

# **The GUIDEBOOK**

**ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTS' LIFE**  
**in INDONESIA**  
**4th EDITION**

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## INTRODUCTION to this Guidebook

The Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) program in Indonesia is a complex undertaking involving many contributors, with unique perspectives on communication, cooperation and the classroom. Your school, your community, your fellow ETAs, American Indonesian Exchange Foundation (AMINEF), and the Indonesian government will all play a role in your experiences during your grant period. For you, this means your year will be a balancing act, and it will also be different from that of every other ETA, past, present, and future.

The regions of Indonesia are different, as are individual schools and sites; the ETA program in Indonesia has also been undergoing a series of significant changes during the last few years. It is our expectation that this guidebook, in combination with summer webinars, e-mail threads, and Facebook AMINEF communities, will help introduce you to the possibilities of your time in Indonesia: the students you will teach, the friends you will make, the new things you will try, and also the difficulties you will face. It is impossible to predict what your individual experiences will be like—we want to help you prepare for your upcoming grant period, but we also wish to encourage you to do your own research, come in with an open mind, and be prepared for your own experience to be unique.

**“We must try, through international education, to realize something new in the world — a purpose that will inspire us and challenge us to use our talents and material wealth in a new way, by persuasion rather than by force, cooperatively rather than competitively, not with the intention of gaining dominance for a nation or an ideology, but for the purpose of helping every society develop its own concept of public decency and individual fulfillment.”**

**- Senator J. William Fulbright**

**This guidebook is designed to be read in pieces during the summer leading into your grant period.** This summer will play an important role in your grant period—it is a chance for you to spend time with family and friends before you leave for Indonesia, and it is also an opportunity for you to equip yourself with a foundation of knowledge and skills. We will be e-mailing out regular updates with additional chapters of the guidebook; we hope that this will help you set weekly goals, will guide our conversations during summer webinars, and will make the process of preparing for your grant period a little less overwhelming. You should receive all of the summer sections within four to five weeks. When possible, this book includes lists of resources to consult and items you may need, as well as stories of experiences you may encounter and anecdotes from previous ETAs.

We expect you will also use this guidebook as an ongoing reference throughout your time in Indonesia. You can print this complete guidebook for your reference. It's easy to bring it back to your site, put it on a shelf, and forget about it, but we hope that you will keep it in a visible place and flip back through it when you find yourself needing inspiration to study Bahasa Indonesia, feeling frustrated about cultural boundaries, or seeking advice on how to set up that pesky internet modem.

The writing of this book happened in cities and villages from Sumatra to Maluku and includes stories and advice from the 2010–2011, 2013–2014 and 2015–2016 grant periods. Please remember that the opinions and views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent official policies or practices of AMINEF or the Fulbright Program. Happy reading, happy teaching, and *selamat jalan*.

*Contributors: Rick Ferrera, Lindsay Graef, Bethany Hellerich, Brett McNeil, Mark Mock, Katy Rennenkampf and the rest of the 2010–2011, 2013–2014, and 2015–2016 Fulbright English Teaching Assistants in Indonesia*

# **YOUR ROLE as an ETA**

**Orientation, Teaching Assistant,  
Cultural Representative , and Getting Started**

## YOUR ROLE as an ETA

Congratulations and welcome to “American Cultural Representative” as an English Teaching Assistant in Indonesia! Your contract has arrived, medical clearance forms are in order and you are all getting ready for the almost-36-hours of flights into Southeast Asia. You may be excited, perhaps a little nervous, and, if you’re like we were, you might not understand what it really means to be an English Teaching Assistant in Indonesia.

We cannot tell you exactly how your experience will manifest, but we can give you tips to help ease the transition into your role as an ETA at your school site. Assuredly, this time of your life will be one of great excitement, during which you will experience tantalizing foods and interesting smells (to put it mildly), take advantage of opportunities for growth and introspection, and build new relationships.

Although you’ve signed up to be an English Teaching Assistant, chances are that your school will be so excited to have a native English speaker around that they may want you to have a larger role in the school than you may have anticipated. Before you begin teaching, it is essential that you understand your actual role as a teaching assistant and what responsibilities you do and do not have.

AMINEF welcomes your comments, recommendations and pictures during and after to improve this guidebook.

### As a Teaching Assistant

As an ETA, you are permitted to assist anywhere between 20 to 25 hours a week in the classroom. ETAs usually assist to teach Monday through Friday, but that may vary at individual schools. ETAs are also encouraged to participate in (or even form) extracurricular activities, such as English club, drama club, or debate team, for up to 10 hours a week. Teaching English as a foreign language is difficult and may require more planning (and rest) than you foresee!

Because you are a teaching assistant, your duty is to concentrate on creating opportunities for students to engage in English conversation. However, many ETAs find that their students lack basic grammar knowledge and will find ways to combine grammar lessons with listening/speaking objectives. You may be using a school workbook, strictly following the guidelines of the 2013 curriculum, or responsible for creating all of your own lesson plans and activities! Be flexible, and be prepared—it might help to brush up on English grammar knowledge before you leave the States or to bring a good grammar book with you. It may also be helpful to bring a few teaching resources with you; some schools may have language labs with headsets and projectors, and some schools may only have blackboards and chalk. You may not be fully trained to teach English as a foreign language but a few games or photos from home can go a long way in the classroom.

At your school you will be partnered with a counterpart, who is your main connection between your school and AMINEF, and a coteacher(s), who will work with you in the classroom (it is possible for your counterpart to also be a coteacher). These will be some of the first relationships you build at your school, and your first opportunities for cross-cultural (mis)communication. Communication and relationships are key: understand your contract, set boundaries, get to know other teachers, spend time at school, and join students and teachers for activities outside of school. Be flexible! Your time at school will be shared between students and other teachers and will provide endless opportunities to get involved, build friendships, and seek community outreach.



*The 2013-2014 ETAs climbing Tangkuban Perahu Volcano at Orientation.*

## As a Cultural Representative

When you come to Indonesia, you bring with you a lifetime of experiences and an individual identity, but you may not always be perceived that way by others. Many people in Indonesia have only experienced the United States (U.S.) through movies, music, and pop culture, and have generalized ideas about what it means to be American. Sometimes the assumptions will be positive (that Americans are self-confident), sometimes they will be negative (that Americans too-readily engage in sexual activity), and sometimes they will be difficult to combat (that all Americans are rich). For our students and our communities, we can provide a connection to a more genuine and diverse depiction of America.

Of course, we know that all of the U.S. does not sound, look, laugh and think the same way we do, and it may be difficult to let our individuality shine through our overwhelmingly Western identities. Finding the balance between being a representative of the United States and being yourself is one of the hardest but also most rewarding parts of the grant. More than anything, it requires personal connections and friendships, and it will take time. Along the way, you will have the chance to learn about the individuals around you and build an equally nuanced picture of Indonesian culture and identity. Finally, it is important to establish (if you're the first ETA at your school) or build upon (if there was an ETA before you) a legacy of excellence and commitment to cultural exchange.

## Getting started

ETAs will join an up to two week in country orientation before you are sent to your sites. During orientation, you will hear information from the U.S. Department of State, AMINEF, and the Indonesian government outlining expectations, safety, and other general information. You will have language classes to help you improve and practice your Bahasa Indonesia, and pedagogy classes to help you prepare for your role as a teaching assistant. It's also a time to get to know your fellow ETAs and form the friendships that will be an integral part of your support system in Indonesia. In your free time, you can sample delicious new foods or test your language skills at a traditional market.

Be prepared for a constant deluge of information coming from all directions while you are battling culture shock and trying to memorize new names. As stressful as this sounds, ride it out for the adventure that it is! The class time can be overwhelming, but don't forget your role in the situation. If a pedagogy session seems irrelevant, don't check out – ask probing questions. If the language class isn't challenging you, explore the possibility of creating additional activities that would be more enriching, and see if the teachers are willing to work with you outside of class.

Every bit of information you learn during orientation will benefit your teaching, and every friend you make will be another person by your side as you live out this amazing opportunity in Indonesia. You might be surprised to wipe away a tear or two as you say goodbye to new friends, but you'll have ample opportunity to stay in touch, travel together and exchange inter-island text messages when you need an outlet for some un-culturally-sensitive cynicism. Value the friendships you create during orientation; they'll be integral support networks during the year ahead.



*The 2013-14 Fulbright ETAs at Orientation in Bandung*

Your time as an ETA will start with this summer and will stay with you long after your grant period ends. Much of your experience will depend on the particulars of your placement, but as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant, here is the bottom line: be present, be open, be you.

*Contributed by:*

*Mia Keeys (Kupang, West Timor 2010 – 2011)*

*Brian Kraft (Pekanbaru, Sumatra 2010 – 2011)*

*Rachel Palmer (Bontang, East Kalimantan 2010 – 2011)*

*Katy Rennenkampff (Bogor, West Java 2013 – 2014)*

# **PLANNING and PACKING**

Pre-departure Planning, Clothing Guidelines,  
and Packing Suggestions



## PLANNING and PACKING

"After accepting the ETA grant, I obsessively combed through every piece of information that I received from AMINEF and IIE and compiled a four-page, double-sided to-do list. In retrospect, most items on this list, like registering to vote overseas and buying a mosquito net, were either unnecessary or could have been taken care of or purchased in Indonesia.

During the orientation, we all had opportunities to purchase anything we had forgotten or were unable to fit in our luggage. And, throughout the term, ETA e-mail chains guided me through taxes, voting, and many of the logistical matters that I had been so concerned about before the grant started."

*Erin Fitzgerald (Medan, North Sumatra 2010 – 2011)*

### PLANNING

Everyone's advice will vary when it comes to packing, as everyone has different levels of comfort and personal needs. We've tried to compile key essentials and suggestions from previous ETAs, but ultimately what you pack is up to you! Be forewarned that you will probably only be able to check one 50-pound bag.

#### Things to Consider Before Departing:

- Go to a travel clinic and talk about your immunization needs.
- Find a back-up method for accessing your bank account in case your primary card becomes unusable.
- Call your bank and credit card companies to notify them that you will be out of the country. Some credit cards might have travel perks – ask them about travel and baggage insurance while you're at it.
- Write down important personal information in a separate notebook - credit card numbers, your license and passport numbers, bank account numbers, routing numbers, phone numbers, etc.
- Health Insurance. Many ETAs decide not to have supplementary health insurance; however, the limited benefits offered through Seven Corners (Health Insurance agency appointed by the US Department of States for Fulbright Program) are not extensive and have relatively low maximum coverage - especially when considering how expensive emergency evacuation could be. If financially possible, it might be a good idea to keep your current health insurance, go on your parents' plan, or apply for a cheap, high-deductible plan.
- Take the GRE or any other standardized tests you might need if you don't want to have to spend a weekend in Jakarta or Singapore doing it. If you'll be doing applications from Indonesia, bring the materials you'll need – transcripts, writing samples, contact information for references and anything else you might need.
- Scan important documents before you come, especially your passport and passport-sized photos. Consider putting some important information into GoogleDocs, where you/ someone at home can access it readily.
- Try to have a computer in good, working order. That said, not having a computer is OK - BlackBerries, iPhones and iPads/tablets can serve as cheaper alternatives. So could internet cafes (warnets).
- Brush up on basic U.S. history, politics and national issues. Also, make sure to know the names of important Indonesian figures (like the president!).
- Take some photos of your family, your house, your city, local supermarket, favorite coffee shop and other important parts of your life.





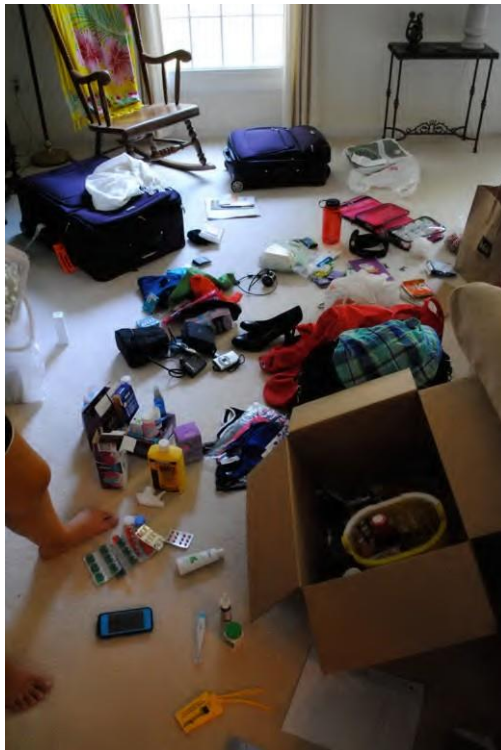
- Don't expect everything to come home with you. Clothes rip, computers crash, and rainstorms ruin phones and cameras. That being said, it's not the end of the world, and you'll figure out solutions while you're in Indonesia.

Working on applications for your future while in Indonesia is a mixed bag – depending on your placement, you might have lots of free time, but it can be difficult and unpleasant as well (for reasons) ranging from crowds of screaming children looking over your shoulder in the internet café to power cuts and connectivity issues).

### Obtaining Your Visa

AMINEF will provide you with the information required during the visa process. This can be lengthy and sometimes complicated, but know that AMINEF is working to make sure everything runs as smoothly as possible. Everybody should receive the necessary forms after AMINEF obtains work permits for each ETA from the Indonesian government.

Your responsibility as an ETA lies in filling out the visa application forms and mailing or taking them in person, along with your passport, to the nearest Indonesian consulate. The process can be stressful, but be patient. Your visa documents are coming, and you should make it to orientation.



*Hopefully your packing goes much more smoothly than this.*

## PACKING

### Item Packing List

Here are some of the things ETAs have most often recommended packing, or been glad they had brought with them:

- E-reader – (Kindle is generally best because it is easier to buy books internationally. Buying books for Nook is harder, but can be done. If you are doubting the purchase of an e-reader, don't. Just buy it – you will be so, so glad that you did.)
- Camera
- Contact solution
- Comfort food / Items from home
- Computer / tablet / smartphone
- External hard drive for sharing / borrowing books and movies
- First aid kit
- Floss
- Headlamp
- Hobby items
- Plug adapter for outlets
- Medications (addressed in the Health section)
- Music / MP3 player
- Opinions on mosquito nets are divided: some sites simply don't need them, and some ETAs wanted them and had difficulty finding them. Try to find out if your site is an endemic malaria/dengue area and go from there.
- Quick-dry towel
- Rain jacket
- Sheet / sarong that you can cover yourself with
- Stick deodorant (can be surprisingly hard to find)

Note: Certain websites are blocked due to illicit content. Plan accordingly.

### Packing Tips

If you enjoy non-instant coffee, consider packing a small French press and bringing some coffee from home. You can also buy coffee in nicer grocery stores (at orientation, in Jakarta, etc.)

Food from home will be a happy relief when your tummy is rebelling or you're feeling homesick. Instant oatmeal and granola bars are easy on the tummy, and products such as Crystal Light and Mio can help break the monotony of water (and add electrolytes). As a hint: you can just pack the cheese packets from Kraft Mac n Cheese and find pasta, milk, and margarine here to recreate a blue box dinner! ETAs have also been glad to pack their favorite spices, like an Italian herb mix or Old Bay.

Nail polish & remover can be expensive and difficult to find, but painting your toenails can help your feet look less dirty! You might want to bring a bottle from home, even if this isn't usually "your thing."

You can have friends or family mail you things and it is always a super welcome reminder of home, but be warned, it can get expensive, and your mail will most likely be opened and rifled through once it gets to Jakarta-- don't have electronics or gift cards sent because they will very possibly get stolen.

We suggest packing one week's worth of clothes: Think versatile and neutral. You will be able to buy more of the clothes that you'll need at orientation. If you tend to have great difficulty finding clothes that fit, or wear a larger-size shoe you might be advised to pack one. For teaching, both men and women usually wear long-sleeved, collared shirts and slacks. Women can usually also wear skirts that go past the knees. Closed-toed shoes are mandatory at most schools.

- One or two nicer outfits
- Basic shirts
- Basic pants/shorts/skirts
- One pair of sturdy, yet easily removable shoes

*Kelsie Miller (Gorontalo, Sulawesi, 2013 – 2014)*

You can wear what you want at orientation and when you travel, but depending on your site you will want to have looser-fitting shirts (with  $\frac{3}{4}$  length sleeves), at least knee-length skirts, and possibly won't be allowed to wear shorts. It is safest to cover to your ankles and wrists, and up to your collarbone. Prepare for a conservative community and only pack a few things that you can't wear at your site—it's better to pack too conservatively than too scandalously.

Girls may find it difficult to run/exercise in public spaces, and should pack conservative options. Female ETAs in the past have worn long hiking/gym pants and loose-fitting t-shirts.

## PLANNING and PACKING

It can be hard to find larger sizes of shoes here so if you wear a size nine or larger, we suggest that you bring your own shoes. In most homes, and even at school, it is customary to take off your shoes before entering a building- pack accordingly and avoid dress shoes with laces. Quality flip flops and slip on sandals will take you a long way.



*Oleh-oleh* are small gifts or food items that you buy when traveling or away from home. You give them to friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers upon your return, as a way of letting people know you were thinking of them and missed them.

Here are some tips and some of the best *oleh-oleh* that we brought:

- ## PLANNING and PACKING



**\*\*Don't bring Snickers, M&Ms, Kit-Kats, Toblerones, or Oreos, because those can be found in Indonesia. Just about everything else is fair game. Reese's are pretty popular and Tootsie rolls or foil-wrapped candies travel well (remember that you may be traveling for a long time, and things melt!). Be aware that anything containing alcohol and most gelatin products are not halal—this may include things like marshmallows, Starbursts, chewing gum, etc.** Also, try to get rid of this candy within the first month because candy does not keep well in Indonesia.

If there is a situation where you have to give oleh-oleh to a lot of people (like a class or a room of teachers), food or small oleh-oleh is the way to go. Whether you're bringing oleh-oleh from America or from another part of Indonesia that you've visited, bringing a shareable food item for the teachers' room is always a winner.

However, you don't want to have lots and lots of little things because you might end up with lots and lots of those things at the end when you leave. While it is good to have a bunch of little oleh-oleh for your students or neighborhood children, you should ideally also have a few select "bigger" items of oleh-oleh for important people like your counterpart, the head of your school, and your co-teacher(s).

#### Good examples of oleh-oleh for these people include:

- Travel mugs or regular mugs with the name of your state, city, or college (this applies to all of the following items)
- T-shirts
- Hats
- Tote-type bags

**WHEN TO GIVE OLEH-OLEH:** Many ETAs like to give their bigger oleh-oleh at the beginning of the grant when you arrive and some like to save those for when they leave. Or you can do both! One thing you have to be careful of is you generally want to avoid situations where you are giving oleh-oleh to some people but not everyone else in the room. It is sometimes acceptable for people who are clearly important (like the head of your school) but otherwise, avoid it or have oleh-oleh for everyone.

"The 'best' oleh-oleh is enough oleh-oleh". Culturally, what is most important is that everyone gets one, i.e. that no one feels left out.

I find the best combination is an edible oleh-oleh with a non-edible oleh-oleh. Food is immediate and starts a conversation, people get really excited to try something new and talk about ingredients and tastes. At the same time, with food in Indonesia it's definitely first in, best dressed. There's not really an attitude of 'I'll just take one because others haven't had any,' and those who are unlucky enough to get there after the food is gone are disappointed!

With the non-edible oleh-oleh, people like it because it's much longer-lasting and it's something they can show off to others, and also you can keep some in reserve for people who weren't there on the day or whatever. But, because it's non-perishable often people start to ask for one (or five or ten) extra for every member of their family until you don't even have enough for everyone at school! I've found that something about the combo of food/not-food does something to make people more satisfied.

But, whatever you bring, I cannot stress this enough, **BRING ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE.**

I brought two bags of candy and about 75 keychains I ordered online which was just enough for my school. With oleh-oleh, it's best to have more because as the year goes on and you meet more people, it's always nice to have something on hand. Truly, as long as it's minimally connected with the United States and there's enough of it, you can't really go

P.S. I really like to bring pennies for students because you can do a ton of activities with them in the first days - talking about Abraham Lincoln and the civil war, American currency, numbers (how many rupiahs is one penny, two pennies, 100 pennies?), penny-oriented idioms (shiny as a new penny, a bad penny, penny for your thoughts, my two cents, etc.)."

*Amirah Nelson (Belitung 2012 – 2013 and Manado 2013 – 2014)*



#### Teaching Materials

You will absolutely be able to find everything you need to teach a class while you are in Indonesia - thousands of people do it everyday. Additionally, you should know that AMINEF supplies all ETAs with some teaching materials during orientation.

In past years ETAs have received

- A map of America
- A CD of American roots music (with lyrics)
- A box of TEFL teaching books and materials, including photographs, CDs, a dictionary, grammar books and other things (this was shipped to our schools)

Bringing additional materials from home can add uniqueness and creativity to your lessons, and can help your students better understand where you're coming from. Possible ideas include:

- Photos of family and friends and your life in America
- Magazines
- American stickers or toys
- Nerf products (American footballs especially)
- Deflated beach balls
- Inflatable globes
- Candy or something else suitable to use as a small, cheap prize
- Word games like Bananagrams, Scrabble, Madlibs, story cubes, Apples to Apples Junior
- Small whiteboards
- Playing cards, UNO, dice
- Books for children or teenagers (children's books, young adult fiction)
- More Than a Native Speaker by Don Snow
  - Snow discusses everything from culturally adjusting to a new country to best strategies for teaching English at each level, including the beginning and intermediate stages where most of our students are.
- Barron's English For Speakers of Other Languages
  - This textbook explains almost every English grammatical concept and is very useful as a reference book when reviewing grammar. Although we do not teach grammar officially, you may be asked constantly about English grammar, and this can be a helpful way to explain it to people.
- More Than 50 English Games
  - Great resource for getting you through tough times when the lesson plans feel more like writer's block. If you don't get it at home, it can be found in any large Gramedia (Indonesian bookstore chain)
- Cord(s) to connect your computer to a projector (HDMI to VGA), especially if you are a Mac user, as you probably will not be able to buy it in Indonesia
- A guitar to play songs for students - or buy it in Indonesia for \$30 to \$40
- Also note that anything you might pack as "oleh-oleh" is probably also great for your classroom or to use as prizes!

### **Things the 2013-16 ETAs wish they had not brought**

These are things we simply didn't need, or could find in Indonesia:

- Books
- Clothes that you love
- Clothes that were not essential
- Insect repellent (in excessive quantities. It is hard to find non-DEET bug spray here, and more common to find anti-bug lotions)
- Power strip
- Shampoo and toiletries
- Dress shoes with laces (a huge pain)
- High heels (you will only need these if you want to go out somewhere fancy in Jakarta... we never did)
- Heavy hiking boots
- More than three pairs of shoes
- Sweatshirts, sweaters, hoodies
- Sunblock (although it can be hard to find SPFs higher than 30 in Indonesia)

## Planning and Packing Advice from Former ETAs:

"Before departing, learn or practice ways to de-stress through an understanding of stress techniques, your favorite activities or possibly favorite comfort foods that could assist you in times of stress. Consider the materials you may need to bring with you or the limitations of your placement. If working out at the gym de-stresses you, but there are no American-style gyms in your placement, learn exercises that use your body weight for resistance. If reading English books lets you wind down, consider buying a Kindle or Nook, or bring your favorite books."

*Mark Sueyoshi (Parung, West Java 2010 – 2011)*

"There are two rules to packing for a Fulbright in Indonesia: 1) Anything you need, you will find in Indonesia. 2) If you can't find it, you will survive and be able to add to your tally of 'cultural adaptability.'"

*Taylor Saia (Pekanbaru, Sumatra, 2013 - 2014)*

"I went to a wholesale store before leaving and dropped about \$300 on supplies that filled an entire suitcase. After lugging this heavy suitcase through several airports and getting to know Indonesia, I realized that much of what I had brought was unnecessary, such as shampoo and conditioner, immodium, and body wash. What I did fully appreciate, though, were the granola bars and hundred-calorie packs that I subsisted on for our first month here when I was sick and afraid to eat anything else. If you're a coffee fiend, bring Starbucks Via – the instant coffee you'll find here is less than desirable."

*Kelsey Ritzel (Pekanbaru, Sumatra, 2010 – 2011)*

"It's not that rugged. It's just not. This is not a year-long camping trip. You can and will buy far more stuff than you need while you're here so don't bring a lot with you. All the outdoorsing equipment you could possibly want can be bought for fractions of the cost here, this includes quality shoes and backpacks. All the teaching stuff you will ever need can be bought here. Books are stupid, burn them and get ebooks on a kindle."

*Louis Bergsman (Pekanbaru, Sumatra, 2013 – 2014)*

"Things I'm really happy that I brought are my netbook, my iPod, a few books, my painting supplies, linen pants, a rain jacket, floss, cosmetics (face wash, lotion, makeup... it's hard to find those things without whitening elements here), pictures of my family and friends, and a lightweight hoody. Don't bring any clothes that you absolutely love... they will get ruined from washing and traveling!"

