



Youthlinc Cultural Committee Cultural Research Worksheet

Committee Members: _____

Site: _____ Date: _____

Cultural Research Template

What Home Visits Are

Use this template to research your host country's etiquette, social norms, and traditions. Your goal is to help prepare the team so we enter the community with respect, awareness, and cultural humility. Your committee will use this research to present important cultural information to the team before departure.

How to Research This Information

Your research should come from multiple reliable sources. Avoid relying on only one website or assumption.

Ways to gather information include:

- Google research about cultural norms and etiquette
- Government or tourism cultural etiquette guides
- Speaking with the In Country Coordinator (ICC)
- Asking community partners or local leaders
- Contacting past Youthlinc team leaders or mentors who have visited the site
- Reading reports or notes from previous teams

Things to Research

Greetings and Respectful Behavior

How do people typically greet each other?

Things to research:

- Handshakes or bowing
- Eye contact
- Physical touch
- Greetings for elders or leaders
- Common greeting phrases

Notes:

Important greeting phrases to learn:

Dress Expectations

What is considered respectful clothing in this community?

Things to consider:

- Shoulders covered
- Shorts vs pants
- Skirts or dresses
- Religious expectations
- School or community norms

Notes:

Cultural Do's and Don'ts

List behaviors that show respect and behaviors that should be avoided.

Things we should do

- _____
- _____
- _____

Things we should avoid

- _____
- _____
- _____

Family and Community Structure

What is important to understand about family and community life?

Examples:

- Role of elders
- Family structure
- Community leadership
- Respect for teachers or leaders

Notes:

Food and Dining Norms

What should volunteers know about meals or food customs?

Examples:

- Eating with hands vs utensils
- Accepting food politely
- Hospitality expectations

- Meal etiquette

Notes:

Cultural Customs and Traditions

Research traditions or practices important to the community.

Examples:

- Holidays or celebrations
- Religious traditions
- Cultural values
- Community gatherings

Notes:

Sensitive Topics to Avoid

Are there topics that may be uncomfortable or inappropriate?

Examples:

- Politics
- Religion
- Money or income
- Personal hardships

Notes:

Key Cultural Values

What values are important in this culture?

Examples:

- Hospitality
- Respect for elders
- Community cooperation
- Family pride

Notes:

Cultural Pitfalls to Avoid

Sometimes misunderstandings happen when people unintentionally judge or compare cultures. Your job is to help the team avoid common mistakes.

Examples of cultural pitfalls include:

- Comparing life in the community to life in the United States
- Expressing shock about living conditions
- Making jokes about traditions, accents, or customs
- Assuming our way of doing things is better
- Taking photos without permission
- Showing pictures of food or exquisite meals

Write 3–5 reminders for the team:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What Our Team Should Remember

List the most important things the team should keep in mind when interacting with the community.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Team Presentation Plan

How will you share this research with the team?

- Short presentation
- Handout
- Visual examples
- Demonstration of greetings

Presentation Date (coordinate with TL): _____

If there are multiple presentations, who will be presenting on what, when?

Notes:

Entering the Community with Humility

As you prepare to enter the community, remember that we are guests. Our role is not to judge, compare, or try to “fix” the way people live. Every community has deep knowledge, traditions, and strengths that deserve respect.

Approach each interaction with curiosity and humility. Listen more than you speak. Be mindful of your reactions, especially when you encounter things that feel unfamiliar or different from what you are used to. Avoid expressing shock, pity, or comparison. Difference does not mean deficiency.

Many community members are proud of their homes, their work, and the lives they have built for their families. Your role is to honor that pride and approach every interaction with gratitude, respect, and a willingness to learn.

The goal of cultural exchange is not to teach others how we live. It is to build understanding, connection, and mutual respect.