilet is usually a hole in the ground with footrests on the either side. There is usually no flush system or toilet paper, as water is preferred for reasons of hygiene.
- **SICKNESS** Most Indonesia prefer to have mild illnesses treated at home. The cure any illness due to masuk angin(the entrance of the wind), oil is rubbed onto a person's neck and back with a heavy metal coind that is vigorously scraped along the skin. The deep red stripes that remain for a day or two actually look much worse than they feel

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INDONESIAN FAMILIES

- Indonesian culture is family oriented, in which family is playing an important role in daily lives. Although family is important, but with the closed relationship, in general they are not openly showing their feelings/affection.
- Families play a major role, in difficult times, entire families come together and relatives pitch in, especially in some ethnic (Minang - West Sumatra, and Batak - North Sumatra) the concept of family means big families.
- In general, parents especially father has a dominant role in the family. The head of family, generally makes all major decisions, often after discussion with all. The schooling, college, even marriage is sometimes decided by parents.
- Sons are generally pampered and spoiled. Most are not asked to do house chores. However, in "modern, urban families", girls and boys are treated equally and have same privileges and even sometimes boys are expected to help at home.
- In general, parents treated their children as their babies, so when the children has to make decisions they always ask permission or opinion from parents as a form of respect.
- Obedience in general is very important value in the family, consequently decisions or rules are not supposed to be questioned.

RELIGION

- This is the land were four of the world's major religions are practiced-where prayers are offered to Allah (islam), Shiva (Hinduism), Buddha (Buddhism), and the Christian God.The majority of Indonesians are Muslim
- Being a multicultural nation with a multi religion society, Indonesian people have learned about the importance of tolerance and respect side by side with harmony.
- Religion and religious practices are important, even in some parts of Indonesia it becomes the basic norms of society.
- Muslims observe the obligatory prayer five times a day. Prayer in Islam is actually an inner and outer action, which serves as a direct link between the worshipper and God.

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- Observant Muslim fast from dawn to sundown during the month of Ramadan. It is expected that people pay respect to this ritual and do not eat or drink in front of fasting Indonesians.
- In Islam, Muslims cover themselves and avoid wearing "revealing" outfits, however, not all Indonesian Muslims women wearing this kind of dress.
- Islam has dietary restriction for pork and alcohol, in this regard any food contains pork and alcohol are also prohibited.

FOOD HABITS

- Indonesian eat three time a day. Rice is the staple food in most parts of Indonesia and can be eaten for breakfast, lunch and dinner with either fish, meat, vegetables or eggs. Most Indonesian food is highly spiced with hot chili peppers or is accompanied by a fiery red chili paste called sambal. Indonesian Food tends to be spicy, oily, and often deep-fried. Fresh fruits as dessert are also served after meal.
- The traditional way to eat is with fingers of the right hand. Indonesian believe that food tastes better when it is eaten by hand rather than with a fork and spoon. In cities and towns, people do use a fork and spoon. Knives is not necessary.
- Indonesians eat with their right hand. The left is considered unclean as it is used for toilet purposes. At most, it is used to hold a glass of water if one is eating with the right. The left hand is usually kept on the table.
- Guests are always honored with special treatment. IF they are present, the table is laden with far more food than guests can possibly eat

SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Schooling years

- The schooling years are divided as follows:
  - Pre-Primary : Lower Kindergarten (Play Group,) and Kindergarten, for two years from age 4.
  - Primary : 1st to 6th grades
  - Secondary : 7th to 9th grades (Junior High School)

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- Higher Secondary : 10th to 12th grades (Senior High School)

After 12 years of Primary and Secondary schooling above, a student can continue their study as follows:

- 3 - 4 years of college/university studies which results in a B.A, B.Sc.
- Then if he/she so desires, 2 years post-graduate studies resulting in MBA, MM, MA, M.Sc., etc.,
- 3 – 4 years of non-degree studies (we called it diploma).

There are a very tight competition to get a seat in good schools (mostly state own universities), as many candidates apply. In this regard, students have to sit in the entry tests.

