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Cultural Diplomacy in East Asia: A Forum for Young Leaders



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Introduction

The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD) was founded in 1999 to address the growing cultural diplomacy in the international environment. The organization's main base for activity is now Berlin, Germany. The ICD has two main areas of focus: the research and the promotion of cultural diplomacy. Research is conducted to better understand the history of cultural diplomacy, the range and diversity of cultural diplomacy initiatives being conducted today, and the areas for development in the field.

What is Cultural Diplomacy?

Cultural Diplomacy has been described by Joseph S. Nye as “a prime example of ‘soft power,’ or the ability to persuade through culture, values and ideas, as opposed to ‘hard power,’ which conquers or coerces through military might.”

The ICD understands Cultural Diplomacy not only as the conducting of international relations by governments through the use of soft power, but also as the exchange of cultural values and beliefs at all levels of society, by all actors. In both cases, culture represents not only a system of beliefs and values that each side should seek to understand and be sensitive too, but in many cases also provides a medium (such as sport, arts and music) through which this interaction can take place.

The Need for Cultural Diplomacy

The process of globalization, together with the rise of the internet, communication technology and the ready availability of low-budget transport, is increasingly bringing different cultural groups into contact with each other both physically and virtually. To improve communication and to prevent misunderstanding and conflict it is important to ensure that such interaction is constructive, peaceful, and based on effective dialogue, understanding and trust. In addressing these problems, the traditional, top-down approach to international and inter-cultural relations can be optimized by increasing the emphasis on constructive dialogue between governments and representatives.



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The Need for Cultural Diplomacy in East Asia

The East has always been portrayed in a fixed and generalized manner in the eyes of the world. Until recently, with the emergence of China and India, the perceptions of Asia have been defined mostly as oriental and mystical. On top of that, with Japan's incredible growth in the last decades, Asia has also been placed into a nutshell that was largely influenced by Japan in the economical and political areas. It has only been in the last decade that the West has started to sit up and take note of the Asian countries due to incredible growth rates in countries like Singapore and Taiwan, part of the four Asian Tiger economies. It has then gotten clearer that there is more to East Asia than what is seen in popular media.

The intriguing fact about the region is that it has managed to develop in a manner faster than any other region in the shortest time periods. What took many countries decades to achieve is now being done by China, South Korea, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan at speeds previously unimaginable. With the Asian market opening up, there is a higher necessity for other global economical powers to take note and look for ways to break into the regional markets. In order to enable successful collaborations and cooperation, there is a need to understand the Asian way of life, philosophies of business and cultural nuances. Asia thrives on tradition and culture, which has been retained amidst extraordinary economic success. In order to link the region and create world economic growth, understanding Asia has now become a top priority. This is where the Cultural Diplomacy in East Asia Forum hopes to bridge these differences.

East Asia and the world

Defining the Regions

The term Eastern Asia, according to the UN definition, refers exclusively to North East Asia; that is China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, North Korea and Mongolia. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that most people understand the term East Asia to mean something broader. For the purposes of this program, we will take East Asia to mean both North East Asia and South East Asia (all the countries that make up ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), these being: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) as well as South Asians India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Perhaps it is precisely the creation of ASEAN and its countries' shared experience of Western colonialism (with the exception of Thailand) that has drawn an otherwise largely arbitrary line of distinction between North and South East Asia.





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Historical Overview

The inter-regional and international relations of East Asia

From the time of Roman trade with Han-dynasty of China, the ties between Europe and East Asia have always been one of the most vibrant and globally crucial of inter-regional relationships. The contact of cultures that came initially through the Silk Road trade routes and the sea-lanes via India is undoubtedly one of the most important axes of cultural exchange in world history. Until the mid-nineteenth century, East Asia, China in particular, continued to hold a fascination for the rest of the world.

Many of the commonly held notions about the Far East during Enlightenment era for example in Europe were, of course, based largely on fantasy and catered to a taste for exoticism. Today, East Asia has transitioned into a complacent actor to a vital influential political, economic, social and cultural player in the world. The impact of East Asian influence in the world has molded and questioned global western standards.

Comparing Regional Agreements

The 21st century represents a challenge to East Asian economic leaders and experts to further develop their regional co-operation and integration. Within international policies and agreements, there has been significant improvement of trade relations since the creation of the "Asia-Europe Summit Meetings" (ASEM) in the 1990's, when the European Union saw the need for better Europe-East Asia cooperation in the so-called 'three pillars' of political dialogue, security and economy, and education and culture. The mark for regional agreements was further set by China, who is now a major investor in Africa. The Sino-African trade reached a „historic“ level of 106.8 billion U.S. dollars in 2008. Therefore, this remarkable growth pushes the need for cultural diplomacy between regions that had previously little or no contact.

