



American Youth Leadership Program

Hong Kong and Guangzhou, China
(HK-GZ AYL_P)



Orientation Guide

This guide is intended to help you prepare to participate in the 2015 HK-GZ AYL_P, to familiarize you with the program, its goals and your role, and to help you feel confident and comfortable as you embark on this experience. Please read through this guide carefully.

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PROGRAM GOALS

American Youth Leadership Programs – sponsored by the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs – are designed to advance mutual understanding between the people of the United States and of other countries, prepare youth leaders to become responsible citizens, spark an interest in learning about foreign cultures, and develop a cadre of Americans with cultural understanding who are able to advance international dialogue and compete effectively in the global economy. Through people-to-people exchanges, ECA seeks to break down stereotypes that divide peoples, promote good governance, contribute to conflict prevention and management, and build respect for cultural expression and identity in a world that is experiencing rapid globalization.

The Hong Kong-Guangzhou AYLP offers participants a unique opportunity to develop a greater understanding of Chinese culture and society through the lens of urban sustainability, empowering them to become thoughtful contributors to cross-cultural dialogue on global issues.

We hope that through this program you will experience things you have never experienced before, learn something new every day, build strong new friendships with other young leaders from both the U.S. and China – and bring that all back with you as you continue to pursue your goals back home.

PROGRAM THEMES

The AYLP program focuses on three themes:

- **Urban environmental sustainability:** We will explore the issues of environmental sustainability that transcend country borders. Rather than try to become experts on this very large topic in such a limited time, we hope this program will expose you to a broader understanding of these complex issues, help you discover which areas are of particular interest to you, and spark your curiosity and enthusiasm for continuing the learning process. To that end, we will focus on concrete areas such as waste, energy and water, where students have the ability to make direct choices that create change. We will participate in workshops and other activities to learn more about environmental challenges, and visit organizations that are taking creative approaches to solving these challenges.
- **Youth leadership:** VIA programs aim to help participants develop their leadership skills using the framework from “The Student Leadership Challenge” (Kouzes and Posner). You will be introduced to the five best leadership practices through a workshop at the pre-departure orientation, and look for ways to use them throughout the program. You will lead reflection sessions for your peers during the trip, and after you return, you will design and implement an environmental service project in your school or community.
- **Cross-cultural collaboration:** You will be exploring the ways that culture influences leadership and communication throughout the program, and learning how to set aside stereotypes and assumptions. You will be practicing these skills every day, whether it is interacting with the families during the homestays, navigating daily life, or living in the dorms with Chinese students during the conference. This will most likely be the area where you will feel your boundaries stretched the most, as you learn to feel comfortable

in many unfamiliar situations – but you may find that it is also the aspect of the program that has the deepest impact.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- You are expected to participate fully in program activities, maintain a positive attitude, and be proactive about finding constructive ways to address any challenges that arise.
- During the program, you will have a few tasks:
 - Reflections – Each student will be asked to lead one reflection session to help the group think about the day’s experiences. More details are available in the reflections toolkit.
 - Blogging – We will be posting blog entries each day so that friends and family back home can follow our activities. Each student will be responsible for creating one blog post.
- After the program, you will come up with an environmental project of your own to carry out at school or in your community. At the end of the year, we will hold a Project Presentation Night for the group to present on your projects.
- We hope that you will stay connected to the VIA and AYLP communities long after the program is over. If you haven’t already, you should register at the International Exchange Alumni website – <https://alumni.state.gov> - an interactive networking website for current and past participants of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs. As a member of the site, an alumnus can build on his or her exchange experience and explore all the resources available, such as grants, jobs, and online publications. The website enables alumni of all U.S. Government exchange programs, including the American Youth Leadership Program, to network and collaborate with one another.

