



1. The origin of this tour

A chance for the students of the Sophia School of Social Welfare to start this experience tour in the Philippines came in 1979, when the President of Sophia University, Father Joseph Pittau, told the Principal of the School of Social Welfare, Father Xavier Garralda, the following piece of good news. "Sophia has received a sizable gift from a Dutch company. I want you to make plans to take some School of Social Welfare students to Asia to study the welfare conditions there."

A report remains from the late Professor Inoue Hideharu (lecturer in the School of Social Welfare, Professor in the University), who experienced the first overseas research trip to the Philippines. He wrote that Principal Garralda of the School of Social Welfare went to the Philippines himself to check on the possibilities for such a study tour to be based on student experiences. There he had meetings with local Church officials and with social workers; from their suggestions, he created a feasible plan. In 1980 from March 6th until March 20th, the first Philippines inspection and experience tour took place.

The thirty-six participants in this first tour included mostly current students in the School of Social Welfare, with some graduates. School Principal Garralda and Professor Inoue participated as leaders. Since part of the travel expenses were covered by scholarships based on the contributions from the Netherlands, the financial burden on the participants was somewhat eased. During this first trip, the group visited three cities: Manila, Davao, and Cebu. In each city, the participants were able to stay with host families. They visited various social welfare facilities and the hospice with the name *House for those awaiting death* that had been established by Mother Teresa's



The upper picture shows the participants in the first inspection and experience tour to the Philippines, with some of the local staff. The third person from the left in the rear line is Principal Garralda; Professor Inoue is at the right end of the line of persons standing in the rear of the picture. The lower picture shows children at one of the social welfare institutions that the participants visited.

Sisters of Charity. Some days were set aside for group sightseeing tours or for swimming in the sea.

This tour found a lasting spot in the memories of many of the participants, so the result that had been expected from the experience learning program was achieved. The second tour was held in March of 1981 (Manila and Baggio) and the third tour was held in the same year in August (Manila and Cebu).

2. To achieve some continuity, the participants set up an organizational structure.

A group of the 1980 tour participants set up an organization in September of the same year. They called this organization the Pantai Association. This name comes from a Tagalog expression *pantai pantai* that means “equally respectful to each other”. At the school festival of the School of Social Welfare that year, the new group sponsored a variety of related activities: an exhibition of pictures from their tour, a bazaar whose proceeds would go as contributions to some of the welfare institutions in the Philippines, and a slide show plus talk show that treated some of the social problems that people in the Philippines had to face. During the two-year period that followed, this Pantai Association continued to sponsor explanation meetings about the tour and a charity bazaar at the school festival.

In October of 1982, some participants of the fourth trip to the Philippines held earlier that year offered a proposal to create an organization that included members from all four tours. They worked diligently to make their plan a reality. They recruited members from all the earlier tours and they pushed along their organizational plan through many gatherings of interested persons. Finally, in March of 1983, they created the new *Halohalo Association*. The word *Halohalo* in Tagalog means mixed up or jumbled together. It referred to a popular dessert in the Philippines with a crushed ice base over which jelly, fruits, sweet boiled beans or sweet potatoes, ice cream, and the like are all mixed together and eaten. In 1990, there was a brief boom or fad for this dessert in Japan. The tour participants had enjoyed eating the authentic dessert. This spirit of being all jumbled together was typical of what they hoped for from their new association.

The activities of the Halohalo Association continued those of the earlier Paitai group. They sponsored bazaars and exchanges of experiences among the tour participants and they provided supports for the annual tour. Eventually the tours came to be sponsored by the Halohalo Association.

The first experience learning tours used the PET acronym to mean Philippine Exposure Tour. The number of the tour, for example, PET 4 or PET 5, followed the PET acronym. However, the use of the word *Exposure* became problematic since the word can often mean *disclosure of some secret matters*; there are also nuances in the English word

usage that are not helpful. Later, the meaning of *E* was changed to mean *Experience*. Here, the understanding of learning about the Philippines through personal and group experiences was reflected in the title of the tour.

3. Continuation of PETs and Development of the Halohalo Association

PET 6 was planned for the year, 1983, that the Halohalo association was founded; however, due to the convenience of the leader and other factors, it was postponed until March of 1984. The PET scheduled for 1986 was cancelled because of the change in the national government of the Philippines. This is called the Edsa Revolution, which took place in February

1986 and brought to an end the twenty years of political dictatorship of President Marcos. In spite of such interruptions, during the next thirty years or so, roughly one PET was planned for each calendar year.

As the number of chances piled up, the details of the tour came to be checked and standardized. Manila and Cebu became the ordinary destinations of the learning experience tours. The social welfare facilities that the participants visited, the families with whom the participants stayed, and the local staff members who guided the participants continued to provide good opportunities.

A separate Campus Ministry office for the School of Social Welfare of Social Welfare was established in 1987. The organization of the annual PET was one of the duties entrusted to the new office. From the 1990s, Father Generoso Florez worked as the chief of the Campus Ministry office located within the School of Social Welfare. He was a part-time lecturer in this school, specializing in Christianity. More often than not, he was the leader of the annual PET.

During this period, the Halohalo Association became somewhat inactive, but it was revived in 1995. Later, in 2000, an organization called *NGO Halohalo Association for Aid to the Philippines* was founded. At its center were graduates of the School of Social Welfare who had gone to the Philippines on one of the PET programs. They lengthened the list of programs that were supported, including especially the *Feeding Center* in Cebu that was managed by Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic parish.

During these years of steady progress, the PET 25 program occurred in 2006. This was accompanied by a series of anniversary-related events. Many tour participants came back together and celebrated with current staff members.



This picture shows the participants in PET 22, which took place in 2003. They are standing at a home for children in Manila. In the middle of the group, one can identify Father Gene Florez.

4. PET at present

PET 30, counting from the beginning, took place in 2011 from March 5th to March 15th. The Halohalo Association continues to support activities and institutions even today. Starting five years ago, a tour for persons who wanted a deeper relationship with local children in the Philippines was set up as an original tour. Many graduates of the Sophia School of Social Welfare of Social Welfare, along with the leaders of the Halohalo Association and some current students who participate in the annual PET program have taken advantage of the opportunities to increase their interest in and concern about overseas social welfare problems.

Many people regret that not so many current School of Social Welfare students are able to participate in a PET program. For these students, who work fulltime while attending night classes, financial and time considerations argue against such PET participation. Nevertheless, the organizers continue to hope that more currently enrolled students, even if just a few, will obtain from a tour program some benefits that cannot be measured in terms of money.



This is a picture of a 2007 Newsletter of the Halohalo Association. This issue introduces events connected with the 25th anniversary of the beginning of the PET programs.