*Mary Martin (Bandung, West Java, 2010 – 2011)*

*Contributed by:*

*Erin Fitzgerald (Medan, North Sumatra 2010 - 2011)*

*Chelsea Hochstetler (Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, 2013-14)*

*Clara Summers (East Java 2015-2016)*

*Mackenzie Findlay (East Kalimantan 2015-2016)*



*Don't stress too much about packing. Whatever your bags look like, this is probably how Indonesia will greet you – students singing songs on your doorstep. It's about people, not stuff.*

# HEALTH

Immunizations, Medications,  
Medical documents, Physical Health,  
Insurance, and Mental Health



## HEALTH

Like the rest of this book, the advice in this section is strictly from former ETAs to current ones. These words do not reflect official policies of AMINEF or the State Department. You should consult your doctor to determine the best immunizations, prescriptions and disease-prevention strategies for you.

### PRE-DEPARTURE

#### Mandatory Immunizations

All ETAs should be up-to-date on routine vaccines. These vaccines include:

- Measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine
- Diphtheria-tetanus-petussis vaccine
- Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine
- Polio vaccine
- Your yearly flu shot

#### Recommended Immunizations

The following is a general list of commonly recommended immunizations for travel to Indonesia.

Some are more important than others – nearly all travel doctors will recommend immunization against typhoid, but not all will advise you to worry about Japanese encephalitis.

Consult your physician and the CDC (Center for Disease Control) website for the most up-to-date information about recommended immunizations for your site.

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Tetanus or Tetanus Booster
- Typhoid
- Meningitis
- Japanese Encephalitis
- Rabies

Many universities have student health clinics with a specific travel/immunizations doctor on staff who can advise you on which vaccines are necessary. University clinics are also generally cheaper or have student rates and will usually see alumni. There may also be local health clinics that staff immunizations specialists. It is important to see a doctor who can walk you through your options and help you make informed decisions. We know some vaccines are expensive- seeing a doctor will help you carefully weigh the costs vs. risks when deciding which vaccines to get.

#### Medical Documents You Should Bring with You

- Health insurance documents: health insurance card and copies of claim forms
- Copies of all prescriptions that include generic names (medicines, eye glasses/ contacts). If you are bringing large quantities of a medication, you may need to show proof at Customs that they are for personal use.
- Copy of your vaccination record



*The more time you spend home sick in bed, the less time you have to sit and help local merchants like this kid sell Fanta and eggs.*



## Malaria

Medications that assist in protecting against malaria in Indonesia include mefloquine, doxycycline or Malarone.

If you are placed in a high-risk area and plan to bring prophylaxis medicines from the United States, be advised that doxycycline is widely available in Indonesia for a fraction of the stateside price, though its production may not be regulated as tightly as it would be in the US. Several ETAs have used doxycycline purchased in Indonesia without problems. Malarone has relatively few side effects compared to doxycycline, but is very expensive and not available in Indonesia. You can go to this website for more specific details on the different types of malaria medication.

Mosquito netting can be purchased in Indonesia, though it may be impossible to find in smaller towns. See the CDC website for a list of high-risk malaria areas. **Keep in mind that you might want to bring malaria medicine even if you are not placed in a high-risk malaria area, if you plan on traveling to those regions while in Indonesia.**

**Asthma and Allergies are a common problem in Indonesia.** The air quality in some places is probably bad and the pollens are new. Anyone with any history of asthma, even as a child, should bring an inhaler and allergy medications such as Claritin to combat respiratory illness. Claritin and inhalers can be purchased in Indonesia, but if you know you will need those medications its best to bring at least a short supply from the US.



*You may feel frustrated if you are having trouble staying healthy. Good thing there are other ETAs around to make fun of your face-mask.*

## Medications We Were Happy to Have

Many medications (or their equivalents) are easily found at pharmacies, but here is a list of medications we were glad that we brought to Indonesia.

- Neosporin
- Z pack
- Imodium
- Probiotics
- Multivitamins
- Pain and fever reducer (aspirin or ibuprofen)
- Hydrocortisone cream (for bug bites)
- Antihistamine/Allergy medication (Benadryl or Claritin)
- Cipro (travelers' diarrhea antibiotic, UTI antibiotic)
- Antacid (Tums or Pepto Bismol)
- Ketoconazole (anti-fungal cream)
- A thermometer (can also purchase in Indonesia)
- Midol and Cranberry pills

A tip about Medications: Replenish your supply after use so you have some available for the next time you get sick, especially if there isn't a pharmacy near your house.

## LIVING in INDONESIA: PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Diet and Exercise

You are what you eat, so be careful when living in Indonesia not to become pisang goreng (fried banana). Fried food, over-cooked vegetables and mystery meat may quickly become your average meal. However, you will no doubt discover satisfying replacements to keep you healthy and happy. Indonesia has amazing fruit that is filled with lots of antioxidants to help fight all the free radicals in the fried food. There are also fresh greens at most markets that you can cook up to get your minerals. Eating young coconut alongside fresh fish tastes great and will give you a great balance of Omega 3, 6 and 9.

Access to workout facilities and quality running routes will vary from site to site, but most ETAs have been able to find a routine that suits their needs such as cycling, tennis, badminton, futsal (soccer), senam (aerobics), and swimming. Female ETAs have often felt uncomfortable running outdoors or using public gyms; wearing loose-fitting clothing can help. You can also ask someone at your site if there are workout facilities or aerobics studios that are for females only.

### Keeping Your House Clean

Many of your houses will have a water basin instead of a sink in the bathroom. In most Indonesian households the bathroom water basin is kept filled at all times and used for toilet- flushing, hand-washing and bucket showering, among other things. However, remember that stagnant water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes and germs. Make sure to empty your water basin every few days and scrub out the bottom with an anti-bacterial soap.

Mold can be removed by dousing the affected area with a spray bottle filled with a mixture of water and bleach. Repeat this process every few weeks to keep mold at bay.



*Some ETAs are lucky enough to find athletic groups or clubs that fit their interests. The Hash House Harriers have running groups in several major cities.*

### Preventing Bug Bites

Bugs can spread several of diseases in Indonesia. Here is a list of some preventive measures you can take to avoid or reduce contracting a disease from a bug carrier:

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Use an insect repellent that contains one of the following active ingredients: DEET, Picaridin (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and icaridin), Oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535
- Use permethrin-treated clothing gear (Do not use permethrin directly on skin)
- Purchase and sleep under a mosquito net
- Some ETAs have used a “zapper” tennis racquet bug-killing device. They are pretty easy to find/purchase and are a good alternative to bug sprays and chemicals.
- Read the labels carefully.

### Food Sickneses and Germ Reduction

The most important advice about food in Indonesia is to always wash your hands and go with your instincts. If you are wary, be selective about where and what you eat at first to help avoid diarrhea and food poisoning. Many medicines and foods are used to help prevent food borne illness, such as GSE (Grapefruit Seed Extract), yogurt or the widely available Yakult. These can be taken every day to help maintain good stomach bacteria, especially when you first arrive in Indonesia or after bad bouts of diarrhea.



*A lot of digestive ailments are traced back to street food like this. You can't be sure of the conditions when buying food at a street stall, but if you never do it you might miss out on some delicious opportunities.*

### Steps to Follow When You Become Sick

If you think you have dengue, typhoid, malaria, parasites, bacterial dysentery or anything that requires a lab to diagnose, then you should follow these steps (again, this is just our opinion, we aren't doctors!)

- Determine what disease you might have and find the necessary diagnostic test: for example, typhoid requires a blood test; parasites require a stool sample. If you are unsure what diseases are consistent with your symptoms, consult AMINEF.
- Visit your local hospital or medical lab (such as Prodia) and obtain the tests necessary to determine the cause of your ailments.
- Again using local doctors or help from AMINEF as your guide, go to a pharmacy and buy the correct medicine. Prescriptions are often unnecessary and the medicine is cheap.
- Remember to keep your receipts and file them with 7 Corners for possible reimbursement. Please see the ASPE health benefit guidebook.
- See below for more on this limited health care benefit plan.
- Keep in contact with AMINEF about your condition. The AMINEF duty officer cell phone number is 0812 8233 7974.

Previously, AMINEF has helped grantees to visit SOS clinic in Jakarta for issues that cannot be resolved at your local hospitals. Extreme cases (traffic accidents, internal bleeding) will be medically evacuated to Singapore or the United States.



## Insurance

All ETAs will have limited health care benefit plans through 7 Corners. This plan requires payment at the time of treatment and may not cover injuries incurred during recreational activities. Plan to pay for all medical care up front and file for reimbursement later. Bring medical forms to your appointment if possible to avoid delays.

## LIVING in INDONESIA: MENTAL HEALTH

### Preparing Yourself for Emotional Challenges

Controlling your emotional well-being is a process that begins before you ever step foot in Indonesia. Past ETAs have found it useful to create lists of goals or launch blogs for sharing their experiences with friends and family back home. If you have a previous history of depression, indicate as such on your AMINEF medical forms – you've already been selected at this point and won't be suddenly disqualified, and AMINEF can potentially place you at less emotionally stressful sites. Assist your technologically-challenged parents with setting up Skype and webcams. If you see a therapist, counselor or psychiatrist at home, it may be possible to continue sessions via Skype or email. Discuss options with whoever is appropriate before leaving home.

If there is even a remote chance that you may need anti-depressants while abroad, obtain them before leaving the United States. Antidepressant medications are essentially impossible to purchase in Indonesia, and difficult to ship from home. Further complications arise when considering that most antidepressants must be taken for three or four weeks before their effects are felt. It is recommended that you obtain the largest prescription possible before leaving the United States – one possible loophole is obtaining the largest prescription supply allowed at the largest dosage possible, which you can later divide into smaller, appropriate dosages. If you do decide to take antidepressants, commit to using them for at least a several month period – it can be difficult to manage your emotions during the transition periods from off to on and vice versa.

## Maintaining Emotional Well-Being While in Indonesia

Be patient with the time it takes to adapt and respond to culture shock. One can feel temporarily depressed as a result of culture shock and it is a natural response. However, be aware if these feelings linger and take steps to help yourself cope. More than anything else, your emotional health will depend on how proactively you recognize, acknowledge and maintain/improve your state of being. The following is a list of techniques past ETAs have used to mitigate negative emotions while in Indonesia:

- Create a list of goals and do your best to achieve them.
- Use orientation to meet other ETAs and focus on relationships with them.
- Maintain contact with other ETAs and discuss difficulties at your site.
- Foster and maintain a good relationship with your counterpart.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Keep a blog or a journal, or just write one sentence every day.
- Skype, email, Facebook and write letters to anyone and everyone.
- Make lists of what you are grateful for in Indonesia.
- Relax in public areas where you won't be bothered – the presence of others can be reassuring.
- Adopt relaxation techniques like tai chi, yoga, massage, or spa treatments.
- Exercise regularly.
- Join clubs and organizations.
- Improve your Indonesian, thereby improving the possible depths of your friendships.
- Take part in local ceremonies, celebrations and customs.
- Spend time with your students outside of class, and
- Get to know your neighbors.



*Although we all need alone time, sometimes getting out of your house can be equally as helpful as self-reflection. You never know when a walk around the neighborhood will turn into a face painting fight with students.*

## Emotional Health While Living Abroad

by Ben Vatterott (Mataram, Lombok 2010 - 2011)

For many of you, a year in Indonesia will be the longest time you have ever spent away from friends, your family, and the United States. Certainly, it will be an incredible experience that few are fortunate enough to have, but it will also be challenging and occasionally frustrating. Highs will be followed by lows, successes will be accompanied by failures, and more than once you may ask yourself if this experience is truly what you wanted.

Undoubtedly, some of you may think this particular section of the book doesn't apply to you. Perhaps you have no history of counseling or depression. Maybe you have spent long periods of time away from home before, without incident. Indonesia might be the country you have always dreamed of visiting, and experiencing anything less than bliss during your stay doesn't seem possible. Whatever the case, know that your upcoming year as an ETA will likely be one of the most emotionally challenging experiences of your life thus far. Your living situation will be different from any previous lodgings you've known, you will have no social network at your site before arriving and may find it difficult to make close friends, your site won't look like a postcard from Bali, or you might find that locals at your site do not hold positive views of the United States and the western world. Before long, you may find yourself harboring feelings towards your site, your school and Indonesia that you previously didn't think possible.

These emotions, and those like them, are completely normal symptoms to experience when living abroad. Even if you have no previous history of depression, you may occasionally feel sad, anxious, helpless, guilty, irritable or restless. You may lose interest in activities that you used to enjoy, change your eating habits, have problems concentrating and avoid social situations. Perhaps you will begin to feel distrustful of all those around you, disgusted by how people treat you or dismayed by the way Indonesians treat one another and the environment. These are all natural responses to living abroad, and are certainly not cause to return home – rather, they are symptoms that can be addressed and remedied, yielding a more wholesome ETA experience.

*Revision Contributor:*

*Serena Dasani (Pangkal Pinang, Bangka, 2013-2014)*



*Catnaps can be essential in battling daily exhaustion.*

## **FINANCES and COMMUNICATION**

Cash, Bank Accounts, Taxes, Student Loans,  
Cell Phones, and Internet

# FINANCES and COMMUNICATION

## FINANCES

In addition to a rewarding experience and many new Facebook friends, your grant will provide you with a comfortable stipend. You will have enough money to indulge in endless bowls of nasi goreng, visit fellow ETAs and perhaps even save up for future plans.

### How to Access Your Cash

AMINEF will wire your stipend into a U.S. bank account that you designate before your departure. During orientation, AMINEF will provide a payment schedule with the dates for payment dispersal. Depending on your bank, you may be charged a wire transfer fee ranging from \$10 to \$20. To avoid heavy fees, it is important to research travel-friendly banks.

Many ETAs have opened a Charles Schwab bank account before departing to Indonesia as ETAs generally have had very positive experience with this bank. With a Charles Schwab account, you pay no ATM fees anywhere in the world. There is no exchange fee for conversion from USD to local currency, no monthly service fees, and no minimum balance required. Schwab even detects local ATM fees charged by Indonesian ATMs (unavoidable) and reimburses them on an unlimited basis back into your account at the end of each month. Charles Schwab also has fantastic customer service toll-free 24 hours a day and will send a replacement card in a timely manner should you lose your debit card.

Here are the steps to open an account:

1. Open a "High-Yield Checking Account" with Charles Schwab Bank. The account will be tied to a brokerage account, but you are under no obligation to use the brokerage account whatsoever.
2. Wire some money from your current checking account into your new Charles Schwab checking account. Give this account to AMINEF for deposits if you want Fulbright funds directly wired to this new account.
3. Call the Schwab customer service at 866-855-9102 the moment you have money in your checking account, so that they can mail you your VISA debit card. You can request the card to be expedited and you will have it in 4 days with a new PIN.
4. Be sure to notify Schwab of your whereabouts during the grant. This includes any initial time you may spend in Singapore or other major transit cities.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** AMINEF has had troubles when transferring funds to Charles Schwab accounts opened under larger banks such as JP Morgan or Citibank. Their transfers were rejected by the bigger banks. Therefore, if you decide to open a Charles Schwab account, please open it directly at the branches of the bank nearest to your place.

### Money Changers

When you first arrive in Indonesia, you can exchange leftover American bills for Indonesian rupiah. Moneychangers and larger banks (e.g. Mandiri, BNI, BCA) will provide this service. However, this method will likely be unsustainable and often problematic since Indonesian moneychangers only accept very specific bills. Most will only exchange pristine \$50 and \$100 bills, and some charge hefty fees.





## ATMs

Debit and credit cards are less commonly used in Indonesia, (sometimes even in hotels and for other major costs). Therefore, you will need a reliable way to access cash at all times.

**Fees:** Past ETAs have found that the most common way to access money is through an Indonesian ATM. MasterCard, VISA, Cirrus and Plus debit cards are accepted at most Indonesian ATMs. Depending on your American bank, fees for withdrawing cash with a debit card may vary from zero to thirty dollars per withdrawal. In addition, some banks will charge an exchange rate surcharge of .5% or more. This is one reason many ETAs recommend opening a Charles Schwab Account.

**Large Withdrawals:** To cut back on needless fees, past ETAs have found it economical to withdraw large amounts of cash at once. For those of you in rural areas, this may also be a convenient way to ensure that you have cash.

**Opening a Local Bank Account:** One strategy for avoiding excessive ATM surcharges is to open a local bank account in order to use its ATMs. Generally, a minimum deposit is required and can range from \$30 to \$1,000. Also, bear in mind that only international banks, such as Citibank or HB Swiss Financial, will transfer money to these institutions. If you are considering this route, check with your at-home bank on its feasibility prior to arrival. Ask Indonesians at your site to assist you.

Do note you may find credit card fraud in Indonesia.

## Using a Credit Card

In some bustling cities, a credit card may be accepted and might come in handy for your bigger purchases. Even if you are not considering making any purchases on credit, it may be beneficial to have one in situations where a debit card is lost, money is stolen, or funds run low. Be aware that you will likely incur an exchange rate or service charge fee, especially if your purchase does not reach a certain minimum. Before you leave the States, contact your credit card's customer service agency (find the number listed on the back of the card) and notify them that you will be staying and making purchases in Indonesia. Do the same if you travel outside of Indonesia at any point during your grant.

## Spending Your Money: The Basics

**Tips and Safety:** Learn your numbers, but more importantly, learn what your money looks like; otherwise you could accidentally give your driver a 100,000 rupiah note instead of a 10,000 rupiah note – which he might happily accept. Don't flaunt your cash. Whether you're at home or on the road, diversify the places where you keep your money and bank cards. Moreover, it is useful to carry smaller bills (uang kecil) for public transportation fares and other small purchases, since these vendors often do not have change (uang kembalian).

**"Foreigner Price":** As a westerner, Indonesians may assume that you have more money than your pockets can handle and will charge accordingly. To avoid paying an excessive price, (which can be anywhere from one to 300 percent over the actual market rate), understand the price range of the item before making a purchase. Consult with a trustworthy Indonesian or ask a bystander – ideally, one that is not part of the business – to tell you the going market rate. Do not be afraid to bargain for a fair price. While it can feel awkward at first, bargaining is a part of life in Indonesia. Trial and error, along with increased knowledge of your surroundings and Bahasa Indonesia, will make you a smarter shopper.

**Shopping in a Market:** Unmarked prices will almost always invite the prospect of the foreigner price; this is most prominently showcased at your neighborhood farmers market. When shopping at a market (pasar), be sure to go early (5 am) and bargain hard. Never accept the original price. If you're lucky, you will only be charged twice the original price of goods, but usually you will be charged much more. The Indonesian rule is, "If you're charged 80,000 rupiah for a batik shirt in the market, offer half price (40,000 rupiah) and settle for 50,000 rupiah." For bolder shoppers, ask for 20,000 rupiah and settle for 30,000 rupiah. As with transportation, understand the market value before making a purchase. During orientation, check out a local market to practice your bargaining skills.

**Transportation Expenses:** Whether hopping on a bus or a taxi, be sure to ask the driver to fix the price before taking off. Ask your friends how much you should pay and take note of what Indonesians are paying. If you don't know the price in advance, take metered taxis such as the Blue Bird Company. As you get more comfortable in Indonesia, fixing the price will seem less important and more natural. If you are traveling by microbus, avoid asking the driver the price, as they will almost always charge you a higher rate. Ask other riders and try to pay in exact change until you feel comfortable asking for proper change.



*If you're living in an area with lots of public transportation, you may find yourself spending many afternoons riding in angkots--sometimes these little minibuses can have big personalities!*



**Tiping:** In general, you are not expected to tip cab drivers or waiters in traditional Indonesian restaurants (warungs). While there is no fast and firm rule, a restaurant catering to tourists will probably expect you to leave a 5 to 15 percent tip. However, before you rush to tip, check the bill first to see if gratuity charges have already been included – they often are.

### **Taxes**

AMINEF does not report your income to the IRS. If you made over \$10,500 in the tax year, you are required to file federal taxes and must take the initiative to report Fulbright income as additional funds on a 1040. Check with your state for local tax requirements as well. You can consult this IRS page for more details.

If you don't want to deal with taxes while you are abroad, you can get an automatic extension of up to 6 months by filing Form 4868 (Application for Automatic Extension of Time To File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return). However, this form simply extends the deadline to file. If you owe, you will still earn interest on your tax liability despite the extension.

### **Student Loan Deferment**

The Fulbright program is authorized to sign loan deferment requests. Contact lenders to get the relevant forms and send them to Jonathon Akeley at IIE. You can find more details at the Fulbright website here or contact Fulbright's East Asia – Pacific Program Manager, Jonathon Akeley at (212) 984–5487 or [jakeley@iie.org](mailto:jakeley@iie.org).

## **COMMUNICATION**

You will quickly find that Indonesians are some of the most prolific social media users around. They often own more than one cell phone and have more social media accounts than you knew existed. There are ample ways for you to keep in contact with old and new friends alike.

Please, if you change cell phone and or email addresses notify AMINEF immediately.

### **Cell Phone Basics**

AMINEF provides you with a very basic cell phone upon your arrival. For many ETAs, this phone is suitable throughout the grant period. Indonesia operates on a pay-as-you-go system for cell phones. Rather than buying a monthly phone plan, you simply buy phone credit, called pulsa, which is credited to your sim card. As you make phone calls and send texts, pulsa is deducted from your card.

Pulsa is sold ubiquitously and can be found at any convenience store. Look for signs saying "Menjual Pulsa" (sells pulsa) when you need to purchase credit. Remember to mention the provider associated with your number (probably Telkomsel/Simpati for your phone from AMINEF). How much you spend is dependent on usage, but Rp. 50,000 will last you a significant amount of time. Pulsa does expire after two months, however, so it's not advised to buy more than Rp. 50,000 at a time.

#### **Pulsa can be purchased two ways:**

1. After telling your pulsa dealer how much you would like to buy, you will write your phone number in a book and the dealer will send you pulsa from their cell phone.
2. If you are leery of writing down your phone number, you can directly purchase a pulsa card for a set amount of rupiah and follow the instructions on the back.

When you buy pulsa, the dealer will charge a transaction fee of Rp. 1,000-2,000. So, if you buy Rp. 50,000 worth of pulsa, you will pay Rp. 51,000. You should check your pulsa status on your phone before you finish paying.

### **Smart Phones**

There are distinct advantages to having a smart phone. Applications such as BBM, Line, and WhatsApp will enable you to contact friends and family back home as well as your friends in Indonesia free of charge. Additionally, ETAs appreciate the convenience of having reliable internet, maps, and an Indonesian-English dictionary at the palm of their hands.

If you bring your cell phone from home and plan to use it to connect to Wi-Fi networks, be aware that Wi-Fi networks are very limited in Indonesia. You may be able to connect at school or home, but it will be difficult outside of those places. If your smart phone is on a family service plan at home and you want to continue with limited service from the U.S. (ask your cell phone provider at home), it can be worth it to turn off roaming and simply use your U.S. phone for FaceTime, Skype, etc. while using your Indonesian phone for all in-country communication.

However, it is a completely different case if you unlock your cell phone before you arrive in Indonesia. Some U.S. providers, such as Verizon, will unlock your cell phone if you tell them you are working abroad for 9 months. When you arrive, you can simply buy an Internet-enabled sim card (check which is the best provider in your area, but most ETAs use

Telkomsel's Simpati card) and switch it with your U.S. sim card. Then, you can add pulsa to your phone. Pulsa provides you credit for minutes, texts and internet data. To buy data on a Simpati card, buy pulsa, then call \*363#. A menu will pop up asking you to select a data plan. Ask AMINEF, friends, or your local pulsa dealer to help you choose the right package for your needs. With an Indonesian data plan, you will have reliable 3G internet even in remote areas.

### Buying a Smartphone

If your home provider won't unlock your phone or you choose not to bring it, it is very easy to buy a phone in Indonesia. Apart from iPhones, which are heavily taxed, you will find that phones are fairly cheap and reliable. Expect to pay between Rp. 1 million to 2 million for a good Blackberry or Android phone. During orientation, you may ask AMINEF and your language teachers for a good place to buy a phone. In large cities, there are sometimes electronics malls where you can bargain. If you are uncomfortable with bargaining or concerned about miscommunication, bring a friend. Also, make sure to tell the salesperson that you will be traveling and want a phone that works all over Indonesia, as some phones only work in certain areas.

### Internet Access

Internet access is a site-dependent matter. For some, access is freely provided and somewhat reliable. Others must seek it out through trial and tribulation. While many schools technically have a Wi-Fi network, you will often find that the internet signal is unpredictable. Most importantly, ask Indonesians how they access the internet when you arrive at your site. Different internet providers are more reliable depending on your region. Here are some suggestions in your search for internet access:

#### Broadband

Both Speedy and WiGo provide broadband wireless internet service. These are the most reliable and expensive internet options. However, the service areas for both providers are primarily limited to cities. Check on their respective websites for more information. In the case of Speedy, you can visit your local Telkomsel office and ask about setting it up. Note that Speedy requires a phone line, so it is typically only available to ETAs in homes (make sure your computer has an Ethernet port). WiGo, does not require a phone jack. When setting up an account, you'll be required to purchase a plan for a specified number of months. However, previous ETAs have not had problems closing their WiGo accounts early. They also recommend placing the modem in a medium-high location for a better connection.