LOGISTICS

- **Flight information**

You should plan on being at the airport by 7:30 a.m. on July 1. You will meet as a group in Terminal 1, and the AYLП mentors will help you check in. **Please don't be late - the group will not be able to wait.**

Date	Departure Time	Departure Airport	Arrival Time	Arrival Airport	Airline	Flight #
July 1	9:17 a.m.	San Francisco	11:29 a.m.	Seattle	Delta	5736
<i>You will have a layover in Seattle airport from 11:29 a.m. until 2:56 p.m.</i>						
July 1	2:56 p.m.	Seattle	8 p.m. (July 2)	Hong Kong	Delta	281
<i>AYLP program staff Brooke Bryant and Marie-Ana Follett will meet you at the Hong Kong airport, and bring you back to your hotel.</i>						
July 22	11:55 a.m.	Hong Kong	9:30 a.m.	Seattle	Delta	282
<i>You will have a layover in the Seattle airport from 9:30 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. (Yes - you do arrive earlier in the day than you depart from Hong Kong!)</i>						
July 22	10:50 a.m.	Seattle	1 p.m.	San Francisco	Delta	5775
<i>Please let us know who will be picking you up from the airport. The group will be gathering outside baggage claim, and someone must come into the airport and check in with staff/mentors so that we know you have transportation home.</i>						

- **Lodging**

We will be staying in a number of different locations throughout this program (another great reason to pack light!). When we are staying in hotels, you will be staying in double rooms with another participant of the same gender. In homestays, you will be staying in the home of a local student (note that in China, "middle school" refers to high school). During the conference at Zhongshan Huaqiao Middle School, you will be staying in the dorms with local students.

July 2-10	Y-Loft	Y-Mart, 238 Chai Wan Rd, Hong Kong
July 10-11	Homestays with students from New Asia Middle School	
July 12-14	Lido Hotel	182 Beijing Rd, Yuexiu, Guangzhou
July 15-18	Zhongshan Huaqiao Middle School dorms	
July 19-20	Homestays with students from Zhongshan Huaqiao Middle School	
July 21	Hong Kong hotel near airport (tentative)	

- **Homestays**

We have been working closely with New Asia Middle School in Hong Kong and Zhongshan Huaquiao Middle School in Guangzhou to select student families to host you for two-day homestays during the trip. AYL staff will call the families each night to check in with the students, and will be available 24-7 to handle any problems that might arise.

- **Itinerary**

Please note that this is the current schedule, but that it is subject to change. There is always the possibility that an activity will fall through at the last minute, or that we will need to adjust the schedule to accommodate an unexpected challenge.

Please approach this with a sense of adventure and flexibility!

Day 1: Wednesday, July 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depart SFO @ 9:17 a.m.
Day 2: Thursday, July 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive Hong Kong @ 8:10 p.m. • Welcome orientation @ Y-Loft
Day 3: Friday, July 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Opening Talk by Conservation International staff • Afternoon: Visit HK Recycles – a social enterprise founded in 2012 by concerned Hong Kong citizens, on a mission to provide convenient recycling. • Evening: Reflections
Day 4: Saturday, July 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Language class • All Day: Explore culture and permaculture on the island of Cheung Chau with Growing Smart – a group that hopes to awaken, inspire and encourage incremental changes in people’s daily lives. • Evening: Student-led reflections
Day 5: Sunday, July 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All day: Explore marine ecology with a dolphin watching and boat trip of HK, organized by Ocean Park. • Evening: Student-led reflections
Day 6: Monday, July 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Learn about energy challenges and solutions with a visit to the HK Electric Lanma Power Station. • Afternoon: Learn about green building design with a visit to Hysan Place • Evening: Student-led reflections
Day 7: Tuesday, July 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Language class • Morning: Speaker – David Yeung of Green Monday (a social startup that aims to make low-carbon and sustainable living simple, viral and actionable) and Green Common (a new plant-based grocery that strives to empower the community to

