

Section One - Fact Sheets

Fact Sheet 1: Mercy in Action

(Slides 3 and 4 are relevant for this section)

Education in Action

Mercy in Action currently supports over 400 children on its education programme. About 50 of those are at Tapul School, the school shown on the DVD. Some of these children are recommended by the schools for sponsorship because they are in the bracket of the 10% poorest families who would otherwise be unable to educate their children. Others are known personally by Mercy in Action because their family already attends the Drop-in Centre where they receive food.

The sponsorship programme is needed because, whilst education in the Philippines is theoretically free, everything that is needed to ensure a child can attend school has to be paid for, including uniform, books, shoes, stationery and school certificates. The sponsorship money also provides a meal for the child and pays for medical bills should the need arise. Often poor families do not send their children to school because the children have to work to help support the family.

Since Mercy in Action started in 1999:

- Over 1,000 children have been sponsored through primary and secondary school
- Around 5,800 hot, nutritious meals are provided for children every month
- More than 60 native houses have been built to keep families together
- Over 10 huge containers full of clothing, food and gifts have been sent
- 12 UK charity shops have been opened to help support the work, and more are on the way

Fact Sheet 2: The Philippines

(Slides 5-12 are relevant for this section)

The Philippines is a country in Southeast Asia in the Western Pacific Ocean. It is made up of over 7,000 islands, stretching for over 1,120 miles. The nearest countries are Taiwan (to the north), Vietnam (to the west) and Borneo (to the south-west).

The Philippines is a land of contrasts. Its tropical climate means that there are beautiful palm-fringed islands and dazzlingly white beaches beside the turquoise blue sea, but also thundering volcanoes and typhoons that rage every year; fertile paddy fields and lush tracts of rainforest, but also rivers like open sewers and bare, scorched mountains. The highest mountain, Mount Apo, is a dormant volcano. In 2013, one of the largest typhoons to ever reach land hit the Philippines, causing total destruction to many cities, towns and villages.

The unit of currency is the Peso.

People who live in the Philippines are known as 'Filipino'.

Quick Facts/Background

| | The Philippines | UK |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Area (sq. Miles) | 115,831 | 93,788 |
| Population | 99 million | 63 million |
| Average weekly income for construction worker | 600 pesos (£10 per week) | £300-£400 per week |
| No. cars | Less than 6 million | Over 32 million |
| Paved roads | 20,000 miles | 250,000 miles |
| Length of coastline | 22,549 miles | 7,723 miles |
| Highest mountain | Mount Apo 2954 metres | Ben Nevis 1344 metres |

In 1521, the Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan arrived in the Philippines and claimed the islands for Spain. In 1542 another Spanish explorer named the islands the 'Felipinas' after Prince Philip of Spain. America took control of The Philippines in the 19th Century following years of war and America then governed the islands until the Japanese invaded in 1935. The country was politically unstable until 1945 when the Philippines gained independence. After World War II the country was the second wealthiest in East Asia, after

Japan. However, since the 1960s the country has suffered both political and economic crisis. The daily income for 45% of the population is now less than £1.50.

Climate

The Philippines has a tropical maritime climate and is usually hot and humid. There are three seasons: summer from March to May, the rainy season from June to November, the cool dry season from December to February. The coolest month is January and the warmest is May.

| | The Philippines | The UK |
|--|--|---------|
| Average temp in coldest/hottest months | 21-32 °C | 4-17 °C |
| Average annual rainfall | 1,000mm in the valleys 5,000mm in the mountains | 1200mm |

Biodiversity

The Philippines rainforests and its extensive coastlines make it home to a huge range of birds, plants, animals and sea creatures. Around 1,100 land vertebrate species can be found in the Philippines including over 100 mammal and 170 birds not thought to exist anywhere else. Native animals include the flying lemur, pythons, cobras and the national bird, the Philippine eagle. The rainforests contain many rare types of orchids. The coral reefs are home to pearls, crabs and seaweed.

Did you know...?

- The Philippines is one of the top 10 countries in the world in terms of biodiversity. Its rainforests and extensive coastlines make it home to a diverse range of birds, plants, animals and sea creatures
- The most popular sports in the Philippines are basketball and volleyball

- The Philippines is one of the most populated countries of the world, with over 92 million people
- There are over 170 individual languages in the Philippines. Filipino (also called Tagalog) and English are the official languages

Did you know...?

- More than 90% of the population are Christians, with about 80% belonging to the Catholic Church.
- Rice is the primary staple food of the Philippines. Most Filipinos will eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner, every day.
- The Filipinos call the coconut tree the Tree of Life as they use every part of it.
- Coconuts are one of the country's main exports.
- The Philippine Eagle, also known as the Monkey Eating Eagle, is the national bird. It has brown and white coloured plumage, and a shaggy crest, and generally measures 86 -102cm long and weighs up to 8kg. It is the world's largest eagle in terms of length. However it is under threat of extinction due to deforestation.
- Bamboo is grown in the Philippines and has many uses, including house building in rural areas



The Philippines Eagle,
the national bird

Rice is eaten three
times a day by most
Filipinos



Fact Sheet 3: The Coconut

(Slides 13-15 accompany this section)

Filipinos call the coconut palm the 'Tree of Life' because they use every part of it. The Philippines is the largest producer of coconuts in the world, producing almost 20 million tonnes of coconuts per year. The coconut industry is worth £500 million per year in the Philippines.

