Message for the volunteers
by Dominique Lemay – President and Founder

Firstly, I would like to personally thank you for your commitment to the street children in Manila. My team and I are very grateful to welcome you as a volunteer in Virlanie Foundation.

Every year, Virlanie Foundation takes care of more than 200 children through our residential programs and helps nearly 300 children through our various outreach and support programs.

Since the establishment of Virlanie Foundation in 1992, we have hosted more than a thousand volunteers who have worked closely with the Philippine team to help sustain the foundation and give back more smiles to street children in the Philippines.

Indeed, the volunteers’ presence is very essential to the foundation and provide essential contributions to the development and sustainability of Virlanie.

This guide will help you to be well prepared.

Your mission will also be a one-of-a-kind personal experience that can be a turning point of your future career.

Finally, I hope you will enjoy the discovery of a very different culture and geography, of a world that, despite the existing poverty, will surprise you with its beauty.

Before you leave, please spend time reading about the Philippines (history, culture, etc.) to better understand the country.

Thank you again for your commitment to the street children.

Hope to see you very soon in Manila!

All the best,
Passport and Visa

To travel, you will need a passport valid for, at least, 6 months after your return date. Don't forget to check the validity before booking your flight!

Volunteering is not work! Apply for a tourist visa and, not to confuse the immigration, don't mention that you will "work" for an association! Aside of this, you will need to present a proof of departure flight to the immigration officer before boarding. If not, you might not be allowed to get on the plane! Please, take in consideration your visa validity while booking your flight out of the country.

For the visa, all the European citizens can stay 29 days on the Filipino territory without a visa. On place, you can either renew your visa (4 400php for 1 month/5 700 for 2 months + 2 550 for the mandatory I-Card on the 1st renewal) or have a way-and-back trip out of the country.

Health

There are no mandatory vaccines for the Philippines, so, just be up-to-date with your regular vaccines and hepatitis.

Antimalarial treatment is not required!

You can bring your pharmaceutical kit with you but be aware that you can easily find medicines on place.

Don't forget to send your medical certificate to the volunteer coordinator before your arrival!

Travel insurance

It is necessary to travel with an insurance, contact your insurance for an international cover. Your credit card can also cover you for a while. Ask your bank.

Note that some insurances are proposing special contracts for volunteering missions like the Cap Volontariat contract of Chapka Assurance.

Safety

For safety, register with your embassy!

Budget

The cost of living in the Philippines is really low compared to western countries.

You should foresee a budget of around 300 euros/343 dollars per month to live and travel here with no worries (excluding the cost of visa renewal).

GOOD TO KNOW

The currency of the Philippines is the Filipino peso (php-₱). In October 2017, 1€ = 55 ₱ = 1$

Meal: 150-200 php
Jeepney ride: 10 php
Tricycle ride: 20 php
Bottle of water: 32 php

Before arriving, get an international credit card for withdrawal and payment.

Don't forget to notify your bank that you are going to the Philippines!

You can easily withdraw money on place but ATM takes 200php per withdraw so don't hesitate to withdraw the maximum amount (10 000php). As we are paying almost everything with cash in the Philippines, it's the best option.

France Volontaire

France Volontaire is a French organization which aims to facilitate international volunteering missions. They can advise, accompany and orient the volunteers before and during their missions. One branch is here in the Philippines! You can meet them on place or contact them at: ev.philippines@france-volontaires.org
Prepare your luggage

What to bring with you?

- Climate in the Philippines is hot and humid so prefer lightweight clothes, cotton... Avoid synthetic.
- A formal dress for events.
- A sweater for air-conditioned places (especially buses).
- Earplugs (if you cannot sleep in a noisy environment).
- An adaptor for your electronic devices (you can find cheaper ones on place).
- Beach and snorkeling equipment (the Philippines are one of the best place to snorkel!)
- Trekking shoes if you want to go to the mountains.
- A raincoat (if rainy season)
- Bed sheets are provided but you can bring yours if you prefer.

Important: Bring your insurance contract and important numbers.

Notice

Dress Code

Even if you are free to dress as you like on your free time, please note that Virlanie Foundation is a working place so these outfits are not allowed:
- Transparent clothes, thin straps or bareback tops, tops revealing bras...
- Plunging necklines, skirts and shorts
- Swimming shorts and beachwear’s
- Sweatpants
- Stained or damaged clothes
- Flip flops (allowed in the homes but not in the main office)

Hygiene

Hygiene is really important for the Filipinos. Showering once a day, at least, and changing clothes every day are the basics!

If you do want to bring in kind donations, look at the need list on Virlanie’s website.