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make sustainable food choices). • Afternoon: Visit the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong • Evening: Visit the HK Peak • Evening: Student-led reflections
Day 8: Wednesday, July 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Language class • Afternoon: Meet Project We Can students and play the Carbon Trading Game • Evening: Behind-the-scenes tour of Ocean Park ... spend the night in the aquarium!
Day 9: Thursday, July 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning : Ocean Park workshops - 2 Groups (Sustainable Seafood & Every Drop Counts) • Afternoon: Relax and enjoy Ocean Park! • Evening: Back to Y-Loft and Student-led reflections
Day 10: Friday, July 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Tai Chi at Hong Kong Park • Morning: Walking tour of Sheung Wan, an old Hong Kong neighborhood filled with traditional businesses and culture • Afternoon: Explore the conflict between environmental conservation and urban development with the World Wildlife Federation. • Homestays with New Asia School students
Day 11: Saturday, July 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Urban planning and cultural tour of Kowloon Walled City Park with Growing Smart. • Afternoon: Closing talk at Conservation International • Homestays with New Asia School students
Day 12: Sunday, July 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to Guangzhou by train • Student-led reflections
Day 13: Monday, July 13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Welcome & Intro to Guangzhou history and culture • Afternoon: Visit U.S. Consulate in Guangzhou – tour sustainable design of compound • Evening: Pearl River boat tour • Evening: Student-led reflections
Day 14: Tuesday, July 14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: Meet with Greenovation Hub to learn more about water quality issues • Afternoon: Visit Guzai Art Home to learn about traditional art and Lingnan heritage • Evening: Student-led reflections
Day 15: Wednesday, July 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Bike Guangzhou to learn about sustainable transportation • Biking tour of Guangzhou • Travel to Zhongshan • Evening: Student-led reflections

Day 16: Thursday, July 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and Service Learning Conference @ Zhongshan Huaqiao High School
Day 17: Friday, July 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and Service Learning Conference @ Zhongshan Huaqiao High School Fieldtrip: Shipyard Park
Day 18: Saturday, July 18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and Service Learning Conference @ Zhongshan Huaqiao High School
Day 19: Sunday, July 19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestays and group activities with Zhongshan students
Day 20: Monday, July 20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestays and group activities with Zhongshan students
Day 21: Tuesday, July 21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farewell lunch with the Zhongshan group Travel to Hong Kong for early departure the next day
Day 22: Wednesday, July 22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depart Hong Kong at 11:55 a.m., arrive SFO 1 p.m.

CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to ensure the health and safety of AYLP participants, you will be asked to sign a code of conduct. At the pre-departure orientation, we will discuss and agree upon as a group language to address the following topics:

- Respect for people, program and host country's customs
- Encouraging an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for everyone in the group
- Encouraging full engagement and participation
- Damages caused through recklessness/negligence by the participant
- Conflict resolution

The terms that are non-negotiable include:

- I agree to abstain from any and all drug and alcohol purchase, possession, and use during the AYLP.
- I agree to remain with my assigned AYLP group at all times and not venture off on my own without the supervision and express permission of AYLP staff.
- I agree to follow the directions and instructions of AYLP staff and adult mentors at all times. If I disagree with a decision, I will find an appropriate and non-disruptive time to address it with staff and/or mentors.
- I agree not to engage in political activity or make public announcements related to the politics or public policies of my host country.
- I understand that participants are not allowed to be in a bedroom that is not their own during hotel and dorm stays for an extended length of time.
- I will not evangelize for any religion or spiritual calling.
- I understand that I will be sent home at my own expense if I break any laws or commit a crime while on the program.

LEAVING THE PROGRAM

In the case of a serious problem – including but not limited to repeated behavior problems, or violating the code of conduct in regards to alcohol/drug use or physical violence – a student may be sent home at their own expense.

RULES ABOUT VISITS

Visits from family members living in Hong Kong or Guangzhou during the program must be proposed by parents before the trip, and are subject to case-by-case approval by AYLP staff. Participants may not miss scheduled activities for a visit, and will not be allowed to travel by themselves to visit anyone. This will be a demanding and intensive program, and we want participants to remain fully focused on the experience.