#### USB Modems

Many ETAs choose to purchase a USB modem. Ask one of your friends to help you purchase one and walk you through all of the options. If you have a Mac, double-check with the store that it will be Mac compatible. Be aware that some modems only work with specific providers, so be sure to ask whether your modem is locked before you purchase it (you may want to switch providers if you experience problems). Popular providers include Esia,

Smartfren and Three, but vary depending on location. After you buy a modem, you will buy a data card similar to a phone's sim card. When needed, you can purchase data for the card at the same place where you buy pulsa for your phone. The first time you use your modem, you will be asked to register. Confirm that the modem actually connects to the Internet before you register it, because you won't be able to return it after doing so.

### The Community

Inevitably, due to thunderstorms, floods, blackouts, or a multitude of other reasons, your Internet connection will fail at some point. Familiarize yourself with local Internet cafes (called warnets), coffee shops, and hotels in your area. When all else fails, these establishments will likely provide the Internet access you need to contact home or search for lesson plan ideas.

### Tethering or Creating a Hotspot

If you have a smartphone with an Indonesian sim card and data plan, you can use your phone to create an Internet hotspot and then access the Internet network on other devices. Follow the instructions on your device to set up the connection. Tethering is not always reliable so it should not be your primary means to connect to the Internet, but it can be very helpful in a pinch.

### Contacting Friends and Family

- To make cheap phone calls to America, dial 01017 then 1 + area code + number
- For smart phones, ETAs favor WhatsApp, Viber and Snapchat
- For computers, ETAs use Facebook, email, GChat and Skype (if your Internet connection is good enough)
- For in-country calls, send a text that says TM ON (TalkMania) to 8999 before you make a call, and TalkMania will give you about an hour of talk time for Rp. 2,000-3,000. Note that this is only for phone calls between two Simpati phones (i.e. other ETAs!).
- The 24-hour hotline number for the American Embassy is +62 21 3435 9000.



*Letters aren't the easiest way to stay in touch, but they're still the coolest!*

## Finance and Communication To-Do List

### Before you arrive

- Talk to your bank about international options and open a new travel-friendly account if desired (be sure to start this process as soon as possible!)
- Inform your bank and credit card company(s) of the time period you will be abroad and which countries you will travel to
- Talk to former employers and family members about how you will get your tax information
- Send the proper forms to your lending institutions to defer student loans (optional)
- Contact your cell phone company about international plans and unlocking your phone (optional)
- Collect phone numbers of friends and family at home so that you can communicate with them via apps like WhatsApp (optional)

### When you arrive

- Identify a reliable shop to buy pulsa for your cell phone
- Find local ATMs that will accept your card
- Ask your counterpart and other locals about transportation and food prices
- Ask about the best internet service provider (optional)

*Contributed by:*

*Victor Chiapaikeo (Kupang, West Timor 2010 -2011)*

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# **HOUSING**

Types of Housing, Getting Comfortable,  
Keeping Safe, Utilities, and Neighbors

# HOUSING

## Types of Housing

When you arrive at your site you will be accompanied to your new abode, probably by your counterpart. ETA accommodations vary, and you could be placed in one of the following types of housing.

### Your own House

You may get to stay in your own house (alone or with a housemate), which often is owned by your school or by someone who works there. Your new home may or may not be supplied with household items necessary for everyday living, sleeping, cooking, and cleaning. Your counterpart, neighbors, or other teachers can help direct you to a store where you can buy the products you need. This is when you will learn how little you actually need to purchase in order to live comfortably! A smart item to pack is a sheet or light blanket; in Indonesia it is common to be provided with a bottom sheet and pillow, but have nothing to cover up with. Even if it is hot when you arrive, a light cover may be necessary to make sure you don't become a nighttime buffet for mosquitoes. Your house may not be in its most bersih condition when you arrive, so you may need to do some cleaning before it feels like home. And don't be afraid to make it ~~home~~ **home**! Hang up pictures and maps on the wall, or buy a plant to take care of. But before you stick stuff to the wall, be careful of what you use to adhere it. Some kinds of tape will rip the paint off!

### Homestay

You can be assigned to a homestay, where you will live with a host family or landlord. ETAs placed here usually eat meals, attend outings, and spend a good bit of time with the people who host them. Many meals, utilities, and housekeeping may be provided for you by the family, but this depends on the situation; some could require you to pitch in for your portion. Be warned: sometimes living with a host family is frustrating for a young adult, because you will probably lose some of the independence you are used to having. Your host parents will likely be protective of you and interested in all of your habits and activities. Many ETAs also become fatigued when they feel like they have to be "on" all the time when they are in their home. It is good to establish plans for "family time" and "alone time," in order to preserve your own emotional health and find balance in your new environment. Host families are an important part of the relationships you will form in Indonesia, and are very often a valued part of the ETA experience.

### Kost or Dormitories

Living in either a *kost* (boarding house) or dorms on or near campus is another possibility. In this living situation, you will have your own room (and usually your own bathroom), but you may share rooms such as the kitchen and the common areas. *Kosts* and dorms vary, and some can have limitations on visitors and curfews—for example, you may need to return home before 9pm, at which time the gate will be closed and leave you locked out. Some ETAs ask for negotiations in these types of situations, such as asking to have their own keys made. *Kosts* and dorms are also great for becoming close friends with your neighbors and school communities.

Even in the same "type" of housing, ETAs can have very different experiences, and your housing can greatly affect the way you interact with your community in Indonesia—it may also greatly affect your mental health. Your housing situation may set you up to feel incredibly lonely and isolated, or totally overwhelmed by people and relationships, or



*Many ETAs will live in one-room apartments like this.  
(Just kidding - but this is what your backyard might look like.)*



extremely limited in your independence and opportunities to take care of yourself. Each situation will come with its own pros and cons; remember that your feelings are totally valid. If you have a site partner, it may even be the case that you and your site partner are in two very different types of housing, and it might help to find an ETA in a similar housing situation that you can more easily talk to about your frustrations, solutions, and happy moments.

Where you're placed in relation to your school's location can help you decide whether to invest in a bicycle, use a regular ojek (motorbike taxi), etc., or to use mostly public transportation. Schools are not required to provide a vehicle to ETAs. If you have problems with your living situation that you cannot resolve on your own, always contact your counterpart before involving AMINEF in the matter. It's likely that your school will be happy to help you feel comfortable in any way they can.



*Some ETAs may be placed in a homestay.*

### Getting Comfortable

After leaving orientation and finally arriving at the place you'll call home for the rest of the year, you'll quickly realize that living in Indonesia presents a whole new set of challenges than the ones to which you're accustomed. In parts of the US, your water pipes can freeze and burst if you don't take care of them. In parts of Indonesia, your water pipes can be highways for rats and roaches to get into your house. Expect some frustrations as you try to get comfortable. You'll adapt to the new realities of life in your own way, but here are some tips to help.

### Water

If you are living in an area that's prone to water outages, it's a good idea to keep the *bak mandi* (the large tub built into the wall under the faucet in the bathroom) or plastic tub full so that you'll still have water to wash with when the outages occur (and so you won't end up covered in soap and have to use your drinking water to rinse off). Try not to let soap residue or other dirty water get into the *bak mandi*, as it can cause slime to start growing at the bottom. If there are mosquitoes in your bathroom, it's a good idea to drain and scrub the *bak mandi* every few days to get rid of any larvae, and drain it if you won't be using it for a while. There are also chemicals that can be purchased to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your bathroom.

### Mold

Indonesia's climate is hot and humid. That's fine if you're on the beach, but it can pose a challenge if you're trying to keep a mold-free house. If there are leaks in the house, make sure to wipe up the water with a towel or a mop as soon as possible. Invest in a bottle of Vixal (pronounced "fix all") and a sponge to scrub down your bathroom at least twice a month. Gloves are recommended because products like Vixal are harsh on the skin.

### Pests

Ant and cockroach populations can be kept under control with the use of insecticide chalk. The main brands are called "Bagus" or "HIT" and can be found in grocery stores. Be sure to draw lines with the chalk around any cracks or holes where you have noticed bugs coming in and out. If there is food you want to keep outside the fridge but don't want to share with household pests, put a nail in your wall, then draw a large circle around the nail with insecticide chalk. Hang up any food in a plastic bag inside the safety of this circle, and it should be ant free! Bug repellent spray such as Baygon works fairly well for eliminating ant and other small pest infestations. Just point and spray, then sweep up the carcasses. You may also line the perimeter of, say, your bedroom, with Baygon, which also somewhat discourages smaller pests from getting in. Mothballs placed near the drains in bathrooms and/or kitchen, can help prevent some insects from crawling up them. Each person has to weigh the pros and cons of using these sorts of chemicals in their living areas – some ETAs use them liberally, some never touch them.



*A typical bathroom in Indonesia is pretty different than in America. Showers are likely not separate from the rest of the room, and while most ETAs will have Western toilets in their homes, public places generally have squattoilets.*

There are also ways to keep your home critter-free with fewer chemicals. Sweeping your house frequently can help eliminate the bulk of these small pests because you are both sweeping up any food vestiges they may be attracted to and also just sweeping them out of the house. Having wet wipes around to wipe down countertops after you eat is an easy way to clean up small messes - this also gets rid of the food crumb temptations for ants. Also, take out your trash regularly, and use plastic containers to store food (even dry foods). As an alternative to harsh chemicals, a simple solution of water and soap (shampoo, detergent, or dish soap will do) can halt a cockroach in its path by clogging the pores through which it breathes. Just mix and dump. To prevent cockroaches from getting into your home in the first place, make sure all holes are covered by a screen or other barrier. If you don't have screens on your windows, ask someone to install them – this will help keep roaches and other unwanted guests away. Keep all rooms clean and don't forget to wipe down your stove-top after making nasi goreng, because grease attracts roaches.

Rats and mice can also be a problem - they can live in your drains and in your roof, and you'll especially notice them if part of your house is open to the air. You have a choice: battle them or ignore them. It is hard to find rat poison or traps, and when you do find them you face the exciting prospect of dealing with the ensuing dead rats yourself. Try to get a bed bug cover and mosquito net, which also helps with rodents. Your biggest problem with rodents is not that they live with you, but that they poop everywhere. A mosquito net keeps bugs away as you sleep and makes sure they don't poop on your bed. You can also buy covers for your drains to keep out rats, mice and cockroaches, or just find a rock or brick and cover them when you're not using them.

### Protecting your food

The best thing you can do to keep your food safe is to stash it in the fridge, but it will fill up fast, and sometimes you want to have food out for guests. When you go into another house and see the snacks they have sitting out in little containers, know they are packed so for a reason – if you screw the lids on really tight, the arrangement is completely ant-proof! Invest in some of these jars and tins – Tupperware also works, but not always as effectively. When you want to leave open food on the table, you can line the legs of the table with insecticide chalk to keep ants at bay.

### Keeping safe

Indonesia is a friendly country, but even friendly countries have a few bad apples. Differentiating between culture shock and genuine security threats can be a big challenge, especially in the beginning when you are still adjusting to everything. Pay attention to patterns over time, and trust your gut instinct. Never hesitate to ask for help from trusted neighbors or teachers at school. If you feel truly unsafe at your site, don't be afraid to share this with an AMINEF officer staff, who can help you get more insight into the situation. If you still feel unsure, contact the Regional Security Officer number at the US Embassy number in Jakarta. Remember that a huge part of the embassy's job is to help protect American citizens abroad, and they will take your concerns seriously. The embassy also has a 24-hour switchboard that you can call for true emergencies (arrests or mortal peril); the number is 62-21 3435 9000. It's a good idea to keep this phone number on you at all times, as well as the numbers for your counterpart and AMINEF contact person.



*A typical Indonesian neighborhood in Kalimantan.*

### Utilities

Depending on your placement, you may be required to pay your own utilities, including electricity, water, garbage disposal, phone, internet and security. Electricity and water are charged based on usage and either paid monthly or billed on a quarterly basis, while garbage disposal and security are usually a flat rate that must be paid monthly. Depending on your situation, it is also common to use a pre-paid electricity system; electricity credit can be purchased at a convenience store, such as Indomaret (a common convenience store in many Indonesian cities). Internet costs vary and you may be billed a monthly rate, prepay for pulsa (electricity credit), or pay by usage depending on your provider. See Finances and Communication section for more information on Internet options.

Sometimes it is tricky to figure out how each service is billed, so it's best to inquire from the beginning about exactly what is expected of you. In addition to your counterpart, it is useful to find someone in your neighborhood who can help you navigate this aspect of life in Indonesia. Costs vary greatly depending on living arrangements, but shouldn't be much of a burden. 500,000 to 1 million rupiah a month is probably a decent estimate, but you won't be able to know for sure until you arrive at your site.



## Neighbors

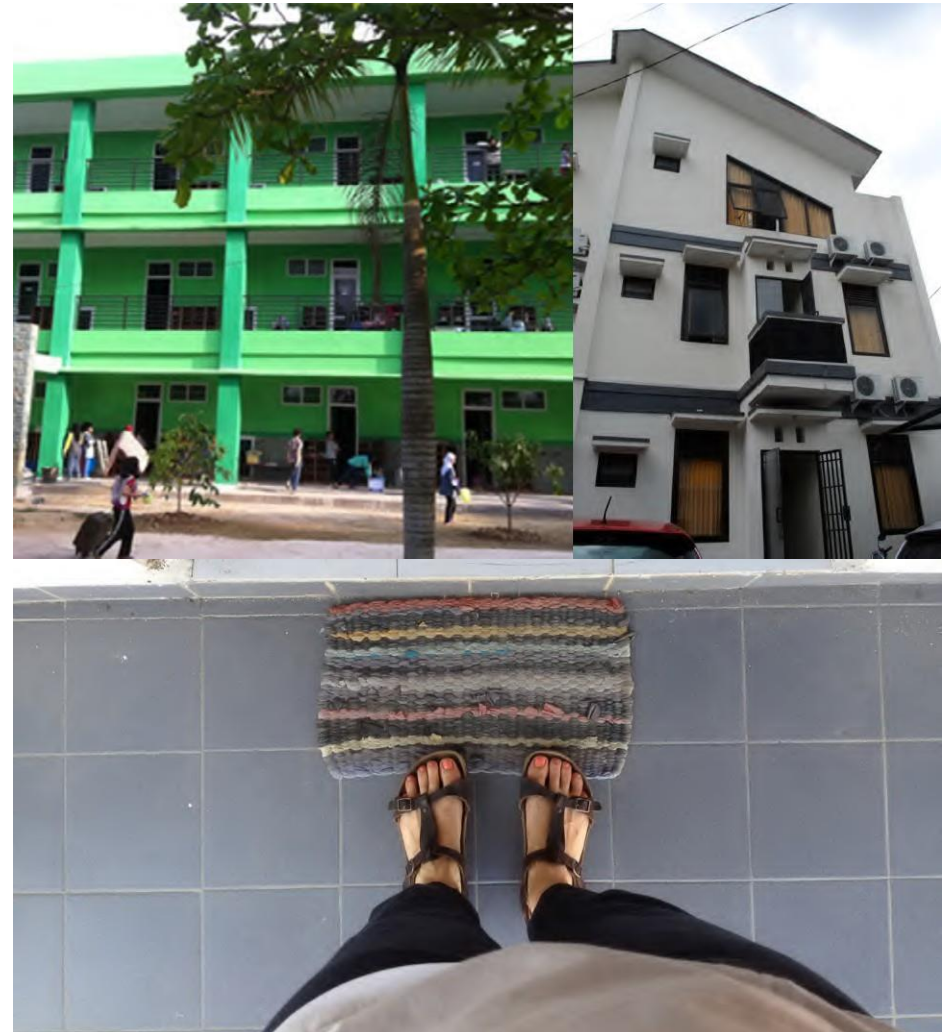
A large part of adjusting to your housing situation will include learning how to interact with the people who live near you. In Indonesia, neighbors act as extended family, coming together for major life events like weddings and parties and helping each other through rough times like funerals and illnesses. This family-like atmosphere also means they might expect you to report to them as you would your parents when you were 12 years old. This means that the door must be left open when there are people of the opposite sex at your house, and in some cases you may need to let the head of the neighborhood (kepala desa) or your counterpart and principal know when you will be gone or when you will have guests. Not to mention that it is policy to let your school know when you will be away from site. This can get frustrating, but try to explain to people that you like being alone, you like being independent, and that you are capable of taking care of yourself – many ETAs are initially frustrated at being treated like children, but in most cases your friends and neighbors mean only the best and are caring for you as they would a member of their own family.

You can choose to view this as an irritation, or as an opportunity for genuine cultural exchange about family dynamics and American society. As with most things you'll encounter, this aspect of the experience will be what you make of it.

A final note is that many people in Indonesia are intimidated to talk to foreigners (beyond the ubiquitous selamats and “mau kemana”s), so don't be surprised if you have to take the first step and introduce yourself to your neighbors. You won't regret taking the time to form these relationships – and don't worry about your Indonesian not being good enough. As long as you're trying, you'll probably be deemed *pintar sekali*.

### Contributors:

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### Welcome Home!

*Clockwise from top right: A kost (boarding house) in Bogor, West Java.  
A doorstep in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. A  
boarding school in Palembang, South Sumatra.*

# **SCHOOLS and TEACHING**

Types of Schools, Preparing for your  
Classroom, and Teaching Resources

## SCHOOLS and TEACHING

Your school and your role as a teaching assistant are undoubtedly two of the biggest parts of your time in Indonesia. Many of your best friends will be found through your school and your school will probably become a huge part of your social life. School situations and teaching schedules/expectations vary greatly among ETAs but all have found their relationships with students and co-teachers to be some of the most rewarding of their grant.

### SCHOOLS

#### What to Expect at Your School

In a trite phrase, you can only “expect the unexpected.” Objectives and unwavering rules concerning placement sites in Indonesia are hazy, an Indonesian word liberally used to indicate that whatever it is you’re looking for is gone. Unless you have been in contact with an ETA who previously lived at your placement site, there is no way to predict your individual classroom situation. Most of you will not be able to learn much about your school before arrival. However, to give you a peek into the unknown, this section provides a series of written snapshots from several different school placements across Indonesia. Usually, Indonesia ETA placements can be categorized into one of four different school types (madrassa, pesantren, SMA and SMK), with two different geographical/demographical locations (urban and rural). Again, please keep in mind that while two schools may fall into a particular ‘type,’ no one school is exactly like another.



*An adapted Halloween at a school in West Sulawesi.*

School Type	Notes
Madrasah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Religiously affiliated, with additional classes on religion.</li><li>Rarely have boarding students</li><li>Typically urban</li></ul>
Pesantren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Religiously affiliated, with additional classes on religion.</li><li>Boarding students</li><li>Typically rural</li></ul>
Sekolah Menengah Atas (Negeri / Muhammadiyah) (SMA / SMAN / SMAM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public high schools are designated as “Negeri” (SMAN)</li><li>Schools run by the Islamic organization Muhamaddiyah are designated as SMAM</li><li>Private SMAs may or may not have a religious affiliation</li><li>Students may or may not board</li><li>Intended to prepare students for university</li><li>Perhaps have access to better resources, but urban schools tend to have more than rural schools</li></ul>
Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Typically no religious affiliation</li><li>Students may or may not board</li><li>Intended to prepare students for a particular vocation</li></ul>

#### School Profiles

Following is a look at four very different schools. These placement stories were chosen to demonstrate a wide variety of school types and locations: urban madrasah, urban SMA, rural pesantren and rural SMK. They are included so that you can begin to visualize teaching in Indonesia – but remember to take them as the anecdotes they are, and check out the extra footnotes about how placement sites can differ.

## Madrasah: MAN Model Gorontalo

*Kelsie Miller (Sulawesi, 2013 - 2014)*

A Madrassah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) school is an Islamic school comprised exclusively of Muslim students. All of the female students and teachers are required to wear a jilbab. I dress very conservatively at school – long pants or skirts, no shorter than ¾ length sleeve shirts, and my collarbone is always covered (I wear a scarf almost every day). I chose not to wear a jilbab, and am the only female at school who does not cover her hair.

Students have four special classes for Islamic lessons (including Arabic language), while public school students only have a general religion class. Other than extra religion classes, the curriculum is the same. The Qur'an is read and studied before class every Tuesday and Thursday. Many students (although not all) come from Islamic SMP schools, or Mts (Madrassah Tsanawiya). These students have the benefit of learning Arabic earlier, which is not standard in public junior high schools. While praying before the start of every class is the norm in some MANs, it is not at my school. Classes break at both 12:00pm and 3:30pm for prayer but students usually pray on their own time and not necessarily in a large group. The 12th grade students have an extra set of exams specific to MAN schools (UAM/UAMBN).

My co-teacher and I like to use technology as much as possible in the classroom. He has an iPad and uses e-books for teaching narrative texts, and English games for review when we have a projector. That is, as long as there's not a mati lampu (blackout)! I often have my students create and practice dialogues for different topics (invitation, compliments, thanking, etc.). I also like to use songs and vocabulary-builder games. We've taught our students head, shoulders, knees, and toes; BINGO; Doe a Deer; and several other songs as "filler" activities that help students expand their vocabulary. I-spy type games with the large photos from the AMINEF box are really popular, too. I have also had a lot of success with drawing activities for narrative texts. I try to incorporate as many styles of learning as possible into my lessons.

Outside of class my students are extremely busy! They are involved in several different extracurricular activities including traditional dance, marching band, pramuka (scouts), health organizations, sports teams, and English club. Once a month classes are canceled for pengembangan diri day, in which students play sports and focus on extracurriculars. The week after semester exams is called "meting class" and the entire school (class vs. class) participates in rounds of tournaments for various sports (volleyball, tag, badminton, dance, etc.) The teachers are usually busy preparing materials for exams or with meetings outside of class, but there is always time for sharing food. Sometimes we have special events held at the beach. My school also participates in many of the events held by the local Ministry of Religion office.



## Pesantren: Pondok Pesantren Pabelan Magelang

*Maxwell Bevilacqua (Central Java, 2013 - 2014)*

My initial impression of a pesantren was a boarding school with a rigorous attention to moral behavior from an Islamic standpoint. What I have found is in fact a boarding school that prides itself on the idea of shaping the morality of students with Islamic education, but operates with significantly more lax measures – not unlike a summer camp.

A normal lesson will be presented by the teacher who works permanently at the school. I will know what the lesson is ahead of time – it could be a lesson (or several lessons) about invitations, advertisements, posters, etc. The concept is to teach things that are applicable. However, I choose to take the teacher's material as an outline into which I infuse songs, videos, or games that make the material more relevant to the fundamentals of language learning – specifically, speaking.

Male students play football (soccer) and sometimes basketball. They can be found playing music at all hours of the night, and they enjoy drawing (in- and outside of class). Female students have a basketball court, play badminton sometimes, and have a marching band. Both male and female students draw with me and love watching movies.

The majority of teachers live in the village, but those who do not are rarely seen outside of the school. The activities of the local teachers revolve around food. We eat lunch in the canteen, hang out in the teachers' room talking about food,



and occasionally we will go to someone's house to eat. Occasionally, teachers organize activities after having pooled money. For instance, one afternoon we went touring on motorcycles around the local beach.

I have few expectations outside of the classroom. My interests in Indonesian, Javanese, and Arabic have kept me in the loop with my fellow teachers. There has become an expectation of visiting teachers' homes if we have developed a relationship. In my school I am the resident expert on English but both students and teachers (with the exception of my co-teachers) are incredibly shy about utilizing me as such. My co-teachers also have the idea that I am an expert on "games" – often asking that I provide a game for a lesson that may be very difficult to incorporate a game into. I do not feel that there are any strict expectations or responsibilities thrust upon me – the more I do in the way of socializing with teachers the more I am praised; my activities with students, however, are met with less interest.

### **Public High School: SMAN2 Madiun**

*Robin Cumella (East Java, 2013 -2014)*

Students are divided into one of two tracks: the science track (IPA) or the social science track (IPS). Each grade has only one or two classes of social science students, and early on in the school year I was warned that these students are supposedly less ambitious and not as well behaved as their science counterparts. (These warnings have proved unnecessary in my experience.)

It appears to be the common consensus that my school is the "favorite" (best) school in my city, because only the students with the highest placement scores are admitted. Teachers and students alike have proudly told me on countless occasions that many of our alumni go on to become doctors. With these expectations for students' achievements, students and teachers tend to be fairly busy outside of classes and school. A new English teacher at school spends the bulk of her free time planning lessons, because she "needs to keep up with the clever students." When they are not planning lessons, teachers like to socialize in the teachers' room or library – gently teasing one another (or the foreign teacher), sharing in a basket of newly fried tempe, or just surfing the web. Students can be commonly found in the cafeteria purchasing some snacks to get through the morning, or just lingering in the hallways when their teachers are MIA for one reason or another.

