



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Social and Human Sciences Sector



Teaching philosophy

IN ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC

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Teaching philosophy
in Asia and the Pacific

Background

On 25 and 26 May 2009 in Manila, the Philippines hosted the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Asia and the Pacific, co-organized by the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

This meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Mr Jesli A. Lapus, Education Secretary of the Philippines, and by Dr Mona Dumlao-Valisno, Assistant for Education to the President of the Philippines. It gathered some sixty participants, among whom the representatives of fifteen countries from the region: Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Cook Islands, India, the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Palau, the Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The meeting was also attended by philosophers, philosophy inspectors and teachers in primary, secondary and higher education, as well as experts and members of philosophy associations.

This publication was elaborated by UNESCO's Secretariat on the basis of a study published in 2007 under the title *Philosophy, a School of Freedom – Teaching philosophy and Learning to Philosophize: Status and Prospects*. The debates and discussions that took place during the Manila meeting allowed UNESCO to update this publication and to complete the data initially collected for the 2007 Study. An Action Plan for the Promotion of Philosophy Teaching in Asia and the Pacific, elaborated and validated by the meeting participants, is addressed to Member States, to National Commissions for UNESCO, to philosophers, to philosophy teachers and to UNESCO and is included in the present publication, from page 60 to page 69. Moreover the Regional Unit in Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP) at UNESCO Bangkok has prepared summaries on the teaching of philosophy in Member States, in ongoing consultation on its website.

The Social and Human Sciences Sector of UNESCO and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok would like to express their deepest gratitude to:

- The Philippine authorities and their partners for their steadfast support and their warm hospitality;
- The representatives of the participating countries from Asia and the Pacific for their engagement and active participation;
- The philosophers, experts and representatives of philosophy associations and institutions for their substantial and fruitful contribution to the debates.

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Message

I would like to commend UNESCO for organizing this High-Level Ministerial Meeting on Teaching Philosophy in the Asia-Pacific Region. Indeed, education, specifically Philosophy, is of vital importance to the welfare of present and future generations.

In the Philippine setting, the government's vision of the Philippine Main Education Highway: Towards a Knowledge-Based Economy ensures that every Filipino child is assured the opportunity to get high quality education that will make him or her a whole person, a responsible citizen, and lead him or her to a productive and high quality job or to a successful entrepreneurial venture.

The Highway situates Philippine society on the path of a fulfilling and comfortable future that we want all future generations to enjoy. And by emphasizing the importance of Philosophy, we foster the creativity and innovation among our students for them to survive these tough times. It is through Philosophy that we can cultivate the soft skills as communication, logical and analytical thinking, critical reasoning and teamwork to propel our country to a knowledge-based economy which is what we need to be globally competitive.

I am confident that this High-Level Meeting will contribute immensely to the dynamic collaboration among nations in the Asia-Pacific Region in order to reform the educational systems in our respective countries to be able to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Mabuhay!


GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

President of the Philippines



Malacañan Palace, Manila, Philippines, 26 May 2009

Foreword

We were indeed honored to host the ministerial meeting on Teaching Philosophy in the Asia-Pacific Region. This gathering of education ministers and philosophy experts in the region enhanced our attempts to promote democratic governance in our educational systems which ultimately depend on the type of education imparted to our students.

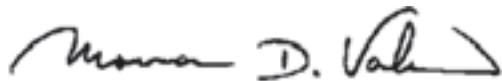
The Presidential Task Force for Education, which Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has created, recognizes the values promoted by philosophy as “a school of freedom.” Thus, its current efforts are consistent with promoting community and school based management approaches in our schools, since local issues will eventually be explored more intelligently in the classrooms through the analytical and other reasoning skills inculcated by philosophical approaches to understanding the basic concepts that underlie social life.

The discipline of Philosophy is particularly important for us because it cultivates the necessary skills that underlie good democratic decision-making such as the depth of understanding of the central concepts upon which democracy rests and the social dispositions that are needed for democratic citizenship. Since philosophy is in the business of exploring alternative possibilities and different points of view through dialogue and discussion, it has the potential to engage students in the kinds of discursive encounters with one another that will help promote a more tolerant and reasonable citizenry.

The Philippine Main Education Highway, which encompasses a student’s academic path from Pre-school to Elementary, the Secondary, Pre-University, Technical Vocational, the University up until Graduate studies and even covers Continuing Education, envisions a workforce that is highly competent and globally competitive which can adeptly cope with the dynamics of the times worldwide.

We also believe in investing in our human resource as the ultimate solution to the problems of poverty in our region, particularly by improving the thinking skills of our people. We are very much aware that human capital has become the most important factor in social development especially today when creativity and the ability to adapt to fast changing environments have become necessary skills for economic survival and resiliency.

The rich wisdom traditions of the Asia-Pacific Region could be harnessed through this meeting in order to advance higher forms of thinking among our students. Technological and discipline-specific forms of knowledge, after all, can be absorbed and applied only by an educated mind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mona D. Valisno". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mona" being the most prominent.

Hon. Mona Dumlao-Valisno
Presidential Assistant for Education, Republic of the Philippines
UNESCO Commissioner for Human and Social Sciences



Manila, Philippines, May 2009

Welcome message

We were indeed honoured to host this meeting of Asia-Pacific education ministers and philosophy experts on the introduction and enhancement of the teaching of philosophy and peace-making in our educational systems. As Pierre Sané aptly puts it in his letter of invitation for us to host this meeting last July, 2008: “Learning to philosophize is the very essence of a culture of peace.”

We may recall that when UNESCO’s Executive Board adopted the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy in April 2005, it rekindled its passion for the intellectual foundations of its mission “to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men.”

The four pillars of UNESCO, learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together, will certainly be well-served by the learner-centred approaches being enhanced by the teaching of philosophy.

We are very supportive of this project because it will eventually promote the lifelong learning skills in our region that will enable our students to become not only technologically savvy but also reflectively sagacious in their ways of handling the challenges of our globalized and knowledge-based society.



Amb. Preciosa S. Soliven
Secretary General

UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines



Manila, Philippines, May 2009

Preface

Creating UNESCO was in itself a philosophical undertaking

Let us look at the history of our Organization. It witnesses to the fact that philosophy has always been at the heart of UNESCO's action. So it is that, since UNESCO was founded, this organic bond has manifested itself in the existence of a programme devoted to philosophy and to the promotion of its teaching. Philosophy is understood here as working for peace, UNESCO's primary and fundamental mission. Indeed, building lasting peace requires thoroughgoing and ever renewed reflection on the very foundations of the action to be undertaken, which in turn call upon most creative and diverse philosophical convictions.

The teaching of philosophy is undeniably one of the keystones of a quality education for all. It contributes to open the mind, to build critical reflection and independent thinking, which constitute a defence against all forms of manipulation, obscurantism and exclusion.

The Memorandum on the philosophy programme of UNESCO announced as early as 1946 that, "[i]t is not enough to fight against illiteracy. It is still necessary to know what one is going to have people read". This reflection, philosophically significant in its own right, conveys a powerful and relevant message that applies, and will continue to apply, to today's and tomorrow's educational dynamic.

Since 2005, UNESCO's Member States have been intent upon strengthening the Organization's philosophy programme through, on the one hand, the adoption by the Executive Board of a three-faceted Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy comprising philosophical dialogue facing world problems, the teaching of philosophy, and the promotion of philosophical thought and research; and on the other hand, the proclamation by UNESCO's General Conference of a World Philosophy Day and the inclusion of a reminder of the inherent bond between philosophical reflection and analysis and the building of peace in the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013.

Philosophy, a School of Freedom, the study on the state of the art of the teaching of philosophy in the world, published by UNESCO in 2007, represents a milestone in the implementation of the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy. Based on the results of a worldwide qualitative and quantitative survey, addressed to Ministries of Education, National Commissions for UNESCO, philosophers, researchers, experts, teachers, educationalists, UNESCO Chairs in Philosophy and any other UNESCO privileged partners in the field, this unprecedented work describes what exists, but also, and especially, deals with key questions and, as much as possible, provides proposals, innovative ideas and orientations.

UNESCO's ambition is now to go one step further by involving the largest number of concerned and committed Member States in providing durable support for philosophy within the educational system, both formal and informal. Within this framework, high-level regional meetings on the teaching of philosophy were organized in Manila, Philippines, in May 2009, for Asia and the Pacific; in Tunis, Tunisia, in May

2009, for the Arab region; in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in June 2009, for Latin America and the Caribbean; in Bamako, Mali, in September 2009, for African Francophone countries; and in Port-Louis, Republic of Mauritius, in September 2009, for African Anglophone countries.

The principal objective of these high-level encounters was to engage in concerted action with UNESCO's Member States so as to accompany them in the formulation of policies favouring the teaching of philosophy.