SUPERVISION

There are five adults traveling with the group – the program director, the program coordinator, and the three adult mentors. Each mentor will directly supervise a group of student participants – this will be your first point of contact with questions and concerns. Students will not be allowed to go off on their own during the program.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR FAMILIES WHILE ABROAD

The best way for your family to stay up-to-date on your adventures during AYLP will be through the blog. Participants will take turns writing a daily blog post describing our activities that day, including pictures.

Email & Skype

There will be wifi in some of the places we are staying, and we will make every effort to allow students time to contact their families through email and/or Skype at several points throughout the program. However, we have a very busy schedule, and it will not be possible for students to contact their families every day.

Phones

If you choose to bring a phone with you, please remember that international roaming charges can be very expensive. We highly recommend that you **do not** use your phone's international plan for calls or data while you are traveling.

Staff

AYLP staff traveling with the students will be very focused on keeping the group happy, healthy and safe, and will have limited time to respond to individual inquiries from parents during the program. Please see the contact sheet for the best ways to get in touch with VIA and/or students during the program.

Contact Information For Families

This page is for your family at home. It contains information for contacting VIA and AYLP staff. Please give your parents a copy before you leave.

Parents: We want you to feel comfortable and reassured that your child is safe and in good hands. The best way for you to follow along with their activities during the program will be to check the AYLP blog (<http://via2015aylp.weebly.com/blog>) each day. However, in the case of an emergency, there are several ways to get in touch with staff.

Email

You can reach us at aylp@viaprograms.org. VIA staff in San Francisco, as well as AYLP staff in China will be monitoring this account, and will respond in a timely fashion to inquiries. Please remember that this is a busy itinerary, and staff will have limited time to respond to "just checking in" emails.

Volunteers in Asia (VIA) main office:

Phone: 415-904-8033

If no one is available at the office, and you need to get in touch with staff in an emergency, first call:

- Melissa Golden, VIA Operations Director, at (541) 272-2789

In very urgent cases, you may contact our AYLP staff in China directly:

- Marie-Ana Follett, AYLP Program Coordinator, at +86 13533 6299 56



Traveling abroad is fun ... and challenging. While we are on this trip, you will probably experience something called “culture shock” – when everything feels strange and unfamiliar, from the weather, language and food to the fashion, values and customs. Sometimes this will seem exciting, as you explore new places and cultures ... but sometimes this will probably feel frustrating and confusing.

There are three main stages of adjusting to a new culture:

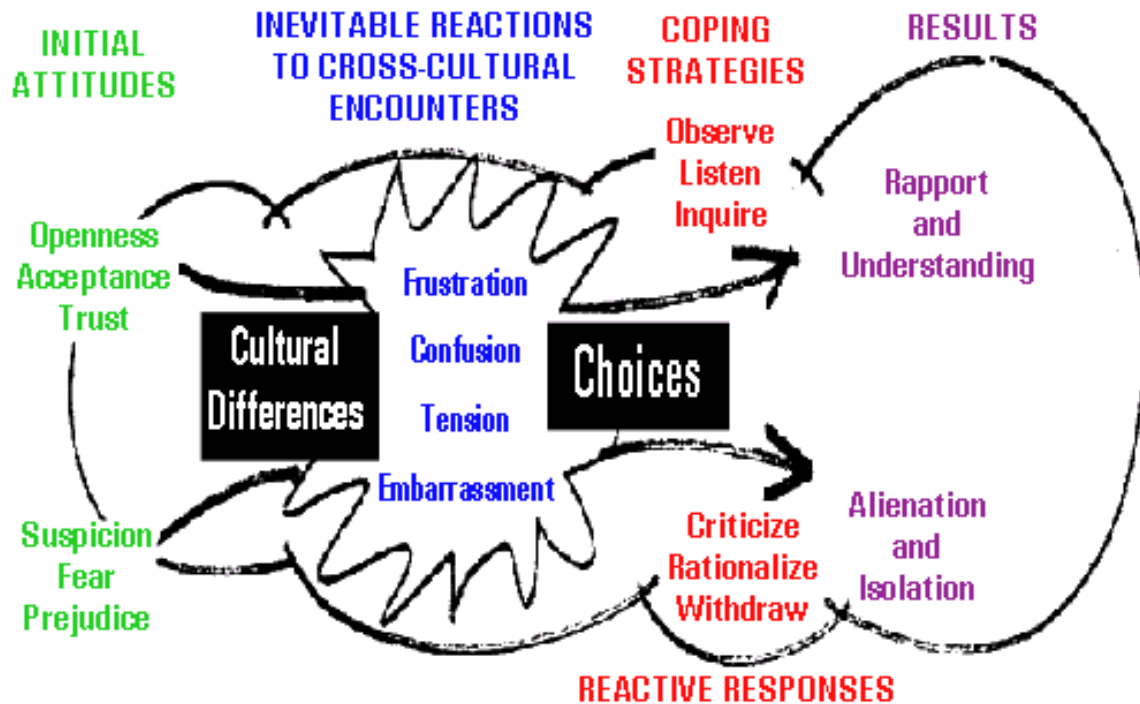
STAGE 1 – THE HONEYMOON – When you first arrive, everything is new and interesting, and you are feeling open to exploring and having new experiences.

