Collaboration between ACEIU and the Institute of Asia-Pacific Education Development (iAPED)

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It is with great pleasure that I address this Commemorative International Symposium for the Opening of the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (ACEIU). Taking this opportunity on behalf of the Institute of Asia-Pacific Education Development (iAPED), I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (ACEIU) on its inauguration.

This auspicious occasion celebrates the birth of ACEIU, which will be a center of excellence and a major influence in the promotion of education for international understanding in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, I would like to highlight the close cooperation and collaboration which will develop between iAPED and ACEIU.

I will begin by discussing the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region, since this is the overall context in which our developing programmes and activities will be implemented. I will then introduce briefly both the purposes and planned programmes of iAPED and ACEIU which are the proposed bases of their mutual cooperation and collaboration. Finally, I will suggest various ways in which iAPED and ACEIU might
work together in close partnership in the years to come.

1. Vastness and Diversity in the Asia-Pacific Region

It is important to consider for a moment the characteristics of the Asia-Pacific region in order to establish an appropriate context for examining this new frontier in learning with particular reference to Education for International Understanding.

The Asia-Pacific is a region of vastness, vast in geography and landscape, and vast in the sheer numbers of human beings who live in the numerous nations within its borders. Actually, the region of Asia and the Pacific is home to 63% of the world's population of six billion. In this region are found countries of vast land mass (China, India and Australia) and also island countries in vast ocean areas (the Maldives and the Pacific Islands). Countries with the largest populations (China and India), as well as the most rapidly growing mega-cities are to be found in the region, as are countries with relatively small populations (Bhutan and Niue).

However, the Asia-Pacific region is notable for more than just population size or number of countries. It is a region wonderfully and deeply rich both in cultural diversity and in the breadth of civilizations. Every major faith is represented here, and some of the oldest religions and spiritual traditions have their roots in this region. The majority of the world's indigenous peoples continue to strive for their cultural and social survival in Asia-Pacific societies.

The level of economic development also varies widely with some of the richest countries (Japan) and some of the poorest countries on earth existing in this region. In spite of the region's exceptional overall economic performance over the past two decades, the Asia-Pacific region contains the largest number of poor out of all the regions in the world.

In short, Asia-Pacific is outstanding for the vast range of diverse characteristics that encompass almost all aspects of life, whether they be geographical, socio-economic, cultural, political or developmental.

All this vastness, diversity and depth of histories and heritages give us a very sound rationale for the establishment of both iAPED and ACEIU, as well as for the foundation of their roles in Asia-Pacific Education Development and Education for International Understanding. As we enter a new century full of promise, we must be
willing and able to strive for a bright future in this region so that a fuller realization of such vast human, social, and cultural potential may be realized.

2. A Brief Outline of iAPED

Exactly on the threshold of the 21st Century (that is in December 1999), iAPED was born at Seoul National University. From its inception, it has enjoyed a strong background. It was established as a Korean national strategic policy to cultivate high-powered and creative human resources, designed to meet the challenges of the future society; hence, it is dubbed Brain Korea 21. Its mission is to educate young research and development professionals of the coming generation to be creative problem solvers in our rapidly changing society.

Under the leadership of the director-general, iAPED is now carrying out six specific major research projects in the field of education, namely (a) foundations of education, (b) educational technology, (c) educational counseling, (c) educational administration, (e) lifelong education and (f) civic moral education. Six research teams and their directors are executing these projects. The director of each team serves on the Steering Committee, which is the governing body of the Institute. To facilitate the smooth functioning of the Institute, three centers have been set up: (a) the Center for Cyber-education, (b) the Center for International Cooperation and (c) the Research Information Center. Two committees have been founded for the purpose of hosting a regular international conferences and publishing an annual international journal.

The International Advisory Committee counsels all these bodies and a Secretariat supports them in their endeavors. At this time, iAPED involves a collaborative team of 26 professors, 2 guest professors, 7 post-doctoral specialists and more than 90 graduate students (master and doctoral degree) from the Department of Education and the Department of National Ethic Studies at Seoul National University.

iAPED, although born as a domestic organization dealing with international education affairs (especially education development in the Asia-Pacific region) has a strong international nature, as the name of the Institute implies. As mentioned earlier, the mission of the Institute is to educate young research and development professionals of the next generation to be creative problem solvers in our rapidly changing society. This mission, in terms of the Asian-Pacific context, can be achieved in two ways: (a) one through stressing the study of Asian education and
cultivating a broad Asian perspective, and (b) the other through exchange and cooperation with the Asian educational society.

The details of the mandate, goals, and research agenda follow.