To this end, Member States have been invited to perform a diagnosis that is as thorough as possible of the crucial questions concerning the teaching of philosophy at national level, as well as suggestions for action that would deserve to be implemented.

By means of this publication, UNESCO wants to contribute to deepening the debate going on by putting forward a certain number of facts, practices having proven their worth and live questions raised by the teaching of philosophy notably in the debates and discussions that took place in the Manila meeting in May 2009. We are convinced that combining the preliminary diagnoses performed at national level and UNESCO's specific contribution during each of the regional meetings will lead to a promising synergy. The ultimate goal will be to facilitate the establishment of national action plans, especially through strengthened regional cooperation.

We are most delighted to see the joint efforts undertaken by UNESCO and its Member States in favour of the teaching of philosophy.



Moufida Goucha
Chief of the Human Security,
Democracy and Philosophy
Section (UNESCO)



Pierre Sané
Assistant Director-General for
Social and Human Sciences
(UNESCO)



Teaching philosophy at

pre-school and primary levels

Quality basic education is education that does not perceive schools as places for the mere transmission and assimilation of knowledge, but as places for questioning and as “the best time to learn to learn”.¹ The 1996 Report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, presided by Jacques Delors, stated that “it is at the stage of basic education (which particularly includes pre-school and primary school teaching) that attitudes towards learning are forged that last all throughout one’s life”.² In Asia and the Pacific, alongside the outstanding literacy movement which resulted in many children learning to read and write, it is basic quality education that will be the strength of a youth confronted by the major challenges the region is to take on.

For several years in some countries in the region there has been active teaching of philosophy at primary level. Philosophy for Children,³ or more broadly the idea of introducing Philosophy in Schools⁴ and of developing philosophical inquiry, has inspired growing curiosity and enthusiasm throughout the world since it fills a major gap in education today. Indeed, the importance of stimulating reflection and questioning at the youngest age, and of doing so within the framework of basic quality education, is increasingly acknowledged. Learning to philosophize at pre-school and primary levels is an accepted curriculum goal in the regional Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific, and many countries have been developing innovative approaches and experimentation.⁵ Countries with extensive experience in these approaches such as Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea have developed their own models.

Learning to philosophize in schools for a quality basic education

The idea of learning to philosophize in schools assumes that children only fully blossoms in school when encouraged to take active and deliberate steps to seek responses to the questions about existence they raise at a very early age. Children are actually perceived as being “spontaneously philosophers” by virtue of their extensive, radical existential questioning. The idea of learning to philosophize in schools has given rise to very diverse experiments throughout the world in order to attempt to take this philosophical uniqueness of children into account.

So it is that certain countries make the most of opportunities for discussion and debate about philosophical themes in the classroom and others are rethinking the teacher/pupil relationship in a way that appeals to the pupils’ intellectual curiosity.

These measures, scattered as they are, are contributing in their way to the reflection of education experts, who stress that “confrontation, through dialogue and exchanging arguments, is one of the tools necessary to education in the 21st century [...]. More than ever, the essential role of education seems to be to confer upon all human beings the freedom of thought, judgment, feeling and imagination that they need to make their talents blossom and also retain as much mastery of their destiny as possible”.⁶

¹ *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, Paris, 1996, p. 131.

² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³ This term was first coined by Matthew Lipman. See in this publication, “Practices that are tried and true”, p. 23.

⁴ Term adopted in Australia about ten years ago.

⁵ RUSHSAP, UNESCO Bangkok is continuing to review all philosophy related goals in all countries in the region. Draft country profiles are available for open review on <http://www.unescobkk.org/rushsap>

⁶ *Learning: The Treasure Within*, op.cit., pp. 101-103.

Box 1 - Philippines' roadmap to Philosophy for Children (P4C)

The Manila Department of Education, with the help of strategic partners (notably the University of the Philippines, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy) walked the path towards a new territory and it has covered a hundred miles. There were roadblocks along the way but by now, we know what strategic moves to make depending on the conditions of the environment.

For teachers of social studies who wish to employ the community of inquiry in their classes, remember the challenges you may encounter, which are: untrained teachers, a more complex and extended curriculum, the necessity to keep up with standardized measures of achievement, incorporating philosophical inquiry in lessons and breaking from tradition. There are best practices, however, that may be practical answers to the obstacles along your path. These are the things that are currently happening in schools in terms of P4C implementation:

- Teacher mentoring / Teacher apprenticeship on the community of inquiry;
- Immersion/Induction of teachers to philosophical inquiry through guided practice during Learning-Action Sessions (LAC);
- Collaborative partnership with other regions to cascade P4C in other regions;
- Supervised implementation of inquiry in the teacher's own classroom;
- Participation in a support system to discuss experiences;
- Pooling of educational resources and materials to come up with culture based materials rich in philosophical content;
- Preparation of lesson plans with detailed critical thinking questions for the analysis phase.

On top of all these, it is important that there is a sense of commitment among the practitioners who will implement the programme. It would ensure that the quest for developing lifelong learners shall continue in our schools. Speaking of commitment, a pioneer teacher of P4C, Jesusa Antiquiera of P. Gomez Elementary School was judged one of Metrobank's Outstanding Teachers of the Philippines. Last year she conducted a series of lessons showing how the community of inquiry is being done in English classrooms. Principals from various regions of the country were amazed at how the children were able to think critically and reason logically. As cited by Metrobank and educator observers, "her impact on children is remarkable. Her pupils have become an engaging group of reflective, creative and critical thinkers and philosophers who can identify good reasons, make distinctions and connections, formulate and answer probing questions".

When the Manila practitioners embarked on the P4C advocacy in our schools, we were always aware that our gains in terms of developing lifelong learners would not be quantifiable. Although we have statistical data of gains in reasoning and logical thinking skills of our students, these are but facets of critical and creative thinking. But when we observe our classes, we see students who are collaborative and interactive. We see democratic teachers and facilitators who are our equals in the quest for quality education. We see enthusiasm and group collaboration in our learning circles.

Nancy Sta. Ana, Principal, Bacood Elementary School
Paper for Karunungan Festival II, Manila, Philippines, 29 August 2008

UNESCO makes a resolute commitment to encourage learning to philosophize in schools

Teaching philosophy for children and learning to philosophize had already been the object of a UNESCO study in 1998,⁷ which had stressed that it was possible, and even necessary, to present philosophical principles in simple language accessible to young children. Reflection upon this matter went still further in UNESCO's 2007 publication, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*,⁸ which takes into account discussions currently underway on the subject of learning to philosophize in schools and formulates the principal live questions which, in themselves, constitute suggestions for reflection that altogether shed light on the forms of education we want for our children. What is at stake with learning to philosophize in schools concerns the very meaning we wish to give to tomorrow's schools, which will have to be places that foster independent thinking, reflective citizenship and the blossoming of the child. If education in general must provide children with "the maps of a complex world in a perpetual state of agitation", philosophy can probably be the "compass enabling one to navigate" in that world.⁹

The impact of philosophy on children may not be immediately appreciated, but its impact on tomorrow's adults could be so considerable as to make us feel astonished at having refused or marginalized philosophy for children up until now.

Live questions

Is educating children in philosophy possible, is it desirable?

Ethical and psychological questions often come up when philosophy for children or learning to philosophize in schools is brought up.

Are children ready to reflect at such a young age?

During the different stages of their psychological development, children naturally raise questions of a philosophical nature. And since they ask questions, at times anxiously so, it is preferable to accompany them in their questioning and to reassure them with regard to the different questions about existence.

There is also the assumption upon which philosophy for children is based that exhorts us to demystify childhood and look at reality, since many children experience very difficult situations, regardless of their social milieu or the state of development of their country. To confront this situation, one can resort to learning to philosophize in which rational thinking enables one to understand an existential experience and acquire distance with respect to the emotions felt. This work is all the more operative within the context of the classroom since it is collective. In fact, it enables each and every person to experience being drawn out of their existential solitude and become aware that their questions are those of each and every person, which is reassuring and produces feelings of participating in a shared human condition helping one grow in community, as well as opening doors to new communities.

⁷ Philosophy for Children, Meeting of Experts, Report, Paris, UNESCO, 26-27 March 1998.

⁸ UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007.

⁹ *Learning: The Treasure Within*, op.cit., p. 91.

Box 2 - KARUNUNGAN (Wisdom) Festivals in the Philippines

The Social and Human Sciences Committee of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines designed Karunungan Festivals to disseminate UNESCO goals for sustainable development to social studies teachers and supportive NGOs. Karunungan (KAH-roo-noo-ngan) means “wisdom” in the Philippine National Language. Its continuing parallel programme to boost social and human sciences, particularly critical thinking, was already on-going in basic education.