Don’t overload yourself, you can find everything on place!
Your arrival at the airport

Before your departure, book your flight ticket in coordination with the volunteer coordinator to make sure you will be welcomed at the airport. Once your flight booked, let the volunteer coordinator know about your arrival schedule. The easiest way is to directly forward your flight ticket confirmation to the volunteer coordinator.

Be sure to travel with a return ticket for a date included in your visa validity period! Without it, you can be not allowed to take the plane!

To facilitate your pick-up, try to arrive on week days (for traffic reason, avoid Fridays) before 4pm.

Instructions to meet you at the airport...

Terminal 3: After taking your luggage, take the exit on your right, the volunteer coordinator will wait for you there, in the hall.

Terminal 2: Leave the hall and proceed the extension area. The volunteer coordinator will be waiting for you behind the gate, in front of the Duty Free store (yellow). Please note that the Volunteer Coordinator is not allowed to come closer.

If no one can welcome you, these are the recommendation to reach the Foundation

Regular/white cabs are cheaper than the airport/yellow taxi. You will find them in the departure zone. Ask for the meter instead of negotiating.

Ask the driver: Makati City, Vito Cruz extension (Pablo O Campo on the map), Shopwise (near Chino Roces, Pasong Tamo).

Arrived at Shopwise, find Yague Street (cf map below). Landmark: Makati Coliseum

Travel range: 30 to 50 minutes.
Fare: 300-350 php

Your arrival in the Foundation

Immersion

Upon your arrival, you will be welcomed in your immersion home where you will spend your 1st month. Before your departure, read carefully the immersion rules the volunteer coordinator sent to you.

Orientation

On your 1st day, you will be oriented by the volunteer coordinator with an intercultural presentation and a visit of the Foundation. You will be accompanied to change or withdraw money, buy a local sim card...

Policies

Virlanie Foundation is working closely with the Filipino Department of Social Welfare and we all must respect non-disclosure policies. Are prohibited:

- Posting of photos/videos of children on social medias, for custody protection’s reasons.
- Communicating with children who has been adopted, if it is not officially coordinated with the Department of Social Welfare.
- Engaging with our children/beneficiaries on facebook or other social media channels.

Other:
- Initiating a fundraising effort without prior coordination with the Fundraising department.

Follow up

The volunteer coordinator is your referent for everything related to your mission so don’t hesitate to solicit her whenever you need. You will have a monthly one on one interview with the volunteer coordinator to assure the follow up and the smooth running of your mission.

WELCOME!

Immersion

The immersion period is a one-of-a-kind experience, you will live for 1 month with the children of the Foundation and the local staff. It’s time to discover the Filipino culture and sense of hospitality!

Volunteer House

After your immersion, you will be accommodated in the volunteer house (photo above), in colocation with the other volunteers of Virlanie. Respect your housemates and take a proper care of the place, it’s the basics of the life in community!

DESPEDIDA

Organizing a Despedida is a way to express your gratitude to the people who have been there for you during your mission!

It’s in the Virlanie’s traditions to hold a despedida when:
- you are leaving your immersion home as the way of thanking the staff and children. (please coordinate with the home lead)
- you are leaving the Philippines: One at your place and one with the other volunteers.

Advice: Plan it in advance to make sure that people will be able to attend!
LIST OF HOLIDAYS

January 1, Wednesday – New Year’s Day

January 25, Saturday – Chinese New Year

February 25, Tuesday – People power revolution

April 9, Thursday – Araw ng Kagitingan/ Maundy Thursday

April 10, Friday – Good Friday

April 11, Saturday – Black Saturday

May 1, Friday – Labor Day

May 24, Sunday – Eidul Fitr

June 12, Friday – Independence Day

June 24, 2018, Sunday – Manila Day

July 31, Friday – Eidul Adha

August 21, – Friday Ninoy Aquino Day

August 31, Monday – National Heroes’ Day Bonifacio Day

November 1, Sunday – All Saints’ Day

November 2, Saturday – All Souls’ Day

November 30, 2018, Monday – Bonifacio Day

December 08, Tuesday – Immaculate Conception

December 24, Thursday – Christmas Eve

December 25, Friday – Christmas Day

December 30, Wednesday – Rizal Day

December 31, Thursday – New Year’s Eve

– Possibility of Additional Holidays during the year –

In addition of the national regular holidays, all the volunteers benefit with 2 days of holidays per month of mission. Inform the Volunteer Coordinator and your program supervisor of your dates at least 2 weeks ahead.

BON VOYAGE!

For any concern or more information, contact your volunteer coordinator at: Jeanne.gaziglia@virlanie.org