A. Facilitating the Study on Asian Education

To lay a sound foundation for this study on Asian Education, iAPED is now considering opening lectures and realizing research programmes in the areas from the first year (2000):

- Comparative study of East Asia culture and education.
- Comparative study of the education system of South and North Korea, including plans to overcome the disparity.
- Comparative study of educational administrative systems in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Comparative study of civic education in four countries in the region (Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore).
- Comparative study of the history of Asian education.
- Study on Buddhism and education.
- Study on excellence in educational counseling by global standards.
- Study on globalization of Korean lifelong education.
- Study on the Yangban education system in the Chosun dynasty.
- Study on the goal of education.

B. Strengthening Exchange and Cooperation in the Asia and Pacific

To promote cooperation in higher education and facilitate intellectual exchange in the Asia-Pacific region, iAPED will implement the following two programmes.

(1) Training Abroad

- Short term training (less than three months) will be provided to graduate students to attend international gatherings such as meetings, or on-the-spot surveys in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Long term training (more than six months) in universities in the Asia-Pacific region will also be offered to graduate students, especially those who are writing dissertations and have training needs.
(2) Inviting Foreign Scholars and Students

- A programme to invite foreign scholars and professors in the Asia-Pacific region to lecture and conduct research studies at iAPED will be implemented.
- A programme to invite government officials, human resource development specialists and graduate students in the Asia-Pacific region for training, and sharing experiences as well as information will be conducted at iAPED.

C. Hosting the International Conference and Publication of the Journal

To stimulate research activities and share experiences and information about education in the Asia-Pacific region, iAPED will host an international conference regularly and publish an annual international journal.

This year’s international conference will be held from November 9-10th in Seoul under theme of *Reflections and Explorations for the 21st Century Educational Development: The Search for Asian Identities and Perspectives*. Meanwhile, the international journal, named the *Asia-Pacific Education Review*, has already requested articles for its inaugural issue.

3. Envisioned outline of ACEIU

It is not easy so soon after its inception to envision the outline of ACEIU responsibilities. However, on the basis of a feasibility study carried out by Toh Swee-Hin and Jagdish Gundara, we can predict a possible outline of ACEIU goals.

Their report highlighted two major goals to be accomplished by ACEIU. First, ACEIU will contribute towards the growth and strengthening of Education for International Understanding in the Asia-Pacific region. Cognizant of the existing and evolving regional initiatives in such fields as educating for a culture of peace, human rights, values, intercultural harmony and sustainable development, ACEIU will fulfill a valuable role in nurturing and, most importantly, in linking these initiatives. Furthermore, it will facilitate the building of theory and practice in Education for International Understanding relevant to Asia-Pacific realities and perspectives.

Secondly, ACEIU will strengthen educational and human resources so as to empower governments and citizens to engage constructively and appropriately with
the phenomenon of globalization. Virtually all nations and societies are experiencing rapid change in their social, economic, political and cultural milieu in an increasingly interdependent world. ACEIU will promote educational programmes and initiatives helpful to such national, regional and global transformation, including the ongoing democratic transition in the Asian region.

Six more concrete objectives of ACEIU are presented in the report:
(a) To promote and coordinate Education for International Understanding (EIU) in the Asia-Pacific region.
(b) To strengthen national and regional capacities in planning and implementing a broad range of practices in EIU.
(c) To create opportunities for indigenous voices and vulnerable groups in the Asia-Pacific region to participate in EIU, including the sharing of success stories.
(d) To act as a clearinghouse for information and knowledge on EIU relevant to Asia-Pacific contexts.
(e) To encourage and facilitate collaborative links between Asia-Pacific initiatives and exemplars in EIU and those in other regional, international and global efforts in EIU.
(f) To promote EIU as one constructive strategy towards democratic and sustainable transformation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Finally, the report proposed programmes and activities under the following six categories in order to facilitate achievement of ACEIU goals and objectives:
- Professional in-service development of teachers, school administrators, teacher educators and civil servants in EIU
- Institution building of teacher education agencies for EIU
- Curriculum development and development of instructional materials in EIU
- Youth formation for EIU
- Training of non-formal and community educators in EIU
- Research and policy development on EIU.

4. Possible Areas of Collaboration between iAPED and ACEIU

As we briefly review the purposes and programmes of the two organizations (iAPED and ACEIU), we can easily recognize their common ground. First of all, the two organizations share common goals and objectives, namely mutual
understanding and cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries. Second, they have a common ground in the field of education. While iAPED deals with Asian education as a whole and emphasizes a comparative viewpoint, ACEIU attends to Asian education as a part of specific areas focusing on international understanding such as peace, human rights, and sustainable development. Third, modes of implementation of programmes in both organizations share some common ground such as (a) research and development on curriculum and instructional materials, (b) training of teacher educators, and (c) promotion of non-formal and lifelong learning. In addition, they emphasize joint efforts in the international exchange of personnel and information in the Asia-Pacific region.