Karunungan 1 (2007) showcased social studies successes and best practices in schools with strong principles. It supported the Department of Education’s School-Based Management Programme that encourages strong partnerships between local government, educationists and stakeholders. The value of cultivating neighborhood and grass-root multi-sectoral leadership for sustainable development was apparent.

With the theme “Celebrating the Teaching of Social Studies for the 21st Century”, Karunungan 2 (2008) built on the need for schools to redefine their leadership status in communities. A situationer of meta-multinational challenges and Philippine socio-environmental crisis was followed by a sharing of practices that combine philosophical, artistic and scientific methods as they aid students understand emerging societal and ethical challenges inclusive of weaknesses in the protection of human rights and their choice of solutions.

Future workshops hope to continue their focus on the critical, innovative and forward thinking needed by 21st Century New Youth in making choices that address emerging social and ethical challenges. Deliberative teaching methodologies will be highlighted in order to view the classroom as an integral part of a broader ‘community of inquirers’ wherein issues that affect local communities, such as health, environment and bioethical issues, are addressed and evaluated by students and their teachers.

Social and Human Sciences Committee,
UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines

What about their lack of scientific knowledge?

There is also the question of knowing whether children can engage in reflection without having necessary scientific knowledge. The objection that is often made to philosophy for children is based on the argument that one philosophizes as an after effect of constituted knowledge, in order to go back to the knowledge one has and to understand the process in which it was built up. According to that paradigm, philosophy’s place is at the end of the course of study.

This argument displays contempt for the scientific processes integrated as early as primary school by children, upon which they may reflect with the help of the teacher, especially when the methods are active, by working on the process and not only on scientific findings to be learned and memorized. Indeed, attempting to provide fixed answers to philosophically significant questions for children to which science cannot respond, such as ethical questions, keeps children from thinking for themselves, and also ignores the diversity of responses and ideas people have in response to any ethical question. These questions are ones to which the children themselves will have to find their own answers in the course of their lives

and by evolving in their own reflection. So, although one must not answer for them prematurely, one must accompany them as they go along in order not to leave them defenceless. This is the role of teachers at school – supporting them in this searching, by proposing situations to them in which they are going to develop tools for thinking that will enable them to understand their relationship to the world, to others and to themselves, and to orient themselves in these terms.

Box 3 - What is at stake with the learning to philosophize in schools

1) Thinking for oneself

Being a matter of existential, ethical, aesthetic questions, thinking for oneself presupposes a reflective process that formulates problems, conceptualizes and argues rationally. Beginning to learn this as early as possible means guaranteeing awakening enlightened reflection on the human condition in children.

2) Educating for reflective citizenship

Learning to think for oneself develops freedom of judgment in future citizens, protecting them from ideological indoctrination and persuasive advertising. Teaching philosophizing through the debating of ideas encourages confronting others with reason while aiming for the truth, an ethical and intellectual requirement of genuine democratic debate.

3) Helping the child's development

Learning how to reflect is important for the construction of the personality of children and adolescents. It is an opportunity for them to experience that they are thinking beings, which strengthens their self-esteem and helps them grow in humanity by experiencing disagreement in discussion in peaceful coexistence. This, in turn, raises the threshold of tolerance with respect to others and prevents violence.

4) Facilitating the mastery of language and speech

Verbalizing in order to think develops cognitive- and socio-linguistic capabilities. By working on the development of their thought, children work on the need for precision in language.

5) Conceptualizing the philosophizing

Practicing reflection with children calls for a redefinition of philosophizing, for a conceptualization of its beginnings, its nature, the conditions for it.

6) Developing a theory of teaching philosophy adapted to children and adolescents

Theories about teaching philosophy are also brought into question. One cannot teach philosophy to children in big lecture halls, with major works or essay writing. But, one can theorize about their learning to reflect on their relationship to the world, to others and to themselves, by means adapted to their age group.

Michel Tozzi
Professor Emeritus in Education Sciences,
University of Montpellier 3, France

A matter of approach and pedagogy

Within the framework of philosophy for children, it is appropriate to speak more about learning to philosophize, or to develop philosophical inquiry, than merely about teaching philosophy. The traditional model of teaching philosophy is based on what is called the transmission model. As for the way in which learning to philosophize in schools is practiced, this involves a new pedagogical approach, that of a teaching-learning process that places the pupil at the heart of the learning dynamic.

Indeed, since it is a matter of young children, who naturally cannot understand a purely theoretical course, learning to philosophize in schools fits in with a paradigm that is more problem-oriented and more focused on a logic of learning. It is thus the cultivation of questioning and not just answering that is aimed at in this case. Most of those practicing this method support the idea of leaving the answers open, in order to keep up the exploration of possible solutions.

How, therefore, does one transmit philosophical 'not-knowing' if not by continuing to circulate it as a desire? That implies two fundamental attributes on the part of the teacher: on the one hand, modesty with respect to possessing truth; on the other hand, the requirement regarding the desire for truth, where the status of the 'discussability' of the remarks allows for co-operative, shared and non-dogmatic quest for knowledge.

The pupils are therefore principally placed in the foreground in their role of actors rather than mere recipients. In this case, the process of learning to philosophize in schools is principally based on the discussional approach, in contrast to the institutionalized approach where the expository aspect prevails for the most part (as it is the case at secondary and university levels). Of course, discussion as the way to learn to philosophize can generate some reservations on the part of advocates of traditional teaching, to whom classroom discussion would seem a superficial pedagogical method, while the teacher's course would still remain the norm.

However, discussion is understood here as being an interactive process within a group, an interaction surrounding a specific subject where the intellectual responsibility would reside on the teacher. Many dimensions of this discussion may be philosophically oriented, knowingly the very nature of the subject dealt with often formulated as questions; and the manner in which students are going to infuse this questioning through rational and not just emotional approach. Besides, discussion is only one of the possible forms of learning, which does not exclude written work or traditional courses.

More generally, the pedagogical approach underlying learning to philosophize in schools requires the necessary conditions for bringing philosophical reasoning by and for children into play. Social psychology and the sciences of education often have recourse to the idea of the "Pygmalion effect". Teachers, confident about the success of what they are doing, will create the material conditions necessary for practicing philosophy, and the pupils, finding that teachers have faith in their abilities, will see their self-confidence and their personal self-esteem grow.

Box 4 - Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND) project on the production of materials for philosophy teaching in schools

The project on Philosophy Education for Democracy and Sustainable Development involves the development of philosophical materials dealing with democracy and sustainable development for use in schools in the Asia-Pacific region. There will be two sets of classroom resources, one targeting the 10-12 year-olds and the other 13-16 year-olds, as well as teacher-support materials. These materials are being developed by international teams of philosophy educators drawn from the Member States of UNESCO in the region.

In addressing the subject matter – democracy and sustainability – as two great pillars for a viable world and human advancement, we are guided by two main considerations. (1) Our approach to the subject matter is essentially philosophical. We are concerned with philosophical ways of looking at these topics and issues – with philosophical questioning of problems and issues and the philosophical exploration of concepts and ideas. (2) Our approach is to reconstruct the philosophical subject matter so that it meets with the experience and life-world of students. While it has sometimes been held that philosophical subject matter of any description is beyond the reach of students of the age with which we are dealing, the experience of those of us who have been involved in this field for many years leads us to agree with the distinguished educationalist Jerome Bruner when he says that “the foundation of any subject may be taught to anybody at any age in some form”.¹⁰ This, of course, includes philosophy.

At the level of tools and procedures, our subject matter will include learning to formulate issues and problems; learning to use questions and questioning in inquiry; learning to explore similarities and differences, agreement and disagreement; learning to use examples and counter-examples; learning to identify the criteria that affect the way we deploy our concepts; and learning to make balanced and well-supported judgements.

This implies a combination of two teaching strategies. First, in order to engage the students philosophically, it will be necessary to focus upon inquiry-based learning. This is to say that the tools and procedures of philosophical inquiry will need to be systematically built into the teaching programme. Since we are not presuming that classroom teachers are familiar with this approach, we will explicitly configure the classroom resources and teacher support materials to supply what is needed. Secondly, the emphasis upon deliberation, and exploring alternative possibilities and different points of view, highlights the need for collaborative learning. This means that we will be building ample opportunity for class discussion and small group work into the design of the materials.

Briefing paper presented during the APPEND meeting,
Preceding the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy
in Asia and the Pacific, 24 May 2009, Manila, Philippines

¹⁰ Jerome Bruner, *The Process of Education*, Harvard University Press, 1960, p. 12.

