



A STUDY ON FILIPINO VALUES

A Primer

What is the research for?

As part of the government's Filipino Values Formation Program, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) conducted this research that seeks to determine the different values upheld across the country, so that Filipinos can continue to embody these values to strengthen the Filipino society through widespread implementation in partnership with educational institutions. This executes Chapter 7 of the Philippine Development Plan which states that "the inculcation of values to promote the common good."

The research aims to answer the question: "What is important for the Filipinos?" or "What do Filipinos value at present?" Surveys and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted nationwide, participated by Filipinos from different places and sectors. Part of the research is for Filipinos to articulate why these values are important for them. The values determined by the research will help in the implementation of *AmBisyon Natin 2040*.

What Filipino values were identified by the research?

After a year of research, 19 common and shared values were identified. The values mentioned are as follows:

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|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Family | 11. Life and Purpose |
| 2. Education | 12. Human Rights |
| 3. Faith | 13. Environment |
| 4. Health and Wellness | 14. Love for Country |
| 5. Basic Needs | 15. Happiness |
| 6. Self | 16. Kapuwa |
| 7. Work and Livelihood | 17. Culture, Arts, and Sciences |
| 8. Peace and Development | 18. Governance |
| 9. Honesty and Integrity | 19. Creative Excellence |
| 10. Resilience | |

The following is an elaboration on these values and connected themes:

Family

Family is of utmost importance to Filipinos. For them, family becomes a source of strength and inspiration to brave through challenges in life. This is also where one first learns the value of respect, kindness, love, and faith in God.

Many Filipinos still believe in the importance of a traditional family structure, with the father and the mother being the "*haligi*" and "*ilaw*" respectively, while the children reciprocate the love and support given to them by their parents. However, many think of family beyond the nuclear structure. Including in the definition are the cousins, aunts and uncles, even in-laws, nieces and nephews. Some respondents thought farther, considering neighbors, friends, groups, church mates, clanmates and tribemates, even pets as family.

In other words, Filipino family structures are traditional, and yet they change with the times, where single parenthood and same-sex parenting are also embraced. In any case, Filipinos still believe that above all else, family comes first. "Pamilya among daganan."



Education

Education is an important achievement for many Filipinos, for even though the child first learns at home, it is through education that one learns further about the world, about good manners, and just and humane treatment of others. An ideal education provides opportunities not only to learn about lessons in school, but also on how to interact in society.

For many Filipinos, education serves as the way to a better future. Sustainable education ensures better job security. For impoverished families especially, their children getting proper education gives them a chance to lift themselves out of poverty. Such is its value that parents are willing to give their lives to ensure their children get the best education they deserve, from paying the tuition to giving their child's daily allowance.

However, many think that the current state of education is facing multiple problems — from lack of proper facilities and equipment to lack of focus among students through their frequent exposure to gadgets. Despite this, education is still a valuable asset for Filipinos who will try to attain it as much as they can.



Faith

For a lot of Filipinos, faith is an important force in their lives. Some think that believing in a higher being affects their daily lives and their overall character and that this is where they get their sense of right and wrong. Some think too that faith gives them resilience to go through life's challenges — the belief that someone is always there to help them. "Nasa Diyos ang awa, nasa tao ang gawa."

God for the Filipinos is the Supreme Being, "ang labaw sa tanan." For the indigenous peoples (IPs) in Iloilo, God is the source of all and knows everything. For the Ivatans, God is the center of everything. Their lands are sacred for they are given to them by God: "Doon tayo nagmula't doon tayo babalik." This shows that everything is connected, and though God is called by different names—*Magbabadya*, *Dwata*, *Allah*, *Abba*, and others—Filipinos believe that there is one God who created everything.