STAGE 2 – THE REJECTION – But after a little while, you start to miss your life back home, and you may start thinking that everything is so much easier – and better! – there. This can make you feel very critical of the country you are visiting. You might feel homesick, frustrated, angry, or anxious. You may feel disappointed or even upset that things aren’t what you expected.

This is completely normal! Luckily, there are a few coping strategies you can use to help process these feelings, and move on to ...

STAGE 3 – THE RECOVERY – Keeping an open mind, talking to people about what you’re feeling, taking the time to really observe and learn about the culture around you, using your empathy to think about why people might be behaving in a certain way, asking questions to help you better understand a situation ... These are healthy, positive ways to deal with culture shock. As a result, you might find you are more relaxed and understanding in unfamiliar situations, and that you begin to enjoy the experience again.

MAKING POSITIVE CHOICES TO DEAL WITH CULTURE SHOCK



Immerse yourself in the new culture – it can be tempting to surround yourself with familiar things, or to spend your time talking to friends and family back home ... but try to remember that we have a short time to spend in China, so do your best to get the most from the experience!

Keep an open mind – set aside the preconceived ideas and beliefs that you have, and remain open to learning and experiencing new things. You may find that you learn to enjoy something that you never thought you'd try.

Stay connected – Get to know the other AYLP participants, mentors and staff, and meet as many new people as you can. Talking to them can help you better understand the experience, and even your own feelings.

Learn as much as you can – Often our frustrations with another culture comes from not fully understanding the reasons behind a cultural difference. Learn everything you can, by observing, talking, reading and asking questions.

Stay positive – Instead of getting upset or irritated with your host country, ask yourself what you can do to make the best of the experience. A few skills that we have found to be useful when traveling abroad include:

- **Flexibility and adaptability** – The bus is late? Take the opportunity to talk with a new friend, or spend a few minutes writing in your journal. An activity you were looking forward to was canceled? Embrace the new activity as a chance to explore something you hadn't even considered.

- **Open mindedness** – Try not to bring too many set expectations with you. This can lead you to frustration and disappointment. Instead, be open to whatever the experience brings you.
- **Empathy** – Put yourself in other people’s shoes. Why do you think are they doing what they’re doing? If you encounter someone who is rude to you, ask yourself: What might have happened to them that day that contributed to their behavior? Is it possible that what you interpreted as rude was simply a cultural misunderstanding?
- **Curiosity** – Make the most of this chance to learn more about the world around you!
- **Sense of humor** – Be willing to see the humor in a difficult or embarrassing situation – and most importantly, be willing to laugh at your own mistakes!
- **Self-reliance** – Be confident that no matter what happens, you have the ability to handle it.
- **Willingness to fail** – Not everything is going to go perfectly all of the time. Be ok with that. Embrace each failure as a chance to learn something new.