A matter of teacher training

Another important aspect requiring adapted action concerns the low level of philosophical training of primary school teachers. In fact, non-institutional training is often left to volunteers and is often provided in a private context, or even by associations. Finding teachers without actual philosophical training, or who have only studied philosophy at secondary level, the first reaction would consist in proposing to provide them with a classic academic training. This teaching would have its limits, however, because having knowledge is not enough to train skills. It is entirely a matter of having the teachers learn to philosophize and not only learn philosophy, for them to awaken children's minds to reflective thinking. It is the whole question of a theory of learning to philosophize that is raised for teachers, as well as for the children themselves.

The appearance of a new subject in primary school should therefore lead the institution to introduce into the educational system – both in initial and in-service training – a consistent education of teachers in specific required practices in line with the objectives pursued by the programmes. In the Philippines for instance, in the early 1990's, the University of the Philippines' Philosophy Department initiated Philosophy for Children Seminars with the support of the Department of Education and of some Commissioners from the Philippines National Commission for UNESCO. This new idea came up after several philosophy professors of the University of the Philippines attended summer sessions at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, at the Montclair State University where Mathew Lipman was teaching. The Seminars were intended to acquaint school teachers with inquisitive thinking through workshops where philosophical questions – such as 'What is thinking? What is the mind, culture, language? Who is a person?' etc. – were collectively analysed. By doing so, the teachers themselves probed into their thinking, and at the same time built a 'community of inquiry'. The Seminars were also aiming at enabling the teachers to incorporate Philosophy for Children in their subject areas, preparing lesson plans using topics and issues that could motivate pupils to engage in philosophical reflection. Today, there is a need to institutionalize this type of training so that it becomes sustainable and expanded throughout the country. It is possible to do so by institutionalizing in-service training for teachers on philosophy teaching and by including philosophy teaching methods and techniques in pre-service trainings.

In Australia, there are Philosophy in Schools organizations in every state that engage in teacher education. In this domain, the University of New South Wales, Sydney, has worked with over 100 schools and many educational authorities both in Australia and abroad over a twenty-year period.¹¹ The National University of Singapore is also training teachers, and the courses are open to all serving teachers (primary, secondary and junior college). The Singapore Teachers' Union (STU) is a major provider of such in-service training. As of early 2009, more than 500 teachers have attended the training.

¹¹ In this regard, Prof. Philip Cam's work is to be commended. Prof. Cam is Honorary Professor of the University of New South Wales, and is currently President of the Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND). He has written several books related to philosophical inquiry for children, some of which have been widely translated, and he is the author of many articles on related aspects of education.

Box 5 - The Australian appropriation of P4C

The arguments in favour of including philosophy in school curriculum were born outside mainstream educational research. Laurence Splitter was the first to introduce P4C practices in Australia, in 1984. After working with Lipman, Splitter directed a workshop on teacher-training in Wollongong, New South Wales, in 1985, then another in Lorne, Victoria, in 1989. The participants at the Lorne workshop, by creating associations and drafting school textbooks, had the most visible impact on the introduction of P4C in Australia [...].

[Along with individual initiatives taken by Philip Cam, Tim Sprod, Chris De Haan, San Leslie MacColl and Lucy McCutcheon], state organizations were also created, of which some came together to form the Federation of Australasian Philosophy for Children Associations, which later became the Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations. With the exception of Queensland, where Buranda primary school contributed a great deal and worked in collaboration with the Ministry for Education, these state organizations remain the principal source of teacher-training in philosophy.

The teaching of philosophy has spread little beyond primary education – and even there, it has not been adopted across the board. It is sometimes brought in at school-district level, but most of the time it depends on the initiative of individual schools or, more often still, individual teachers. Even though the teaching of philosophy at primary level is gradually spreading, the Ministry will have to become involved to really make a difference.

One can cite a positive example in Queensland, where the state school at Buranda, in a working-class area of Brisbane, has achieved remarkable results since it incorporated the teaching of philosophy into its curriculum eight years ago. It received the title of Queensland Showcase School of the Year in 2003 and the Outstanding National Improvement by a School Award in 2005. Its results have been spectacular. For eight years, the students of the Buranda school have obtained exceptional results at both academic and social levels. They have a reputation for knowing how to solve problems, and violence or bullying is rare, even non-existent in the school. The success of the programme has aroused great interest and the Buranda school receives many requests for visits from teachers from Australia and overseas. Staff members have been sought out to speak at conferences and to train other teachers. The Buranda school and Education Queensland also offer a training course online.

In the state of Victoria, a growing number of institutions, from primary level to universities, have introduced courses in philosophy. The Victorian Association for Philosophy in Schools has received a subsidy for the recruitment of a coordinator and regularly holds workshops for teachers. The association has a website and encourages schools to share their resources regarding philosophy – but here too, the principal movers in favour of philosophy come from outside the central education system.

In Sydney, a growing number of schools are integrating the methodology of the philosophical community of enquiry into their school curriculum, and at least two of the city's education zones are considering introducing the teaching of philosophy. When Tasmania established its new Essential Learning curriculum, it accorded philosophical reflection a central place. The apparent lack of a

coherent and concerted philosophy programme, however, has led to increased calls for philosophy classes, as proposed by the Association for Philosophy in Tasmanian Schools.

In every Australian state there are places where philosophy is taught at primary level, and all states are now working actively towards incorporating philosophy classes into the last few years of high school, but there is not yet any concerted approach with regard to the intermediate levels.

Stephan Millett, Director of the Centre for Applied Ethics and Philosophy,
Curtin University, Perth, Australia.

Presentation submitted at the international conference
“Philosophy in Schools: Developing a Community of Inquiry”, Singapore, 17–18 April 2006

Practices that are tried and true

Ever since its founding by Mathew Lipman in 1974, the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), a pioneering institution as concerns Philosophy for Children, has given rise to several methods and practices throughout the world. Today, one finds a variety of models for teaching children to philosophize at pre-school and primary levels.

The Lipman method

This method is recognized as being the one that has most influenced the development of Philosophy for Children in the world. When it was created, the Lipman programme was the only systematic philosophy programme for the 6-16 age group. It was therefore a model for many other countries, which translated and adapted it.

In contrast to the Cartesian tradition, for which childhood is the place and time of prejudice and error, Lipman hypothesized that children are capable of thinking on their own once a method adapted to their needs is employed. The method that he developed includes instruction material that is consistent and useful to all teachers who have not received philosophical training. Lipman wrote seven novels¹² taking into account the major philosophical questions and the age of the children and covering the entire course of study from nursery school to the end of secondary education. Each of the novels is accompanied by a teacher’s manual, which consolidates what is learned in the discussions and supports what the pupils and teacher do with diversified exercises which are suggestions, and not obligations, leaving the teacher completely free to use initiative. This method counts at least three well-established strong points: first, cultivating questioning in the schoolroom by relying on the questions of the children themselves; second, proposing written supporting material that is narrative, in order to facilitate the children’s identification with the characters and situations, and has highly anthropological content; third, setting up a place in the classroom organized for speaking and exchanging ideas about human problems, where the speaking is democratically shared, but with a critical requirement for which the duty of argumentation is the counterpart of the right to express oneself.

¹² See Box 6.

Michel Tozzi's "democratic-philosophical" method

This method pursues goals close to those pursued by Lipman, but proposes a structured democratic mechanism by assigning specific functions among the pupils, and philosophically oriented intellectual requirements (problem solving, conceptualization and argumentation). Practice is enriched by coordinating debates about the interpretation of a text (literature for young people) and philosophically oriented discussion, as well as by the use of myths as a basis for reflection.

Box 6 - The teaching material for the Lipman method

Whether it is a matter of an innovation to be introduced or to be strengthened, of experimentation to begin, or in progress, or yet the institutionalization of this type of practice, learning to philosophize in primary school can be greatly facilitated with the help of teaching material that already exists or is yet to be created. Several options are possible after the fashion of what many countries have been doing, namely:

- 1 - Translating Lipman's novels into the language of the country, as well as the manuals he designed for teachers, with many complementary proposals for discussion between and with students;
- 2 - Adapting the content of Lipman's novels to the local culture, by transforming certain episodes in a way that makes them more meaningful for the culture, traditions and context of the country concerned;
- 3 - Writing new "Lipman-style" novels, conceived in terms of the same objectives for engaging in the same process, but rooted in the specific culture of the country concerned;
- 4 - Producing new supporting material on the basis of Lipman's material – such as albums with pictures, comic books, or other audio-visual materials.

Lipman's seven novels

- *Elfie*, 3 volumes, 1988
- *Kio and Gus*, 1986
- *Pixie*, 1981
- *Mark*, 1980
- *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, 1974 and 1980
- *Suki*, 1978
- *Lisa*, 1976.