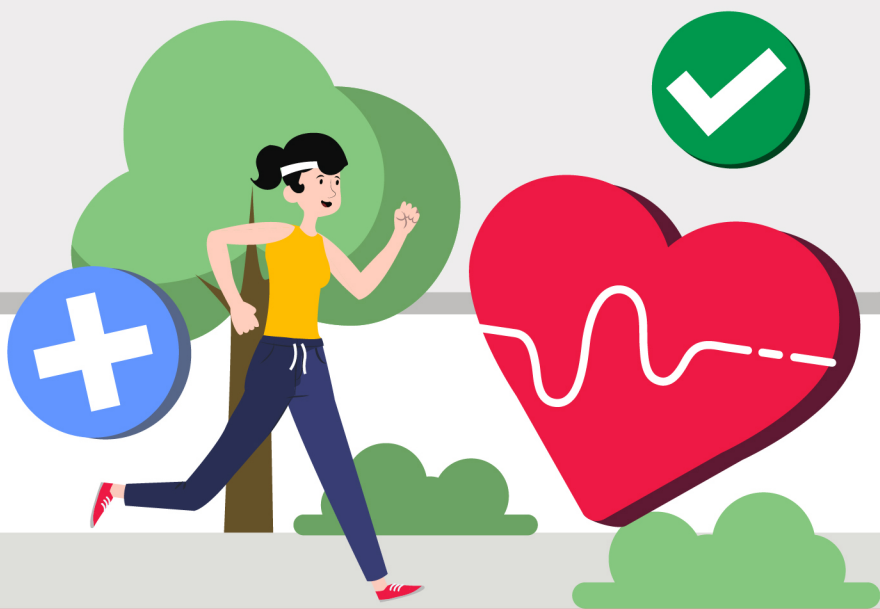


Health and Wellness

One famous commercial slogan that goes like “*Bawal magkasakit*,” holds true for Filipinos. Health and wellness are a priority because this serves as some sort of investment to accomplish what they want to do in life. Health and wellness range from the physical to mental, as well as spiritual. It is important that all three are equally healthy.

How does one achieve this? Some believe that it can be achieved through having a proper diet, exercising, ensuring a sound mental health, avoiding bad habits and cultivating good ones, and maintaining a spiritual connection with God.

For most people, the government plays a big role in maintaining the overall health of the population — from proper hospital services to accessible medicine and assistance. In other words, health is not only about the self, but is also connected to the society.



Basic Needs

For Filipinos, food, shelter, clothing, and medicine are the basic needs essential to function in their daily lives and help them live as humans with dignity. Anyone who does not attain these needs will have a hard time to be humane to others. It is important, therefore, that one maintains a sustainable livelihood where he/she can achieve these basic needs.

However, it is not enough to just attain the basic needs. A comfortable life means being able to have a stable job where salary comes regularly to pay for the bills. For others, being able to afford luxuries beyond basic needs is important.

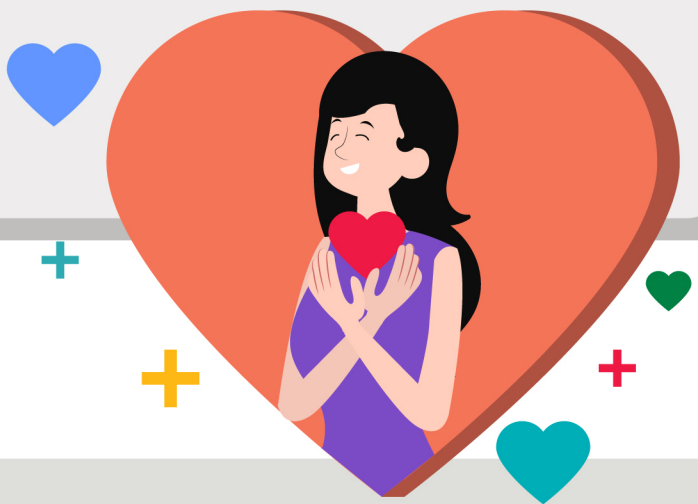


Self

To be able to show one's true self, to display the values one has learned from family, religion, and community, and to express oneself are important for many Filipinos. To do this, one must be able to cultivate a strong sense of integrity.