Trade and Economics

The relations between East Asia and the world are increasing at a dramatic rate, bringing the regions closer together through cooperation in education, culture, politics, and economic integration. The prospect of a new, rapidly rising China creates both opportunities and challenges for the task of regional community building in East Asia. With the 7th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) successfully concluded in October 2008 and with the next one already planned in Washington, economic relations seem increasingly strong and stable between these two regions. Overcoming the imbalances in the relationship between the world and East Asia will undoubtedly contribute to a greater stability of the world economy and help avoid conflicts detrimental to global exchange in all areas of international relations.

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Political Dialogue

The difficulty of establishing effective dialogue about political or legal issues is difficult even on a multilateral scale. Particularly intriguing today is the East Asia's inevitable progression towards a process of trying to establish coherent political aims and policies with other countries and regions. In the East Asian region, though many nations remain politically conservative, several have made a dramatic shift in embracing a wholehearted commitment to free market principles. Political discussion is an area that is often restrained in East Asian economic forums like ASEAN but, as is the case with all rapidly increasing trade there are a steadily rising number of tourists and permanent residents from European countries, Africa, Latin America, Australia and the United States in East Asia and vice versa, creating a much higher number of people with a background in two or more regions. Participants will get to discuss the issues that affect the political statuses of the East Asian Diaspora worldwide in the weeklong forum.

Cultural exchange

Several countries have a long history of cultural offices in East-Asian nations, and the Japan Foundation is the most established cultural diplomacy initiative from an East Asian nation in countries world-wide, but South Korea and China in particular are beginning to expand their efforts at cultural diplomacy in a major way. The aims and methods, successes and failures of various European and East Asian countries' cultural diplomacy initiatives will be examined and evaluated in the Young Leaders Forum, as well as possibilities for multilateral cultural diplomacy.





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About the Forum

Focus of the Week

In addition to looking in greater detail at the history and development of cultural diplomacy, the forthcoming CDEA Weeklong Seminar will focus in particular on the following areas:

Primarily,

- The European - China Relationship
- The presentation and portrayal of East Asian culture globally
- The East Asian Diaspora
- Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol Applications in East Asia
- Corporate Social Responsibility in East Asia
- Economic Bridges between the East Asian region and the world

The Advantages/Benefits of Joining the Forum

The Weeklong Seminar

The Weeklong Seminar offers a wide range of benefits to the participants, their local communities, and the culture(s) they represent.

Cultural Diplomacy - Gaining new insights and Knowledge: The speakers during the Weeklong Seminar will include leading figures from the fields of academia, politics, business, civil society and the media. Through seminars and workshops with these speakers, the participants will gain an understanding of the broad range of issues the realms of cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy have to offer and the most salient issues within them. Furthermore, participants will be presented with numerous inspirational examples of work being done in this area. Moreover, participants will gain the skills and tools which are vital in the field of cultural diplomacy as well as learning more about the importance of soft power.

Creating Constellations / Networking: The seminar creates a unique prospect for young leaders who share similar ideas and interests to build lasting networks with like-minded professionals in addition to the high profile speakers. Participants will have the opportunity during the Weeklong Seminar to engage with individuals from different cultural and academic backgrounds with different professional skills. These relationships will be mutually beneficial and will help the participants in their further academic studies and in their professional careers/paths.



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Seminar Certification: Upon completion of the Weeklong Seminar, all participants will be awarded with an official certificate detailing the activity of the week and welcoming them to the Forum, which they will be able to use to further their academic and professional prospects.

Experience Germany and Berlin: The Weeklong Seminar will allow the participants to submerge themselves in Berlin's cultural and political scenes. As an established NGO, the ICD is able to offer access to expert speakers and historic locations, ensuring a unique experience of Europe's second largest city. Culture is alive and vibrant in Berlin; there is a large international community and participants will have the chance to sample the vast variety of cultures, music, dance, art and even languages that thrive in the city that never sleeps.

The Young Leader's Forum

Future Leadership Initiatives Projects: A group of ambitious young leaders can have a significant and positive impact on intercultural relations between the cultural groups involved. The Forum therefore offers encouragement, support (financially where possible) and guidance to forum members who would like to organize their own cultural exchanges and other leadership initiative projects. This support will begin during the Weeklong Seminar, where participants will take part in related group activities and will be provided with info-material on the subject, and will continue over the subsequent months and years.

Academic Research: Forum members will be able to conduct ongoing research into issues associated with the Forum and the field of cultural diplomacy. The ICD will support the members in the following ways:

- 1) The ICD will assist our young leaders in overcoming any obstacles they may face. We can provide high-profile contacts, manpower, financial support (where possible) and even a platform to launch your initiative in the field of Cultural Diplomacy
- 2) We endeavour to continue researching Cultural Diplomacy. The ICD helps academics publish their works in a variety of ways, including on our ICD Publications and our online Cultural Diplomacy News, www.cd-n.org.

Stay in touch - ICD Online Forum: Forum members are able to communicate with each other, and members of all the other ICD's other Forums, through the ICD Online Forum (available through the ICD website and facebook).

The Online Forum was created to allow ICD alumni to keep in touch and share information about their leadership initiatives, and other related events, with each other. The Forum will conduct web conferences every 3 month in order to help strengthen ties between our young leaders bringing together more ideas and inspiring others to get involved and contribute not only their concepts, but also assistance.