Adapted from the publication *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007, p. 23

Even if the themes of the discussions vary, the mechanisms remain practically the same: the questions that are the object of the reflections have come from the life of the classroom. The children form a circle. The mechanism is set up through the assigning of various different functions: the *chairperson* oversees the exchanges by recalling the rules of functioning; the *reformulators* explain in their way what they have

understood about what has just been said; the *synthesizer* sums up the exchange progress; the *scribe* notes the important ideas he has isolated on the blackboard; the *discussants* participate in the exchanges by giving their opinion; the *observers* have chosen not to participate in the discussion, in order to help a schoolmate make progress in their speaking; the person running the group (generally the teacher) endeavours to maintain the intellectual requirements of philosophizing. Organized in this way, this discussion among peers initiates the children both to reflecting philosophically and to practicing living together as citizens.

Oscar Brenifier's Socratic method

This method harks back to Socratic maieutics, with significant guidance of the group by the teacher with a view to progressive and logical reflection on the basis of questions, reformulations and objections. This method has generated a substantial amount of internationally published teaching material.

It is the teacher who guides the class with intellectual requirements. Faced with a question, a pupil proposes an idea that others must reformulate in order to assess whether they have understood it well. If not, reformulations must continue until the idea is understood by everyone. Then, the speaker asks if anyone disagrees with this idea and why. Pupils reformulate the objection until everybody understands it. The teacher then asks the group to respond to this objection, etc. The progress of the group's ideas can be followed on the blackboard in accordance with a methodical, rigorous process.

Jacques Levine's method

The objective of this method is to foster the development of the children's personality by anchoring it in their condition as thinking beings, by having them experience their ability to comment on a fundamental question that people, including themselves, face. As early as 1996, Jacques Levine formulated a set of practical and research guidelines based on his experience as a developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst. This approach is put into practice as follows.

First, the teacher tosses out a subject or a question of interest to mankind and to all children (for example, growing up), expressing his/her interest in finding out the children's opinion. The teacher then voluntarily remains silent.

Second, children are asked to express their opinions about this topic for about ten minutes. They thus become the author of their own thought, no longer expecting a right answer from the teacher. The session is recorded.

Third, in the presence of their peers, the group listens to the tape for ten more minutes and children can interrupt whenever they want to express themselves again. By means of this exercise, the conditions of psychological possibilities of constructing autonomous thinking are worked out so as to allow the individual to become aware that he/she is thinking in connection with others, but remains nevertheless distinct from them. Children undergo a community experience that binds them together in a common culture of shared oral expression. This confers on each of them a feeling of being both serious and pacified.

Box 7 - Malaysian experience in cultural adaptation of teaching materials and objectives

In 2006, the Institute of Education of the International Islamic University of Malaysia was given the University's consent to set up a Centre for Philosophical Inquiry in Education (CPIE). The CPIE is the second centre of this type in Malaysia; the Centre for Philosophy for Children in Malaysia was also created by Professor Rosnani Hashim and is affiliated with the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC). According to Professor Hashim, the objective of the CPIE is to restore the philosophical spirit of research and intellectual rigour as called for in the Koran.

The CPIE is to become known as a centre for the development and practice of philosophical education, with an aim of equipping individuals with good judgment skills. It intends to offer to all the possibility to understand and appreciate Islamic thinking and educational philosophy, and its practice, and in particular its connection to truth, knowledge, moral values, wisdom and logical and critical thought, so as to develop good judgment and ability to discuss ethical questions in a rational way.

The Centre's activities include: 1) providing training in philosophical research, the community of enquiry and democratic processes for school and university students, as well as for teachers, professors and the public; 2) collaborating with schools, the Ministry for Education and other educational establishments to introduce philosophy programmes in schools; 3) developing modules on Islamic philosophy to be used in schools, in educational institutions and in the P4C programme; 4) conducting research on philosophy in education, Islamic educational thought and other related subjects; 5) publishing Malayan educational materials; 6) organizing local and international conferences; and 7) organizing courses on philosophy for schools and philosophical research for the public.

In terms of instructional materials, the CPIE uses a selection of Lipman's stories. At first these were translated for use during the experimental stage. Today, however, following a shift in the language policy in Malaysia towards English, Lipman's original texts are used, adapted for use in Malaysia by translating names, foods, festivals, etc., to ones more recognizable by local children. Even if new resources were created in the future, such as stories and materials with more connection to Malayan culture, Professor Hashim says there is little in Lipman's stories that can be regarded as shocking from a moral point of view. The CPIE also uses the 'community of enquiry' method.

The activities of the CPIE are entirely situated outside of the formal school curriculum. Philosophy is still not taught as a school subject in primary or secondary schools in Malaysia, nor is it taught at universities as a field of study: it is taught as philosophy of education, of science etc., but there is no Department of Philosophy.

UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007, pp. 41-42

Children philosophize



UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007, p.31

Teaching philosophy at

secondary level

Teaching at secondary level comes at a time of profound change in an individual's life – that of adolescence. The evolution-revolution experienced during this period has significant consequences to be taken into account in education. During adolescence, one's relationship to the world, with others and with oneself sets into motion a process of structuring and problematic restructuring, with its questioning, fears, joys and suffering. In addition, one's perception of others changes by becoming a determinant factor in the way one sees oneself and reacts. Adolescence is, therefore, a propitious time for philosophical questioning.

Teaching philosophy at secondary level should thus find a legitimate place in the educational system.

To that end, it is necessary to restore the place of teaching philosophy, often the first to be sacrificed in comparison to literature and history which generally benefit from being firmly anchored in the cultural identity of the different countries. It is also necessary to restore the place of the human sciences in general, which they continue to lose to the benefit of the scientific and technical fields. As secondary education has a tendency to become increasingly technical in an overall context of pursuing economic growth, it is fitting to envisage development in terms of all of its dimensions: ethical, cultural, social and human.

Overview

Countries in Asia and the Pacific have been resolute in their determination to undertake measures in favour of quality education, particularly at secondary level. For this reason, the teaching of philosophy, similarly to other disciplines, should take on a certain number of challenges.

The survey conducted by UNESCO in 2007¹³ found that in the Asia-Pacific region philosophy is taught at secondary level in several countries, but with a wide range of experiences, goals and curricula. According to responses from many practitioners, the question of philosophy teaching at secondary level in Asia is intricately linked with that of ethics, moral education, civics and humanities in general. These domains of education are indeed viewed as disciplines that do foster philosophical questioning. Some philosophical issues are even tackled in natural sciences, such as social and ethical questions in the biology curriculum. Therefore, any attempt to systematically cluster Asian countries that teach 'Philosophy' in secondary schools and those which do not would be too simplistic and will not reflect realities. Only a brief and provisional overview is provided in this publication.

Philosophy is taught in India at upper secondary level in years eleven and twelve, for three to four hours per week on average, as part of classes on scientific method and logic, as well as in history of philosophy.

In Pakistan, philosophy is taught in the sixth and seventh years (upper secondary), as an option in the Literature, Economics and Social Sciences branches. It is taught in combination with other subject matters such as literature, history or religious studies.

¹³ UNESCO online Questionnaire on the state of the art of philosophy teaching, whose results are published in the UNESCO Study *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001541/154173E.pdf>

In China, philosophy is taught in the framework of moral education and sciences (philosophy of sciences).

In Japan, philosophy is taught as part of moral education at secondary level, as well as in other disciplines, namely philosophy of sciences in natural science class and philosophy of history in history class.

Currently in Indonesia, there is no plan to introduce a specific subject called 'Philosophy' below the university level. Nonetheless, the Department of Philosophy at the University of Indonesia (UI) has organized secondary school competitions on philosophical subjects, particularly in the area of human rights.

In New Zealand, while there is no distinct official curriculum in the sense that philosophy is not treated as a separate subject in secondary school, certain ethical and philosophical themes, including interracial relations, are included in history and social studies text books as well as in language studies. Several schools, however, teach philosophy as a distinct subject.

In Thailand, philosophy is taught throughout the seven years of secondary schooling, but not as a separate subject. It is taught in both general and technical schools for two hours per week, in the context of other subjects, such as literature, history, ethics, Buddhist studies, civics or science. A holistic approach is generally employed. Philosophy teachers in Thailand are highly regarded, be they school teachers or religious leaders such as Buddhist monks.

In Uzbekistan, since independence in 1991, the education system has been reformed and new instructional norms are in place in accordance with the Education Law of 1997. Philosophy is taught in all years of secondary schooling, with course titles such as 'Cultural Identity', 'History of World Religions', 'The Individual and Society', 'Family Psychology', 'Aesthetics', and 'The Idea of National Independence and Basic Enlightenment Principles'.

In what follows, the main challenges faced by philosophy teaching in Asia and the Pacific are highlighted.

Challenges

What place for philosophy in quality teaching?

It is necessary to stress that philosophy teaching aims at training people to think independently and at fostering a critique of knowledge, rather than its mere assimilation. Participants in the debates of the Manila regional meeting¹⁴ agree that countries in Asia and the Pacific welcome all innovative pedagogical methods that can adequately improve students' active learning. Indeed, in a context of social and economic transition, quality education is high in the agenda of governments: they have to build citizens' resilience in fast-paced and ever-changing social environments.

