

CONCLUSION

First seek to understand and then to be understood. Canadians must learn to listen and listen to learn if they are to develop successful partnerships in the Philippines.

Be sensitive to the differences between yourself and your counterparts. Once you have received a briefing on the Philippines and its culture, take time to learn more. Even after six months you should still be asking questions and trying to understand. Filipinos will be polite and will tell you that you are doing the right thing, even when you are not. Seek the assistance of your Philippine sponsor, someone who will take you around, introduce you, and help you find your way through the systems.

No matter how much you have read about the Philippines, avoid feeling that your knowledge is superior. If you tell Filipinos you know little about their country and culture, they will be relieved. One consultant, who believed he could ingratiate himself by showing how much he knew about the Philippines and its problems, ended up insulting his partners. It took them six months to get over it.

The development of a successful partnership is a two-way process. Learn from each other. Be willing to adapt. Instead of criticizing or attempting to fix things that do not appear to be working, offer information. Act as a facilitator. For example, use your Canadian and international connections to get journal articles, scientific papers, reports, and policy documents for others to use. Assist your Filipino colleagues in developing a model that works in the Philippines, one they will keep up long after your return to Canada.

The complexity of Filipino culture provides an exciting and demanding work environment for Canadians. Most arrive with enthusiasm, professional commitment, and a genuine desire to help. Success does not come easily.

Although this guide has focused on the differences between Filipino and Canadian culture, people from the two countries have much in common that can help bridge communication gaps.

We hope your stay in the Philippines is enjoyable and rewarding.