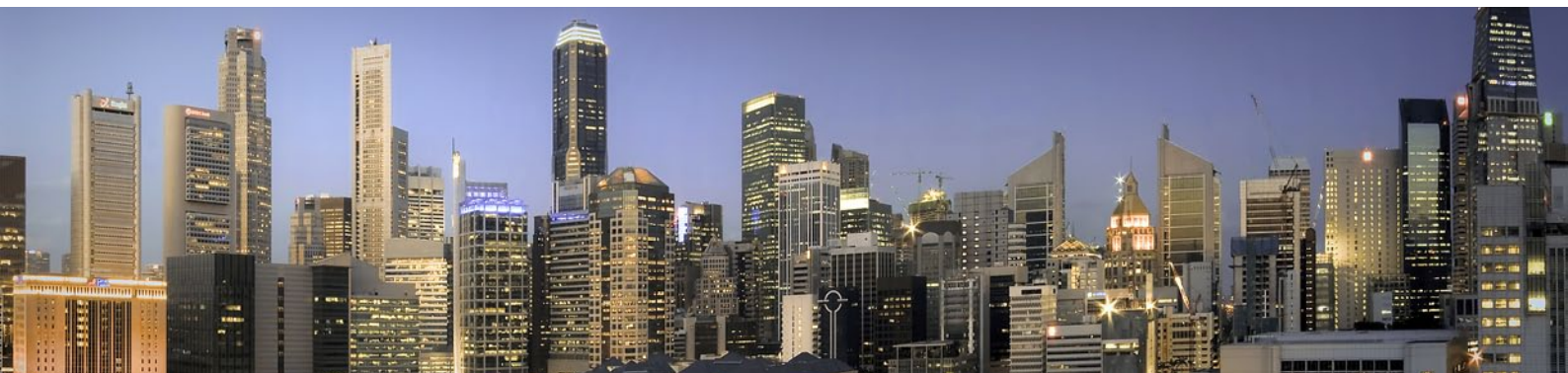
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Academic Conferences: In addition to the Weeklong Seminars, ICD activity will include shorter, more focused 2-4 day academic conferences that will allow the participants to consider an issue in more detail. Forum members will be entitled for 50% discount of all future ICD's conferences. To learn more about ICD's latest conferences please visit www.icd-internationalsymposium.org or www.world-without-walls.org

Participants Resume: The Forum then provides another platform for participants to use as a reference in their future endeavors.

Components

- **Seminars:** A range of seminars will be held during the week that will inform the participants about a particular element of Cultural Diplomacy. Speakers at the seminars will include leading figures from the business, political, academic, diplomatic, non-governmental, sport, art and media sectors.
- **Workshops:** Interactive workshops are a necessary complement to seminars for three reasons. Firstly, they offer the participants the opportunity to take part in structured discussions on the subjects they have learned about in the seminars. Secondly, they allow the Young Leaders to learn from each other – each Young Leader will have an experience and perspective that is unique to them. Finally, the group discussions in these workshops help the Young Leaders to learn about their respective backgrounds, develop personal networks, and plan potential leadership initiatives to take place after the Forum.
- **Podium Discussions:** The week long Forum will include a high profile podium discussion, where a speaker, or panel of speakers, will discuss a relevant topic in front of a larger audience. The purpose of this event is not only to give the participants more exposure to expert speakers, but also to raise awareness for the program in general, giving other stakeholders the opportunity to learn more about the Forum, and allowing the Young Leaders to expand their networks. For an overview of our former speakers please see http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en_forum_speakers



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Participants of the Forum

Cultural Diplomacy in East Asia: A Forum for Young Leaders (CDEA) is open to all individuals with an active interest in international affairs in general, and the East Asian region in particular.

Once submitted, applications will be reviewed by the selection committee. If selected to participate you will be required to transfer the tuition fee (195 Euros) to reserve your place. Participants are responsible for covering the cost of their transport, accommodation and meals. If you have any further questions regarding participation, please contact us via email at: cdea@culturaldiplomacy.org

Why Berlin?

Reasons for Berlin as a location

"The greatest cultural extravaganza that one could imagine" ~ David Bowie

Berlin represents an excellent location for the CDEA Forum due to its vast array of resources to learn from and be inspired by, and its status as a center of inter-cultural interaction within Europe. Politicians, businessmen, and artists live side-by-side, cultures from all over the world interact and cooperate with each other in their daily lives, and the defiant traces of socialism in the former East Berlin are just a short train journey from the dazzling skyscrapers of Potsdamer Platz.

Berlin is, as Bowie described, a 'cultural extravaganza'. The city has a unique spirit, one imbued upon it by history and fate, and one that demonstrates the importance and potential for intercultural interaction in the modern world. As the capital city of Europe's largest economy, the home of three prestigious universities, and a city bubbling with diverse culture and art, Berlin has lots to offer the participants, who will be given the opportunity to take advantage of this unique city.