Grading System

- In Primary up to Senior High School, the grading systems usually are range from 1 to 10, or 10 to 100. Although there are many grading system but in general the grading system is as follows:
  - 9 – 10 = Outstanding
  - 8 = Excellent
  - 7 = Good
  - 6 = Fair
  - 4 – 5 = Poor
  - 1 -3 = Fail
- In colleges/universities, the grading system is also ranging from 1 to 10, or 10 to 100, but then converted to alphabetical grading (A to E).
- 6th Grade and 9th Grade has a National Exam, generally in the month of May all over Indonesia
- Schools sessions are start July. A year school session is divided by two semesters.
- 12th Grade called Senior High School, one chooses a stream: science, humanities or commerce. At the end of 12th is a final National Exam.

Appendix E – YES Cultural Tip Sheet

The information presented below is a general guide to understanding some of the cultural roots of behaviours that may be displayed by students from YES countries. This information speaks only to overall trends and will not hold true in all circumstances, especially since the cultures represented in YES are so varied. This guide will hopefully be helpful in attempting to understand the underlying causes of some misunderstandings and provide a point of departure for starting a conversation, when issues arise.

Topic	Cultural Information	Possible Support Issues	Support Advice
Religion	Even though many YES students come from countries that have large or majority Muslim populations, there are other students who are Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jewish, etc. Some students are very devout and religiously observant while others are not practicing. (Please also refer to the YES Cultural Handbook on differences regarding religious practices and following of religious rules which may differ greatly from country to country).	Diet: Practicing Muslims are not allowed to eat pork or consume alcohol; Hindus do not eat beef; many Hindus are vegetarians. In many religions, meat has to be prepared in a certain way prescribed by the religion (Halal foods/ Kosher foods).	Diet: Be mindful of dietary needs; discuss and look up ingredients in dishes; if a student does eat something forbidden, it is ok, but may need to stop once the mistake is discovered. Some host families choose to avoid eating the type of food that is forbidden; some offer different kinds of foods so that their host son or daughter can avoid the forbidden foods, while enjoying many of the same dishes his or her host family does.
	The month of Ramadan is a time during which many Muslims fast from sun up to sun set (no food or drink). This special month is based on a lunar calendar and therefore does not correspond exactly with the solar, Gregorian calendar.	Fasting during Ramada for Muslims may mean that they do not participate in sports or feel left out during family meal times; swimming can be an issue; if participating in sports, not drinking water may be an issue	Fasting is common in a number of religions in some form. Some families choose to participate in fasting with their students as a way of experiencing a new cultural through their hosting. Students may be excused from participating in sports during Ramadan.
	Prayer is an important aspect of the	While the prayers typically take no more	Praying does not have to be done in a mosque

Topic	Cultural Information	Possible Support Issues	Support Advice
	religious life of practicing Muslims, who will generally pray five times each day, at specific times, which are religiously-dictated.	than several minutes, finding a quiet and clean place for prayer can sometimes prove challenging, especially the noon prayer, which takes place during the school day.	or temple; a private space can be provided; it is helpful to find out the direction Mecca is and not to disturb the student while praying. Many schools allow the students to use a corner of a room designated for "study hall" or a school counsellor's office.
		Ablutions: practice of religious cleansing (basically, of the face, hands and feet) before prayer can result in wet floors/	Since wet floors in a bathroom may be seen as quite OK in the context many students are coming from, explanation of expectations regarding dry floors and using towels to soak up any water left on the floor would help them meet expectations in the host family's home. Stepping inside the bathtub, rather than using the sink for the ablutions can help a lot.
	Many religions require specific levels of modesty in dress or specific types of dress. In the case of Islam, there is a wide array of interpretation of "modest dress" but many observant Muslims feel that head covering for women is essential and many would include the covering of legs and arms for both men and women as essential elements of modesty in dress. Again, there is a widely varying interpretation among the religiously observant Muslims about what is required.	Some people not used to seeing women who cover their hair, will find the practice awkward. The head cover will not stop a student from participating in normal family and school life (with the exception maybe of joining a coed swimming team in some cases). Some students who wear the head covering might feel somewhat rejected by their peers in their schools because the head covering is unusual to see in most U.S. high schools.	Students who use head covering make the decision to wear a veil on their own and will not view it as subservient (as is often interpreted in the West). They see the head covering as an essential element of their religious observance and are not embarrassed by. A frank and open conversation about their religion and the part the head covering plays in their observance can help to demystify it and even lead to some good discussions about what "modest" dress may mean to different communities.