Many students are involved in one or more of a variety of extracurricular activities, ranging from traditional dance to badminton to English Club, and many students eagerly participate in local and national academic competitions. Teachers tend to be very busy outside of school with their families and often have second or third jobs. Some spend hours commuting to school every day. As I do not have a particularly long commute or a family to support, my school occasionally asks me to serve as a judge at English competitions, which I have found to be quite fun.

I have come to see my role in the classroom as that of a cultural ambassador more so than strictly an English teacher. At the beginning of my grant, my co-teachers would frequently make the incorrect assumption that I was familiar with the various grammar points included in textbooks, which I should note were frequently incorrect. Although I am a native speaker, I am not an expert in the rules and nuances of the English language, nor am I a trained

teacher. I came to realize that the most redeeming information I could share with the students was not my faulty grasp of grammar points, but rather my sincere presentation of my culture as I see it, my country, and myself.

My lesson topics have ranged from Martin Luther King, Jr., to American food, to 'Things You Might Not Know About America' in which I discussed topics such as poverty, diversity, and obesity in America. I strive to present information to students in as culturally-sensitive a manner as possible – emphasizing when I am sharing my viewpoints and reminding students that I respect differences of opinion. By selecting topics of interest, I have had a great deal of success in these classes, which brings me a far greater sense of fulfillment than if I were only teaching the nuts and bolts of the English language. These classes are a unique opportunity for students to practice their listening, speaking, and reading skills with an American English speaker, and I also view them as a unique opportunity for both the students and me to improve our cross-cultural understanding. When I feel like we have had a particularly successful and slightly intensive class, I like to surprise the students with a more relaxed class the next time, playing a game such as charades or twenty questions. I am fortunate to have so much freedom in planning my lessons, due to the fact that my co-teachers are very supportive and enthusiastic when I have something planned for class.



## Vocational High School: SMK1 Tanjung Pandan

*Dylan Kitts (Belitung, 2013 - 2014)*

SMK 1 Tanjung Pandan is seemingly typical of other vocational high schools in Indonesia for two reasons: every student must choose a subject focus once they are admitted to the school, and many of the students come from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The school's focuses for students are Accounting, Technology, Administration, and Marketing. Many students have told me they chose to go to SMK 1 because their marks (on, presumably, a government exam and SMP testing) were not high enough to enter the SMA schools, as well as because of their parents' insistence on employment after school.

Typically, my lessons are about grammar. Generally, my students' English level is very low. Most students cannot communicate in English and, thus, are unable to delve deeper into other subjects in English. I always try to incorporate games to keep the students interested, but also emphasize how important English is to their future employment prospects.

Outside of class, teachers are advisers to certain classes. They help link them with internships (for 11th graders, they are only in class on Saturdays because Monday - Friday, they are at internships) and give employment advice. Some students have employment outside of school already, but the vast majority do not. There are some after-school activities, such as OSIS (student government) and a recycling club, but the school does not provide after-school clubs. The culture is to go home right after school.

My vocational school also has a confidence issue. Many students doubt their English ability and believe that they will never be good at it. Furthermore, many teachers and students are intimidated sometimes by the local SMAs. I put this note in because, as an ETA, I think it is even more important in a vocational school, like mine, to raise their confidence.

## TEACHING

School will probably be your first and strongest community in Indonesia, as it's where you will spend most of your time and meet your amazing students. Our visas allow us to work 20 to 30 hours/week in the classroom, and ETAs are supposed to be placed first in classes for students in Grade 10 / Kelas 1 (although you may supplement your schedule with other classes). You may teach anywhere from 100-500 students and can expect to meet with each class only once or twice a week. You may have access to projectors, technology, and workbooks, or may be in a classroom equipped only with a chalkboard... every school and every class will be different.

### Preparing to Enter the Classroom

As English Teaching Assistants, the main goal is to assist his/her co-teachers in English language instruction within the classroom--but if you have never been in a classroom before as an instructor of some sort, do not fret. During orientation, AMINEF will provide teaching instruction. This teaching instruction will cover a range of challenges associated with a teaching assistantship. Some of these topics include—but are not limited to—overcoming cultural differences in order to connect with students, how to successfully navigate and achieve a collaborative relationship with one's co-teacher, lesson planning, useful games and activities to promote English language learning, and how to understand and adapt to the nuances of an Indonesian classroom.

Teaching experiences in Indonesia are as different and diverse as the country itself. No two placement sites, schools, or classrooms are the same. However, orientation will provide you with the basic tools necessary to enter any classroom. Take advantage of the materials and information given and taper that information accordingly, in order to thrive at your school.

Your success as a teaching assistant has just as much to do with you, who you are, and how you relate to your students and colleagues, as it does with your familiarity with the material or, even, with teaching itself. Bringing a positive attitude into the classroom, working with others instead of against them, and making an effort to understand each day as a new experience will be the most important factors for being a good ETA. You are already equipped with everything you need to thrive at your site. After all, you were chosen to embark on this journey for a reason. So, get excited! You're already well on your way. To help further alleviate your concerns, please take a moment to look over the following pre-departure resources. The more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel.

If you are wondering what things you might bring from home to supplement your classroom experiences (or to help with last-minute teaching requests), please flip back to the Packing & Planning section and refer to the suggested list of teaching materials.







*Clockwise from top right:  
Two classrooms of students in Sulawesi and Kalimantan working on an  
Environmental Comic Book project as part of a Regional Grant.  
A successful English Corner in Bogor, West Java.  
Donated books and resources from RELO at the US Embassy.*

## Web Resources for ETAs

There are many online resources for teaching ESL and EFL available online. Below is a comprehensive list of resources—we've put our favorites first!

- American English is a U.S. Department of State website offering resources for teachers and students of English as a foreign language abroad. There are many lessons that teach to American culture and history, plus information about scholarships and opportunities.
  - Movie Segments to Assess Grammar Goals. Claudio has a TON of activities and movie clips, and if you scroll down on the right side they're sorted for Beginners, Intermediate, etc. He labels all of the lessons with their grammar goals, learning audience, and appropriateness and provides downloads for videos and worksheets (which you can always tweak!). There are activities for specific grammar points and also some with larger goals, such as narratives/story-telling. Plus most of the movies are ones that Indonesian students have seen and enjoy!
  - Grammarman uses comics to address EFL/ESL topics, such as parts of speech and prepositions, and also puts other stories/texts into comic form. The website also provides blank comic templates that students can fill in to create their own stories! ETAs have had a lot of success using comics in the past.
  - Dave's ESL Café is a great website for quick ideas and games to add a little fun to your English classes. While it does not offer full lesson plans, the ideas offered on this site are quick, applicable and easy to implement in the classroom.
  - Busy Teacher has free worksheets for a range of activities. This site is especially helpful for special events and holiday-related worksheets!
  - About.com offers articles on teaching ESL as well as long lists of lesson plans complete with worksheets and classroom materials. The website is easy to navigate and offers materials on most subjects within all of the major skill sets at three levels of English proficiency.
  - ESL Flow does not offer ideas or lesson plans; just worksheets in PDF format for any topic. There is also a link for "Teacher Tools" which enables you to create your own quizzes, puzzles, worksheets and flashcards online.
  - ESL Galaxy's website helps you find lessons and activities on other ESL websites. The most notable thing about this website is the variety of interactive games. Some of the lesson plans seem to be geared towards younger learners, but the games are generally easy to implement and adapt for any classroom.
- ESL Gold is a great site for both teachers and students who want to study on their own. It is divided into ten skills sections and then into five levels, from beginner to advanced, with materials for teaching and studying. It even offers English conversation partners through Skype!
- ieLanguages is a website created by an English Teaching Assistant in France, but the teaching principles are the same. It offers lesson plans, printable worksheets in Word and PDF formats on a variety of topics (including American slang), as well as quizzes. A list of recommended books is also included for further reading.



- The Internet TESL Journal offers articles and techniques for further developing yourself as an English teacher, as well as complete lesson plans and activities for teaching English. The lessons are easily read and implemented and range from short warm-up activities to multi-day lesson plans on a variety of topics including culture, music, and presentation skills.
- Rong-chang.com This site is a springboard for other websites with lesson plans, ideas, and worksheets for teaching and learning English as a second language (ESL). There are so many different links that it can take a while to find what you're looking for, but the variety of topics leaves nothing to be desired.
- While Teacher Tube is not specifically an ESL website, you can use the search feature to look for ESL lessons and related materials. All material is presented in video format, so this site may be unhelpful for you if you have a slow internet connection.
- Web English Teacher is a website for English teachers offering a section specifically for teaching ESL.

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*Several ETAs have created successful English Corners at their schools. These can be a great place for word puzzles, weekly challenges, and displaying student work.*

**ADAPTING to a NEW  
CULTURE:  
IDENTITY**  
Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Religion

## ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE: IDENTITY

Be careful using phrases like “Indonesian culture.” This country is extremely diverse, and it’s difficult to say anything that holds true from Sumatra to Papua. However, the truth is that you will experience moments of culture shock while in Indonesia. Topics usually considered private in America (including religion, race, finances and marital status) are often the first things about which strangers ask questions in Indonesia. Things like race, religion and gender will become the basis for assumptions in ways that make many Americans cringe.

Your experience will depend on many things, but we’ve compiled some anecdotes to help you start thinking about what life might be like in “Indonesian culture.” Balancing your individual identity and the “American” identity Indonesians see in the media will be a constant fact of life. When you feel angry, try finding some distance by looking at the situation around you as a cultural anthropologist might – concentrate on people’s intentions and what you can learn, not on what offends you. Most importantly, don’t overlook the moments of simple kindness from strangers that will most likely pave your road through Indonesia.

**Not all of these anecdotes will apply directly to you, but they will apply to fellow ETAs.** Being an ally to your friends in Indonesia will start with trying to understand their viewpoints and their difficulties. Remember that everyone will bring a different identity and a different set of experiences to Indonesia, and thus will be struggling with different things in different ways. The first step is to listen, understand, and acknowledge that every person’s feeling and experiences are valid. These struggles will become an indelible part of our lives in Indonesia, but are rooted in our experiences and identities in America. Reading all of these stories will help you start looking at some of the identity issues that may affect you or your fellow ETAs, and begin understanding how to be an ally in Indonesia and beyond.

### GENDER ISSUES in INDONESIA

Women will have more to adjust to than men after arriving in Indonesia, although anyone moving from America to Indonesia will find many differences between the two. Immense differences exist within Indonesia as well – in conservative Muslim areas, fully covered women are the norm; in Christian areas, women often wear t-shirts or shorts.

#### Girl Talk

*by Mary Barnes (Makassar, South Sulawesi 2010 - 2011)*

#### Dressing the Part:

As an American female in Indonesia, you will have to adjust your dress and habits, but it’s not nearly as dramatic or debilitating as you might imagine, especially in the cities. Dress codes vary tremendously between sites and largely depend on how conservative your local teachers and principal are. This year, ETAs dressed in a variety of styles: some wore short sleeves, while others needed three-quarter or full-sleeves; some had to wear flowing tunic-shirts that covered their butts, while others could wear tucked-in, collared shirts. Outside of school, some could wear capris, leggings or below-the knee skirts, while others needed ankle-length skirts. However, high necklines and covered shoulders seemed to be a consistent rule.

In summary, bring whatever conservative clothes you already own and feel comfortable in, but don’t bring anything you love and plan to wear later in life, as



*Which one is the “bule”? Fitting in will look different for every ETA.*

clothes tend to get worn and tattered very quickly. You will probably supplement your wardrobe once you arrive and figure out the rules. Also, pack a few cute and/or casual outfits for your time at orientation and on vacation. Clothes are easy to purchase (as long as you're not much taller than the average Indonesian), but not as cheap as you might be expecting – though generally cheaper than in the US.

When deciding what to wear, you should also evaluate how much extra attention you can take. In a big city, you'll be able to get away with bare arms/knees, but this will definitely draw eyes and, if you're white, you'll already have plenty of eyes on you. Covering up has benefits besides winning the approval of others and deflecting unwanted attention: sun, bug and motorcycle protection. On top of all that, loose clothes are much more comfortable in hot weather. Billowy pants and skirts are best.

#### **Independence and the Opposite Gender:**

Enough about clothes, let's talk about boys! Like dress codes, rules about having the opposite gender visit you at home vary tremendously. Don't be surprised if it's taboo to have a member of the opposite sex visit you alone. In addition to violating cultural norms, your neighbors will probably notice and assume the worst.

You may be living alone and the revelation of this fact will inevitably prompt questions about your safety and whether you'd like another female to sleep on the couch. Explaining that it's not uncommon to live alone in America usually makes for a pleasant cultural exchange and most people, while slightly incredulous, will let you be.

You'll also often get asked about whether you are married or dating. If you are single and not actively seeking a soul mate, you will puzzle many Indonesians. Likely, they'll want an explanation as to why you aren't romantically interested in Indonesians, then offer to introduce you to their nephew. Again, explaining that in America it is quite acceptable to be single at your age works pretty well. In short, you will already be exempt from a lot of societal expectations by virtue of being a foreigner.

That said, once you understand the rules, the way you choose to dress and act will depend on how comfortable you are bending them, and whether you think of it as being progressive or disrespectful. Keep in mind that, despite these rules, many of the Indonesian women you meet will have careers, drive motorbikes and (at least appear to) live fairly independent of their husbands and fathers.

#### **Your Toiletry Bag:**

Beware: bodily functions are discussed more casually in Indonesia. If you are female, you will likely be asked about menstruation (menstruating women may not enter mosques) –but sometimes your friends just want to know about your favorite feminine hygiene products. Speaking of which, you may want to invest in a DivaCup before leaving the US. It can be easily cleaned with wet wipes and bottled water. That said, it is simply not true that you can't find tampons here. They are available in all the major cities but are often prohibitively expensive, so bring them with you if you have space. Lastly, you might also want to pack facial cleansers/moisturizers, especially if you're picky or don't want to accidentally whiten your skin; in Indonesia anything that can be applied to skin will have a version with skin lightening/brightening compounds added.

### **Dramatic, Debilitating... or Both? A Response to 'Girl Talk'**

*by Jenna Wallace, Pekanbaru, Riau, Sumatra 2011 – 2012*

True or false: harassment and stereotyping of women exists in America. You'd be kidding yourself if you said false. Now true or false: It will be worse in Indonesia. True or false: As a female in Indonesia you'll have to dramatically change your habits and dress. True or False: As a female you will find these adjustments debilitating. Truth is, there isn't an answer. Everyone's experience of Indonesia is different as placement sites differ, schools differ, communities differ, and ETA's definitions and expectations differ.

For me, in many ways the adjustments of dress and habits were often both dramatic and debilitating (in contrast to what I had read in the 1st edition of the Guidebook). However, what I gained from adjusting was more than what I lost. At my school, it was inappropriate to wear pants and it was expected that I wear the uncomfortable school uniform of a floor length skirt and long heavy jacket. So, how did I gain anything from that? Sitting in the teacher's room towards the end of my time in Pekanbaru another teacher took my hand with tears in her eyes and said, "I'll always remember you in your teacher's uniform." Every day that I showed up to school dressed like the other teachers made the gap between us less noticeable. The people I worked with appreciated my efforts to adapt to their culture, and for me, that was worth it. If wearing uniforms wasn't exactly debilitating, the social restrictions for females could sometimes feel that way. It was frowned upon if I went out after dark (6pm), which drastically changed my social life. Having male friends was often difficult, interacting with male teachers and administrators could be tricky, and avoiding uncomfortable situations stemming from gender relations was a weekly challenge. This wasn't ideal, but it gave me time to get to know my neighbors, sit and chat with my landlady and play with the neighborhood kids.

So if you were to put adjustment into terms of true and false, for me, the truth would be that I had to adjust my daily activities, my dress, and almost all my social habits, especially the way I socialized with men, and yes, sometimes it was frustrating and sometimes I felt restricted. However, what's false is that it ruined my experience or changed the way I felt about the Indonesians I knew. You'll have to adapt in many ways, but that's what is so special about the experience. Adapting opens doors into people's lives, even if it isn't always a comfortable process. The more you adapt, the more you learn. It is your choice where to draw the lines between adaptation and unhappiness.

Harassment is another story. The biggest truth is that it is a reality and that it will likely affect you in some way, whether at your site, when you travel, or both. Stereotypes of American women often color how female ETAs are perceived, and there are certainly cultural structures at work that allow harassment to exist, often at surprising levels. For example, once while wearing long, loose pants and a long sleeve shirt high around the neck, I walked to a store to buy a few things. To occupy myself I counted how many people cat-called at me, followed me, stopped to ask me if they could have my number, etc. I got to 35 before I gave up counting. Sometimes it was clear that the person was simply curious or wanted to practice English. Other times, I was furious or uncomfortable and often I was simply annoyed. Throughout my time in Indonesia I dealt with it in various ways. I learned what worked for me, what turned something rude into something funny. I learned to laugh it off and sometimes I fumed about it to other ETAs. So yes, harassment affected my experience in Indonesia. It was challenging, frustrating, demeaning, uncomfortable, and ridiculous, but looking back what strikes me about my experience isn't being cat-called in the street on the way to the store, but rather it's the memories with my co-teachers and students, times



with friends, and learning about a new culture and language. The truth is that adapting and dealing with harassment are both parts of the challenge, but they don't hold a candle to the wealth of truly wonderful memories that I will bring home from Indonesia.

### **Riding like a Girl**

*by Hannah Vann (Medan, North Sumatra 2010–2011)*

After pestering the people at my school for three weeks about getting a motorcycle, an accidental public mental breakdown turned out to be just the thing to turn their absolute refusal into a skeptical “maybe.” In spite of my many assurances that I knew how to drive a motorcycle and had my license, I was required to take what the male teachers at my school described as ‘motorcycle lessons.’ I would prefer to call them firsthand experiences with male chauvinism.

Pak Habib pointed at an automatic moped and said, “You will drive that.” I looked at him with a smile and replied, “Okay, I can practice on that. But the kind of motorcycle I want is not an automatic, it's a manual. That's what I drive in America.” He frowned at me, then looked at the other men and said something hurried in Indonesian. Then they all turned to me and started gesturing, cigarettes in hand, at the automatic. In my experience, there is no use arguing at the beginning of any endeavor, inching your way toward what you want is much more effective. So I walked over to the moped, turned it on, and drove figure-eights in the parking lot, where I spotted the kind of motorcycle I wanted. In my broken Indonesian, I pointed at the bike and said, “*Saya mau sama yang ini*” (“I want one like this”). My request was met with laughter. Only this time, instead of laughing at yet another of my failed attempts to speak Indonesian, they were laughing at my request – because, according to them, women do not drive manual motorcycles. Manual motorcycles are too much machine. They are for men. Women aren't coordinated enough to work the clutch. Women who drive manual motorcycles are loose, immoral women.

As I listened to all of these reasons I couldn't get the motorcycle I wanted, I could not help but laugh. Motorcycle sexism is quite possibly the last thing I ever expected to encounter in Indonesia. Dressing like a nun in spite of the heat, being constantly interrupted by men during conversations, and observing an appropriate curfew so as not to scandalize the neighborhood are all things I expected and accepted as part of my life here. But that's just it: you never know what will happen. As I smoothed my ruffled feathers, Pak Habib was already vamping up for a motorcycle ride to show off his favorite bule woman and her mean motorcycle skills. I was expected, of course, to preserve my honor by riding the semiautomatic.

Being a western woman in a conservative place in Indonesia is not easy. I often have to remind myself that people like Pak Habib act out of genuine concern for my well-being, not because they are consciously trying to put me in my place. Although I want to jump on my soapbox and preach about equality, I have to remember that my way is not always the right way or the only way. And oftentimes the purity of someone's intentions is a much better thing to focus on.

The important thing to remember is that this is an exchange. In as much as we are trying to fit into Indonesian culture, we are also sharing our culture. When someone expresses concern about me living alone or traveling alone because I am a woman, there is nothing wrong with talking about the independence and individualism we value in America.

Sometimes I might have to give a little more than I would like, but that's okay. Because when I least expect it, I find that my day-to-day actions are inspiring the women around me to venture out on their own, too. Like Ibu Sri, who was so inspired by my fearless motorcycle driving that she made her husband teach her how to ride. Or my student, Nora, who realized that if I can move 10,000 miles away from my family to follow my dreams, then maybe she can, too.



*An ETA with fellow teachers on Kartini Day, a national holiday celebrating Indonesia's most prominent women's rights leader. Women's rights may mean something very different to Indonesians and Americans.*

## Bridging the Gender Gap: Being Friends with the Opposite Sex in Indonesia

by Adam E. Bazari (Gresik, East Java 2010 – 2011)

Given the fact that most people in Gresik are conservative Muslims, there is a tangible distance between men and women. Generally, women and female students cannot come over to my house without at least one friend or relative (Islam mandates a chaperone is present in a mixed-gender group), and they cannot stay past 10:00pm. Once, I wanted to take two female neighbors to a movie, and learned that I needed to ask their father for permission. He declined, saying that the movie was showing too late. I also find that I need to be cautious about spending too much time with any person of the opposite sex – people do start to talk about it, jokingly at first, but in a way that can become uncomfortable.

The male-female divide goes both ways. For example, the male friend of a female ETA told her that if she were a man they would probably have sleepovers every weekend and hang out much more often. Thus, building strong relationships with the opposite gender is rather difficult, given that opportunities for socializing are often limited by cultural mores. Even minor, everyday contacts with women, such as shaking hands, can be made more difficult or impossible. While it is probably easier to build relationships with women in more liberal places, it is not impossible anywhere, even in Gresik. In general, it is socially acceptable for me to hang out with women in mixed-gender groups. For example, if a married woman is visiting my house, she will always bring her husband or her son, and when I hang out with my closest female friend, we are always with at least two of her siblings. School is another venue for hanging out, as the social atmosphere in my school is quite informal and people tend to relate to each other as friends rather than as teachers.

As of this writing, I've only lived in Gresik for two months and still have much to learn about gender roles, so I asked my co-teachers for their opinions. Most of them told me things that weren't surprising: women are expected to take care of their family and work at home, while men are supposed to be providers. Women are encouraged not to talk, laugh loudly or express controversial opinions, while boisterous men are fairly common. Men will almost always be served meals before women, and women will almost always clean up after men.

However, not everyone in Gresik agrees with all of these norms, and many women and men believe that both sexes should have equal opportunities. The best advice I could give to a new ETA is to be culturally sensitive, observant, and open to these new situations: you will quickly learn how to act with people of the opposite gender. It's best to adapt to social conventions as well as you can – even if you don't like them, you probably won't succeed in changing them. The people with whom I have discussed these issues in Gresik have been very open to differing points of view and, at least with friends, I wouldn't worry about offending anyone when discussing gender roles.

## Being Queer and Keeping Quiet

by anonymous ETA, 2013 - 2014

I've been at my site for three weeks and I'm at a food court with some students from grade twelve when he asks me: "Is it true gay people can marry in America?" Putting aside how impressed I am with his staggering English abilities, the question is a problematic one for me. I start with the simplest answer: "Yes, in some places." I nervously await his response by taking another bite of my *nasi padang*; he is not eating because he is fasting before Idul Adha. He responds, "I think it's good that in America people can choose." What ensues is an astonishing conversation about the differences between legal versus religious marriages and gender versus sexual orientation. I leave lunch feeling incredibly happy and perhaps even accepted among my students, although they remain unconvinced that "bisexuality" is a real thing, or that there could be any bisexual people in Indonesia.

Two months later a similar question yields a very different conversation. "But Miss, they are bad people." Am I a bad person?, I want to ask. But I don't. Then towards the end of the year, a student writes me a long letter. He describes the problems he is having at school, that no one believes in him, that students and teachers are not friendly to him, and that he is gay. I want to write back and tell him that I hear him, that I am here for him, and that I understand, but I feel forced to exchange empathy for sympathy as I craft a careful response.

It is not uncommon for ETAs to be approached about LGBT\*Q issues—people know and understand that it is a topic more accepted in American culture and sometimes seek out ETAs with curiosity, or as a release for their own struggles. ETAs have found Indonesians of the same sex waiting in their beds or approaching them with sexual interest, have had acquaintances come out to them, and have had students open dialogues about gay rights. These moments remind me how lucky I am to live in a place where being me is not illegal—they also put ETAs in a very tricky place.

For me, it has forced me back into a daily struggle of secrecy and self that I had only overcome a year before my grant started. It took me more than 20 years to figure out who I am, and, more than that, to be happy with who I am—to accept myself and allow others to accept me. In Indonesia, however, I am afraid that being too honestly myself will cause my students and teachers to ostracize me and my community to lose respect for me—or that it might even put me in danger.

I have instead found a balance that I try to be content with. When students solicit my opinions about gay marriage, I respond honestly and try to respectfully explain what I think it means to be a "good person" or to "love" someone. When they write in their homework that "pink is for girls" and "racing motorcycles is a boy sport" I leave questions in the margins, asking, "Why?" When my co-teacher asks me, "What is the English word for boy who acts like girl or girl who acts like boy?" I tell her, "Person"—nothing more, nothing less.