Possessing high self-esteem is therefore vital. But where does one get a healthy sense of self? For some, having a purpose in life helps. Others follow their passions which give them something worth pursuing. For a few, it comes from doing noble deeds, and having a strong set of habits and values, such as respect and sense of responsibility.

The source from where one develops a strong sense of self varies from one Filipino to another. Many believe that growth is a life-long process. It is important, therefore, to develop healthy habits to ensure one grows properly, to always do self-evaluation, take responsibility for one's wrongs and correct them, and to avoid unhealthy habits and relationships. A person who cultivates a sound sense of self contributes to his/her society in a positive manner.



Work and Livelihood

Having work and a livelihood helps one provide basic needs for oneself and one's family. For those who are in rural places, having a stable source of income ensures that one's daily needs are achieved, like food, housing, education, and health needs. A secured job means a secured mind and secured family life. *"Pag may kabuhayan, tahimik ang buhay. Walang mag-iisip na magnakaw, kasi meron naman siya."*

It is important to strike a balance between having a stable job and acquiring more. Some Filipinos budget carefully, making sure they do not spend beyond their means. Beyond fulfilling their needs, Filipinos also value careers that make them happy despite the stress that they might experience. Though Filipinos face many challenges in terms of work, such as contractualization and lack of opportunities, the value of hardwork still shines through.



Peace and Development

Peace and development are connected. When one has inner peace, it manifests in their treatment of other people. This peace, in turn, contributes to a peaceful society. The government, however, has a significant role in maintaining this peace by providing its citizens with equal protection under the law and the right to work, to study, to practice religion, and express themselves. For some, an indication of a peaceful society is lack of nuisance in the community like terrorism, crime, gossiping, extrajudicial killings (EJK), planting of evidence, or unjust implementation of martial law.

Respect, mercy, unity, acceptance, truth, and peace are of utmost importance in a progressive society. It is crucial to teach these values starting from childhood. In other words, peace begins at home when parents raise their children well. A family that is well-provided with their basic needs and has a stable livelihood almost always ensures that a child will grow up well-mannered.

Beyond home and the school, the government plays a huge role in peace and development. Without peace, there is no progress. A peaceful and productive community paves the way for a progressive country. Thus, ***AmBisyon 2040*** aims to promote development through peace.



Honesty and Integrity

Honesty and integrity are two connected concepts, and both values that should be embodied by an ideal public servant. For government employees, these are especially important, and they are evident from the smallest things such as going to work early to major actions such as, resisting the culture of corruption.

However, one does not have to be involved in the government to be honest. For the Ivatans, for example, this value is reflected in their "Honesty Store." It shows that a community's economic progress is tied to honesty. For those in the creative fields, honesty comes from one's faithfulness to work and values. For the business sector, their enterprise is built on an honesty relationship between the employers and employees. It shows that in any aspect of Filipino society, honesty and integrity are of utmost importance.



Resilience

In a country often struck by natural disasters, resilience is a much-needed value. How does one remain resilient? For the respondents, it comes mainly from four things: family, faith, hard work, and positive acceptance of one's current situation.

There are two types of resilience: one that comes from the self and one that comes from the community. Resilience is developed first within the self when one is strong enough to face challenges. It is also seen when one saves up for rainy days. Keeping one's business afloat despite disasters is also an example of resilience of the self.

