

Japan

(742)

UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme

Progress report

Period of activity: October 2006 –March 2007

UNESCO Chair in Cultural Heritage and Risk Management

Report established by: Prof. Kanefusa Masuda, UNESCO Chairholder

I. Activities

1. Education/Training/Research

Training

“The International Training Course on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage”

Expected results for training activity: To contribute towards the formulation of disaster risk management plan for cultural heritage sites

Duration: 22 October 2006 – 4 November 2006

Target groups: Academics, Public administrators

Geographical coverage for partners and participants: Asia-Pacific (India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Korea)

2. Conferences/ Meetings

“International Forum on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage”

Dates and place: 4 November 2006, Kyoto

Participants (number and geographical coverage): 70, Asia-Pacific Region

3. Publications

Title: The 21st Century COE Program Newsletter (No. 8) on the International Training Course on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage

Author(S): Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage

Publisher(s): Ritsumeikan University

Year: February 2007

Language(s): English, Japanese

Number of pages: 1-8pages (<http://www.ritsumeikan.ac.jp/se/rv/bousai/newsletter-e8.html>)

Teaching/learning material

Title: Proceedings of the International Training Course on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage 2006 (tentative title)

Author(S): Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage

Year: 2007

Language(s): English

Number of pages: about 300 pages

II. Outcomes

During the first year of UNESCO Chair Program, the main event was the International Training Course on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage held for 2 weeks from 22 October to 4 November 2006. For the training course, WHC professional review center of UNESCO Chair provided advice about the training contents and methods from the preparatory stages.

The training course is designed to help Asian countries make a disaster risk management plan for natural disasters at the government level with regards to the World Cultural Heritage Sites or tentative list of such properties. It is planned that Ritsumeikan University, as a fund provider, will operate the Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage annually for 5 years.

As it was impossible to invite participants publicly in the first year of 2006 due to time constraints, a total of eight experts from four countries were invited with the professional advice of UNESCO and ICOMOS. Each country was represented by two experts; one from the cultural heritage sector and the other from the disaster risk management sector of the government.

Apart from the lectures on professional issues, the training offered special lectures on the world cultural heritage prevention measures in Kyoto, a study tour to Kobe Japan hit by the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake in 1995 to understand the damages and restoration efforts for cultural heritage properties, participants' presentation and workshop and finally an exercise in making disaster risk management plan for cultural heritage sites in each country followed by the presentation.

Although in most cases, the cultural heritage and disaster risk management experts in the region interacted for the first time, experts from different areas of expertise successfully shared their views from different professional standpoints and thereby succeeded in making a coherent disaster risk management plan for the cultural heritage site of their respective countries. In order to help them realize this plan back in their own country, this UNESCO Chair Program provides academic support following the training course and will continue this training to establish an academic network for disaster risk management of cultural heritage in Asia.

III. Forthcoming activities

The Plan of UNESCO Chair Program for 2007 is based on the lessons learnt from the achievements and reviews of the 2006 training course. During the 2 weeks training course from November 5 to 17, 2007, 8 experts from 4 countries will be invited to Kyoto in cooperation with ICCROM. In addition, academic support from UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS will be solicited. As far as the specific contents of the training are concerned, the time for workshop and group work by participants will be increased based on the opinions of participants of last year and experts from UNESCO. Accordingly, the time schedules of lectures and site visits will be adjusted to carry out more practical and high-quality training activities.

Furthermore, as disaster risk management of cultural heritage is the theme of the international conference series at ACCU, Japan for 5 years from 2007 organized with the academic support from ICCROM and ICOMOS, Kanefusa Masuda as coordinator planned an international conference this year in which cultural heritage experts from many Asian countries participated. The conference series aims to enhance the understanding of the Asia-Pacific Rim region and will be organized on various themes every year, based on various kinds of risks to which the cultural heritage in this region are exposed .

As Ritsumeikan University plays an important role focused on the practice in making more specialized disaster risk management plans for various types of cultural heritage sites, the UNESCO Chair program continues to conduct the training course explained above as its major activity.

IV. Development prospects

Although Ritsumeikan University plans to continue such an international training course at least for 5 years, the university is having a discussion with a Japan-based organization for international cooperation, JICA(Japan International Cooperation Agency), to extend the course to four weeks to include the training components in Japan especially focused on wooden architectural heritage and in India focused on architectural heritage in stone to encourage more countries to participate. This is expected to be realized from 2008 at the earliest. As discussed during UNESCO World Heritage Committee Session in 2006, development of cultural area-specific models for disaster risk management of World Cultural Heritage and development of a manual easily accessible to the developing countries are being considered and are likely to be realized as part of the collaborative activities between India and Japan, which participated in the training course in 2006 to work on the disaster risk management plan.

Kyoto has many World Cultural Heritages such as Kinkaku-ji Temple and Ryuan-ji Temple and there is a high possibility that a devastating earthquake will hit Kyoto in the near future. So Ritsumeikan university is academically interested in undertaking protective measures for the cultural heritage properties in Kyoto in response to such a grave risk. This UNESCO Chair Program is expected to play a key role in sharing international concerns and cooperation. In the mid-term, using FORUM UNESCO - university and heritage program of WHC, Ritsumeikan University is considering a platform for carrying out research on Kyoto World Cultural Heritage across various academic areas, in cooperation with interested universities and institutions from Japan and abroad.

For the activities mentioned above, Ritsumeikan University has been making efforts to attract funds at home and abroad. Such mid- and long-term plans will help to secure more sustainable basis for the UNESCO Chair Program.