



Bina Antarbudaya
The Indonesian Foundation for Intercultural Learning

SAFETY HANDBOOK

**FOR PARTICIPANTS COMING TO
INDONESIA**

Conecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

TIPS FOR PERSONAL SAFETY

The purpose of AFS is primarily educational. The education we promote is one that enables people to change their perspective through an experience that exposes them to other (country/person) cultures and patterns of thought. It demands an active approach to learning, or learning by doing. We call this approach intercultural learning.

AFS enables people to act as responsible, global citizens, working for peace and understanding in a diverse world. One very important point to reach those goals is to feel safe in a very new environment. What to do or not to do, when, how or where to go?

A primary objective of experiential learning programs such as those offered by AFS is to help the participant learn through observation, question, dialogue, discussion and experience. From experience, AFS staff and volunteers understand that the opportunity to learn is great, but it is not necessarily easy. Participants encounter complex situations along the way and there is potential for confusion, fear and misunderstanding. If participants are left on their own, the consequences could be very distressing. For these reasons, with the help of host families, local community, AFS contacts and project personnel, AFS has devised the system of "Program Support" for all participants providing a wide range of supportive activities and services. The purpose is to provide a "Safety Net", a consistently supportive environment in which participants can ask questions, obtain advice and help.

AFS cannot supply all the possible answers but through our support systems, we can help to guide participants towards asking the right questions.

Indonesia is such a large and varied country with many different communities ranging from large urban cities to small rural villages. As the way of living differs in each community and family, rules and safety tips are also various, so it's not possible to tell what to do or act in every particular situation that you might encounter. The best thing to do is to rely on your own judgment/common sense that you would also do in your own country. One way out is to discuss any concerns you have with your host family and local AFS volunteers.

ID Card and Contact Numbers

Upon your arrival at your host community, as a foreigner you are required to fill in documentation form from Police Department. The volunteers or a member of your host family will be assisting you in this process.

Within 7 days of your arrival in Indonesia, you will have to apply to the local immigration office for your KITAS Card (Temporary Stay Permit Card) and Blue Book (Foreigner's registration book). You are required to bring USD 150 for the permit and it is advisable to bring some spare passport size photos just in case the immigration asks for it.

Please keep in mind that these documents are very important government documents for your stay. If they are lost you will have to go through a long and complicated bureaucracy of obtaining new ones. Please DON'T LOOSE IT.

You have to carry your KITAS card at all times wherever you go, as they are your ID card while in Indonesia. Do not bring your passport with you, unless you have a specific need for it. Make sure you have a copy of each your document at home, in case the original is lost.

Personal Safety Concerns In and Around the Home

Indonesian families are usually protective of their children, and will feel the same toward you. They feel great responsibility for your safety and well being as if you are their own. Whereas you may used to have freedom and less restrictions, their concerns should be seen as a gesture of care and love.

Home is always considered the safest place to be. But even though you're at home, it is always wise to know what safety precautions you have to take. Each community or family has a unique situation, you need to discuss this with your host family.

Some of the things that you may want to ask:

- Habits concerning locking the doors and windows.
- Responding to a knock on the door, what if it is a stranger waiting at the door, etc.
- Answering the phone.
- Giving phone number and address information to people you just met.
- Curfew.
- It is important to know who you should contact in case there is a problem when you are alone at home.

In Indonesia, every community has a neighborhood association (*Rukun Tetangga/RT*). An RT is comprised of several households, while several RT forms an RW (*Rukun Warga*). When you arrive, your family will report your presence to their RT and RW about your being one of the family members. Try to make friends with your neighbors and know the Head of your RT/RW. In cases where you need help and your host family members are not home, you can either go to your neighbor or to the head of your RT/RW. This is especially true in smaller areas, whereas in big cities like Jakarta, people are less collectivistic and tend to mind their own business.