I use these small moments of quiet questions and comments to try to express my beliefs, while suppressing the speech bubbles that threaten to explode from behind my cringing, clenched teeth: "Your husband is not in charge of you!" "I don't have a boyfriend because I don't #@^%\$\*& want one!" and "THIS IS WHO I REALLY AM!!"

As I emerge from my grant period, the most significant wounds I am taking home are not from slipping on rocks or falling off of motorbikes. Instead it is my bloodied tongue, bitten

with unspoken words. And it is this aching pain beneath my skin, the itchiness of a misfit as I try not to burst the seams of the carefully-stitched, culturally-sensitive, ambassadorial cloth containing and caging me.

## ETHNIC and RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES in INDONESIA

Whether or not your ethnic or religious identity has played a major role in your life thus far, many of your interactions in Indonesia will often be based upon these things, especially visible markers of race. While you will all have unique experiences because of this, we hope that the following anecdotes will provide some food for thought.

### Identity in Indonesia: Finding Your Own Narrative

*by Rupita Chakraborty (Samarinda, East Kalimantan 2011 – 2012)*

You will quickly learn that the term *bule* will be a significant part of your year here. *Bule* colloquially means foreigner, although its strict definition is “albino,” i.e. white person. Definitions aside, it is likely *bule* will come to mean something different to each of you. Personally, as a person of Indian origin, this word was never used to describe or address me: I lived my life completely outside its scope. Its absence, however, is just as important as its presence. It means that though I can shop in a grocery store in relative peace, a luxury I both relish and appreciate, I am delegated to second class when I am with Caucasians. In these situations, Indonesians will frequently only briefly acknowledge me, fail to make eye contact with me, and render me invisible. I am another one of their brown-skinned brethren, really nothing special. This hierarchy of race that you will quickly observe (white, brown, black) can initially be shocking and hurtful, but it’s important to remember that Indonesia is not the only country that operates this way and that the people making such observations likely don’t associate the same historical and cultural connotations with them as you do.

Moreover, because so much of your experience will be based on how you are treated, and how you are treated will often be based on your ethnic (and religious) identity, you will each have different “Indonesia narratives.” Do not be startled when your stories are different from your fellow ETAs. There are a multitude of ways to be a good ETA and though ETAs of color will have fewer stories about hoards of people wanting to take a picture with them and bringing them food at all hours of the day, know that there are other ways to connect with your students and communities. Diversity among ETAs is living proof that Americans are not all blond and blue-eyed. They come in hundreds of shapes and colors, and in this way, your students can be exposed to a side of America that too often goes unseen in Indonesia. Take advantage of this in the form of lesson plans, chats over tea, games of futsal. Instead of being handicapped, let it motivate you.

There are certain parts of this experience that you can control - your relationship with your students and fellow teachers, your lesson plans, safety precautions you take at home - and others that you cannot. Understand and accept that many of the parts of the experience that you cannot control will derive from your identity. Don’t allow this to frustrate or anger you - you will simply waste precious time. Accept this for what it is and move on - it is just as much a part of the Fulbright experience as anything else.



*ETAs and their students during the 2013 WORDS Competition in Jakarta*

**Living My Identity Responsibly**  
*by Ken Snyder (Pabelan, Central Java 2011-2012)*

It might be interesting and beneficial to take a moment to address being a white male in Indonesia, where my privilege is particularly noticeable, and in many ways celebrated. What I mean is being extremely conspicuous in all the “right” ways: taller, whiter, more ‘beautiful.’ I’ve heard many ETAs comment on this rock star celebrity treatment, but I have yet to experience any genuine, insightful conversation about this phenomenon. I don’t mean a mass lamentation about the annoyance of signing autographs and taking endless pictures with Indonesians; in fact, that’s the opposite of what I want. What I do think could be constructive is a dialogue about our experiences that can help us begin or continue to navigate the discussion of some important themes: identity and privilege. It’s important that white ETAs constantly strive to remain humble instead of unwittingly relishing the increased attention. It’s important to discuss ways in which this experience can be a springboard to further delve into issues of identity and privilege.

Throughout this year, I’ve questioned what it means to be the only white male living in my small village, to be in the minority for the first time in my life. Yet, being the minority here carries none of the negative connotations of the “other.” In fact, it has augmented my privilege - not only have I experienced zero negative effects from being a minority, but I have received preferential treatment. I’ve had many internal discussions about how comfortable I am, how I try to counteract these forces, and how I’m complacent and accepting of them. I hope that you will, too.

**The Semantics of a Westerner**  
*by Nick Hughes (Kupang, West Timor 2013-2014)*

Across Indonesia, it’s common for Indonesians (particularly young men) to shout “Bule!” from their car or motorcycle when passing a white person. An Indonesian word whose original usage meant “albino” or “white person”, its meaning has evolved. Now, the word generally encompasses all Caucasians as a way to label the otherness of those of European descent. My Indonesian-English dictionary claims that *bueé* is derogatory, but it is rarely intended as an insult. However, I find myself sometimes getting offended when I hear the word.

In Kupang, when someone shouts out “*Bule!*” from a passing Bemo\*, I always laugh it off, knowing that they simply wanted to say hello or point out this white guy who looks so out of place walking down the street alone. But when someone calls me *bule* to my face, especially repeatedly even after I’ve told him or her my name, it irritates me. I think to myself: “I’ve told you my name, please call me it. You’re identifying me by the color of my skin, not by who I am as a person.” I think there is some truth to that. However, could these feelings of irritation also point to the privilege I have as a white man? This privilege that I’ve always excluded myself from but – as these few months in Indonesia have revealed - most definitely exists inside of me.

From this point of view, the offense I feel when someone calls me *bule* doesn’t stem from me not wanting to be labeled by my skin color, but from wanting this person to show me the respect that most Indonesians do, respect that I’ve subconsciously come to expect solely because I am a white man. This part of me inherently responds to the person calling me

*bule* with: “everyone else calls me mister, so should you.” I know how dangerous it is to develop a sense of entitlement like this, and it’s something that I’ve tried to combat, but I have seen it subtly creep into my mindset over the course of the few months I have spent living in Indonesia.

Things happen everyday in Indonesia that point to my privilege as a white person and it’s easy for me to attribute them not to my skin color but to the good person that I tell myself I am. However, labeling things that happen to me in Indonesia, or anywhere in the world, as being the result of my being a good person when they could really be a result of my white and/or male privilege is a dangerous habit.

Unfortunately, it is a habit that I find has been easy to fall into while living here. Indonesian people are so welcoming and treat you so well that it is easy to set yourself apart from the undertones of racist imperialism that resonate in Indonesia. I find myself wondering what people really think of me, particularly my Indonesian co-teachers. Although they are all friendly to my face, do they really see me as this white guy who does much less work than real Indonesian teachers but gets paid way more money, who can afford to travel all around their beautiful country, when the vast majority of Indonesians cannot, and label it as a year of personal growth and development?

I don’t doubt that my time spent in Indonesia has been a period of tremendous personal growth, but I do worry about what kind of growth will manifest itself in me. After receiving mostly everything I want while living in Indonesia, will I go back to the States and subconsciously do the same, rationalizing it by telling myself I deserve preferential treatment because I’m a good person?

I tell myself that at least thinking about these types of things sets me apart from many other Westerners, as if being aware of my privilege on its own is enough. Upon reflection I realize that being aware of this and yet doing nothing to correct the way it influences you to behave is vehemently worse than being oblivious to your own privilege. I know I must constantly remind myself that this is something I want to change in the world, even if only in the small group of friends I can influence when I return home, or the travelers I meet while living in Indonesia.

I can’t change the fact that I am a *bule*. While I’m here, I will always be an outsider. However, I can change how I behave as an outsider, and maybe by doing so influence other Westerners to recognize the privilege they enjoy as just that—privilege.



## I, Too, Sing America (In Honor of Langston)

by Mia R. Keeyes (Kupang, West Timor 2010–2011)

I am the darker [sista].  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
when company comes,  
but I laugh,  
and eat well,  
and grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
when company comes,  
nobody'll dare say to me,  
"eat in the kitchen,"  
then.

Besides,  
they'll see how beautiful I am [they are],  
and be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

--Langston Hughes

Pak on the bemo points his gnarled finger at me and says, "*Papua? Dari Papua?*"  
"*Bukan, Pak,*" I reply, "*Saya dari Amerika.*"

His countenance, which is sun-baked and wrinkled from age and long days outside, contorts, deepening his facial lines. This, I gather, is a look of pure confusion and, somehow, faint disapproval. He silently takes me in; the long, curly locs, deep brown skin, short frame and muscular arms. I watch him watching me. Snapping out of his reverie, almost angrily, he shouts, "*Ndak! Papua! Papua! Kulitmu hitam!*" He points at the caramel complexion of my exposed arms.

"Yes, I am Black, *saya hitam, seperti orang Papua, seperti Anda. Tapi, saya African-American.*" I speak slowly while adjusting the postal envelope in my hand so that I may point to my skin and then to his. I compare my skin color to the Indonesian people of Papua, hoping to discourage his rising volume and voice inflection.

"*Afrikan? Kamu Afrikan?!*"

"*Ya, 'Pak. Saya African-American. African dan American.*"

My duality obviously annoys him. My speaking English is taken as an affront: how dare this fellow Papuan insult me by insisting on speaking English? I try to explain that not all Americans have blond hair and blue eyes, no matter how prevalent this image is in the media. His rising agitation bothers me and he does not seem receptive to my explanation. Our encounter sits heavily on my mind even after I climb out of the bemo and walk toward the post office. I can feel his eyes searing into my back like a little sun, and my neck burning.

At Pos Kupang, I hand the long yellow manila envelope to Ibu behind the counter. Our hands brush briefly and I cannot help but to notice the sharp contrast between my sun-brown and her light pear-colored skin tone, but I push the thought aside to calculate just how much this international mail would cost. While waiting for my money, Ibu doesn't hide her curiosity concerning my package.

"Mia—Keeyes—," she reads my name aloud. "*Washington D.C. Dekat di New York?* You relate Alicia Keys?" Smiling at this familiar inquiry (which I receive no matter where I am), I took a breath, preparing to explain, but Ibu cuts me off mid-sentence: "No, no, you not relate. You too dark. She too light."

She and the young woman next to her behind the counter—the boring beige, colorless counter—shake their heads in agreement, oblivious to my being taken aback. Teaching moment, or feeding anger moment? Should I tell her that, in fact, my mother is damn near Alicia's complexion? Or that so-called Black people in America boast skin of all colors? Or that Alicia's father is closer to my complexion than to his daughter's? I argue internally the pros and cons of teaching or reacting, but they've moved on to the customer behind me. Or, rather, he's already moved me out of the way because I am somewhat frozen with shock. Every brown and black fiber in me wants to shout, "Alicia Keys is a Black woman!"

I need a cool drink to calm my racing mind and heart. Walking to the grocery store, I pass several beautiful women, old and young. They are sweating, like me. I watch one of them daintily pat at her face. As she does, I notice that where she dabbed at her face there is an apparent two tone-ness: her browner skin is exposed underneath a veneer of white foundation. White foundation, I ponder while crossing the street.

"*Selamat siang,*" I greet the sweet sisters who work the front cashiers. Now that I am here, I might as well grab some soap. The long aisle offers about 79 brands of soap. Lavender-honey soap, cool fresh soap, peach colored papaya soaps, bars of soaps with essential oils...

I run my fingers down the aisle; the sky blues and bright pinks, light yellows and soft tans of the soap packages are like a rainbow of cleanliness. Now, which to choose? I like the soft, clean smell of a wintergreen colored bar, so I pick it up to scan the contents: SomethingsomethingmineraloilssomethingWHITENINGblahblah... Whitening? Whoa, not what I'm looking for. I put it back. Yet, to my deepest dismay, almost all of the soaps that I pick up have a skin whitening agent. 'Well, I guess my Black behind is just gonna have to be dirty,' I conclude, before spotting a bar of baby soap at the far end of the aisle, on the bottom shelf. Surely there isn't a soap meant to alter the skins of innocent, lovely babes, so this is the soap for me.

At the counter, the man before me in line stares at me, unabashedly. "Hello." I meet his gaze head on and hope he realizes that I think he is terribly rude to stand so close and stare so openly (projecting my Americanized sense of personal space, of course).

"*Dari mana?*" the ever-first question surfaces.

"*Amerika.*"

Surprisingly, he laughs loudly and colorfully, almost cartoonishly, yet I cannot understand what is so funny. Now he is pointing at me.

"You? From Amerika? Not Afrika?"

"I am from America—but I am African-American—like Michelle Obama—." This reference

resonates, so I continue. "Like Will Smith?"

"Yes, yes, yes, *saya tahu*, I know them!" I keep going.

"Like—like Michael Jackson!" I exclaim. We both pause. He, out of confusion, and me because he looks worried. "Don't worry," I assure him, "Many Americans are confused, too."

Sipping my tea, I am deep in thought by the time I reach my house. Many people in Kupang and in greater Indonesia, like the darker people of all colonized nations, suffer from serious post-colonial race and skin color issues, which stem from centuries of Dutch colonial dominance. So, I should not take personally their aversion to 'other.' Yet, it pains my heart just the same. Where are the images that celebrate darker brothers? How are darker sisters uplifted and fed without the celebration of their beauty? Why do they feel the need to be hidden, banishing the positive recognition of 'Blackness'?

Opa next door, who is sitting in his customary, brown chair on his porch, shakes me from my thoughts. His clay brown skin and deep facial recesses remind me of earth, strong, grounded, abundant earth. He greets me and proceeds to introduce me to his friend, a dark elder who looks similar to Opa. I gather that they are family, in some manner. He does not speak, initially, but then speaks softly and thoughtfully, "Amerikan, ya? You beautiful. Like my Alor\* people beautiful."

I smile at his affirmation, his acceptance of me as a part of his reality and world, a beautiful part of this world, a beautiful part of what he knows to be beautiful, color and all. As I move to enter my house, he then says, "*Selamat pulang baru*," which means, "Welcome back home." And I feel that.

\* *Alor is an island in East Nusa Tenggara, where most residents are darker-skinned.*

## When to Speak

by Victor Chiapaikao (Kupang, West Timor 2010 – 2011)

Dear Indonesia,

Your persistent prodding has worked. I am physically and mentally exhausted. This, dear friend, is my tipping point.

I'm talking about convincing you all that I am American, of course. You obviously are not thrilled that I consider myself American, and the thought of being Asian-American doesn't quite register as being possible. "*Orang Cina!*" you insist (Chinese!). You won't have it any other way until I give in and say, "*Saya orang Cina.*" "Jackie Chan!" you add with a howl, as if repetition makes you more persuasive. You practice karate kicks on me and even have the audacity to throw in a couple slaps, hoping that I will counter with a block and flip you sideways. I control the urge. Fortunately, I am not as shocked as my bule friends witnessing the exchange. I have been desensitized from youth and your cultural insensitivity no longer upsets me.

I am not Chinese, Japanese or Korean. I understand that I look East Asian and that Hollywood portrays us as one big blob propagating from China. But my parents are Thai, and the reality that my parents emigrated from Thailand to the United States of America, became naturalized under the US Immigration Act of 1965, and that I was born in Elmhurst Hospital in Queens, makes me a Thai-American.

"But Americans have blonde hair and blue eyes," you retort in scientific modality, as you obstinately draw circles with your index finger to highlight my face. For a brief moment, I consider reaching for my UNITED STATES Passport, my NEW JERSEY Driver's License, and the debit card from the Bank of AMERICA in my backpack, but I know that the effort will not be worth the cost. You obviously are not buckling and you certainly are not looking to continue a discussion. Defeated, I say, "*Ok, saya orang Cina, Pak. Sampai nanti, ya.*" (Okay, I'm Chinese, sir. I'll see you later.)

Oftentimes, it's easy to succumb to these notions that have been so innately ingrained, but confirming false notions is not what I was sent to Indonesia to do. And it certainly is not what 22 years of forging a Thai-American identity gives me the convenience of doing. Every incredulous Indonesian deserves my response: "I am of Thai ethnicity, but my parents immigrated to America when they were young. I was born in America, and America is my home" You deserve to know that the United States of America has been and continues to be built by a myriad of peoples: not only Caucasians, but African Americans, Latinos, Jewish Americans, Asian Americans and others. This may not be the answer you'd hoped to hear, but it is a truth that I live by proudly. So the next time you ask, be ready for my response – well, unless of course you are deciding whether to charge me the bule price, in which case I am whatever your lowest rate says I am.

## Being Jewish in Indonesia

by anonymous ETA, 2010 – 2011

I am in a car with my counterpart, bracing one hand against the window to keep from tumbling as we swing around sharp curves and dodge oncoming lorries. Like the road, our conversation has been meandering for the last two hours. What began with a conversation about Indonesian desserts has turned into a discussion about civil rights in America. I had just finished explaining the Jim Crow laws to her.

"Really in the 1960s? I cannot believe America had that so recently!"

"Isn't it crazy?" I say, "And think about the Holocaust—that was only in 1940."

"The what?"

"The Holocaust." I look at her face for recognition. "You know – against the Jews."

"Oh!" she starts, and gives the look of uncomfortable surprise that is always accompanied with my utterance of this word. She does not know that I am Jewish. Like everyone else in my community, she thinks I am a Christian. Indeed, they have good reason to believe this: every time I am asked about my religion, my response has been "Christian." I have even begun to go to church, occasionally, with Indonesian friends.

"The Holo-cause? What is?"

"You know," I probe, "when the Nazis killed the Jews in Europe?"

She raises her eyebrows even higher, but now with doubt. "I don't think so!" she says, then laughs as if I am trying to trick her. It's this moment when my heart sinks, when I see that this woman whom I have grown to love, whom I call "sister" and to whom I feel that I can say almost anything, has never heard about the Holocaust. She cannot even believe that it could be true.

I try to think of where to begin, of what words I can use to explain the Holocaust and make it seem real to her. I try, but I am struck silent by all the thoughts I cannot tell her. I cannot say, "This happened to me, Ibu, to my family. To people I love and who are real, whose laps I have sat on." I want to tell her about my great uncle's concentration camp tattoos, about how skinny my uncle had been during the war. I want to explain that the Holocaust is the reason my family is in America, but I cannot. She cannot know that I am Jewish. It is, perhaps, the only risk that I am not willing to take. I go running in shorts, I talk about racy movies in class, and I explain that it is not uncommon to drink alcohol in America. But not this. I do not feel that I can safely be Jewish, here.

My community is not exclusively Muslim, nor is it extremely conservative. Nevertheless, I have seen and heard anti-Semitic references frequently since coming to Indonesia: in people's comments about the arrogant and hard-hearted nature of Jews, in swastika graffiti and clothing, in looks of disgust when I say the word "*Yahudi*" (Jew).

No, I cannot be Jewish. For now, even with a woman I love, I still feel that I must hide myself, my family, and the crimes that we suffered. I find myself fighting tears and having to look out the window to gather my composure. I focus on the jungle mountains declining slowly toward the ocean, the occasional tree that sticks out amongst the rest.

I redraw my breath and turn back to her in the car. "Okay," I say, and give her a smile, "Are you ready for another history lesson?"

She smiles and nods her head and I begin.



*A Church and a Mosque side by side in Manado, North Sulawesi.*

## Living as an Outsider in a Religiously Divided Community

by Rick Ferrera (*Saparua, Central Maluku* 2010 – 2011)

"Amerika."

The angkot driver considers the revelation of my nationality with approval. Then his friend turns to me from the front passenger seat and says, in an earnestly quiet voice, that Americans are good people – but Muslims aren't, and I need to be careful around them so they don't kill me. This is clearly a Christian angkot, which I already knew from the large Jesus sticker on the windshield. I'm in an area that experienced devastating violence between Christians and Muslims from 1999 to about 2005. Unlike many parts of the country, Maluku's population is split roughly evenly between the two groups. Fighting has stopped, but whispered allegations have not. In my experience, the worst culprits seem to be young Christian men, who commonly warn me about Muslims upon learning I'm American.

I'm up too early in the morning to catch a boat back to my placement on a small neighboring island, but this guy's ignorance lights my temper; the remains of my slumber are quickly shaken off. A flood of images supports my anger – the friendly Muslim communities in my hometown of Minneapolis, the Muslim friends I care about, the obvious fact that none of them have ever tried to kill me – but I don't need to pile up proof that what he said is wrong. I already know that. The relevant question is what I can do about it. I can't change the history of violence and distrust between Christians and Muslims in this province, but can I respectfully hold my ground in this situation and make it clear that I won't passively listen?

How do I challenge his glaring prejudices?

"Last night I had dinner in Diponegoro," I tell him, referencing a mostly-Muslim neighborhood of the city. "My friends and I ate ayam lalapan and no one tried to kill me."

I thought it was a good way to handle the situation, but he just looked at me with a dismissive expression as if I'd spoken total gibberish before turning around to continue smoking and singing along to the stereo. I was disappointed. Once again, it had been made clear that the person with whom I was conversing had no interest in a dialogue about prejudice and tolerance. He knew what he knew, I was crazy; that was that.

You win some, you lose some. The night before, dialogue was more successful –even though the words kristen and islam were never spoken. I'd spent the evening in Diponegoro doing nothing but playing with kids in front of my friend's house. They know I can count in Indonesian, and I know they laugh hysterically when I intentionally count out of order. We had a good time together, and none of us will soon forget it. Sometimes you feel like an effective cultural ambassador, and sometimes you don't – but if you weren't there at all, you'd never be effective.

*Revision Contributor:*

*Amirah Nelson (Belitung 2012-2013 and Manado, North Sulawesi 2013-2014)*



*Indonesia's motto: Unity in Diversity.*



# **ADAPTING to a NEW CULTURE: OBSERVATIONS and ADVICE**

**Cultural observations, Regional differences,  
Social life, Indonesian food,  
Dietary restrictions, and Allergies**

## ADAPTING to a NEW CULTURE: OBSERVATIONS and ADVICE

As ETAs prepare to move to Indonesia, it can be difficult to find clear information about cultural customs, expectations, dress, food etc. We're filled with questions like, "What kind of clothes should I pack?" and "What are the cultural taboos that I should avoid at all costs?" Finding a single answer to these kinds of questions is impossible in a country as diverse as Indonesia. The majority of cultural Dos and Don'ts you may read online come from classical Javanese culture because the majority (59%) of Indonesia's population lives on the island of Java.

### However, it's important to take into account the following:

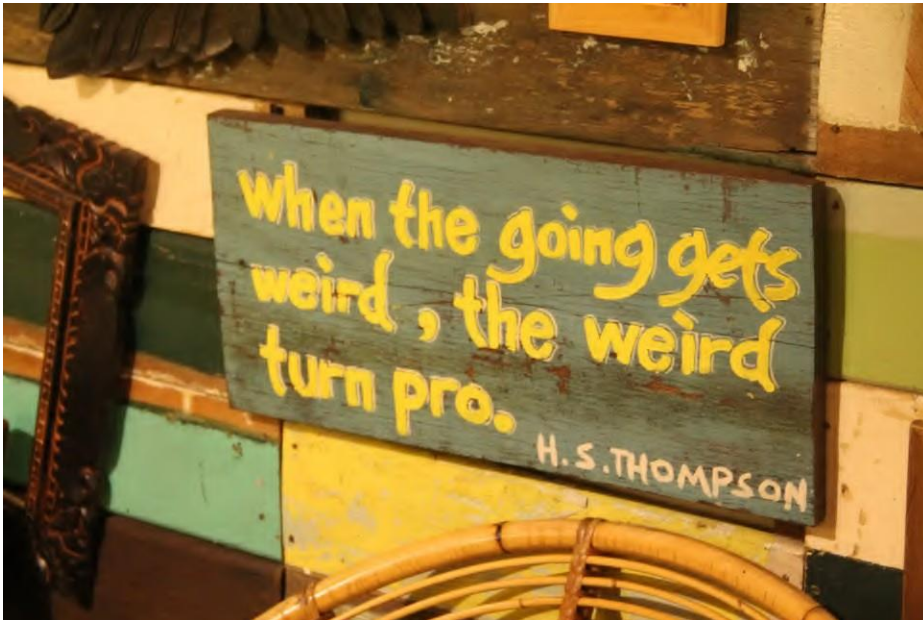
- Some of these cultural norms exist outside of Java as well (as many Javanese have migrated).
- In regions with a history of opposition to the Jakartan central government (e.g. Aceh, Ambon) or with different demographics from Java (e.g. majority Christian N. Sulawesi, West Timor), there may be resistance or ambivalence to cultural mores perceived as 'Javanese.' Using Javanese terms, like addressing a man as "mas" can be considered rude.
- "Javanese culture" itself is an umbrella term for a variety of practices and beliefs, and all of these coexist alongside different and often contradictory cultural norms.
- All of these are legitimate "Indonesian" norms, and all of them can coexist within a single neighborhood, city, or island anywhere in the country.