Topic	Cultural Information	Possible Support Issues	Support Advice
	In Islam, the saliva of dogs is to be avoided, as it is seen as unclean.	Students may be afraid or reluctant to live with dogs Many religiously observant students would strongly prefer not to touch dogs. Some may not realize themselves that the prohibition is actually against the saliva of the dog and would not necessarily preclude them from walking the dog for example. However, it is the case that the religious root of the aversion to dogs is also compounded by the very practical consideration in many countries from which the YES students hail, that a great number of dogs are, in fact, dangerous because they are generally used as guard dogs or are strays prone to biting. Going to church or mosques participating in host family's religious services.	Keep the dog out of the student's room and don't expect the student to pet the dog; this does not mean the student cannot live with a dog; many students come to like their host family's dog and overcome that fear. Students can participate in religious services of host family; there is nothing wrong with attending a different religious service; however, host families should not force a student to attend church if they feel uncomfortable doing so.
Social Life and Gender Roles	Many students come from more hierarchical societies where respect of elders is stressed and fathers may be dominant. They may also be used to segregation of males and females. These societies stress dependence on others and doing many things as a group, not as individuals. People are very socially minded and often have social	Students may not be used to being independent and doing things on their own. Female dominance may be difficult for them. Touching of members of the opposite sex may be considered inappropriate whereas touching of same sex friends may not be an issue. Public appearances can be extremely important and there is a difference in public vs. private behaviours. Strong reliance on	Understanding of these differences as well as an explanation of these differences are a first step. Modelling by elders or advice from friends could be very helpful. Giving students time to adjust and be mindful of differences in touching and space differences is helpful. Knowing that reliance on friends and family is very important and gaining trust is a prerequisite for building a relationship. It is important to know that relationship building may be slower than in the

Topic	Cultural Information	Possible Support Issues	Support Advice
	gatherings. Relationships are extremely important and saving face is a major concern. People can be very spontaneous and live in the here and now.	friends and families may result in what could be considered excessive communication with family and friends. Spontaneity can be interpreted as lack of planning or not being on schedule.	U.S. It is based on helping each other and sharing secrets, not on doing activities together. By helping someone and doing things for them, you show that you care for them.
Communication Styles	Students are generally used to more indirect communication styles. That means they will not directly state what they think but will expect the listener to decipher the message and to find out what they really mean. Students rely on the context and on nonverbals to convey a message. It is also important to tell the listener what they think the listener wants to hear and not to offend people, especially when they are in higher positions, so they can save face. It is also polite to refuse things that are offered (food, for example) with the expectation that it will need to be offered several times before they can accept. Likewise, when told "no", they may argue/ ask repeatedly after being told "no", since this is what they think will bring the expected result. Repetition is very acceptable.	The indirect way of communicating and not directly stating what they really need, think, or want can lead to many misunderstandings - from confusion to a perception that the student is "lying" or "manipulative". For example, a student will find it more acceptable to give vague answers or make excuses instead of saying "no". They will also avoid direct confrontation at all cost and prefer to work through third parties who can mediate for them. Another tendency may be to exaggerate things, for several people to talk at the same time, or to get very loud and excited when they feel strongly about something (some Arab cultures). Other cultures may be very quiet (Asians, for example); for them it is important to be modest and respectful; this could be shown by not looking people directly in the eye and by speaking in a very low and soft voice.	Know that what students say may not be what they really mean. It takes time to get to know the student and to build a trusting relationship. If the student thinks that you do not care for him or her by doing things for them, they may shut down and not be willing to do anything. They will say yes but have no intention of doing things because that is what they think you want to hear. Silence may not mean that they agree; in fact it may mean that they should not object and shows that they do not agree (again, being respectful). Open ended questions such as "why did you do this? are not productive; instead, closed statements followed by some silence may be better in getting students to open up (for example, "this ….must have been very difficult for you", showing the student that you feel for them, understand them, and want to help them. When the need for confrontation arises, know that this makes them very uncomfortable and the use of a third party (maybe a teacher or