Bina Antarbudaya encourages your host family to share with you about family rules and expectations as soon as you've settled in. However you are also responsible in

asking and discussing those topics with them. If you have questions, don't wait until they tell you or guess how things are; **ASK!**

Personal Safety Concerns Outside the Home

Once you arrived in your host community, orient yourself with the surroundings. The best thing to do that is to ask your host family to show you around and fill you in with some useful tips about how to handle the challenges in the area. Your AFS contact person will also help you getting to know the community. Please pay attention to what these people have to say no matter how unimportant they may sound. Remember that they have lived there longer than you do, so they know the area better.

It is a common practice to let your host family know where you are going, with whom, what you are going to do and when you will return. Ask your host family about what you are going to do and if there is anything risky about it. If you are going to be late, please make sure that you let your host family know, either by telephone or by other ways.

If you are going to a crowded place (i.e.: to the market), it is advisable not to wear jewelry, as it might catch attention to pickpockets. Bring just the amount of money you think you may need.

Some specific things you should discuss with your host family:

- Is it safe to walk around the neighborhood after dark?
- Is it safe to ride the city busses at all times of the day? If not, when is it safe?
- Is it safe to use public toilet facilities? If not, what safe facilities are available?
- Are there areas in the community where it is not safe to be? At night? During the day?
- How to react when a stranger approaches you?

Public Transportation

Public transportation varies from one area to another. In general the transportation can be categorized into two groups. The first one is private public transportation which is not communal and takes one party at a time, such as taxi, *becak*, *bajaj*, *andong/delman*, *ojek*. The fare of these vehicles, except for taxi, is negotiable, therefore you will have to bargain with the driver. It is advisable to ask around the range of price beforehand so you can get a good bargain.

The second kind of transportation is the communal vehicles such as bus, minibus, *angkot*, *train*. Usually the fare is fixed according to the distance you travel. Some buses have fixed fare for any distance you travel. These vehicles do not have schedules to follow.

In big cities, buses and trains are usually very full, especially during the rush hours. You may see some people hanging on the doorway, just as long as they could get on.

This is very dangerous and against the law, and you should refrain from doing it yourself. Just wait for the next bus or train and make sure that you get a place inside. Inside, you should mind your own belongings as pickpockets are often found inside a crowded bus or train.

Personal Safety Concerns in the School

Many High Schools have the same rules that concern the student's safety, for example no smoking, no drinking, and no drugs.

Student fights between schools sometimes happen in bigger cities. For your safety, avoid getting involved in anyway. When you are in a situation which is potential to develop into a fight or when you see that a fight is about to break, it's better to stay away. Even if you only wanted to be a spectator, you could be easily dragged into trouble by just being there.

Every school has a guidance counselor who will give you guidance and advice in understanding and adjusting to your school and its culture. You should feel free to go to them to discuss your concern and questions. Or you can also seek other resources, example the principal, a language teacher or a sympathetic teacher.

Uncomfortable Social Situations

For Indonesians, foreigners from whatever national background, differ in height, hair and eye color, you are different! So like it or not you will sometimes experience that you are being stared at and make comments about. Staring at you has no emotional charge, they are just watching because you are different. This can be overwhelming, but unfortunately there is nothing you can do about this other than tries not to let it bother you too much and ignore the staring.

While walking around, you may hear people call you "*Bule*", which is a slang term for a westerner or European. Sometimes people greet you with "*Hello Mister!*", even if you are a girl. This behavior is not culture specific. Even Indonesian women are sometimes receiving distasteful comments. The best response is no response, or just as you would behave in your own country under the same circumstances.

Our way of clothing also makes a lot of difference to other people in respecting us. To prevent people from staring it is advisable to wear clothes that are not revealing.

People on the street especially in the smaller areas like to nod or smile especially if they think that they feel as if they know you because they often see you pass by. You can just nod or smile back without having to talk. Sometimes people do try to make small conversations. In those cases, trust your judgment. If you feel they are nice people you can talk to them too and you can make more friends that way. However, if you've talked to them for a couple of minutes and feel that their conversations are heading into a direction that you feel unsafe, then just say that you're sorry but you are late for an engagement.

