

## UNESCO Social and Human Sciences in Asia and Pacific Region: Briefing Note of Opportunities for Cooperation (29 May 2008)

The Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP), was established in 1977 at UNESCO Bangkok. We are engaged with hundreds of partners in the programmes below, acting as a neutral forum for discussion of some of the most critical social and ethical issues in global society today, networking persons and institutions across all disciplines to enhance the capacity of member countries, communities and individuals to create solutions to these issues. We cultivate a culture of peace. We welcome suggestions from National Commissions and others in any form (please noting that our budget does not allow us to be a funding agency). This explanation supplements the 34C/4 and 34C/5 documents, and may inform discussions towards 34C/5. For meeting information updates are placed on the RUSHSAP website. Enquiries and suggestions are welcomed to:

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### *Main activities*

#### A. Ethics of science and technology

- UNESCO Asia-Pacific School of Ethics. (<http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=apse>) acknowledges a growing number of partners involved in ongoing projects with 80+ individuals and around 20 institutions to deliver programmes.
- Mapping experts and institutions from the region to feed into the Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs organized in HQ)
- Follow-up to the Bangkok Declaration on the Ethics of Science and Technology (From COMEST 2005 in Bangkok)
- Consultation meetings, international, regional, subregional and national workshops in 16 countries across the region since 2005, as parts of these ongoing projects.

#### B. Ethics education and bioethics

- Implementation of UNESCO Bioethics Declarations and the *Joint Plan of Action for Regional Networking in Bioethics Education Towards Better Bioethics Education*.
- Compilations of open source multilingual ethics teaching resources and trials for evaluation.
- Museum displays on ethics and science and technology.
- Teacher training workshops for school and university ethics teaching
- Regional Bioethics Documentation Centre in UNESCO Bangkok for consultation

#### C. Ethics of Energy Technologies Project

- Following on from the launch conference 14 working groups have been formed on the following topics (<http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=energyethics>):

*We are looking for members, and chairs of some of these groups.*

- Universalism and environmental values
- Ethical worldviews of nature
- Visions and hopes of the future
- Representation and who decides
- Community engagement
- Stakeholder responsibilities
- Energy equity and human security
- Cost-benefit analysis and economic constructions
- Adoption & development of energy technologies (state of the art review)
- Ethical frameworks for research agendas and policy
- Educational frameworks for environmental ethics
- Nuclear dialogues
- Energy flow, environment, and ethical implications of meat production
- Water ethics and water resource management

*IT communication is being used to enhance dialogues. There are also mail list serves including:*

*[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/unesco\\_eet](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/unesco_eet)*

*<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AsiaArabPhilosophicalDialogues>*

*<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bioethicseducation>*

#### D. Philosophy

- Inter-regional Asia-Arab Philosophical Dialogues with working groups on:
  - 1) Challenges of globalization to philosophy and democracy;
  - 2) Philosophy facing the challenges of modern technology;
  - 3) The roles of philosophy in war and peace.
- Promotion of philosophy teaching and development of a regional strategy through a High Level Meeting
- Promotion of World Philosophy Day, networking of philosophers to enhance societal critical thinking

#### E. Promotion of Human Rights

- Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific: Towards an Inclusive Society, partnerships with cities across the region on the implementation of the ten point commitment and in order to develop and share best practices within cities and beyond.
- Networking of experts in human rights will be a focus of SHS in Jakarta (position being advertised).

#### F. Peace

- Sowing Seeds of Peace in the Mekong Project completed 2004-2006, next phase launched as:
- Regional Project “United for Peace and Human Security in Asia and the Pacific: Strengthening and Explaining Regional Human Security and Peace Activities”. Development of model curriculum on peace and human security for teachers.
- Joint ASEAN-UNESCO Concept Workshop on Human Security was held 26-27 October, 2006 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

#### G. Gender studies

- Asia-Pacific Network of Gender Studies Centres and fora/workshops to promote gender studies
- Comparisons of existing curriculum and development of foundational curriculum for gender studies
- Prevention of Violence against Women

#### H. Social Development

- Possible launching of a Forum for Ministers of Social Development in South East Asia with ASEAN member countries
- The South Asian Forum for Ministers of Social Development was launched in 2006, with SHS in New Delhi, Marina Faetanini, also focusing on urban poverty.
- SIDS issues are a focus for work by SHS in Apia (Susan Vize).
- Twin Chairs Project: e.g. Intersectorial collaboration between SHS and CLT led to the establishment of two UNESCO Chairs for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia, in Penang, and Prince of Songkhla University in Had Yai, Thailand.

#### I. Youth

- Youth leader training of youth science leaders in Ethics of Science and technology and involvement of youth in above activities. Possible Youth forums on current issues to continue.
- Regional Youth Strategy under development, coordinated by SHS in Apia (Susan Vize)

#### J. Sports

- Sports for All. Future activities against doping in sports.

#### K. Migration

- Mainly a focus for SHS in Almaty (Laura Kennedy), and Beijing (position is being advertised).

#### RUSHSAP Goals:

We will directly effect changes so that this happens:

- 🌐 Introduce new legislation, consistent with UNESCO and UN Declarations
- 🌐 Develop new teaching programs
- 🌐 Effect curriculum change towards empowerment of all citizens as decision makers
- 🌐 Ensure that policy makers always interact with researchers and communities in decision making
- 🌐 Enable groups of divergent opinions to dialogue with each other
- 🌐 Rediscover indigenous philosophical ideas and thoughts and integrate these into curriculum, common knowledge and policy making across the world

As a consequence we can expect that this happens:

- 🌐 Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries
- 🌐 Reduce gender disparity and other forms of discrimination for empowerment of the currently excluded and inclusion for all
- 🌐 Societal and individual maturity and critical thinking is developed towards more informed choices