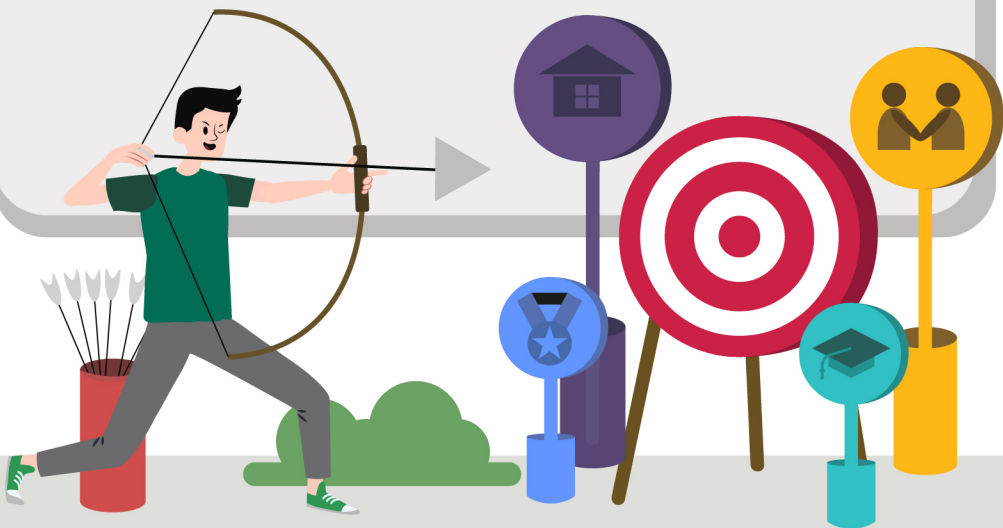
For the community, it manifests through "bayanihan", when one can give selflessly to others. An example of this is seen when Mt. Pinatubo erupted and on how local businesses worked together to lift the community from the ashes of the disaster. The concepts of individual and community resilience are therefore connected.



Life and Purpose

A Filipino saying goes "*Habang may buhay, may pag-asa.*" Many mentioned that their lives and their purpose are of importance. Having a purpose in life for some is the key to happiness. However, what is this "purpose"? For some, it comes from having a dream and working hard to achieve it; for others, it is through helping their families and others. Some mentioned having a precious education or creating a lasting impact to one's community. Being content with oneself for several is enough a purpose to live.

Determining whatever one's purpose is important. Those who lack purpose often fall astray, getting into destructive habits and doing things that do not contribute to their or the community's well-being. Often, it comes from external influences; ultimately, the value of life is lost especially when it happens due to inhumane ways of taking the life of others like extrajudicial killings.



Human Rights

While Filipinos believe in treating each other equally, many underprivileged sectors in our society are deprived of their fundamental rights. Thus, these sectors view rights valuable.

These sectors face different challenges in exercising their human rights. For IPs, it concerns the continued practice of traditions and upholding their rights to their ancestral lands; for the Moros, the biases against their religious identity; for PWDs, the lack of inclusion; for women and LGBTQIA++, the discrimination based on their gender; and for the poor people, the lack of opportunities. Despite their different concerns, each group believes that these problems intersect with one another, and that not one is heavier than the other. It is important for them, therefore, that they work together in ensuring not one is left behind when it comes to equal rights.



Environment

Kina-iyahan in Bisaya and *aglawlaw* in Ilocano, the concept of environment is important to all Filipinos regardless where they come from. Lives and livelihoods depend on nature. An environment in peril also puts lives and cultures at risk.

With the current state of the environment in the country, Filipinos expressed their concerns regarding the depletion of natural resources: from illegal logging and the destruction of agricultural lands, to irresponsible use of plastic materials and dangerous chemicals. Livelihoods, health, and peace are threatened by these destructive practices.

It is important for Filipinos, therefore, to work together to take care of the God-given natural resources, to ensure the present and future generations.



Love for Country

Filipinos have different ways of showing love for their country. It can be seen through OFWs sacrificing their lives to work abroad even though they would love to stay in the country. It is manifested by soldiers who are willing to put their lives on the line to protect the sovereignty of the Filipinos. Even in small things, such as respecting laws and buying locally made products, Filipinos show their love for the motherland.

