

Report on International Youth Development Exchange Program 2009  
Tokio Program Discussion Session, Education Course.

“Explore the needs of foreign language education and effective approaches to them”.

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Education is the primary basis for all human development. This concept measures the way people can have access to opportunities and the State provides them of the necessary means to succeed in life by taking those opportunities. This success is not possible without proper education, good health care, access to a decent job and economic independence, all of which allow people to become what they have dreamed in life. Nevertheless, of all mentioned before, education empowerment is the most important agenda a Nation must have to take care of, for it surrounds all aspects of people's lives and determines in a very straight way the quality of their human development.

To set up examples, it is through education that we learn what good health is and to protect our body against diseases, as we learned through Mr. Hattori speech on the importance of food education (shokuiku) for a more sustainable way of life. It is also through education that we learn to take care of the environment and the importance of its preservation molding people's consciousness. And foremost, it is through a good education that as productive components of a Nation, we can insert ourselves in the labor force to improve our economy and our quality of life, opening up our minds, expanding our visions and fulfilling our lives expectations.

During this journey I had the honor to share my dreams and visions with fantastic people from Cambodia, Laos P.D.R., Latvia, Japan and my fellow Dominican Education Course Members. From the discussion sessions that were held, we were able to understand the importance of foreign language education as the starter point for international human relationship and brotherhood, the construction of a peace culture and the realization of the dream of a world without borders, where all mankind can trespass the barrier of communication, as a part of a world where we commonly exist.

In this exchange program we arrived to the conclusion that every country has to include foreign language education in their education public policy programs, in order to improve people's capabilities, making them an asset to face up front the challenges of a global community. Foreign language education has brought us great advantages, but also a division among ourselves, that we have to recognize and attend. I named this division The Communication Gap or “gap number three”, for number one is poverty, and secondly the technological gap. This communication gap outstands the differences in opportunities of those who studied foreign languages and those who didn't; this program is a living example of the gap, where only the young people who could speak

English were included in the program and the young people who could not speak it were excluded from the program for one elemental reason: they would not be able to communicate with other cultures and participate in discussion sessions, because of the language barrier.

Our commitment as young leaders compel us to take notice on this issue, appealing for a more complete education philosophy in our elementary schools, that develop self confidence in children, provide fun education and engage in foreign language as a communication tool. However, taking notice and acting upon it is not enough, we have to develop new education techniques for foreign language education to be easier to understand and of effective purpose. On this asseveration, we suggested to promote the cultural exchanges, reinforce debate clubs, to teach languages through music and visual learning, as well as promote self confidence in students so they have no fear to speak up. Let us promote an education system that teaches us more than ordinary subjects that feed the mind, and let's change it and promote the approach of an education system that combines knowledge and spirit, love for the environment, and strong communication skills to relate with others.

I urge all of you who read this to open up your eyes and see; to put attention and listen, and open up your minds and speak up on this issue, our job begins right in the moment we take the discussion into mere reality and put it into action, let us not allow the communication gap to expand, we have to act now, our tomorrow never comes, it begins today.