

Report of the Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT)

Working Group on

“Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia.”

June 18-20, 2010, Seoul, Korea

I. Introduction

1. Given that East Asia is composed of different cultures, traditions and nations, cultural exchange is crucial to an enhancement of mutual understanding, solidarity and prosperity of the region. Therefore, countries in East Asia have increasingly identified the importance and necessity of cultural exchange in the process of building East Asian Community. Towards a humanistic regional community, this working group has dealt with general issues of culture and explored various ways to enhance cultural exchange in East Asia.
2. This working group appreciates the spirit of 1998 ASEAN Plus Three Summit meeting that made a statement on Asian identity, human exchanges, mutual cultural understanding, and so on. Following the spirit, NEAT recognized the importance of building East Asian socio-cultural community in 2004 annual conference and the necessity of building East Asian identity in 2005 annual conference. To implement the recognition, 2006 NEAT annual conference proposed a working group (WGECE) that would discuss the issue of “enhancement of cultural exchange in East Asia.”
3. The first meeting of the NEAT “Working Group on Enhancement of Cultural Exchange” (WGECE) was held on June 8, 2007 in Jeonju, Jeollabuk-do Province in the Republic of Korea. It was sponsored by the Korean Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (KISEAS), the Country Coordinator of NEAT Korea. A total of 18 participants from all 13 ASEAN Plus Three (APT) countries attended the meeting and engaged in an interactive and productive discussion.

4. As a result, the 2007 NEAT Working Group on Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia reached an agreement to hold a series of annual meetings for the next 5 years. Each year is supposed to focus on one priority area: the Media (2008); Popular culture and cultural festivities (2009); Education (2010); People-to-people exchange (2011); and Performing arts and cultural exhibition (2012).
5. In accordance with the agreed schedule, the 2nd and 3rd meetings of NEAT WGECE were held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, with each priority areas of discussion in the period of 2008-2009. They were sponsored by the KISEAS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) of the Republic of Korea, and attended by delegates from ASEAN Plus Three (APT) countries.
6. The priority area of discussion this year was “education.” The meeting was held on June 18-20, 2010 in Seoul, the Republic of Korea. It was sponsored by the KISEAS and the MOFAT of the Republic of Korea. A total of 18 participants from 13 ASEAN Plus Three (APT) countries attended the meeting and engaged in an interactive and productive discussion. The meeting brought up diverse and important issues and ideas on the education as follows.
 - A. Identification of concepts, issues and areas of education in promoting cultural exchange in East Asia**
 - B. Examination of roles and functions of education in promoting cultural exchange in East Asia**
 - C. Exploration of agendas and measures for promoting cultural exchange through education in East Asia**
 - D. Policy implications**

II. Key Issues and Suggestions

1. As a **general principle**, all the participants in this WG
 - a. Recognized the importance/necessity of “cultural exchange through education” in East Asian community (EAC) building process.
 - b. Agreed that “education” could be an excellent means of promoting “regional identity” among East Asian people.
 - c. Suggested that “cultural exchange/cooperation through education” should be enhanced in East Asia.

2. Some participants expressed the following **concerns** in dealing with education in the region such as:
 - a. Difference in terms of educational systems and school calendars between countries.
 - b. Different priorities for education between developed and developing countries.
 - c. Lack of cultural understanding between countries.
 - d. Children and women’s limited access to education.
 - e. Need for the emphasis on multilateral education exchanges/cooperation as much as bilateral ones.
 - f. Importance of new media technologies in providing education.

3. Participants also addressed **important issues** in dealing with education in the region. They are as follows:
 - a. Importance of the NGOs’ roles as education should not be entrusted to governments alone so that citizen groups should perform further roles.
 - b. Without mutual cultural understanding, study-abroad alone does not guarantee cultural exchanges.
 - c. Multicultural or Intercultural Literacy education is needed to more efficient cultural understanding.
 - d. Respect for multiplicity of cultures within and among APT countries.

- e. It is necessary to address the role of the media including the Internet and satellite TV in transnational cultural exchanges (e.g. cyber-university in Korea).

III. Policy Recommendations and Proposals for Specific Measures

Based upon the key issues and suggestions addressed in the meeting, the working group made some policy recommendations and proposals for specific measures and programs as follows.

1. Some **specific programs** were proposed to promote cultural exchange through education such as
 - a. **APT Student & Teacher Exchange Program(ASTEPA)** taking cue from Erasmus Program in Europe
 - Developing a broader understanding of Europe and a sense of community, Erasmus Program has realized significant cultural benefits as well.
 - ASTEPA Promotes inter-university mobility
 - ASTEPA covers all school-levels from primary to university
 - ASTEPA includes student hosting network
 - Organizing committee which coordinates and facilitates the program should be set up to discuss further.
 - b. **East Asian Education Council**
 - To manage overall education activities among East Asian Countries
 - To coordinate with existing institution such as SEASREP, ASEAN Foundation and other institutions.
 - To support the establishment of Center for East Asia Studies in every major university in East Asian countries.
 - To function as a hub that informs ongoing program and promotes new initiatives.
 - c. **Asian Language Training Program(ALTP)**
 - Language is the basic element of cultural understanding
 - We need ALTP to promote mutual cultural understanding through language

learning.

- Curriculum includes all national languages of APT countries
- Each APT country takes turn hosting the Program yearly. Or, a Center can be located in a certain APT country

d. East Asian cyber-university

- Taking a cue from the Asia E-University
- Preferably having a major focus on East Asian affairs
- Provide easier access to higher education for those who do not have access to education

2. Some **specific measures** were proposed to promote “cultural exchange through education” in the region as follows.

- a. Courses about East Asia should be included in primary and secondary-level curricula
- b. Multicultural or Intercultural Literacy curriculum is also needed in order to achieve more effective cultural understanding since, for example, study-abroad alone is not enough for mutual cultural understanding.
- c. Keeping database of best practices and experiences because there have been some prior initiatives on cultural exchange through education such as ASEAN Logics
- d. Forming “research networks” including researchers, NGOs, etc. to promote research on conditions and policies of cultural exchanges through education across East Asia.

3. There was **a suggestion** that it is necessary for national governments to render support to education practitioners by providing administrative and material infrastructure for efficient execution in cultural exchange through education.