HEALTH

- **Water** – Don’t drink tap water, even in hotels and restaurants. Tea is usually fine. Boiled water or bottled water are the safest options.
- **Food** – Use good judgment if you are buying food from a street vendor. It’s best to avoid food that looks like it has been sitting out, especially in the sun. Wash any fruits or vegetables that you buy before you eat them.
- **Pollution** – Air pollution is an issue in China, and can be especially difficult for people with respiratory problems. Drinking water and taking throat lozenges can help. Please let an adult know immediately if you are experiencing breathing problems.
- **Heat and dehydration** – It will be very hot during the program, and it will be very important to stay hydrated by drinking lots of water. Please let an adult know immediately if you are feeling sick or dizzy from the heat.
- **Indigestion and diarrhea** – It is very common to experience some degree of stomach upset when traveling in China. You should bring anti-diarrheal medications with you. If you are experiencing ongoing issues, it’s important to tell an adult – so don’t be shy! Everyone goes through it.

PACKING

Clothing

Clothing in China is typically a little more conservative than in the U.S. You will want to pack clothing that will be comfortable in very hot, humid temperatures, but short skirts and shorts and spaghetti straps are not appropriate. The average daytime temperature is 84°F -88°F, but the humidity will make it seem much warmer. Pack light, as we will be moving around and you will be responsible for carrying whatever you bring.

- Bring at least one nice outfit. (For most of our activities, casual clothes will be fine, but you will want some nicer clothes for presentations at the embassies, etc.).
- Bring at least one outfit you don’t mind getting a little dirty for outdoor activities.

- It's likely to rain at some point, so a light rain jacket will come in handy. Umbrellas can be purchased there.
- Bring a pair of sturdy, comfortable shoes for walking.

Other items

Be sure to bring:

- Sunscreen
- Medicine: Bring a full supply of any medications you need; consider bringing pain relievers like ibuprofen, anti diarrheal medicine, an antibiotic for severe food poisoning
- Hand sanitizer and/or hand wipes
- Extra contacts if you wear them, or an extra pair of glasses if you have one
- If you are bringing electronic items, you'll need a converter. (China uses 220 volts of electricity, while the U.S. uses 110 volts). China uses several plug sockets, so consider a travel plug adapter if you need to be charging electronics often.
- A list of what vaccinations you have received, what medications you are currently taking will be helpful in case of an emergency.

Remember:

- TSA regulations: liquids, gels, creams, etc (for example: shampoo or contact solution) must be in containers no bigger than 100ml or 3.4 ounces. Those containers must be in a clear, one-quart zip-top bag. (This applies to carry on baggage you are bringing on board the airplane. Larger containers can be packed in luggage that you check.)
- **NOTE:** *You are responsible for all of your belongings. VIA is not responsible for any lost or stolen items on this program. Please keep that in mind when deciding what to bring with you – including computers and phones.*

OTHER INFORMATION

Insurance: You will have medical insurance through the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, called Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE).

Documents: VIA staff will collect and keep participant passports at most times during the program. We will also provide you with a laminated copy of your passport to carry.

Banking: Your bank card will work in most ATMs, which are available everywhere. You won't be able to use your credit card in most of the places we'll be traveling, so be sure to have some cash with you at all times. (All your costs on the program are taken care of – but you will probably want to bring some spending money for souvenirs and other extras).

Immunizations: There are no immunizations required to travel to China, and we will be staying in urban areas. But be sure to check with your physician to make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccinations. It's also a good idea to ask whether they recommend any additional vaccinations.

Gifts: You may want to bring several small gifts to give to host families and other people you meet during the program – something light (for packing) and inexpensive. Small souvenirs that show where you are from (keychains, Warriors t-shirts, postcards, local packaged foods like San Francisco chocolates, books, etc) are all great options.