

Our Message

This message is being made to recognize the significance of the international youth exchange programs which have been implemented by the Government of Japan, and to make the former participating youth and all people concerned aware of the accomplishments of the 21st Century Renaissance Youth Leaders Invitation Program for past six years.

We, the participating youth of Renaissance 2006, hereby propose the future direction and measures to be taken so that the Alumni Associations consisting of former participants of the international exchange programs initiated by the Japanese Government will further develop in order to contribute to society.

Historical Background of the Japanese Government's SSEAYP, SWY and INDEX Programs

The Japanese Government initiated the Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission Program in 1959 to commemorate the wedding of H.I.M. the Emperor, who was the Crown Prince at that time. In addition, the Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise Program was launched in 1967. Each of these programs aims to develop the leadership skills of Japanese youth by involving them in international goodwill and international exchange activities.

In 1974, the inaugural Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program (SSEAYP) was initiated to cultivate human resources and to establish a strong network between ASEAN nations and Japan. In 1988, the Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise Program was relaunched as the Ship for World Youth Program (SWY). The SWY aims to nurture the leadership capabilities of Japanese youth while enabling the youth to make valuable contributions as part of the international society.

The Japan-China Youth Friendship Exchange Program and the Japan-Korea Youth Friendship Exchange Program were launched in 1979 and 1987 respectively. Both of these bilateral exchange programs broker stronger ties with these two neighboring countries. In 1994 the Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission was renamed as the International Youth Development Exchange Program (INDEX) to commemorate the wedding of H.I.H. the Crown Prince.

The common purpose in implementing the abovementioned programs is the establishment of a networking organization among the former participants after their participation. The Japanese Government has also been supporting post-program activities so that the network will become strong enough to contribute to society.

The former Japanese participating youth initially launched the "*Seiyu-kai*," as the Alumni Association of the former participants to the Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission Program, and "*Seinen-no-fune-no-kai*" was the name given to the Alumni Association for the Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise Program. In 1985, at the occasion of "UN International Youth Year," the International Youth Exchange Organization of Japan (IYEO) was established from the marriage of the two organizations.

The SI and the SWYAA: Histories, Charters and Objectives

From mid to late 1980's, the former participating youth from several ASEAN countries voluntarily established their own Alumni Associations and carried out joint international activities with the "*Seinen-no-fune-no-kai*." From these tentative beginnings, the SSEAYP International (SI) was established in 1987 by the IYEO to enable the six ASEAN Alumni Associations to develop themselves as strong international networking organization for social contribution activities. In principle, the SI member countries take turns in hosting the annual general assembly, SI General Assembly (SIGA), attended by the alumni members and their families and friends. Examples of common projects that were carried out by the SI include the "Asian Children Painting Exhibition" and "Essay Contest." To date, eight of the ten ASEAN participating countries have already established their Alumni Associations. The IYEO maintains a close communication and working relationship with these Alumni Associations.

Meanwhile, the IYEO is actively encouraging and helping the SWY participating countries to establish Alumni Associations in their own countries. At present, the IYEO is in close communication with 42 Alumni Associations worldwide. The Japanese Government has also been supporting international networking efforts of the SWY and in 1996 organized the "Tokyo Conference for the Ex-Participating Youth of the Ship for World Youth Program." In 1997, first SWY Alumni Association (SWYAA) was established, and since then, the Alumni Associations have been actively carrying out their own post-program activities and there is growing collaboration between their respective governments and other Alumni Associations for the implementation of port-of-call activities and joint projects for the community. A notable example of one such collaborative project launched by this network is the "Global Photo Contest."

The SI and SWYAA charters were written upon initiation of each alumni, and both highlighted "social contribution" as their main objectives. This is a strong indication of the shared spirit and desire to change the world for the better and to give something back to the society using the noble experiences afforded through the international youth exchange programs.

The 21st Century Renaissance Youth Leaders Invitation Program: For the Development of Alumni Associations

Encouraged by the outcomes of many post-program activities, the 21st Century Renaissance Youth Leaders Invitation Program was first organized in 2001 to further nurture human resources and to activate Alumni Associations in recognition of the ex-participants who had actively worked in post-program activities. Specifically, the program endeavors to encourage more alumni members to become involved in post-program activities from various directions.

In the first program, four different courses were formed in order to nurture leadership in each field and the "Message to the World" was presented at the "21st Century Global Youth Conference" during the audience with H.I.H. the Crown Prince. In the second and third programs, project proposals at individual and organizational levels were made. The fourth program proposed collaborative projects which could be carried out through the international network. The fifth program proposed various proposals to strengthen the management capabilities of the Alumni Associations in planning and implementing social activities.

Summary of the 21st Century Renaissance Youth Leaders Invitation Program 2006

Based on the results of the past five programs, in the 2006 program focused on the activation of Alumni Associations.