Topic	Cultural Information	Possible Support Issues	Support Advice
			religious person) may be helpful. It helps to use stories or accounts of personal or other people's experiences to get a point across (could be fictitious, too) without mentioning people by name to avoid embarrassment.
Household Rules and Family Life	Many students could be used to male dominance in their families. It could be that they did not have a lot of independence (may be more the case for females than males) and had a lot of very direct guidance from their parents. They may not be used to the concept of getting an allowance and may have no practice in spending money, either not wanting to spend any or spending too much. Household chores may not be something they are used to, especially males. Objects or personal things may be considered as belonging not to one individual, but to everyone in the family because it is one unit.	Families may find the students passive or needing too much guidance, direction, and/or attention. They may be perceived as lazy if they have to be constantly reminded to pick up after themselves or keep things clean. They could also be seen as immature. Some males may not be following instructions from females or feel uncomfortable in a female dominated household. Some communication practices may be perceived as "badgering", not listening, or not following instructions. Using other people's property could be an issue (stealing vs. sharing). Students could be expecting to be treated as guests at the beginning.	It may be advisable to enlist the help of a same sex person in advising the students. Doing things as a family and spending time together would be a good idea as well as giving a lot of direction and guidance at the beginning and slowly making changes. Taking the student to other families where behaviour patterns can be observed is also helpful. Of course, another good way to experience different family styles is by spending time with friends and their families.
Time and space	Time is not as scheduled and more fluid in most of the YES countries. It is not as important to be on time. It may also not be common to plan	Some students could be late or oversleep. They may want to stay up late. They may not be on time at school or for certain events the family is planning on. They may	Students may need some time to adjust to a very time-oriented U.S. culture where it is important to schedule events ahead of time and to be on time. They may need some

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	things that will happen in the future. Personal space may not be as important and people could stand a lot closer during conversations.	change their minds on whether or not they would like to do something or not openly state what they would like to do. Being physically close may make some people uncomfortable.	additional help in getting up or getting ready for events. You will need to offer an explanation on space differences and how people feel about it in different countries.
School	School and studying may vary also. In some countries, there is a lot of homework and students are expected to work on their own when at home. In some other countries, studying may be done at school and not at home. There may be more group activities or very little discussion. Testing is different (multiple choice and open book tests may be uncommon). Writing styles, learning styles, teacher/student interaction are most likely completely different.	Students may have a difficult time adjusting to school and different expectations from teachers and host families. Students who do little homework or little independent work after school in their own countries may be struggling in school. Due to the idea of saving face and indirect communication styles, they may state they have done their homework and school is going well when in fact it is not. Teachers who have not had experiences with people from other cultures could be misinterpreting behaviours and ways of approaching homework and classroom interaction. In Asian cultures it is not expected to criticize or disagree with what the teacher is saying; they may be very quiet in class. In other countries, the classroom may be very loud and students work a lot in groups.	It is definitely a good idea to contact the school and the teachers early and get progress reports. It may be a good idea to monitor homework and to provide help (or enlist help), especially in the beginning. Get grade reports early and do not assume that the student's reports on school work are accurate. Get the teachers email addresses and check on progress regularly before there are any issues. Conversely, if a student studies all the time, encourage them to go out and spend time with friends. Working with friends on school work is also a good idea instead of not doing any homework. It is ok to help each other out but not to do the work for them or to copy from others. Certain subjects in school such as U.S. history or literature may need to be taken later on in the school year. After hour school clubs could help in making friends at the school and enlisting help with homework. Any issues regarding school should be reported to the volunteers early on so help can be set up before there are any problems.