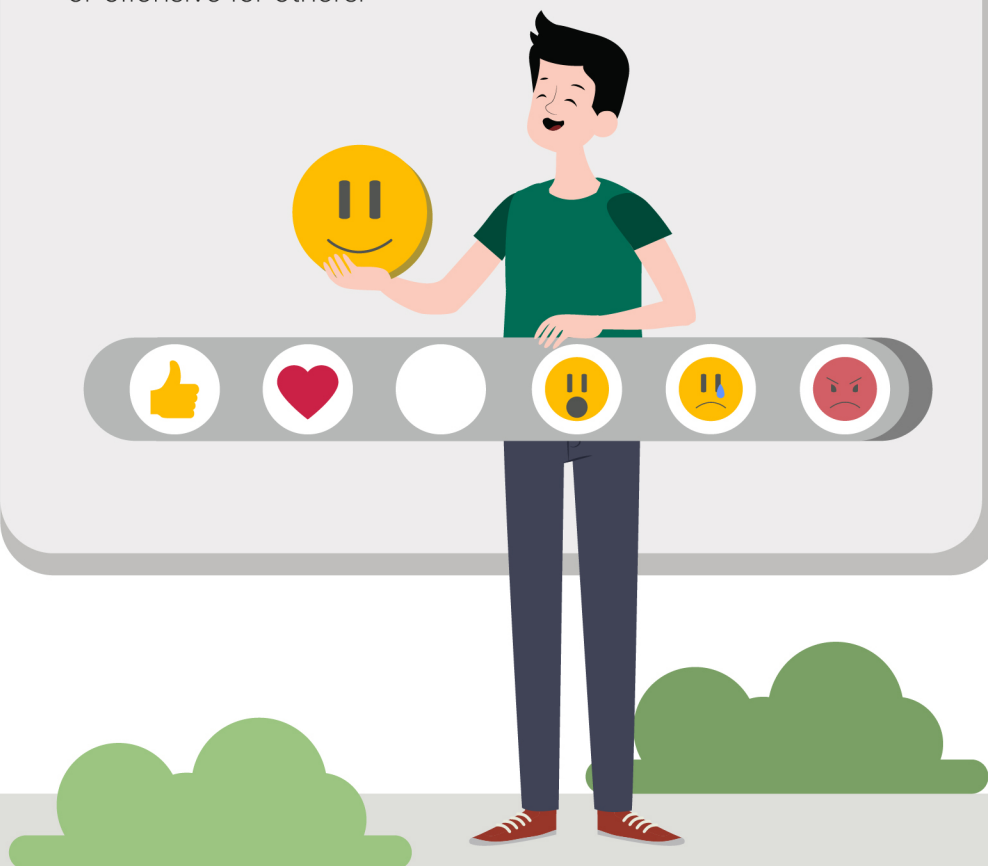
However, Filipinos have observed that this love for the Motherland has been weakening lately. For some, it comes from prioritizing oneself over the country such as when political dynasties prioritize the "*kanya-kanya*" mentality. For many, it is important to elect politicians who will respond to national concerns such as poverty, corruption, and other factors that contribute to the overall weakening of Filipinos' sense of patriotism.



Happiness

Filipinos are known to be happy people. Filipinos always find reasons to smile despite life's difficulties. However, how is this manifested? The youth say that having a positive outlook helps. For the creative ones, being able to produce an artwork makes them happy. Many mentioned families, friends, and their communities as sources of happiness. To see them happy already gives them joy.

Another manifestation of Filipinos' happy disposition is their brand of humor. Filipinos laugh off problems and become more resilient because of it. Some Filipinos think, however, that this can be unhealthy, especially if the humor becomes shallow or offensive for others.



Kapuwa

Kapuwa is a core Filipino value, a word that encompasses both the self and the other. The good that the family, neighbors, and community receives is always considered in everything one does. This is emphasized by the saying, "*Ang kapuwa ko ay ako rin.*"

One only has to look at "*bayanihan*," once referring to the communal effort to transport homes from one place to another. Nowadays it could also mean being helpful to one's kapuwa even in the simplest things, such as in wedding celebrations, livelihood, funerals, and others. Even in sharing one's food or displaying hospitality to visitors is an act of bayanihan.