Some of the advantages of the Alumni Associations are: a) they are comprised of delegates of a high standard who have been selected from various professional fields to participate; b) they are international networks of individuals around the world; c) they have connections with government or local governing bodies that enable them to build collaborative relationships; d) the members of the associations have profound understanding towards inter-cultural understanding and youth activities through their own experiences in the international youth exchange programs. Taking these into consideration, the participants of this year's program discussed and summarized how to manage their Alumni Associations and what kind of activities they should work on.

1. The following are the detailed outcomes of this year's program. These outcomes shall be compiled to be used as reference in implementing future activities.

NPO Management Course

The aim of the Non-Profit Organization (NPO) Course was to assist in substantiating the competencies of the Alumni Association (AA) of each country in terms of organizational management so that they can fulfill the tasks mandated by their objectives. Specifically, the purpose of this year's program was to update the NPO Management Handbook, which was compiled by the course members of the previous year's program.

Our AAs are unique in that we share a common vision of international cooperation and mutual understanding with members in strategic positions around the world. This international network established amongst members has the potential to serve various needs of our society.

Some AAs have existed for longer than others with some countries yet to establish their own. It was felt by some members that their own AAs required restructuring with a more **focused outlook in their futures**. It is hoped that this updated handbook will be a reference for AAs to further strengthen themselves as NPOs and at the same time be able to contribute to their respective communities through specific social activities. This handbook can be applied at whichever stage of establishment they are in.

Ideas for updating the handbook were gathered through various activities and discussions throughout the program this year by the sharing of experiences between course members to identify strengths and challenges of these AAs.

The updated handbook also includes case studies focusing on AAs to aid in the understanding of the principles outlined therein and can be used as examples for AAs to adapt and apply to their own situations as required.

The local programs in Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures included visits to several NPOs, which introduced course members to various aspects and methods of NPO management. The experiences shared by these NPOs as well as the networks formed between the individual members will be beneficial

to the revitalization of our respective AAs into NPOs which will have the capability to make a greater impact on society.

Social Contribution Activity Course

The aim of the SCA course was to identify projects that would reflect the missions, the needs and the capacities of the Alumni Associations by maximizing various resources. Specifically, the objective of this year's program was to first identify key elements that we are best skilled to do, and to make a project management framework (checklist) and a set of projects that AAs can implement.

The projects identified as having key elements are:

- Projects to promote cross-cultural understanding by utilizing our international network, such as the international cooperation activities, intercultural understanding education supporting program and study tours.
- Projects to develop the capacity of youth, as we are knowledgeable about young people, such as youth camps, and volunteering activities.
- Projects that would make a greater impact in society, and further utilize the AA's strengths of ties with other authorities, such as international youth exchange program conducted in cooperation with respective government, the Japan Festival in conjunction with the Japanese Embassy, and the AA's involvement in the SSEAYP/SWY selection process so that we can develop human resources for the betterment of the AAs and their potential for further SCA.

Most of the AAs have been conducting SCA in their respective countries but it was observed that these projects were not properly analyzed on the basis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is the reason for creating the checklist and project management map to offer as a useful resource to all AAs.

The course members learnt a great deal from the social contribution activities undertaken by the NPOs visited during the Local Program. They have provided important ideas to help define a set of projects that the AAs could pursue. Some of these projects are "One More Child Goes To School," "Picture Book to Ache," and "the Elderly Afternoon."

. We have the possibility to share our ideas and projects, not only with other AAs in our own network, but also with the community that we live in. After gaining new and useful ideas, and with concrete actions to take in the Renaissance 2006, we are certain that we are going to make a difference in our own communities.

Future Direction of Alumni Associations

This year marks the conclusion of the 21st Century Renaissance Youth Leaders Invitation Program. This year also marks the actual beginning of our endeavors. With the knowledge and experiences we have gained, and the strong network and friendship we have built, all of us should now embark together towards a common path to enhance our respective Alumni Associations.

We call on every Alumni Association to strongly consider and implement the proposals discussed in

each course with the end-view of developing initiatives that would engender long-term benefits to society. **It would also be beneficial if Alumni Associations continue to develop into NPOs that will make a greater impact in our world.**

In implementing Alumni initiated projects, the network that we have created in the Renaissance Program can facilitate our communication beyond the barriers of distance and time and would enable us to establish a close collaborative relationship.

We realize that we are fortunate to have bonds between Alumni Associations and other stakeholders which include the government, private corporations, other NPOs and the community. Therefore we would like to encourage that these ties be further strengthened and developed in order to benefit their respective communities.

Furthermore, we encourage the link up between the SI and SWYAA to further maximize our potentials for the establishment of international network, which would enable us to help create a mature society where people live together peacefully and harmoniously. We shall fully utilize this network and contribute in creating our future society by promoting activities that involve development of the next generation and the community in a global scale.

WE ARE THE ONES WHO CAN LEAD OUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS TOWARDS GLOBAL HARMONIZATION!