The question remains, however, of the place of philosophy in school curricula? Two main questions that emerge from UNESCO's Study inquire on the place of philosophy and its links with the other subject matters.

¹⁴ The debates that took place during this meeting will be designated in this publication as 'the Manila debates'.

Box 8 - Philosophy and ‘independent thinking’

One of the three pillars of UNESCO’s Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy focuses on the “Fostering of critical reflection and independent thinking”,¹⁵ mainly through philosophy teaching. These goals assigned to philosophy teaching have yet to be thought through the very complexity of given cultural and social backgrounds, especially in the case of countries in transition such as those in Asia and the Pacific. Indeed, in the context of the recent industrialization and modernization of several countries in the region, the notion of ‘independent thinking’ might be understood as an individualistic stand based on individual autonomy challenging the traditional conception of community welfare. This was the case, for instance, of the Republic of Korea which underwent a fast-paced industrialization process during the period 1960-1990: between 1965 and 1995, the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita jumped from less than \$100 to \$10,076. The cultural and intellectual impact of such a change is naturally undeniable. The traditional moral education based on Confucian virtues (Sense of community, Caring, Moral attitude as foundation of a healthy State) was perceived as increasingly challenged by liberal values (Individual autonomy, Rationality, Competition as a factor of progress) that were accompanying new habits induced by industrialization. This evolution is not unique to Korea – it is experienced by many countries in the region.

The central question is not whether philosophy as development of ‘independent thinking’ is suitable or compatible or not with the intellectual traditions of countries in transition; it is about finding the most efficient ways by which misconception and misunderstanding can be avoided, so as to allow students to fully benefit from the intrinsic qualities of philosophical thinking, without having the feeling of denial of their cultural and intellectual heritage.

From discussions during the High-Level Regional Meeting
on the Teaching of Philosophy in Asia and the Pacific,
Manila, Philippines, 25-26 May 2009

On the one hand, one of the main challenges is not to confuse teaching philosophy with teaching civics, ethics and religion, whose respective goals and methods are different. Philosophy has its own requirements and methodology for educating about values and ethical principles that are essential for peace and democracy to set in durably.

On the other hand, as a genuine asset for quality education, philosophy must be conceived of as enabling people to think about the knowledge acquired throughout their secondary education, within a dynamic of complementarity with the other subject matters. Teaching philosophy must thus inspire concrete interdisciplinary reflection that in turn develops the criteria for asking questions about knowledge acquired in other fields. Philosophy courses will then be a special opportunity to encounter different kinds of knowledge, providing coherence in tune with other disciplines taught, through practicing dialogue based on the desire to question.

¹⁵ UNESCO, Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy, 171 EX/12, UNESCO Executive Board, Paris, 2005, Pillar II.

Experts think that one relevant way of initiating philosophical thinking in class that does not require a lot of resources would be to introduce in existing disciplines, one or two philosophical questions per week and to open debate and inquiries. For instance, in history, one can debate upon the possibility of being objective in analysing historical facts; in physics, the question of the ethical applications of physical laws can be opened to discussion; in biology, the meaning of life can be questioned, etc.

In Asia and the Pacific, countries are very much in favour of an interdisciplinary approach to philosophy teaching. According to them, this approach has two major advantages: i. Interdisciplinary approach allows for communication between several subject matters, and philosophical thinking can help students in various disciplines embrace a broader view of human knowledge, trigger questioning and avoid excessive systematic thinking; ii. Philosophical reflection can be more easily embedded into existing disciplines in order to respond to arguments of curriculum overload and lack of teachers. While acknowledging the importance and relevance of having a philosophy class per se in school curricula, representatives of countries of the region where philosophy is not taught as such in secondary schools think that, on the practical side, the first step should be to embed philosophical questioning and thinking into existing disciplines. To strictly advocate an *ex nihilo* creation of a separate philosophy class at secondary level would be counter-productive since certain countries could be put off by an operation they fear to be too costly in terms of human and financial resources. However, countries insist that embedding philosophy in existing disciplines should not discard the necessity of having philosophy department in universities, which is capital for the training of competent philosophy teachers.

In Cambodia for instance, the subject matter entitled “Life skills and personalities” is taught an average of 2 hours per week in primary schools and of 2-4 hours per week in secondary schools. This subject matter is a good opportunity for introducing philosophical thinking because, for the moment, its content is not so determined and firmly fixed: issues addressed during these classes relate to gender equality, environmental awareness, domestic violence, conflict prevention, responsibility and correction, Khmer national and cultural identity, literature critique, morality and civic responsibilities, election rights, human rights, some basic laws and world protocols, peace building and the ASEAN community (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). There can also be lectures from external actors (NGOs for instance) on various topics such as freedom of thought and expression, tolerance, reconciliation and mediation, individual wisdom, etc. The rather soft and large scope of this subject matter leaves some room for practices and methods of philosophical thinking, such as community of inquiry. This however requires training for teachers to be sensitized to new practices in this domain.

What approaches to teaching at secondary level?

Among other things, the 2007 UNESCO Study relayed the opinions of many professors pleading for a critical reshaping of programmes. Indeed, in an age of accelerating globalization, the traditional manner of teaching philosophy has reached certain limits. Would it not be appropriate to establish new approaches that, while presenting certain ideas and concepts, would open the way to a broader debate? Should one, and how, “revolutionize” or reform the ways and means of teaching philosophy?

Too often, in fact, philosophy is taught in a pompous, esoteric, even pedantic way, by summoning up the great names of the history of philosophy. This way of teaching tends to discourage students and to

Box 9 - Excerpts from the Paris Declaration for Philosophy

“We, the participants in the International Study Days on “Philosophy and Democracy in the World” organized by UNESCO in Paris on 15 and 16 February 1995, [...]

Emphasize that philosophy teaching encourages open-mindedness, civic responsibility, understanding and tolerance among individuals and groups;

Reaffirm that philosophy education, by training independently minded, thoughtful people, capable of resisting various forms of propaganda, prepares everyone to shoulder their responsibilities in regard to the great questions of the contemporary world, particularly in the field of ethics;

Confirm that the development of philosophical debate in education and in cultural life makes a major contribution to the training of citizens, by exercising their capacity for judgment, which is fundamental in any democracy.

Committing ourselves to do everything in our power in our institutions and in our respective countries to achieve these objectives, we therefore declare that: [...]

Philosophy teaching should be maintained or expanded where it exists, introduced where it does not yet exist, and designated explicitly as “philosophy”; [...]

Philosophy as the free pursuit of inquiry, cannot consider any truth to be final, and encourages respect for the convictions of the individual but should in no circumstances, at the risk of denying its own nature, accept doctrines which deny the liberty of others, affront human dignity and sow the seeds of barbarity”.

Quoted from the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy, 171 EX/12, UNESCO Executive Board, Paris, 2005.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001386/138673e.pdf>

deaden their interest in the field. While teaching philosophy undeniably fundamentally involves a presentation of the history of ideas, it cannot, nevertheless, be limited to it. In that case, would it not be appropriate to develop new methods oriented also toward the knowledge underlying the theories of major philosophers from every culture in such a way as to stimulate or create a genuine philosophical reflection?

The teaching methods must certainly be adapted to different contexts and to the most varied audiences, while keeping in mind that philosophy teaching is supposed to educate free, aware, responsible citizens and not necessarily philosophers. Philosophy teachers surely sometimes find themselves defenceless before listeners unaccustomed to analysis or uncomfortable with an abstract subject matter that can seem dull by definition. The Manila debates shared several ways to organize the setting of classrooms where philosophy class takes place. One common way is to arrange chairs, with or without desks, in the classroom in a way that makes pupils feel comfortable to share their thoughts. Chairs and tables can be placed in a circle; there could be several boards around the room on which groups can work on; charts, pictures, maps, etc. can be hung and renewed regularly on the students’ initiative, etc.

In the case where philosophy as such does not exist in curricula, teachers could still take the initiative of creating an unusual classroom environment for their respective disciplines, in order to discuss and debate

on concepts or philosophy-related issues.¹⁶ The major purpose of this approach is to instill new habits in the classroom, to make students speak out their thoughts and to foster exchange of ideas. In addition to traditional interactive methods such as debate or asking questions, numerous participatory games have for instance been developed.¹⁷

This initiative can be supported by adequate materials, such as textbooks, teaching tools and instruments that should always take into account both the audience to which they are destined and the issues that philosophical reflection grounded in ethical considerations raises. There is a need for clear and simple manuals and textbooks that fully adopt an interactive approach in explaining complex theories. By starting from concrete examples drawn from daily experience, one can also lead students to ask questions about their conscience, actions, etc. Philosophy taught using these kinds of flexible supporting materials can thus provide students with opportunities to think and compare, particularly in relation to their concerns. In the Philippines, where the school system is undergoing decentralization, there is a need to collect stories and texts from indigenous teaching, so as to adapt the teaching materials to the audience. This can be achieved with the cooperation of research centres that proliferate in the various ethnic regions around the country.