There will be a lot of vendors selling foods and drinks on the street. While they may look very tempting, remember that your stomach is not accustomed to them. First it is better to try in small amount so you can get accustomed to it.

Sexual Harassment

Cultures differ in their views of appropriate sexual behavior and practice between young people. Often clarification of attitudes may be necessary and here, again the advice of people you have come to know and trust is very valuable. Knowledge about the people you socialize with is important, and this acquired best through increasing knowledge of the cultures. Equally important are your own values and beliefs regarding your behavior.

You may be unsure in some situations if you are being sexually harassed or if a particular person's behavior would be considered as normal or just friendly. An important source is your own instinct. Often your host siblings/parents and friends will be able to advise you about what is normal behavior regarding people you do not know. Other people to whom you can turn to for advice or help are the AFS contacts within your community or at the National Office.

Illegal Drugs & Alcohol Abuse

All participants are forbidden to use illegal drugs or substances. Explicit violation of this rule is a cause for dismissal from the program and immediate return to the home country. It is most important that you remember this, should you find yourself in a situation.

When somebody offers you some drugs or alcohol, **JUST SAY NO**. Giving excuses, such as that you don't have money or you don't like it, usually doesn't make the person giving the offer go away, so **JUST SAY NO**.

Special Information

As you may already heard from the mass media in your country, at this moment Indonesia is facing a very challenging time, as the economy is going through a major crises. There have been big-scale disturbances in some parts of Indonesia, and that the tension is increasing. There is no need to panic, however it is very wise to be caution and careful. While hoping that the situation will be calm and that the economic crises will be over by the time you arrive, we would like to advise you to practice the following tips during your stay in Indonesia:

- Exercise prudence and common sense.
- Be sensitive; do not provoke people with comments on economic and political matters that may be perceived as offensive. While they are quite interesting subjects, be sure to practice sensitivity and respect.

- Avoid crowds, demonstrations and other situations that could turn violent. Even if you were just a spectator, you could expose yourself to danger if the situation turned into a riot.
- Do not go out alone, especially at night. Be sure to have somebody with you when you are going somewhere.
- Listen to your host family and Chapter's advice on safety.
- If you suddenly found yourself in the middle of a commotion, don't panic. Try to get out of the crowd, and find your way home. If that is not possible, find the nearest house or other safe place and seek for a shelter. Try to call your host family and chapter volunteers, tell them where you are and the number you can be contacted, and ask for further advice.

Emergencies

In most countries adolescent boys are more likely than girls to find themselves being questioned by the police or other civil authority officer. AFS advises that you show respect and cooperation with authorities, even though you may be innocent of any crime and think you are being treated unfairly.

In such a situation, it is unlikely that you will understand what is being said by the authority figure. In general, the best advice would be to say that you do not understand what is happening and identify yourself as an exchange student. As a foreigner you are obliged to carry your KITAS all times and it is also advisable to always carry a photocopy of your passport. This is important not only in the event of being questioned by authorities, but also in the unfortunate event of a personal accident or if you become the victim of a crime and may not be able to communicate effectively.

Make sure to contact your chapter volunteers for any questions and emergencies. If you are not able to reach them, you or your host family should contact us at the National office.

Natural Disaster

In case of a national emergency such as earthquake, flood, tsunami, erupted volcano, participants should be in close contact with the Chapter and should follow the government or local authority's recommendations. The National Office will provide any necessary help.

Always bring the following contact numbers with you :

Host Family (Home, Host Mother & Father's Office Number)
Chapter President
Hosting Coordinator
Contact Person
Bina Antarbudaya/AFS Indonesia Office

Please be assured that it is our intention to ensure your well being, and we seek your cooperation in this matter. DO NOT FORGET to take this SAFETY TIPS booklet with you, along with the other booklet that we sent to you.



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