There are three sub-sections in this chapter –"Cultural Observations," "Indonesian Social Life," and "Indonesian Food," since these tend to be the areas where cultural differences are the most apparent. Culture is not just visible artifacts or behavior but rather underlying, fundamental assumptions that people have about how things work, so this guidebook and all your online research will never fully prepare you for these aspects of living in Indonesia. The only way to learn is to live it, and to ask lots of questions along the way. Be ready for countless mistakes and faux pas.

### Cultural Observations

While cultural savvy isn't just about learning about the visible trappings of culture (dance, food, language, etiquette), some general understanding of what is considered good or polite can begin to tell you a lot about the underlying behaviors, values and beliefs of people in Indonesia. Below are some selected keywords and observations for you to consider:

- **Sombong and Cuek (arrogant/stuck-up and ignorant/indifferent of others)** – It can be difficult to pin down exactly what behaviors come off as *sombong* or *cuek*, but unfriendliness, lack of respect for hierarchy and over-confidence are some that Indonesians have mentioned Westerners have been guilty of. For example, because smiling and small talk are highly valued and appreciated across Indonesia, an ETA who is not used to always smiling or saying hello to others can be perceived as unfriendly because of conceit and indifference, rather than because of cultural differences.
- **Oleh-Oleh (small souvenirs given after returning from a trip)** - Personal relationships are king in Indonesia, and the practice of giving *oleh-oleh* is one way that Indonesians maintain relationships by showing that they are thinking of others. Usually these souvenirs are trinkets or traditional cakes/crackers the place you visited, and are given to friends, coworkers, neighbors and anyone who is aware that you were away.



*All you really need to know as a Fulbright ETA:  
Be Present, Be Open, Be You.*

In many places, giving *oleh-oleh* is an expectation and your fellow teachers/friends may be very offended if you don't remember them with a gift.

- **Malu (shy/shame)** – *Malu* can mean shy, embarrassed or ashamed. These all have negative connotations in American culture, but in Indonesia it can be an ambivalent feeling which one both rejects and yet aspires to. In one sense, *malu* is something one does not want to feel – for example, many Indonesians express that they feel *malu* because they are not fluent in English. On the flip side, a *malu* person is the opposite of a *sombong* one. Someone who shows shame or embarrassment is also showing humbleness and modesty, and in this sense it is an esteemed quality that can enable one to negotiate complex social situations and interactions. Some of your students may be excessively *malu* in class, which can be a challenge.
- **Gotong Royong (mutual assistance)** – originally a Javanese village system of group cooperation or the joint bearing of burdens to achieve a shared goal, the concept of *gotong royong* has since been embraced by post-colonial politicians and elevated to a central value of Indonesian life. While not as strong in urban areas, the *gotong royong* spirit illustrates and reaffirms the value placed on community and togetherness in Indonesia. Some examples are communities pooling money for road or mosque/church repairs and coming together to cook for events like weddings or funerals.
- **Kulonuwun (to call out and announce one's arrival)** – this phrase can be used to announce one's arrival before entering a Javanese household, but can generally mean asking for an OK before proceeding. Across Indonesia, especially on Java, hierarchy and respect for elders is much stronger than in the United States. It can also be heavily ritualized, like in the practice of saying *kulo nuwun*, *permisi* or *assalamualaikum* (if appropriate) before entering a room or home. For many, failure to give notice or seek permission from the appropriate party before acting is considered impolite or arrogant.
- **'Orang Yang Tidak Dikenal' (stranger)** – sort of like the old saying goes, in Indonesian a stranger is actually “a person who hasn't been met” (although the word *pendatang* is also used). Especially in rural areas of Indonesia, the different concept of who is and who isn't a stranger can prove jarring and sometimes awkward for many ETAs. For example, someone who we have never met and have no cause for interacting with may not be considered by a stranger by others because he or she has some connection to us that isn't clear. Perhaps, the 'stranger' is a cousin of one of our students, the neighbor of a teacher, or your neighborhood security guard's sister-in-law's hairdresser. As a result, striking a balance between being open and friendly to 'people who haven't been met' while staying healthy and safe will be a big challenge for many ETAs.



A student performing a formal “Welcome Dance” in Pangkal Pinang, Bangka.

### Madiun to Medan: Moving between regional cultures

Kelsey Figone (Madiun, East Java 2012-2013; Medan, North Sumatra 2013-2014)

To provide some background to my observations: Madiun, my first site, is a small town in East Java, at least 2 hours from any major city. There is KFC but no Starbucks, a couple department stores termed “malls” but no glam, cosmopolitan malls. I could find too-expensive cheese at the grocery store if I wanted it, but most groceries came from small markets near my house. The majority of people are Javanese, and the only other native English speakers I knew of were Peace Corps volunteers living 30 minutes away. Medan, in contrast, is the third most populous city in Indonesia, comprised of at least 8 distinct ethnic groups, and Westerners are everywhere. There are countless American fast-food chains whose employees speak impressive English, in addition to legitimate Italian, Japanese, Cuban, and Indian food. There are big malls, crazy traffic, and constant noise. While I believe the following differences are related to the differing cultures of each site, it is entirely possible that they are also a result of the contrast between small town and big city, or other factors.

With those caveats, my experiences with the cultures of Java and Sumatra have been different in the following ways:

	Madiun (East Java)	Medan (North Sumatra)
<b>Physical Expressions</b>	<p>--It is polite to bow down/hunch over when passing someone who is above you in the hierarchy (typically anyone older than you).</p> <p>--It is considered more beautiful to demurely smile with your mouth closed, and not make direct eye-contact with anyone of authority.</p> <p>--It is impolite to eat during a meeting (where food is not provided) or on-the-go.</p> <p>--When arriving at school, it is appropriate to salam every teacher in the teachers' room before I sit at my seat. After each salam, I touch my hand to my heart. Some devout men refuse to shake my whole hand, instead touching the very tips of my fingertips with their fingertips.</p> <p>--It is rude to offer/take something with your left hand. It is only acceptable if I say "I'm sorry" and use my left hand while my right hand is occupied or burdened.</p> <p>--Smiling is highly valued and appreciated.</p> <p>--When served tea or snacks, it is not appropriate to drink or eat until the most respected person does first (for example, with a headmaster).</p>	<p>--Teachers laughed at my habit of hunching over, telling me it was excessively formal and unnecessary.</p> <p>--When salam-ing, I only touch my hand to my heart with Muslims. Christians, Chinese-Indonesians, and many others in Medan perceive this gesture as specifically Islamic.</p> <p>--Other physical expressions have essentially been the same.</p>
<b>Language</b>	<p>--I mostly use saya and Anda (formal terms for I/you), unless I am talking to someone who I am sure is younger or 'inferior' to me.</p> <p>--I am offered something multiple times (especially food), even if I have turned it down. My refusal is not taken seriously until the third or fourth time because it is considered more polite to initially refuse and then give in later.</p>	<p>--I mostly use aku and Kamu (informal terms for I/you), even with older teachers or friends. This is because many co-teachers have said that when I use saya or Anda it expresses distance between us or even arrogance, meaning that I do not consider them close friends. With strangers and authority figures, I still use saya and Anda.</p> <p>--I am still offered something multiple times, but polite refusal is more readily accepted.</p>

	Madiun (East Java)	Medan (North Sumatra)
<b>Stereotypes</b>	<p>--Halus = smooth/soft</p> <p>--Javanese culture is stereotyped as being very indirect, demure, patient, and non-confrontational. It took months for close friends to tell me about my regular cultural faux pas because they didn't want to embarrass me - not telling me was how they showed respect. Anger or frustration was almost never expressed, and dissatisfaction or desire for change was expressed in ways that Americans would term "behind someone's back", although this wasn't usually done maliciously but rather out of respect. Vocalizing or addressing problems was neither effective nor straightforward.</p>	<p>--Keras/Kasar = hard/ rough</p> <p>--Medan people are stereotyped as "durians:" abrasive and unrefined on the outside, but soft and well-intentioned on the inside. While I still believe that Medanese culture is more indirect than my American culture, it is much more acceptable to express negative emotions. People are generally louder and more expressive than in Madiun, although outright anger is still rare. There is a greater focus on outcomes and a lesser concern for embarrassing people.</p>
<b>Visual Representations of Culture</b>	<p>--Wayang, Javanese dance, traditional songs, wedding traditions, batik and other visual representations of culture are very important. They are a significant source of pride and common heritage.</p>	<p>--As a "multicultural" city, visual representations of culture are not as widely shared as on Java. Thus, representations of culture are not as big a rallying point for unity and pride as in Madiun.</p>

Moving from Madiun to Medan required a second cultural adaptation. Even though they are part of the same country and same dominant culture, there are differences that influence the pace of life, the topics discussed among people, and the mannerisms in each place. I am glad I got an inside look at Javanese culture, and the opportunity to see other equally important cultures of Indonesia.



## Indonesian Social Life

It's going to take some time for your social life to evolve: be patient but outgoing. Here are a few observations that may help you ease into your new Indonesian social life:

- Your social life will be highly dependent on the environment you live in, for example, city vs. village.
- Housing and transportation will also highly influence your social life. Living in a solitary house in the middle of a village is very different from living downtown in a booming city. English speakers are harder to find in small towns or villages, and the lack of structured social activities (bars, bowling alleys, etc.) can make it harder to meet other young people. Indonesians are very friendly, but they are often shy and intimidated by foreigners; you may have to make the first move.
- Forget about drinking and the club scene. Outside very large cities, Indonesian social life is shaped by family gatherings and other formal events – birthday parties, weddings, funerals and religious celebrations.
- Don't feel disappointed about staying in on Friday and Saturday night; enjoy the opportunity to do things you have no time to do at home.
- A great portion of your social life depends on you. Even if you are tired of going to weddings, funerals or religious ceremonies, these are important gatherings to your fellow community members and you should try to attend.
- Parties vary by region and religion, but usually require you to eat tons of food and sometimes to sing and dance. Be prepared, Indonesians like to make guests sing and dance at all sorts of events. Karaoke is a major part of social life.
- Get ready for the photo shoot of your life. *Foto-foto* is huge social pastime.
- In many regions, it is uncommon to make introductions when strangers walk into a room. You won't realize how much Americans rely on this convention until you feel its absence. If you need to be proactive and introduce yourself, feel free to do that.
- In Nusa Tenggara Timur, beware of Sopi, liquor with an alcohol content ranging from 40-60%. It's not always clean/safe. In other places, it's called Arak.

## Small Town Life

*by Luca Valle (Majene, Sulawesi 2010 – 2011)*

After spending a month in Jakarta and Bandung, you know the fun that can be had in big Indonesian cities. Maybe you feel a little hesitant to leave that behind, but life in a small, rural Indonesian village is a wonderful thing! Sure, there aren't real grocery stores and internet cafes tend to be few and way overpriced, but if you're able to let go of the things you're used to at home I think you'll find that life in a small town can be very rewarding. I have found that small towns help facilitate rapid and deep cultural assimilation. It was much easier to become part of the community when I would come across students and teachers at the market or on the street. There are few degrees of separation between anyone in a village, so as soon as you're in with somebody, you're in with everybody. Small towns still haven't seen much *bule* action, so from becak drivers to motorcycle repairmen, everyone greets me with an earnest sense of curiosity and a smile, which is always a comforting way to start the day.

You will also spend far less in places without invasive western chain restaurants, pricey taxis and expansive malls. You know life is good when getting from one end of town to the other costs a flat rate of 20 cents. Living on less than five dollars a day is a very realistic endeavor in the more rural towns of Indonesia. But the best news is that it is not only you who will

benefit immensely from the small town experience, your community will, too. More people will be able to benefit from your presence, and you will also have much easier access to the people in power (whether it is the mayor, administrators at the education headquarters, or the chief village fisherman). This gives you more power to effect meaningful changes. Whether that means campaigning for an update in the curriculum at your school or rallying for funding for competition travel expenses for the English debate club, you will find yourself more involved in things that can really make a positive difference for your community.

Contrary to what Journey says, your small town experience will not leave you feeling like you're "living in a lonely world." If anything, you will find the exact opposite to be true.



*In Indonesia, a wedding might consist of an Islamic ceremony in a mosque, followed by more traditional ceremonies and, of course, a party! The bride and groom can easily go through two or three outfits on their wedding day. The traditional styles pictured here are Sundanese.*

## My Indonesian Social Life

by Karen Evans (Samarinda, East Kalimantan 2010 – 2011)

If you are a party animal, you're in for a change of pace. Outside major cities, Indonesians are usually fairly conservative. While Indonesia is, on average, not as strict as other majority Muslim nations, people of all religions take religion very seriously – social activities tend to be more innocent than in the United States. Many cities are dry or it's nearly impossible to get alcohol outside of hotels/clubs. Cities with a population of half a million or more usually have nightclubs, but they are often borderline brothels. Fortunately, in the early evening much of Indonesia does have lively restaurants and cafes where people go for free Wi-Fi and to nongkrong (hang out) with friends.

It is very important to prepare yourself for social life in Indonesia because it will not resemble a typical American's social life at all. It is likely that your best friends will be neighbors or students – they might be 10 years younger or older than you. Do not feel weird about this. Some of my best Saturday nights are spent with neighbors who are 18, 14, and 8. In fact, the eight year old and fourteen year old are tied for my favorite person in Indonesia. Do not be surprised if your idea of a good time changes from clubbing to the more adventuresome circumcision party. That's right; in Indonesia, families typically have huge parties for a son's circumcision when he is eight or nine. Other major parties or weekend social activities include weddings, baby dedications, religious festivals, movies and karaoke. There is a 50 percent chance that someone will make you go karaoke in your first month. Teachers and students will also probably try to make you dance or sing during different school holidays, so practice while you can! These events are great for learning about the culture and also can be genuinely fun.

However, be prepared that people may treat you like a celebrity, which can be quite annoying. When meeting you for the first time, people may want to take pictures and ask you a thousand questions. This can get extremely irritating after a while, but grin and bear it. Remember that for many people, you are the first American person they have ever met, and you do not want to leave a bad impression. During orientation, a former ETA told us, "Never turn down an invitation because eventually they will come less often." Great advice! While Indonesian social life is typically much calmer than in the United States, you can still have a great time with students, co-teachers and neighbors. Enjoy this chance to really get to know people around you, both Indonesians and your fellow ETAs. You will probably find some unexpected best friends.



*Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you....and into the river you go!*

## Hello Miss!: Life at a Boarding School

by Anna Cabe (Palembang, South Sumatra 2013-2014)

The sounds of pounding feet filtered through my door.

I blinked. Renovations had finally been completed at my boarding school, SMA Plus Negeri 17 Palembang. Because of that, I had just moved from my warm-hearted host family's house to a brand-new dorm on campus, and was unsure of what to expect.

Hesitantly, I popped my head out the door to the warm sunshine outside. The dorms were constructed with rooms opening onto covered-walkways. Outside, several girls were carrying a protesting, fidgeting friend by her arms and legs.

"What's going on?" I asked. The students stopped and regarded me. I, their American ETA, was a novelty; heretofore, they had seen me mostly in the classroom. Now, I was living among them.

"It's our friend's birthday. We're going to throw her in the pond. Want to join?" said a student. I only paused a second before grabbing my camera and saying, "Of course."

This is not a typical living situation for a Fulbright ETA in Indonesia, and I feel fortunate to experience it. Financially, it's fantastic, because my school gives me three meals a day (plus frequent snacks) and absorbs the cost of my utilities, save my Internet, which I procure



through a combination of school Wi-Fi during the day and, after hours, a modem, cursing, and raiding every café hotspot in Palembang.

Socially there are pros and cons to living on campus. Keep in mind, my school is a highly-regarded public school in the middle of the sizable metropolis of Palembang. If you are at a more rural campus, my experiences may not exactly match yours.

By far the most valuable part of my experience is the access I get to students' private, after-school, lives. All tenth-graders board at my school and consequently have rigorously scheduled lives. They wake at 4:00 AM for prayers and roll-call. They have class from 6:45 AM to 4:00 PM. They have approximately an hour or two of free time to leave for nearby shops and restaurants (the only time they usually can leave campus during the week) before prayers start around 5:30 pm. They might have meetings afterward. Then dinner, homework time in the masjid, and bedtime with their laptops locked up right before they go to their crowded, shared rooms.

Because of this, before I moved to campus I rarely got to see my students outside class. Now, I can see and participate in the small amounts of free time they snatch for themselves. We sing Taylor Swift songs on the dorm advisers' bullhorn and shoot videos of us bopping around to "Call Me Maybe." I usually hang out with them in the evenings, where I have taught them to play games like Bananagrams, "Down by the River Hanky-Panky" and "Tic Tac Toe." Late into the evening, we have talked about dating, high school, traveling, religion, celebrities and other topics. I have participated in their meetings, from voting on class t-shirt designs to a farewell party for a soon-to-be-married dorm adviser. These are all experiences I know I'm lucky to have been part of.

As an ETA, I am not subject to rules my students live under. Once class is over, I can head to the mall, the movies, karaoke or a café. However, compared to my previous living situation, my curfew is earlier and more strict. I return home by 9:00 PM at the latest and, if I want to be out later, I usually obtain permission from the vice-principal of the school. I am definitely privileged to live in an urban area with plenty to do off-campus, but since I have more than 300 pairs of eyes on me, I usually find myself being quite cautious about what I say, wear, and do, a definite con of living at school. Because I have so many eyes watching me, I am conscious of being more careful than if I lived on my own or even with my host family. Not to mention, living on campus definitely blurs the lines between "work" and "free time." Even during weekends or exam periods, I usually feel obliged to stick around at least for a little while and check in with teachers and staff, which can add stress when I find myself being roped into last-minute tasks.

Still, when I think of my time here, I'll remember hearing rustling from behind my door on an otherwise boring and lonely Valentine's Day evening, only to open it and find students carrying a beautiful red cake, a card and popping cameras.

"We love you, Miss!" they exclaimed.

For all the cons, I think the pros far outweigh them.

## Indonesian Food

An Indonesian meal usually includes *nasi*, *lauk* (side dishes, such as chicken, egg, or tofu) and *sayur* (vegetables). If you don't like rice, start learning to – it is the main part of every meal, and foregoing it may also be interpreted as arrogance. Meals are packed with the trappings of the culture to which they belong, so pay attention to the subtleties of who eats what and when, and to the not-so-subtleties of sambal and heaps of sugar. Everyone adapts to new cuisine in their own way, but here are some points of entry for your transition.

### Eating – and How to Avoid Eating – in Indonesia

by Hannah Vann, Medan, North Sumatra 2010–2011

Indonesian culture is tough to make generalizations about, but one constant is a tendency to offer copious amounts of food to guests. You might find yourself faced with something you don't want to eat: it can be something really nasty, overwhelmingly sweet, or just interminable amounts of food piled onto your plate, thrust onto your desk at school or brought to your home. I've gone through every excuse in the book to avoid eating, and the following three are failsafe:

- *Saya kenyang*. "I'm full." You might have to say it five times, but it works.
- *Saya diet*. Meaning "I'm on a diet." This only works if you are a woman. Sorry guys – you're on your own!
- *Tidak bisa makan yang pedas*. "I can't eat spicy food." If they don't believe you, follow this sentence with a diarrhea sound and hand motions. They'll laugh at you, but they'll leave you alone.



Meals are communal occasions and every meal shared with teachers, students, and friends is a chance to try new foods. Sometimes, you might not want to ask what it is until after you've tried it-- at this lunch (photo on left) we ate fried cow intestine!

## Dietary Restrictions

As an American coming to Indonesia, you'll be giving up a lot of the comfort and choice that characterizes your diet at home. That can be particularly challenging for those with dietary restrictions, but past ETAs have found ways to make sure their diets meet their needs.

### Vegetarianism

by Mary Barnes (Makassar, South Sulawesi 2010 – 2011)

It's usually not problematic to find vegetarian foods in most areas of Indonesia. Tempe, tofu, peanuts, and eggs are all popular. Also, most cooks are happy to accommodate special orders. Just memorize the phrases:

*Saya tidak makan daging* (I don't eat meat).

*Saya mau pesan \_\_\_\_\_ tanpa daging/ayam/sapi/kambing/udang/ikan.*  
(I want to order \_\_\_\_\_ without meat/chicken/beef/goat/shrimp/fish).

You often have to specify what counts as meat, as it's usually assumed to mean beef and pork only. And don't expect to find fresh veggies outside of the market!

## Allergies

Southeast Asia can be a very dangerous place for people with food allergies and dietary limitations. Often, emergency services aren't readily available and there is limited access to sophisticated medical care outside of Jakarta. If dietary restrictions are an issue for you, then you'll already be familiar with the ritual of reading the *komposisi* (or ingredients) label of each food item you buy. It is also advisable that you arrive knowing how to read, write and pronounce any foods you may be allergic to. Helpful phrases to know might include:

*Saya alergi \_\_\_\_\_*. I am allergic to \_\_\_\_\_.

*Saya tidak boleh makan \_\_\_\_\_*. I cannot eat \_\_\_\_\_.

*Pakai \_\_\_\_\_?* Does this contain \_\_\_\_\_?

The burden is ultimately on you to be extremely careful and to trust only food that you've already tried. It's also vital tell your counterpart, your headmaster, your friends and anybody else in the community with whom you regularly eat about your allergy. The more people who are aware of your allergy, the lower the probability you will accidentally ingest your allergen. Armed with some emergency medications and these suggestions, you should be well equipped to have a successful, healthy grant period!

### Advice for Individuals with Allergies:

- Scan the list of ingredients on everything you buy. Peanuts, soy, and fish sauce are common ingredients in Indonesian foods.
- Learn how to say anything you can't eat before departure and learn the key phrases outlined above.
- Take everything that Indonesians say about food ingredients with a grain of salt. Many Indonesians have no experience dealing with allergies or dietary restrictions outside of a religious context. Approach foods that have been okayed by Indonesians with caution, unless you know and trust the person.
- Bring a healthy supply of allergy-related medication with you.
- Ask AMINEF for common foods that contain the ingredient you can't eat.

## Preparing for Indonesia's Food:

- Rarely do houses have ovens or microwaves. Before leaving home, learn some recipes for basic dishes that can be prepared with a sink and a gas stove.
- It may be difficult to achieve a balanced diet for the first couple months. You can bring dietary supplements from home, or buy them in Indonesia (although they are typically expensive). Suggestions include a daily multi-vitamin, extra calcium supplements, probiotics, EmergenC and/or fiber supplements.
- Bring snacks and comfort foods that remind you of home during the transition period. Granola bars, Fruit by the Foot, instant mashed potatoes, oatmeal, and mac and cheese are all great options for a lonely night or when you're feeling ill.
- MSG is extremely popular in Indonesia, and you will likely be consuming it every time you eat at a *warung* or street vendor. For many ETAs this is not ideal, but MSG is nearly impossible to avoid if you want to eat traditional foods. Be careful when shopping for salt at the supermarket: MSG looks the same and is packaged similarly. There are also salts with MSG added so read labels carefully.

Revision Contributor:

Amirah Nelson (Belitung 2012-2013 and Manado, North Sulawesi 2013-2014)



*If you're really lucky, you might find a magical freezer of Non-Halal food items at your largest local grocery store... otherwise, you can probably say goodbye to bacon for nine months.  
(Right) The infamous Durian fruit is an experience in itself.*



**LIFE in INDONESIA and  
LIFE AFTER INDONESIA**  
Practical Advice, Travel in Indonesia, Jobs,  
Internships and Fellowships, and Reverse  
Culture Shock

## LIFE in INDONESIA

### Practical Advice

This advice was compiled from ETAs during the 2013 – 2014 grant period and in no way represents official ideas or opinions from Fulbright or AMINEF. It's here to let you know that if you're having trouble right now, you're not alone. We had trouble, too. With love from us to you, please take this or leave it as you see fit.

- **Master Transportation.** Find transportation that you understand.
- **Orient Yourself.** Find a map of your city and internalize the main streets. Smaller cities and towns may not have maps available so you may need to go exploring and figure it out on your own. Knowing the lay of the land will make you feel much more in control. In addition, it will help keep you from getting trapped into only knowing one small (albeit convenient) area.
- **Get Settled.** If there is something early on that is bothering you (e.g. a semi-broken fridge, uncomfortable sheets) fix it! There are more than enough major irritants here to keep you busy – nip the little ones quick. This might mean spending a little money, but you will be glad you did.
- **Find Friends.** Try to find people your own age to hang out with at your site. It might not be easy at first, but look into university clubs, interest groups, and pick-up sports around town. They'll love having you, and you'll have an independent group of people to spend time with, which can be a nice thing if you need a moment of distance from your students and co-teachers.
- **Get Support.** Maintain relationships with other ETAs. This may take some effort, but consciously make that effort – particularly if you're someone who can be alone easily. It's much easier to have support when you need it than it is to make a supportive friend after you're already struggling. And you will need support. You're surrounded by remarkable people, and there's a lot more to them than your first impressions.
- **Allow yourself to vent.** Venting and allowing other ETAs to vent to you can be wonderfully cathartic. Of course, constant negativity is harmful, but many ETAs feel that they can't complain or feel like a failure if things aren't going perfectly well. It is important to be mindful and be grateful for the positive aspects of your experience, but at the same time, feeling frustrated, annoyed, or angry with difficult experiences is completely valid. Continuously brushing those feelings under the rug is dangerous for your mental health. Be careful about sharing these feelings with Indonesians, however—some conversations are better had between ETAs who can likely empathize with you.
- **Be You.** Be courteous, but be willing to be unique.
- **Keep Studying Bahasa Indonesia.** Look for language classes at your site, and be diligent about practicing with Indonesian friends. Try to learn a bit of your local language too, if it's spoken widely. Seriously, progress requires effort. If you're limited



*You may feel far from home sometimes, but you'll find ways to make it work.*

to speaking English, you will be missing out on remarkable demonstrations of warmth and welcoming. Plus, speaking Indonesian makes confusing situations infinitely more manageable. Upon reflection at the end of the year, a majority of ETAs wish they'd kept at studying the language more diligently. You have the chance to do that.