Keeping this in mind, I would now like to discuss possible areas of collaboration between iAPED and ACEIU in the field of Education for International Understanding (EIU).

As I mentioned earlier, iAPED is composed of six teams, each concerned with one of the following areas: (1) foundations of education, (2) educational technology, (3) educational counseling, (4) educational administration, (5) lifelong education and (6) civic moral education. Each of these teams may collaborate with ACEIU in various areas of EIU.

4.1 Joint research and/or training on philosophy, ideals, and goals/objectives of EIU

The direction of the EIU programmes and activities largely depends on their philosophy, ideals, goals and/or objectives. Of course, much research has already been conducted in this area, especially by UNESCO and its member states who also study EIU. However, this area still needs a more thorough examination, particularly in reference to the Asia-Pacific context. Furthermore, the concrete objectives of EIU need to be translated into action-oriented terms through the development of practical multi-level education curriculum at primary and secondary schools and higher education institutes. Research and/or training in this area may be carried out by the Team on the Foundation of Education, the members of which would deal with the philosophy of education and curriculum development in collaboration with ACEIU.

4.2 Joint research and/or training on various ways and means to implement the action-oriented programmes of EIU through education technology
Efficiency and effectiveness are key elements for success in any programme or activity. EIU is no exception. The adoption of educational technology is one strategy that can generate and increase efficiency and effectiveness in executing the EIU programmes and activities, especially by utilizing a cyber-network (such as the Internet) and by instituting distance education through multimedia. Application of educational technology to EIU is not only necessary for the domestic programme, but even more so for the regional one. In this context, it may be good idea for the Team on Educational Technology to undertake joint research and/or training on various ways and means to implement action-oriented EIU programmes in collaboration with ACEIU.

4.3 Joint research and/or training on psychological approach to EIU

The EIU programmes and activities, which seek to foster not only the cognitive domain of knowledge, but also the affective domain of attitude, are based on psychology. The cultivation of self-esteem, the respect of others, or the development of critical and creative thinking (all of which are very important EIU factors) need a very strong psychological foundation. Thus, the Team on Educational Counseling may be the most proper group to study and integrate the psychological aspects of EIU with ACEIU.

4.4 Joint research on education policy of EIU and training for school administrators

Needless to say, programmes and activities require strong administrative and financial support, if they are to be successful. Specifically, newly emerging areas of education such as EIU, need more support from school masters and supervisors of local boards of education, as well as more attention from central authorities. The establishment of education policy, the planning of EIU, and the training of school administrators at both local and national levels will be the most clear manifestation of support for EIU. In this context, it is advisable for the Education Administration Team to carry out related research and training in cooperation with ACEIU.

4.5 Joint research and/or training on the relationship between lifelong education and EIU

As almost all nations and societies are experiencing rapid change in their social, economic, political and cultural milieu in an increasingly interdependent world, the
roles and functions of both lifelong education and EIU are increasingly empowering schools, governments and citizens to engage constructively and appropriately with this phenomenon of globalization. In this regard, research on the clarification of the relationship between lifelong education and EIU and the consequent training are necessary in order to complement each other in both the vertical and the horizontal aspects. The Team on Lifelong Education might investigate and implement such training programmes with ACEIU.

4.6 Joint research and/or training on citizenship in civic-moral education and EIU

Civic-moral education and EIU share a common ground in their focus on citizenship education, whether called democratic citizenship education, or education for world citizenship. Both educational programmes pursue universal values such as justice, freedom, peace and human dignity, emphasizing ethical norms for the rights and duties of human beings and the social order. In this regard, a meaningful task for the Team on Civic Education might be to analyze the EIU factors in civic-moral education, and those of civic-moral education in EIU, and to organize follow-up training courses in collaboration with ACEIU.

4.7 Joint research and/or training on development and utilization of evaluation tools for EIU

EIU objectives are portrayed in curricula, textbooks and other educational materials, and may be expressed in terms of knowledge, attitudes or values, and skills. All four dimensions are needed to promote comprehensively the principles of international understanding, cooperation, peace, and human rights. All four dimensions should be measured and evaluated with valid tools. On the basis of these results, the achievement of EIU and the need for improvement in EIU can be determined. The Team on the Foundations of Education with its evaluation specialists can make a contribution in this area in cooperation with ACEIU.
References


NIER, *Educational Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific-30-years of NIER's Activities*, Tokyo, NIER, 1997