"*Utang na loob*" (debt of gratitude) is also connected to kapuwa, although it could affect one in both positive and negative ways. On the one hand, through *utang na loob*, Filipinos learn to reciprocate the help received from others. However, on the other hand, values are often compromised when utang na loob is prioritized over own morals such as supporting a *padrino* system of politics. Aside from this, some mention that technology and modernization can distantiate *kapuwa* and are creating problems on how people connect with each other. Too much materialism created by capitalist structures develops a culture of competition and selfishness among Filipinos and puts a price on the help extended to them erasing the real essence of selfless giving towards one's *kapuwa*.



Culture, Arts, and Sciences

The word “culture” encompasses history, identity, and expression such as songs, dances, or other products that reflect the values of a group. When one passes this heritage to future generations, especially for indigenous peoples, it helps safeguard one’s culture.

In a place with multiple cultures like the Philippines, it is important to be immersed not only in one’s own culture but in other’s as well. Through this, one develops sensitivity to cultures outside his/her own. It is vital, therefore, that respect for one’s own and another person’s culture is taught at a young age.

Culture also faces another problem; with modernization, some languages, indigenous knowledge systems, practices and other artifacts are threatened and slowly disappearing. It is important that, along with the scientific community, the government develops a program that supports the safeguarding of endangered cultures.



Governance

Filipinos value a strong and reliable government — a government that is governed by an authority figure, one who has good leadership and vision, knows how to discipline his/her citizens, and is never selfish. A governance that lacks these values will lead to its country's downfall.

What does it mean exactly to be an ideal government? Some of the characteristics mentioned are its ability to respond to basic needs, equal implementation of its laws, concern for culture and environment, and absence of corruption. The last one, however, is a significant concern for most Filipinos nowadays and contributes to their mistrust of the government.

Filipinos recognize, however, that they have roles to play to contribute to the government's success such as obeying and respecting the laws of the country and participating in government functions, such as electing rightful politicians.



Creative Excellence

While creativity is often connected to the arts, creative excellence is also a value in everyday life. In a society filled with daily struggles, creative ways of sustaining oneself is important for survival.

In the business field, creativity manifests through high quality products especially in a field with many competitors. A highly creative product is a reflection of how much a society prizes creativity. In the field of arts, especially in the Philippines where it is not so much sustainable to pursue as a career, creating something often demands time and effort that goes beyond what one can normally give. One needs, therefore, to make sacrifices to be creative.

However, creative excellence should also be in the service of others. The youth say that their most creative ideas are fostered in one's down times, and often, they can draft plans that benefit their fellow Filipinos. When combined with hard work, they are able to execute these plans and produce a desired creative output in the end.



Sectoral Values



Some sectors of the Filipino society identify values that are specific to their context. For the indigenous peoples (IPs), it is maintaining their ancestral domains and keeping indigenous knowledge, systems, and practices (IKSP) alive.

For the business sector, it is incorporating social responsibility; for the Moro people, the practice of Islam; for women, empowerment that enables equality of sexes; for LGBTQIA++, acceptance in society; for the PWD, inclusion in the legal, societal, as well as in a “philosophical” sense where they are viewed as whole and not defined by their disabilities, and for the military, it is possessing a sense of honor.



These results show that other than the shared Filipino values, various groups may uphold their own respective values.

Conclusion

Overall, one can observe that traditional Filipino values have remained the same: family-centered, faith and virtue-based, sympathetic for others (kapuwa), and education-oriented. Filipinos reiterate the importance of values related to society such as good governance, love for country, honesty and integrity. As for personal values, value of the self, life and purpose, resilience, and happiness are important.

However, there were changes in the articulation of values such as health and wellness, the focus on basic needs, work and livelihood, concern for human rights, peace and development, protection of the environment, awareness on the importance of culture and heritage, and creative excellence. Hopefully, these values will be taught to all Filipinos in schools and communities and will be integrated in different sectors of society, both private and public, to ensure a stronger Philippines, working for the common good.



Credits

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