- **Re-examine.** Re-read the earlier sections of the guidebook. No, really. There may have been a few gems in there that you've forgotten since the summer, or that you didn't have the framework to really understand yet. Re-examine goals and make new ones if you need to.
- **Recharge.** Join a gym, figure out a way to make a favorite food from home – have something into which you can retreat when you need to.
- **Embrace Invitations.** The flip side to self-reflection is saying yes to opportunities, even when you're not totally enthused. The spur-of-the-moment invitation to jump in the back of a pickup for five hours (one way) to go to the beach may sound exhausting in the moment – but experiences like that one will likely be the definitive moments of your year. The balance between retreating into yourself and putting yourself out there is one each person has to strike on their own. As long as you do so consciously and intentionally there's no 'wrong' ratio.
- **DIG IN.** Remember that the end of this time will sneak up on you; being intellectually aware of that won't make it any less surprising. Soon enough you'll be off doing other amazing things, so squeeze as much out of this experience as you can.
- **AMINEF.** Do feel free to contact AMINEF staff and your fellow ETA colleagues.



## Traveling in Indonesia

Your first priority is always to be present at your site, however, you will have allocated travel days. Sometimes a well-earned vacation is great for recharging your spirits and making you a happier, more effective and productive ETA. Traveling in Indonesia is generally pretty inexpensive by American standards and is a great way to learn more about other parts of this huge and diverse country. It can be confusing and complicated sometimes, but once you get the hang of it, traveling in Indonesia is very manageable.

You will be briefed on the travel policy at orientation, including details of how many travel days you are allowed, how and when you can use them, and info about any restricted areas. You must always notify AMINEF before you travel away from your site. It seems silly, and you may be tempted to travel without reporting it, but don't. This is for your safety. Past ETAs have been caught in difficult situations while traveling and if AMINEF can't find you, they can't help. If there is an emergency situation, like a tsunami or eruption, AMINEF will not know to evacuate you from that area. **Travel honestly and safely.**

We hope the following lists will help to guide your travels. *Selamatjalan.*

### Purchasing Plane Tickets

- **Traveloka** is probably the largest website for cheap flights throughout Indonesia and Southeast Asia. They recently changed their website to only accept Indonesian credit cards/bank accounts, so unless they switch again you may not be able to purchase from this site with a US credit card.
- **Nusatrip** is another site for cheap flights in Indonesia and surrounding area. They should still accept US credit cards.
- **Tiket.com** has accepted some US credit cards.
- **Lion Air** only flies to certain areas, but their tickets are generally very cheap. They also do not accept US credit cards, however Lion Air tickets can be purchased over the phone and then paid for in person using cash at your local Alfamart.
- **Air Asia, Sriwijaya Air, and other airlines' websites.** A few of these may accept US credit cards online. They may also offer promotions through their website.
- **Travel Agencies.** Using a travel agent for plane tickets seems absurd only until you've banged your head against the Internet for a few days. Sometimes it's easiest to head to a local travel agency and have them do the booking for you. Bring a list of the specific flights/times you want to avoid confusion. Many Indonesians purchase plane tickets this way. Ask a friend where the best/closest travel agency is at your site.
- **Take care** not all airlines have good flight records.

### Travel Van

- Often referred to as simply "travel," passenger vans between cities offer another possible mode of transportation. Usually more expensive than economy trains, these vans might be the quickest option when it comes to ground travel. They will sometimes take you directly to the home or destination within the city you are traveling to. Tickets may be purchased at several different travel offices in your town or city.

### Taking the train

- **If you live on (or are visiting) Java,** you will be able to travel by train. Some sites in Sumatra may also have train access. The train system is very accessible and tickets can be purchased at Indomaret. Train times and schedules can be found online.

## Hotels, Hostels, and Places to Stay

During the off season, you can often get discounts by either calling the hotel/hostel and bargaining before booking or just showing up and attempting to bargain. The latter is a little nerve-wracking for more type-A ETAs, but has worked well for others.

- **Agoda** has information for thousands of hotels throughout Indonesia and the rest of the world. Offer promotions and discounts off list price. Sometimes 4-star hotels can be found for hostel-level prices!
- **Hostel World** is a worldwide database of hostels. Also has hotels, apartments, campsites and B&Bs.
- **Lonely Planet's Website** has a great collection of hotels, hostels, guesthouses and homestays with honest detailed reviews. You can often book directly through lonely planet's website.
- **Trip Advisor** is another great site for hotels, sometimes offering discounts and promos. Also good for finding attractions/things to do.
- **Other ETAs!** Staying with other ETAs is a fun and cheap way to travel.
- **Fulbright ETA General Facebook Group.** For travel around Southeast Asia, there are many ETAs on this group who may be willing to host you, or at least give you some recommendations for places to stay in their area.

## Things to Do and See

- **Lonely Planet's Website** and **Lonely Planet Books**
- **Wikitravel** is an awesome database of travel information, including general background /educational information about the area in addition to things to do, see, eat, etc.
- **Trip Advisor**
- **Ask friends, old and new!** Before you leave, ask friends at your site if they have ideas. Once you get there, ask the many friendly Indonesians you will meet for the coolest things to do in their area. Planning is great, but many of the best adventures are made this way too!



*You'll have plenty of opportunities to travel in Indonesia.  
The countryside is spotted with gems like Mount Bromo.*

## Top Ten Travels in Indonesia From the 2015-16 ETAs

1. FRIENDS (everywhere\*\*)
2. Bunaken (Manado, North Sulawesi)
3. Yogyakarta (Java)
4. Flores and Komodo (East Nusa Tenggara)
5. Lombok and the Gilli Islands (West Nusa Tenggara)
6. Tanah Toraja (South Sulawesi)
7. Bali and Nusa Lembongan (Bali)
8. Pulau Derawan (East Kalimantan)
9. Bandar Lampung (South Sumatra)
10. Tanjung Puting (Central Kalimantan)

Honorable Mentions: Bukittinggi (West Sumatra), Saronde Island (North Sulawesi), Ijen Volcanoes (East Java), Lake Toba (North Sumatra)

\*\* Our favorite trips were our favorite not because of the scenery, but because of the friends we were with. Often it was just a trip to another ETA's site to stay at their house, see their school and experience a bit of their life. These trips can be just as valuable and remarkable as hiking a volcano or riding elephants.



# LIFE AFTER INDONESIA

## Job Search

There are many options for ETAs who want to stay in Indonesia or Southeast Asia, or find a way to keep working abroad. No matter what you want to do after Indonesia, it is a huge pain to network and apply from abroad. Start early, it's hard! In addition to networking with other ETAs and Indonesian friends, here are some ideas:

### Fellowships & Scholarships:

- **Princeton in Asia** offers fellowships teaching English or working in non-profits all over Asia. The fellowship provides a stipend (but not airfare). The due date to apply is generally in November, with the position to start the following summer.
- The Luce Scholarship. You need a nomination letter from your university—they may prefer people without a lot of experience in the country they're applying to.
- East-West Center has fellowships, scholarships, and funding opportunities for graduate school. Many programs with varied application dates and requirements.
- Dharma Siswa Scholarships to study Indonesian culture in Yogyakarta and other cities.
- USINDO (United States Indonesian Society) Grants and fellowships to American and Indonesian students and professionals interested in public relations.
- The Association for Asian Studies
- **ProFellow** is a huge fellowship database not specific to Indonesia or Asia.
- **Relief Web** lists relief jobs worldwide.
- **DevNet Jobs**

### Internships & Employment:

- International Internships Some are run by the Australian government. You have to pay to do the internships through their website, but you can use their website to find organizations and reach out to them individually.
- Bali Institute for Global Renewal and many other job opportunities in Bali.
- Global Leadership Adventures. Apply to lead volunteer field trips all over the world.
- **Idealist** is a massive, constantly updated database of volunteer positions, internships, and jobs. Generally NGO in nature, but not exclusively non-profit. Search for "Indonesia" and be overwhelmed.
- **Development Jobs in Indonesia** Yahoo Group Listserv. Join up and drown in emails about job opportunities in Indo. Don't be weirded out by the fact that it's a Yahoo Group – it's real.
- United Nations in Indonesia
- If you want to keep teaching English, check out **English First**, **SMART Education**, and international schools, national plus schools, and universities. Ajarn also features ESL positions around SE Asia, mostly in Thailand and Vietnam.

- Contact former ETAs. Start by talking to SETAs and staff at AMINEF. As much as networking is a pain, a little legwork goes a long way. You have access to a remarkable group of people, all of whom would be happy to help a fellow Indonesia-er, so reach out to them. There are lots of opportunities that you might never hear about otherwise.

## Reverse Culture-Shock

Reverse culture-shock is exactly what it sounds like. Remember feeling disoriented and confused as you struggled to get used to Indonesia? Well, expect something similar as you head home. While your friends and family will be ecstatic to see you and you'll revel in missed comforts, your homecoming will likely have a flip side as well.

While people will initially ask you all about your trip, prepare for that to fade quickly. One of the most difficult things about returning home is being unable to make others understand your experience. Furthermore, when they don't understand it they often stop asking about it. This will probably be hurtful and difficult to understand. Unfortunately, it's also quite common. One of the best things you can do before you leave is to **figure out how you plan to communicate your experience when you get back**. That isn't as easy as it sounds; give it real time and effort.

The transition into American culture more generally will also likely be jarring. You may be depressed and shocked by aspects of American culture that you are experiencing anew. That will fade in time, but can be difficult to handle as it's happening. On the other hand, you may have the experience of re-entering American culture easily and your time in Indonesia may feel like a dream. This can be just as jarring and mentally/emotionally difficult to cope with. In either instance, talking to people who have experienced similar homecomings can be hugely helpful, as can be talking to other Fulbrighters who are going through it at the same time as you. Journaling, blogging, and creating have helped other ETAs to cope and organize their thoughts.

For further reading, the article, "Reverse Culture Shock: What, When, and How to Cope" from Expatica, is one of the best I've seen on the topic. An important note is that while reverse culture shock will invariably happen to you, being prepared for it and aware that it is coming will likely help you to deal with it. And, of course, you'll readjust and bounce back just as you did when you arrived in Indonesia. With some awareness and preparation there is no reason your transition back to the States cannot be a positive one.

*Contributed by:  
Chris Engebretson (Martapura, South Kalimantan 2013–2014)  
Lindsay Graef (Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan 2013–2014)  
Patrick Dougherty (South Sumatra 2015–2016)*

# **LANGUAGE LEARNING**

**Background, Stories, and Resources**

## LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learning Bahasa Indonesia will greatly change your grant experience. You will be able to converse with more people in your school and community, teach more effectively by being bilingual, and form deeper and more meaningful friendships. You will be better able to share your culture and identity with those around you, and more able to “be yourself” by letting your personality and sense of humor shine. We suggest you learn as much as you can over the summer, so that you can start from a solid foundation—you will be amazed at how quickly your language skills will progress once you are living in Indonesia and using Bahasa Indonesia every day!

The ETAs of 2011-2012 recommend that you do NOT buy Rosetta Stone for learning Bahasa Indonesia, because for the most part, they didn’t find it helpful due to unnatural language use and culturally irrelevant examples. You will quickly discover your own best way for you to study the language – carrying around a notebook, flash cards, putting up post-it notes around your house, etc.

Following is an outline of the linguistic landscape you’ll encounter in Indonesia and the experiences of two 2010 - 2011 ETAs, each of whom had a very different experience with learning Indonesian. You will also find a list of resources you to help you get started on learning Indonesian, and to help you keep studying in-country!

### The Linguistic Situation in Indonesia

In addition to speaking Indonesian, many people in Indonesia speak local languages and dialects in daily life. Some are just variations of Indonesian (changing the pronouns and switching some letters out in predictable patterns), while others are very distinct. You will undoubtedly find yourself in situations with no other English speakers present – you can try to smile and nod your way through them, but don’t be fooled by the lack of language requirement in this grant. Indonesia is not a country in which everyone speaks English. If you live in a large city, chances are that you’ll be surrounded by some competent English speakers; but in rural areas you might find yourself quickly learning a lot of Indonesian or relying very heavily on two or three English-speaking colleagues.

### Learning Indonesian from Scratch

*by Brian Kraft, Pekanbaru, Sumatra 2010-2011*

Perhaps you and I linguistically share some common ground. Maybe we both applied for the grant in Indonesia largely because it required no prior language skills. Or it could be that we both unsuccessfully floundered about in little second-language ponds without ever taking the arm-floaties off. Maybe one month it was Russian, and when that proved difficult it was French for a bit, all the while barely pulling B’s in Spanish because conjugating sucks. It is not easy to get the first new language bagged, so, if you intend to learn a lot of Indonesian, every bit of preparation you can do pre-arrival will help. I suggest using learning indonesian.com podcasts for the basics. In my experience, the best way to ingest these strange sounds and words is to listen to a podcast first thing in the morning and jot down the new words on a flash card so that you can conveniently impress your friends throughout the day. And of course, let the last thing you hear before putting your brain to sleep for the night



*If you don’t learn any Indonesian, you might not be able to ask any of the questions you want to ask when you find yourself in situations like this.*

be that same podcast – it will solidify these odd syllables into your mind like the lyrics of a hip new song on the radio. (You could try downloading some Indonesian songs and learning the lyrics too – music is a great way to memorize. See suggested songs below.)

Upon arrival, take advantage of the language class offered during orientation and complement it with time spent practicing out of class. You will get out what you put in. Plaster sticky notes all over every noun in your room. Go eat at sketchy places that don't speak any English. Watch SpongeBob in Indonesian. Be very willing to fail and say embarrassingly blog-worthy things (word to the wise: *mengundang* is to invite – *mengandung* is something closer to impregnate). But most importantly, if you really want to learn the language, do not give up. It will be easy for you, if you so choose, to get by in Indonesia courtesy of the rough and compulsory English ability of others, although it could be a bit hypocritical. Are we as language teachers willing to clock in the hours with our students and learn as we ask them to? Nine months in-country and away from Western distractions is the perfect chance for us both to end this mono-lingual epoch of our lives, and Indonesian – recently deemed a “critical language” by Washington – is worth every temple-rub and brain lapse.

#### Songs to Check Out:

- **Kangen** – “Juminten”
- **Cokelat** – “Merah Putih”
- **Wali Band** – “Cari Jodoh”
- **K'naan and Ipang** – “Wavin' Flag/Semangat Berkibar”
- **Nidji** – “Laskar Pelangi”

### Learning Indonesian as an “Uber-Bule” Who Doesn't Need It

*by Ben Vatterott, Mataram, Lombok 2010 - 2011*

When I touched down in Jakarta to begin ETA orientation, I knew only a handful of Indonesian words; nothing more than a couple of the *selamat* phrases. Despite a summer to study and a copy of Rosetta Stone, slothfulness had gotten the better of me and my language skills were nil.

To be honest, I didn't have much motivation – none of my career plans require learning Indonesian, and foreign languages have never been my forte. After leaving Indonesia, it's unlikely that I will ever use Indonesian beyond ordering at Indonesian restaurants and shamelessly attempting to impress members of the opposite sex.

Even after arriving at my site, there were still few reasons compelling me to learn much beyond my toddler vocabulary. All of my students spoke passable English, as did many of the teachers at my school. It would have been easy to skate my way through all nine months of teaching without ever consulting a dictionary or cracking open a textbook.

But still, it was immediately obvious that by limiting myself to conversations in English, I was only experiencing a sliver of the culture. I was unable to converse with any non-English speakers – angkot drivers, bakso sellers, market peddlers or fishermen. I could only

understand the gist of festivals and religious ceremonies, and always carried a map with me because asking for directions was nearly impossible.

It wasn't long until I was carrying a pocket notebook and dictionary with me wherever I went – scribbling down new words when I heard them (or asking someone to write them for me) and forcing locals to patiently wait as I flipped through the pages mid-conversation, searching for that perfect word I'd learned a few days prior. Rosetta Stone still wasn't helping much, so I downloaded a flashcard program that better suited my learning style (BYKI).

Most importantly, I tried never to shy from random conversations – people at my site were incredibly eager to speak with me, always wanting to know where I was from and where I was going. It didn't hurt that I am about as bule as they come – as a six foot, blonde-haired, blue-eyed Minnesotan, I fit well into the pervasive Indonesian stereotypes of Americans. In addition to making me an instant celebrity wherever I went, my appearance resulted in many Indonesians assuming I couldn't speak a word of their language. Even the simplest sentences earned me praise – once the gas station attendants told me that I was *pintar sekali* after I simply uttered *tiga belas*.

After only two or three months of on-and-off studying, I found myself already speaking at a basic level – I couldn't debate politics or discuss philosophy, but I could have simple conversations and even make a few rude jokes. Knowing just two or three hundred words can go a long way with a language like Indonesian, and already I felt much more integrated than when I first arrived. The difference was evident everywhere – at school, where I could always make the class laugh by attempting a new word; at the market, where I could effectively bargain; or on my weekend trips to rural villages where not a soul spoke English.

So, what's my advice for incoming ETAs? Even if you have no long-term reasons to study Indonesian, still try to learn as much as you can before you arrive and during your first few months. The pay-off for those first hundred words is incredible, and with 500 words you can express yourself quite well. Of course, it doesn't need to be a top priority (and shouldn't be) – spending nights during orientation bonding with other ETAs will help you much more in the long run than an extra few hours of memorizing. But just a little knowledge can open many doors to opportunities you would not have otherwise to opinions you wouldn't hear expressed in English - to the true fabric of the society. You've all been given not only an opportunity to experience a country that few Americans will ever see, but also the time to fully immerse yourself in the rich culture that it has to offer. Learning a bit of Indonesian, even if you'll never use it again, will help you make the most of it.



## LANGUAGE LEARNING RESOURCES

If you want to get started learning Indonesian at home, your biggest problem may not be finding resources, but deciding which ones to use. Depending on how you learn best, you may want podcasts, flashcards, books, or you may try to seek out local classes and learning options. We've put our favorites of each first, to help give you a place to get started.

### Books & Dictionaries

You may find it easier to get an English-Indonesian dictionary in Indonesia, but downloading a dictionary onto your smartphone or picking up a phrasebook can be just as helpful. There are also comprehensive, self-guided courses the extra-motivated ETA can work through—if you're not in the Washington, D.C. or Madison, WI areas, it may be tough to find a teacher. Try checking out:



#### **Lonely Planet's Indonesian Phrasebook & Dictionary**

Phrasebooks help you immediately communicate on a basic level and get you familiar with grammatical structures of the language without having to necessarily understand every word. Once you have begun to learn the language, knowledge of common phrases can help you create sentences of your own. Organized into categories, this phrasebook introduces key words and phrases that can help you with your daily life and travels throughout Indonesia. It is small, simple, and very approachable, and also includes a few words and phrases from local languages.



#### **Tuttle Concise Indonesian Dictionary: An Indonesian-English Dictionary by John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily**

It is, as it says, a concise Indonesian-English dictionary, making it both approachable and easy to use.

*Kamus Indonesia-Inggris: An English-Indonesian Dictionary* by John Echols and Hassan Shadily

Available from Cornell University Press in the States, but probably easier to buy after arriving in Indonesia - Gramedia carries it.

*Bahasa Indonesia* by Yohanni Johns

This two-part series consists of Bahasa Indonesia: Book One, Langkah Baru and Bahasa Indonesia: Book Two, Introduction to Language and Culture. It accurately uses English and Indonesian to explain Indonesian grammar and then presents language in context through texts taken from various media. It is available at Periplus bookstores (located in airports and malls in major cities) or possibly found online with the ISBN 978-0-945971-57-3. Its approach is systematic, but it is lacking audio/listening resources.

*Indonesian Idioms & Expressions: Colloquial Indonesians at Work* by Christopher Torchia

The chapters hit on various linguistic themes, among them wisdom, characters, animals, food, slang, family affairs, and politics. The idea is to learn about Indonesian through the texture and content of its language, and to connect to Indonesian culture through idioms and proverbs.

*Beginning Indonesian Through Self Instruction* by John Wolff, Dede Oetomo, and Daniel Fietkiewicz

This book is a very comprehensive introduction to the language that incorporates integrated learning (reading, writing, speaking and listening) better than the other products on this list. Each chapter includes new vocabulary, a dialogue, applied

grammar exercises, and then an explanation of new grammar and structures introduced in context in the dialogue. Must be ordered from Cornell University – <http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southeastasia/publications/item.asp?id=1085>

*Instant Indonesian: How to Express 1,000 Different Ideas With Just 100 Key Words and Phrases* by Stuart Robinson and Julian Millie

This travel-sized phrasebook will help you learn the most commonly-used Indonesian words and put them into practice for everyday situations. If you find rote learning difficult, Instant Indonesian may come in handy.

### Podcasts & Audio

*The Indonesian Way*

By far the most ETA-recommended resource besides Shaun and Cici's podcasts, The Indonesian Way is available as an interactive e-learning course enhanced by several hundred images, sound files, and videos with hundreds of lessons from beginner-level to advanced.

*Shaun and Cici's Learning Indonesian*

A series of free podcast lessons available through iTunes or their website. It does a good job of breaking down the basics, and, if you finish all 30 of the free lessons, you can purchase a premium course. They also email you printable study guides to supplement the audio lessons.

*Live Mocha*

Live Mocha is a free online language-learning tool that has just added Indonesian to its repertoire. It walks you through a large range of vocabulary using flashcards (these have a native-speaker audio accompaniment) and then offers quizzes to test and practice. Perhaps the best feature of Live Mocha is its ability to record and play back your own voice as well as submit a speaking sample to a native speaker for tips. \*\*Note: Live Mocha requires internet access during use, unlike other downloadable programs on this list.

*Mango Languages*

Mango Languages is similar to Live Mocha. Free subscriptions are sometimes available through your local library.

*Wikibook's Indonesian Language Course*

A detailed, bottom-up approach to the history and structure of the language, plus lessons in content.

### Flashcards

*BYKI*

BYKI is geared specifically for language learning. Flashcards come in themed sets such as travel, animals and colors, and there is an audio option that helps with pronunciation.

*Anki*

This downloadable program allows you to make virtual flash cards and provides various ways to study them.

*Memrise*

Memrise is an interactive learning online platform for learning languages and beyond. There is also a smartphone app available!

## Other

### Mivo TV

Mivo TV lets you stream eight Indonesian TV stations. After you pick up a few words from the other sources, TV is a great way to familiarize yourself with speech patterns, as well as the concept of lebai (dramatic, over-the-top) via Indonesian soap operas, music videos and ads.

### Dandorf's Indonesian Language

A series of Youtube videos by an Indonesian woman who wanted “to share her language.” It's fairly well-organized, and it's a more relaxed, conversational series (she teaches her super-cute three-year-old daughter the colors in one video). It's nice to put faces to the language.

## Smartphone Apps:

You can go into an app store and search for “Indonesian,” “Bahasa Indonesia,” “Indonesian language,” etc. and you will find a variety of options! Free is always good, but, if you want to keep using these apps in Indonesia, it's more important that you can use them without wi-fi/data!

Here are some apps for basic vocab that don't require data:

- Babbel's “Indonesian”
- Declan Software's “Indonesian Audio Flashcards”
- iLang's “Basic Indonesian”
- L-lingo's “Indonesian”
- Learn Indonesian
- VOC Lab's “Indonesian”

There are also a variety of comprehensive dictionaries you can choose from. iThinkDiff's Indonesian Dictionary allows you to bookmark words and review them as flashcards, and also includes a few games and a “Word of the Day” feature.

## PDFs

*Basic Indonesian Survival Guide by Kathryn McNamara & 2011-2012 ETA's*

This compilation is distributed online through the virtual pre-departure orientation and online materials made available by the Department of State. You will have to adapt its format to your learning style.