Box 10 - Examples of Australian textbooks

Starting from the principle that learning philosophy is not merely learning about this or that philosopher or school of philosophy, but is a practical activity that enables us to understand, evaluate and engage with our world, the Australian philosophers Stephan Millett and Alan Tapper have developed a set of three books for the Western Australian curriculum. The set, entitled *Philosophy and Ethics*, has been designed to provide a practical, collaborative and classroom-friendly approach to doing philosophy. The books are a combination of workbook and textbook, with clearly and simply-written text interspersed with individual, small group and class-based exercises.

The three books were written for 15 to 17 year-old native English speakers in language that, while as simple as possible, does justice to the philosophical concepts and methods discussed. While they have been written specifically for an Australian curriculum, teachers from different cultures are likely to find much of value in them. The authors recommend the books to primary and junior high school teachers in Australia as a way to introduce them to some important philosophical methods and philosophical content, as well as to some useful classroom strategies. The objective is for students to demonstrate that they can do philosophy. Here are some examples:

The question ‘what is a person?’ is an important question in ontology, but how can we introduce it to 15-year-olds in a way they can make sense of? In the first book, criteria from the English philosopher John Locke are listed. Students then read a story about Wendy and her adopted son Louie. Students check Wendy’s story against Locke’s criteria – adding their own reasons – and normally decide that

¹⁶ See previous page, under “What place for philosophy in quality teaching?”

¹⁷ See, for example, Darryl Macer, *Moral Games for Teaching Bioethics*, UNESCO Chair in Bioethics: Haifa, 2008.

Wendy seems to fit all the criteria to be a person. But then they get a bit more information and realize that Wendy is not human. The students then go back and re-think their checklist and discuss why (or why not) “Wendy” might be a person even though she is not human. The exercise is based on a true story. Among other outcomes, students learn to question their assumptions.

As another example, the philosophical technique of elenchus is an important philosophical strategy. To introduce the idea, the first section of Plato’s *Euthyphro* is presented as if it were a news story. So, in the “Athens Times”, the lead story is presented as if written by Plato with the headline “Slave Dies, so Son Takes Dad to Court”. A short news article summarizes the situation and introduces a (slightly modified) coverage of the dialogue between Socrates and Euthyphro. The students are asked to describe in their own words the technique Socrates uses to get Euthyphro to think about what he is doing. They then discuss their ideas in small groups, giving reasons. Following this, students are asked to write down four types of questions (questions where the answer is in the text; questions that speculate imaginatively on the text; questions where there is an established answer in another place; and questions without an established answer that they have to think hard about). These questions are tested in small groups and then some are selected for discussion in a philosophical community of inquiry (the Lipman method). Thus, having seen how it works and practicing it as a technique, the students are then led, using the workbook, into a discussion of elenchus itself.

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Besides, new types of evaluation have been developed in some countries. For example, oral participation throughout the year can be a part of the formal evaluation, not just written work. It is fundamental to envisage means of evaluation other than just the written exercises often deemed to be the means *par excellence* of expressing reasoning. Students must be brought to free themselves of commonplace ideas and reflexes they possess in order to reason fully and autonomously without necessarily reciting a lesson.

What kind of teacher education?

In Asia and the Pacific, as in other regions, one of the principal concerns is the lack of preparation of philosophy teachers. This is addressed through several suggestions in the Manila Action Plan.

The first point is that the training the teachers have received is not always adapted to the real demands of teaching at secondary level. According to the Study, three main scenarios can be identified: i) Cases in which a university degree in philosophy is required, ii) Cases in which the university degree is accompanied or replaced by specific pedagogical training (i.e. a secondary-school teaching diploma), iii) Cases in which other certificates suffice.

1) A degree in philosophy. Here are some examples of countries in which a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Philosophy is required: China (minimum of a BA), Japan (minimum of a BA in Philosophy or a similar field such as ethics or aesthetics) and Thailand (at least a BA – monks, having received a religious education, may also teach). In Bangladesh, an Master of Arts (MA) in Philosophy is required.

Box 11 - Japanese experience between knowledge acquisition and philosophical questioning

Philosophy makes its appearance in the Japanese curriculum in primary school and at lower secondary levels (children of twelve to fifteen years of age) in the form of ethical instruction. It extends into the second level of secondary as an optional ethics course in the more general framework of civic education.

According to Professor Tetsuya Kono of the University of Tamagawa, philosophy is taught through moral education, and is not accorded a proper class of its own until the second level of secondary. At that level, teachers instruct their students on how to judge ethical questions and acquire good moral conduct, in the context of teaching good citizenship. In second-level secondary schooling, philosophy is taught in the *Rinri* (ethics) class, which is itself a subject within *Komin* (civics, or civic education). *Komin* comprises three subjects: contemporary society (sociology), ethics, and politics and economics. In ethics, the focus is on issues of life, morality and politics, rather than philosophical issues such as metaphysics, truth, knowledge, science or mind-body relations. In this sense, philosophy is an extension of the moral education that is given in the first and second levels of secondary school.¹⁸ It should be noted in this context that 'philosophical' questions are conceived of as questions that relate to our individual sense of the meaning of life.

Philosophy textbooks generally cover ideas from Antiquity that are representative of the world's main civilizations, such as Greek philosophy, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Confucianism. They also cover Western philosophy, in particular post-Renaissance, and Japanese philosophy, including the vision of nature, humanity and society as they appear in novels, literary essays and poetry. These texts consider contemporary ethical issues as well – such as bioethics, environmentalism and the global society. The content of textbooks forms more a history of thought than of philosophy. Japanese study books, in parallel with the Japanese course in ethics, seem to attach more importance to the acquisition of a general or historical knowledge of ideas, philosophies and religions.

At this stage, a question is left open: what kind of pedagogies can be set up in order to go beyond knowledge acquisition, towards critical questioning of established knowledge?

UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007, p. 82

2) Specific pedagogical training, complementary or not to training in philosophy. In some countries, accreditation to teach in secondary schools requires specific training, often but not necessarily in conjunction with a university degree. This includes courses in specific subjects among which philosophy figures. Although this tertiary-level training might not be comparable to genuine specialization in the discipline, it enables graduates to teach the various school subjects at a level considered adequate by the national educational system. In any case, philosophy receives no special treatment compared to any other subject. Cambodia, for instance, requires no more than a university diploma and one year of training in a teacher-training centre. Besides training provided by institutional bodies, NGOs have been active in Cambodia in organizing training workshops for teachers and school directors to effectively implement the programme, to attempt new

¹⁸ An example of an ethics text book is *Ethics*, 2001, published by the Mathematics Certification Institute of Japan, <http://www.suken.net/english/>

pedagogical approaches that are more participatory, to create child-friendly schools, and to advocate teacher standards and leadership. This informal type of teacher training can also be an effective medium to initiate new pedagogical approaches.

3) University degrees in other disciplines. Allowing graduates of other disciplines to teach philosophy highlights a delocalized aspect of philosophy teaching at secondary level. In some cases this disciplinary confusion is due to the fact that these degrees already include a significant philosophical education. Another case is that philosophy may not be available as a distinct degree, as in Malaysia. More often there is a tendency to believe that philosophy teaching requires no training in this particular discipline. In other words, no specific knowledge-set is needed in order to teach philosophy.

The second point is that teaching in schools only represents one of the professional opportunities open to philosophy graduates, and not always the most enticing one. Indeed, a large number of philosophy graduates can not find a position in schools. Moreover, a coherent and complementary link is missing between, on the one hand, the training offered in universities and, on the other hand, teachers' specific needs at secondary level.

Finally, in those countries where a philosophy class does not exist as such, but is identified with moral education or civics, there are still problems related to human resources. In Viet Nam for example, where moral education is viewed as philosophy class, this subject matter is very often taught by social science teachers, and when the latter can not do so, it is often the school principal who is requested to teach such a subject. This partly testifies to the fact that, very often, moral education and civics are neglected on the ground that these "soft" subject matters do not require specific training and that anybody can teach them, thus saving expenses in teacher employment and training.

How is the relationship between philosophy and ethical/moral education to be thought through?