Coconuts are grown in more than 80 countries of the world, all within the tropics. The main conditions required for growing coconuts are plenty of sun, regular rainfall and high humidity. Coconut palms like sandy soil and tolerate salt spray, so they are often grown near the coast.

It is thought that the term 'coco' comes from the Spanish and Portuguese explorers in the 16th Century who thought that the base of the brown hairy coconut shell with its three holes looked like a witch called 'Coco'. Coco can also mean 'grinning face' or 'grimace'. The English added the word 'nut' onto 'coco'.

One of the first nursery rhymes that Filipino children learn is about the coconut:

'The coconut nut is a giant nut; if you eat too much you get very fat'

Coconut Facts

- The coconut is not a nut; it is a 'drupe.'
- A coconut palm grows up to 30 meters tall and can yield between 30-75 coconuts per year
- A full sized coconut weighs about 1.4 kg (about the same as 1.5 bags of sugar)
- It is often claimed that a person is more likely to be killed by a falling coconut than a shark.
- The coconut palm can be damaged by certain species of moth and butterfly and the coconut leaf beetle which feeds on young leaves.
- In the Philippines, coconuts are harvested by workers who climb the trees using notches cut into the trunk.

What is the coconut used for?



1. Coir

Coir is the name given to the fibre from the outer hairy husk of the coconut. This is usually removed from those sold in UK shops. It is used to make ropes, mats, brushes, sacks, caulking for boats and stuffing for mattresses.

2. Leaves

In the Philippines, rice is wrapped in coconut leaves for cooking and subsequent storage; these packets are called 'puso'. The leaves can also be used for making brooms and baskets and for roof thatching and woven into mats.

3. Husks and Shells

The husk and shells can be used for fuel. In the Philippines, a dried half coconut shell with husk known as a 'bunot' is used to buff floors (and we have one of these to show you).

4. The Nut

The white fleshy part of the seed is the edible part of the coconut. This is used fresh or dried in cooking. Coconut is a very nutritious food, full of fibre, vitamins and minerals. In the Philippines grated coconut is used in the preparation of many dishes. Here in the UK, coconut is used in many sweet dishes including macaroons. There are some coconut recipes at the end of this fact sheet which you can try at home or school.

Copra is the term given to dried coconut flesh. It can be processed to make coconut oil which is used as an ingredient in cooking, for frying and for making soap and cosmetics.

Coconut Milk

Coconut milk is made by pouring hot water or milk through grated coconut, which extracts the oil and aromatic compounds. Coconut milk is known as 'gata' in the Philippines and coconut jam is made by mixing muscovado sugar with coconut milk. Coconut milk is frequently added to curry dishes and other savoury recipes.

Coconut Water

The clear liquid within the coconut is coconut water. It is a refreshing drink in the tropics and is becoming popular as an isotonic sports drink in the western world. Young coconuts will contain more water and less white flesh. Depending on the size, a coconut will contain between 300 ml and 1 litre of coconut water.

Sap

The sap derived from incising the flower clusters of the coconut is known as tuba in the Philippines. When left to ferment it becomes palm wine. When palm wine is distilled it produces an alcoholic drink, known in the Philippines as 'coconut vodka'. The sap can also be boiled to create a sweet syrup or palm sugar.

Coconut Activities

Below are some ideas for coconut themed activities that you could carry out with your class.

- Encourage the children to try coconut or coconut water
- Make a Coconut Bird Feeder using half a coconut and string
- Decorate a coconut
- Cook with coconut

➤ On the next page are coconut recipes. You can print these out if you wish to do them in school, or send them home with the children

Coconut Recipes

Coconut Ice Squares

Ingredients:

250g condensed milk
250g sifted icing sugar
200g desiccated coconut
Optional food colouring



Instructions:

1. Mix together the condensed milk, coconut and icing sugar in a large bowl. It will get very stiff. Use your hands if easier.
2. Split the mix into two and knead a small amount of food colouring into one half. Dust a board with icing sugar, then shape each half into a smooth rectangle and place one on top of the other. Roll with a rolling pin, re-shaping with your hands every couple of rolls, until you have a rectangle of two-tone coconut ice about 3cm thick
3. Transfer to a plate or board and leave uncovered for at least 3 hours or overnight to set. Cut into squares with a sharp knife and pack into bags or boxes.
4. They will keep for a month if stored in an airtight container.

Coconut Flap Jack

Ingredients:

100g margarine

25g sugar

200g oats

50g desiccated coconut

2 tablespoons golden syrup

Handful of chopped dried fruit (apricots, raisins, cherries)



Instructions:

1. Melt the margarine, sugar and golden syrup in a large pan.
2. Mix in the oats and coconut and dried fruit of your choice
3. Turn into a greased 20 cm square tin and push down with the back of a fork
4. Bake for approx 25 minutes at 175 °C until golden brown
5. Allow to cool for a few minutes before cutting into squares