We know that this may seem like an overwhelming amount of information, particularly if you are struggling to get a handle on the fact that you are moving to Indonesia, much less that you need to learn a new language! But it all depends on you, your interests, and your needs. In some cases, if your school is particularly advanced, it may not be terribly urgent for you to have a good grasp of Bahasa Indonesia. But in many cases, English will not be widely spoken in your area, and Bahasa Indonesia will be key for communicating with teachers and students, neighbors, and people in your community. We are here as cultural ambassadors, and a little bit of language learning goes a long way towards deepening your relationships in Indonesia. *Semangat dan selamat sukses!*

*Revision contributor:*

*Sarah Parker (Pangkalpinang, Bangka, 2013 – 2014)*



*Sometimes it's nice to know what signs say.*

## **RESOURCES about INDONESIA**

Reading Material, Movies, and Music

## RESOURCES about INDONESIA

You won't regret learning as much as you can about Indonesia before arriving, but anyone looking for books in the U.S. may be frustrated by a surprising scarcity of titles. A 2010 – 2011 ETA once heard a State Department official call Indonesia "the most important country you don't know anything about," and it's unfortunately difficult to find resources for learning more. Most books that are available focus on life in Jakarta and Bali – sadly, some of the only places in Indonesia where ETAs will not be sent. Still, if you dig below the surface, there is some great material out there.

Take a look at the list below for the best of what we've been able to find in books, movies, music, and more. Book swapping is highly encouraged, as they can be quite expensive – it might be smart to start an email chain and plan who's going to bring which books in advance. Better yet, buy a kindle! Even ETAs vehemently opposed to e-readers have been thankful they splurged for the benefit of having a lightweight, endless supply of books. It's also a good idea to bring an external hard drive where you can store and share your collections of books, movies, TV shows, music, and more.

This list can help you start researching over the summer, and can help you keep learning during your grant period. Please note that this list is incomplete—in particular, it's heavy on resources related to Java/Javanese culture and Islam in Indonesia. Although these are dominant forces in Indonesia, they may not be reflective of your site or your experiences. As soon as you find out your site, or as your year continues, keep searching for resources that may be more related to your community, and be sure to share them with the group!

★ **The most popular and highly recommended items have been marked with a star if you're looking for a place to start!**

### READING

#### History & International Context

***The Next Front: Southeast Asia and the Road to Global Peace with Islam* by Senator Christopher S. Bond and Lewis M. Simons.**

Written in 2009, this work takes an in-depth look at the status of religion and politics in SE Asia. The book is divided into six parts: the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and America. It ends with a look at American policy in Southeast Asia and where we may be headed in the future.

★ ***Indonesian Destinies* by Theodore Friend**

This book builds a comprehensive narrative of Indonesia in the last half century. Part historical narrative and part personal stories, Friend's book weaves together a complex picture of independent Indonesia. Friend highlights many issues that will resonate with American readers, including oil and gas, minerals, environmental concerns, Islamic radicalism, and the internal struggle for progress and justice. At 640 pages, this volume is only for the serious reader but is well-worth the investment of time!

***The Indonesia Reader: History, Culture, Politics* edited by Tineke Hellwig and Eric Tagliacozzo**

Organized chronologically, this volume covers Indonesia from early civilizations through the present reformasi period. The book is comprised of primary sources, newspaper





articles, letters, manifestos, and more, collected to paint a colorful portrait of Indonesia through a kaleidoscope of perspectives and lenses.

***Ibu Maluku* by Ron Heyneman**

This biography of Jeanne Marie van Diejen-Roemen is full of primary source material dating from the First World War to the late 1970's. Van Diejen-Roemen moved with her husband to a remote island in Maluku, where she worked on various plantations before the Japanese invasion. Unlike most books on this list, the focus is on eastern Indonesia.

***Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* by Robert Kaplan**

From 2010, this book is a particularly helpful and readable option for getting into Indonesia's religious and political situation. Kaplan devotes two full chapters to Indonesia, analyzing the religious history, political situation and current context of Indonesian people across several provinces (focusing mostly on Aceh and Java).

***Letters of a Javanese Princess* by Kartini**

As a young woman, Kartini, a pioneer of women's rights and national heroine, wrote a series of letters to her friends in the Netherlands comparing the Indonesian education system to that in the West. Walking a fine line of appreciating the tradition of Javanese culture while stressing the importance of modernity, her letters are relevant and insightful despite being written around 1900. The compilation was originally published under the title "Out of Dark Comes Light."

***In the Time of Madness* by Richard Lloyd Parry**

The author traveled to some of Indonesia's trouble spots during the turbulent times immediately following the fall of President Suharto. He witnessed violence in Kalimantan and Timor, and writes hauntingly about these blights on Indonesia's recent historical record.

***Indonesia Rising: The Repositioning of Asia's Third Giant* edited by Anthony J S Reid**

Published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, this book addresses possible trajectories for Indonesia and predictions for its entrance onto the world stage. Is Indonesia the rising star to watch?



***A History of Modern Indonesia* by Adrian Vickers**

Vickers' book will bring you up to speed on today's Indonesia. It begins with the end of Dutch rule in the middle of the 20th century and continues through Indonesia's struggle for independence and the political contexts of the country's subsequent leaders. Probably the best choice if you're looking for a comprehensive history of modern Indonesia – just as the title suggests.

***The Malay Archipelago* by Alfred Russell Wallace**

Considered one of the most extensive works of natural history ever written, this book provides an incredibly detailed account of Indonesia through the eyes of a Victorian naturalist. Gear up for lots of Latin, a defense of Dutch colonialism, and even a comparative study of the linguistic traits of all major Indonesian tribes in this fascinating, canon-altering work of biological significance.

## Culture & Faith

***Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* by Leila Ahmed**

Written from a feminist perspective, Ahmed uses the analytical tools of contemporary gender studies to add to the discussion of women in Islam. She builds from Islam's historical roots, explores developments, and participates in Islamic discourses on women from the ancient world to the present. This book does not concentrate on Indonesia, but deals predominantly with Islam in Egypt and the Middle East.



***Islam: A Short History* by Karen Armstrong**

Armstrong's book covers Islam from its humble birth to expansive modernity. The Indonesia ETA will be frustrated to find that Indonesia, with more Muslims than any other country in the world, is mentioned nowhere in the book – but it is still a useful text for contextualizing Muslim practices and understanding the religion.

***Indonesian Islam in a New Era: How Women Negotiate Their Muslim Identities* edited by Susan Blackburn, Bianca Smith, and Siti Syamsiyatun**

Compiling research from sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists from Indonesia and Australia, this book uses a social perspective to explore how women negotiate their Muslim identities at school, work, villages, and in popular culture. Unfortunately this book is rather expensive, but can be purchased through Amazon or the Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology.

***A Short History of Indonesia: The Unlikely Nation?* by Colin Brown**

Brown covers 2 million years of history with depth and brevity. He uses straightforward language and provides nuanced perspectives on Indonesia's development and diversity. The book also addresses current concerns, including the legacy of Dutch colonialism, Indonesia's evolution into the world's largest Muslim country, and the idea that Indonesia is a nation in waiting at the edge of potential economic growth and power.

***Islam in the World Today* by Werner Ende**

This massive book (over 1000 pages) offers a small chapter on Indonesia, which provides a condensed, yet thorough, look at the intersection of politics and religion in the country. The chapters in this book are probably the fastest and best way to bring yourself up to speed on religion and politics in Indonesia today.

***Culture and Customs of Indonesia* by Jill Forshee**

Don't be fooled by the name - this is not your typical "do this and don't do that" book. Instead, it digs deep into the history, politics, culture and customs of Indonesia, providing lots of insight. The book is worth reading just for its extensive timeline - one of the best in publication. Forshee guides her reader through some of the most fundamental aspects of Indonesia, from landforms to religion, encouraging you to live and travel confidently.

***The Religions of Java* by Clifford Geertz**

Geertz published this book in the late 1970's and since then it has become appreciated not just as the definitive work on Javanese religion, but also for conducting ethnographic research anywhere in the world. While ETAs placed on the outer islands may feel like skipping this book, the reality is that Javanese culture is influential in almost all of Indonesia, and this work is relevant to most regions of the country.



***A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* by Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk**

Written by two friends, this book presents a back-and-forth dialogue between the fundamental ideas of Islam and Christianity. Each author presents the core ideas of his faith and responds to those of the other. It is an insightful and respectful conversation that highlights similarities and differences between the two faiths. This book may be helpful for ETAs who are Christian or identify themselves as Christian in Indonesia, but may also help contextualize religious disagreements and issues across the archipelago.

***Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis**

Many ETAs will be placed at predominantly-Muslim sites and may struggle to describe their own beliefs or to contextualize aspects of American culture. Or, ETAs placed in predominantly-Christian sites might need a little brushing-up on the history and fundamentals of Christianity. Lewis's essays are a good way to review the basics of Christianity and prepare for comparative conversations about the world's two largest faiths.

***Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity* by Robert Pringle**

Pringle explores the history and development of Islam in Indonesia, weaving its adoption in Indonesia into larger narratives of colonialism, development, and democracy. Pringle demonstrates Islam as a constant force in modern Indonesian history, and illustrates its intersection with social and political upheavals.

***Gender and Power in Indonesian Islam: Leaders, Feminists, Sufis and Pesantran Selves* edited by Bianca J. Smith and Mark Woodward**

This anthology of essays explores the understanding of gender and Islam in pesantrans, religious boarding schools in Aceh, Java, and Lombok. Through extensive fieldwork, the essays address women's negotiation of "normative" Muslim patriarchy, feminism, sexuality, learning, and piety.

***Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* by Amina Wadud**

Wadud provides the first interpretive reading of the Qur'an by a woman, reexamining the sacred text. She highlights key words and passages that have been used to limit women and finds that the essential language of the Qur'an is written without gender bias or prejudice. Her findings support progressive discourse arguing that the foundations of the Islamic faith are not oppressive--rather, it is patriarchal interpretation and implementation that have led to unequal treatment. For more information on this topic, see also: *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of Qur'an* by Asma Barlas.

**Fiction**

***American Dervish* by Ayad Akhtar**

This novel follows a young Pakistani-American boy as he grows up in the suburbs of Milwaukee. The book highlights the struggles of being Muslim in America and the ways in which American Muslims encounter conflict and compromise in finding their own identities. This book intersects with ideas of what it means to "be American" and assimilation, two themes that will also be present during your time in Indonesia!

***The Land of Five Towers* by Ahmad Fuadi**

Fuadi's novel offers a detailed perspective on education and Islam in Indonesia. The story follows a boy, Alif, as he leaves his home to attend a pesantren (Islamic boarding school), finds friends and faith, and grows into a man. This book highlights the traditions of respect and discipline that drive many Indonesian students, explores the unique culture of pesantren schools, and gives an illustrative view of Islam in daily life. It is part of a trilogy, but only the first book has been translated into English so far.



***Rainbow Troops Tetralogy* by Andrea Hirata**

This book covers a lot of ground, including education, mineral exploitation, government resource distribution and the will to succeed in love. The story takes place mostly at or near a small Muhammadiyah school on a remote island off the coast of Sumatra and is very popular with Indonesian audiences. It provides a glimpse into some of the challenges facing low-income students and schools in Indonesia and is an international bestseller.

***The Year of Living Dangerously* by C.J. Koch**

Set during the tense final days of the Sukarno presidency in Jakarta, this novel focuses on a group of expats who jockey for news and influence. Set in Jakarta, the book fictionalizes the events leading up to the almost-coup by the Communist Part of Indonesia in 1965. It's an easy introduction to this era of Indonesian history from a Western perspective.

***Durga/Umayi* by Y.B. Mangunwijaya**

This book narrates the events surrounding Indonesia's independence, presenting the period as confusing and full of paradox. The irregular prose style—sentences packed with clauses and subclauses—repeats the chaos that Mangunwijaya narrates.



***Girl From The Coast* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer**

Set during the colonial regime of the Dutch in Java, Toer weaves a coming-of-age story for an unnamed female protagonist. Originally from a small fishing village on the outskirts of a larger city, the young girl from the coast catches the attention of a high-ranking Indonesian delegate and is summoned to reside as a concubine in his home. The story contains relatable images of culture shock and personal development through adversity. Based on the story of a relative, Toer's tale provides the reader with a view of the budding Indonesia during a time of promise as well as turmoil.



***The Buru Quartet (This Earth of Mankind, A Child of All Nations, Footsteps and House of Glass)* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer**

This series is based on the life of Toer, a Javanese writer who lived through some of the most turbulent parts of Indonesian history and was jailed by both the Dutch and Indonesian governments for political activities. Toer is widely cited as Indonesia's most accomplished author, and these four works have all been translated from their original Javanese into English.

***Saman* by Ayu Utami**

Saman is a popular book in Indonesia and, though it is cheap fiction for mass audiences, it is useful for getting a sense of modern Indonesian attitudes, particularly those regarding sex, its taboo status, and how it sometimes manifests itself in a society that often does not want to acknowledge it publicly.

## Other

### Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): <http://www.csis.or.id/>

CSIS is an American think-tank focusing on political, economic, and security issues throughout the world. Their Indonesian and Singapore sites can provide more information about Southeast and East Asian geopolitical contexts, and articles may offer insight into Indonesia's humanitarian issues, environmental concerns, and international standing.

### Global Indonesian Voices: <http://www.globalindonesianvoices.com/>

This is an Indonesian media company that compiles independent stories written by Indonesians around the world. They cover everything from news to pop culture to the "listicles" you might expect from BuzzFeed.

### Google News Alerts

You can go to [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts) and create a news alert using "Indonesia" as your query. Choose whether you want news, blogs, videos, (or more), how often you want to receive alerts, etc. Sometimes you'll find that, in a daily e-mail of the Top 10 articles, five of them will cover the same topic--but it's still an easy way to get a snapshot of news from Indonesia (or at least news from Indonesia that is relevant to Western news sources).

### Indo-Pacific Review: <http://www.indopacificreview.com>

The Indo-Pacific Review compiles articles concerning ASEAN, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam to highlight current affairs in a changing and increasingly-powerful Southeast Asia. You can also check out "In Brief," their blog focused on Indonesia at <http://www.indopacificreview.com/blog/indonesia/>.



### Indonesiaful: <http://indonesiaful.com/>

This blog compiles writing, news, photography, and reflections from across Indonesia. It was started by the 2012-2013 ETA group and continues to be operated and written for by current ETAs.



### The Jakarta Post & The Jakarta Globe: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/> and <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/>

These are the largest English-language newspapers in Indonesia and offer Indonesian news from a domestic perspective as well as insight into what international topics are important to Indonesian readers.



### Lonely Planet Indonesia by Various Authors

This is THE comprehensive book on traveling in Indonesia. One of the few books to have detailed information on areas outside of Bali and Borneo, you will find it to be very helpful in everything from planning travel to booking hotels. It can give you a jumping-off point for activities near your site, and also includes an extensive list of additional resources and a pleasantly concise Indonesian history section.

### Memrise

Memrise works as a smartphone app and online learning tool. It can be used for language learning (although it suffers from not having any recordings/listening opportunities) but can also be used to teach yourself Indonesian geography--capital cities, provinces, and other key landmarks that will help you understand the backgrounds of the people you meet.

### Ring of Fire: An Indonesian Odyssey by Lawrence Lorne Blair

This book is a first-person travel narrative of two brothers, recording their ten-year adventure across the Indonesian archipelago. From Borneo to Krakatoa to Papua, readers can enjoy their incredible odyssey across islands as they explore Indonesia's cities, swamps, villages, mountains, forests, rivers, and seas. They also recorded their travels into five documentary films. Although some of their work is now dated and fading into history books, they offer unrivaled descriptions of culture and traditions across Indonesia.

## MOVIES



### The Act of Killing (2012)

A controversial documentary by Joshua Oppenheimer, the film focuses on the anti-communist purges in 1965-1966. Oppenheimer invites death squad leaders to recount their memories of the deaths they ordered and to re-enact the killings for the camera (each done in their favorite style). The documentary has earned high reviews for its honesty, art, and for shedding light on a problematic (and often ignored) period of Indonesian history. Its reception in Indonesia has not always been so positive, nor has it re-opened any significant dialogue regarding these crimes against humanity. However, discussion about this movie is strongly discouraged because the 1965-1966 purge is still deemed a very sensitive topic by both the government of Indonesia and most Indonesians.

### Arisan! (2003)

Take an uptight woman desperate to get pregnant to save her failing marriage, her (closeted) gay best friend trying to avoid getting married off by his mother, and their wealthy friend who's going off the deep end after she discovers her husband cheated, and you have the set-up for Arisan!-- the first mainstream Indonesian film to have prominent LGBT themes, including the first onscreen male-male kiss in Indonesian cinematic history. The movie deals with their struggle to keep up appearances as marriages crack, new love is found, and people are thrown into jail (say what?). It manages to deal with serious issues and is a heart-warming film experience.

### Habibie & Ainun (2012)

An Indonesian drama about love, dreams, and nationalism. The story focuses on an engineer with a dream to build an airplane that will unite Indonesia and the young female doctor he falls in love with. Their story of love and difficulties intersects with that of Soeharto and his wife, to create a tale about love within, across, and for a country.

### Jermal (2008)

When a twelve-year-old boy's mother dies, he is sent to his long-absent father, who works as the supervisor of a fishing platform known as a jermal. There, he must learn to deal with hard physical labor, bullying from the other underage (and illegal) workers, and his distant father, who has a dark reason for being out of his life for so long. Another example of the resurgence of Indonesian cinema, the film was made by young independent Indonesian filmmakers, Ravi Bharwani and Rayya Makarim. It's a fantastic, promising first effort with talented actors, engaging portrayals of Indonesian social issues, and beautiful shots of the lonely, sun-and-ocean-scarred platform.



### ***Laskar Pelangi, Sang Pemimpi, and Laskar Pelangi: Edensor (2008, 2009, 2013)***

Based on the novels by the same name (see Rainbow Troops, above) by Andrea

Hirata, the movies follow the stories of a group of poor boys from Belitung as they navigate school, poverty, friendship, love, and identity in Indonesia and beyond. These are some of the most popular movies ever released in Indonesia.

### ***Merantau (2009)***

Yes, it's a formulaic, naive country-hero's journey to an experience in the big city, but its clichéd elements are done very well. The protagonist as he battles human traffickers in his quest to save his dancer sister, highlighting the Minangkabau men's tradition of merantau, and the film is a fantastic showcase for the national martial art, pencak silak. Available on Netflix Instant Play.



### ***Oeroeg (1993)***

Based on the novel by Hella Haasse, the movie chronicles the return of Johan Ten Berghe to the Dutch East Indies, where he had been raised on an idyllic plantation in the waning days of the Dutch Empire. Now part of an army bent on taming the rebellious islands, Johan searches for Oeroeg, his best friend whom he believes murdered his father. Slowly, as Johan instructs his driver, the naive newcomer Twan, on life in the islands, troubling secrets about his family and their relationship with Oeroeg and his father, are revealed. This movie will break your heart and make you think, and dialogues with the effects of imperialism on the colonizer and the colonized.

### ***The Photograph (2007)***

A quiet, beautiful-looking film, *The Photograph* follows the growing friendship between Sita, a singer and part-time prostitute, and Johan, a dying Chinese-Indonesian photographer. Both of them have secrets, although only Sita's is apparent at first. The movie starts to kick into gear when Sita is brutally attacked by some clients and begins to work for Johan as she recovers and hides from her vicious pimp. Meanwhile, Johan starts a frantic search for an appropriate apprentice as he gets closer to death. It is a slow movie but has a wonderfully bittersweet and hopeful ending.



### ***The Raid: Redemption (Serbuan Maut) and The Raid 2: Berandal (2011, 2014)***

Gareth Evans's Indonesian martial arts films are bringing international attention to the Indonesian film industry and are enormously fun to boot. The movies follow a rookie officer in an elite police squad as they battle crime and corruption in Jakarta. Both films have been popular in Indonesia, feature creative fight choreography, and don't necessarily need English subtitles to be understood.



### ***Year of Living Dangerously (1982)***

Based on the novel by Christopher Koch (see above). It's a beautiful-looking movie that evokes the frenzied rush of mid-century Jakarta and the waning decadence of the expatriate set, whose self-interest is contrasted with the deep poverty of Jakarta's slums and the frustration of agitating Communists as Sukarno's failed promises become too apparent.

## **MUSIC**

### **Agnez Mo**

Also known as "Agnes Monica," she is an Indonesian pop/R&B singer and internationally acclaimed actress. She is the most-awarded Indonesian singer and has also served as a judge on *Indonesian Idol*, but her rise to international fame and appeal has made her a sometimes-controversial figure in Indonesia. Top songs include "Coke Bottle" (feat. TI and Timbaland), "Hanya Cinta Yang Basa," and "Cinta Mati" (feat. Ahmad Dhani).

### **Jogja Hip-Hop Foundation**

The Jogja Hip-Hop Foundation combines three Yogyakarta-based hip-hop crews: Kill the DJ, Hell, and Rotra. JHF's music combines Javanese culture and hip-hop to create a soundtrack for Yogyakarta—a cultural center and increasingly modern city seeking a balance between change and tradition. JHF also produced a documentary, *Hiphopdiningrat*, and has performed in the United States. You can listen to tracks, check out videos, and download songs here: <http://www.hiphopdiningrat.com/> (Small warning that many of the songs use Javanese in addition to Bahasa Indonesia.)

### **Krisdayanti**

An old-school Indonesian singer and actress, she is analogous to Madonna or Whitney Houston in terms of stature and style. An older Indonesian-American friend recommended her-- perhaps students' reactions are less kind: "She's old!" But, if you enjoy '80's or '90s style power ballads and the like, she's gold, and she is considered an influential woman in Indonesia. Top songs: "Ku Tak Sanggup," "Menghitung Hari," and "Cinta" (feat. Melly Goeslaw).

### **Nidji's "Laska Pelangi"**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwIKSKdsLG4>

This song is the theme to the *Laskar Pelangi* movies, and is a great one to share with teachers and students! Another awesome choice for a karaoke song!

### **Noah**

Previously known as Topi, this alternative rock and pop band is extremely popular in Indonesia, and a movie about the band was released in early 2014. "Jika Engkau" is a great pick if you want to sing an Indonesian song during karaoke; "Separuh Aku," "Kukatakan Dengan Indah," and "Ada Apa Denganmu" have also won "Best Song" awards.

### **Raisa**

A new soloist on the Indonesian music scene, Raisa offers a liquid voice and soulful songs. Several ETAs got to see her perform live in Bogor in 2014! Top songs include "Could It Be," "Terjebak Nostalgia," and "Serba Salah."

### **SM\*SH**

SM\*SH or "Seven Men as Seven Heroes" is a pop-dance boy band that started in Bandung. They are joining the popularity of boy-bands and girl-bands, and offer Indonesian competition for popular K-pop groups. Hit songs include "I Heart You," "Senyum Semangat," and "Ada Cinta."



## Tulus

Tulus is a pop jazz male singer with delicious vocals. He has played at Java Jazz Festival and has joined Raisa for several performances. Top songs include “Teman Hidup,” “Jangan Cintai Aku ApaAdanya,” and “Sepatu.”

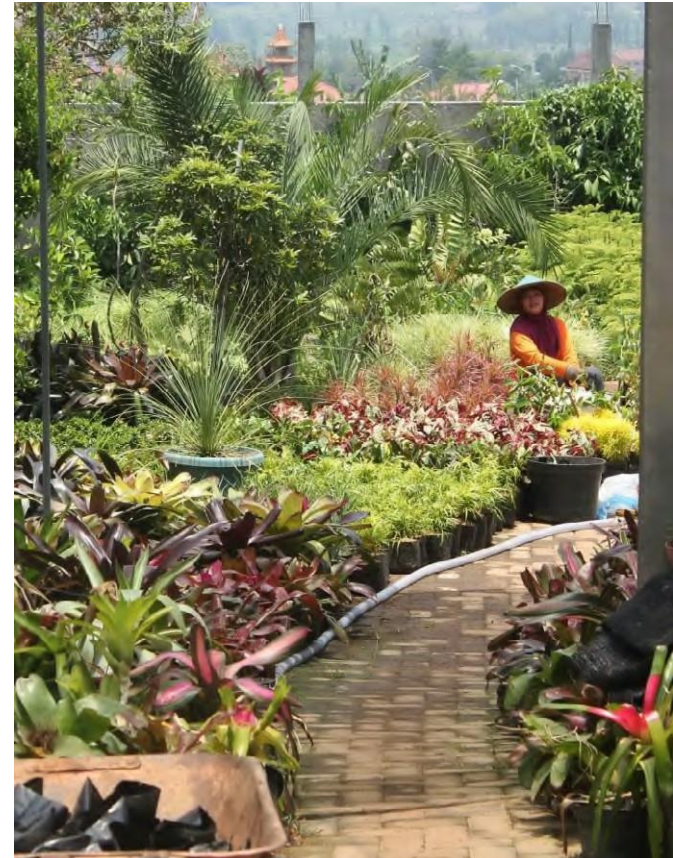
## American Top 40

You will find that many students and friends are very familiar with western music. Knowing a few key songs by Taylor Swift, Jason Mraz, or Bruno Mars can be a good way to start sharing musical interests--or safe choices for karaoke!

## K-Pop

Korean pop music is also very popular with Indonesian youth. Student favorites may include SNSD, Super Junior, Hallyu, Kara, and G-String.

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**Terima Kasih Banyak to the staff of the American Indonesian Exchange Foundation in Jakarta for their confidence and support while this resource was created.**