Another important challenge emerges with regard to the content of philosophy teaching related to local cultures. While training people to think critically cannot be reduced to a culture-bound pedagogical approach, teaching content coming from other contexts often risks to be perceived by students and teachers as abstract and unrelated to the concrete realities of the culture within which they live. This is the reason why there must be no unique or monolithic understanding as to what philosophy is. The Manila debates stressed the tremendous importance of leaving the large range of understanding open to all conceptions, as long as they do not advocate hatred and fanaticism. Depending on the country's history and cultural background, the understanding of philosophy can vary quite considerably. When thinking for the future and looking for answers to the question "What kind of person are we trying to form through education?", a general consensus emerged in Manila that a set of goals for philosophy teaching could be outlined in the Action Plan, stating that an overarching goal of philosophical education should be to stimulate pupils' and students' thinking and questioning capacities. This will allow future citizens to integrate into the global knowledge society and to benefit from it, to reflect upon the ethical use of new technologies, to deeply measure the balance between development and traditional values, etc.

There is a varying emphasis on the three main goals of philosophy that exist in the Asia and the Pacific region. Firstly, for countries where philosophy courses have long formed part of school or university curricula,

such as Australia, India, Iran, New Zealand, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, there is a focus on the essential purpose of philosophy to develop reasoning and critical mind that can counter dominant trends where scientific ideologies and transformations contribute to instill mechanic thinking. Secondly, for other countries where moral classes exist and are considered as philosophy classes, such as Brunei Darussalam (Malay Islamic Monarchy subject), Cambodia (Moral-Civics subject), Indonesia (Pancasila subject), the Philippines (Makabayan subject at secondary level), Thailand (Sufficiency Economy) and Viet Nam (Basic morality subject), the priority of philosophy is to help students acquire moral behaviour as well as a sense of community and nationhood. Thirdly, some countries, such as Cook Islands and Palau, consider that in the context of small islands highly exposed to external influence (studies abroad, family residing abroad, tourism, etc.), philosophy can help youngsters master their national language and intellectual heritage through the organization of debates and inquiry to understand Pacific values.

Whereas in Africa the introduction of philosophy was often modeled on European educational systems and networks, in Asia the relationship between local cultures and philosophy – as an emanation of Western thought – has, in fact, been more complex. Philosophy teaching in East Asia has attempted to integrate the subject within the country's traditional cultural structures. In the past, philosophy has been associated with processes of modernization and, indirectly, of Westernization, which Asian societies first experienced between the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Through the later parts of the twentieth century however, rediscovery of indigenous philosophy and Asian values has challenged the legacy of colonization and questioned the use of Western values in society. From this point of view, it has symbolized the concerns of various political projects and struggles between traditionalists and modernists – a schism that has affected a number of Asian societies.

This contrast has often resulted in the promotion of the more practical aspects of philosophy (for example, ethics, political philosophy, environmental ethics, bioethics and social philosophies), to the detriment of the more theoretical subjects that have characterized Western philosophical thought (such as theory of knowledge or transcendental philosophy). This phenomenon had the complementary and perhaps unexpected effect of a fusion between philosophical enquiry and more traditional knowledge. These more practical philosophical classes, detached from their theoretical basis, gradually found a new foundation in an epistemology emanating from traditional thought. This is noticeable in the various forms of crosspollination between practical subjects (social philosophy, political theory) and Confucianism, Taoism or other forms of spiritual tradition seen in the work of Asian philosophers.

Nowadays, this theoretical integration is encouraged as a means of integrating different traditions and cultural paradigms, and acts as a vehicle for important social, cultural and political issues. In addition, there is an appropriation of the term 'philosophy' by the same traditional forms of knowledge that were once discarded in the infatuation with practical and Western philosophy. This explains the rediscovery and overwhelming presence of 'traditional philosophies' which rethink moral concepts and value systems that existed before the introduction of philosophical teaching.

In the current situation, many countries in Asia and the Pacific consider that philosophical concepts are discussed and transmitted through moral education or civics or so-called 'philosophy-related teaching'. According to this understanding, philosophy has the duty to train responsible citizens able to balance various ideas, facts and opinions, and to instill national identity as a condition for national continuity.

Box 12 - Moral education in the Republic of Korea

Moral education in the Republic of Korea is governed at national level as a fundamental part of the country's curriculum. It is one of the ten core subjects taught in primary and secondary schools. These ten subjects are: Korean Language, Moral Education, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Music, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Foreign Languages, and Art.

Ethics textbooks are prepared under the supervision of the national authority. Moral Education is taught from the third year of primary school through the first year of secondary school. Students have a choice between three courses: Civics, Ethics and Thought, and Traditional Ethics. We are at pains to take an integrated approach so that knowledge and the emotional understanding of morality lead to practical action. The content of Moral Education is divided into four life areas: i) personal life, ii) family, neighbourhood and school life, iii) social life and iv) national life.

Five values and fundamental moral virtues are chosen for each of these divisions. For personal life, these values are: respect for human life, diligence, honesty, independence and self-control. The values to seek in one's relations with family, neighbours and school are: respectful behaviour, taking care of family members, etiquette and courtesy, cooperation, and love for one's school and home town. In their social life, students must learn the values of: respect for the law, consideration for others, protection of the environment, justice and community feeling. Life within a nation requires: patriotism, fraternal love for one's people, awareness of security, efforts for peaceful unification and love of humanity.

Each unit in the manual of moral education covers several discussion points touching upon contemporary moral issues, so that the students can deepen their thinking and share ideas about controversial moral issues. The subject of civics in particular is developed principally to help students foster their ability to make judgments. In encouraging role-plays and discussions in the classroom, we help them develop moral values on their own.

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Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea

Box 13 - Sufficiency Economy in Thai curriculum

Recently, there has been a systematic attempt to integrate the Sufficiency Economy thinking into the school curriculum at every level. The aim is to teach children from an early age how to be self-reliant and live a balanced life so that they can contribute to society and cope with changes in the globalized world. This teaching is distributed across the curriculum in four three-year sections.

The lower-primary level trains children to adopt a Sufficiency Economy approach in their daily lives at home

Grade 1: Self-reliance in daily life; sharing with family and friends; saving

Grade 2: Economical spending; analysing family expenses; reducing expenses

Grade 3: Being helpful and generous; sharing money and goods.

The upper-primary level moves on to applying the principles at school

Grade 4: Surveying household accounts; cooperative projects

Grade 5: Applying Sufficiency principles at the school

Grade 6: Analysing the application of Sufficiency at school.

The lower-secondary level progresses to applying Sufficiency principles in the community

Grade 7: Analysing the community's history, status, social capital, and current problems; applying Sufficiency methods to solve those problems

Grade 8: Applying cooperative principles in daily life; participating in a cooperative store; identifying a community cooperative project

Grade 9: Applying Sufficiency principles in community development.

Finally, at the upper-secondary level, the focus switches to the national level

Grade 10: Study of the concepts in the Royal Projects and King's speeches

Grade 11: Understanding Sufficiency in economic and social development

Grade 12: Application of Sufficiency principles in various sectors.

UNDP, *Thai Human Development Report 2007, Sufficiency Economy and Human Development*, Bangkok, 2007, p. 66-67

Box 14 - Malay Islamic Monarchy education in Brunei Darussalam

Since the inception of Malay Islamic Monarchy (*Melayu Islam Beraja* - MIB) as the national philosophy since the proclamation of Independence, strategies have been planned to disseminate and educate the Brunei society on what MIB is about.

MIB as the national philosophy of Brunei Darussalam is an ideal formulation on the way of life of the nation and state which become the base and source of reference in achieving national objectives, that maintains identity, noble values for national resilience and Malay government guided by Islam as the state religion in the monarchical system of government.

In order to ensure that the national unity and identity of the Bruneian be preserved, protected and appreciated, it is appropriate to include MIB in the curriculum in schools and institutions of higher learning. The education system is designed to prepare the young generation to grow into capable, creative and thinking citizens who would uphold the local social values in the inherent national philosophy. Education is also seen as an important way to inculcate the MIB lifestyle and values which are religious adherence, loyalty to the King and his government and desire for balanced progress and development.

MIB was introduced as a subject both at primary and secondary levels in 1986. In primary schools, MIB is integrated into civic education, with a syllabus consisting of social welfare, culture, politics and religious activities in Brunei Darussalam. The aims of the teaching are family- and society-oriented, to reinforce loyalty and faith, perseverance to challenge, value and preservation of cultural heritage. However, in the newly revised system of education known as SPN 21 (National Education System for the 21st Century), at primary level the subject is now known as *Melayu Islam Beraja*.

Learning outcomes of *Melayu Islam Beraja* are to: inculcate a sense of self worth and being true to one's identity as a Bruneian; demonstrate love for the country, nation and ruler; uphold and practice the values of Islam; contribute positively towards the progress of the community; and demonstrate a caring nature and become part of a responsible society.

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Suggestions for possible action

There is a great variety of means of transmitting a taste for philosophizing and awakening interest and curiosity for this field. The region has already demonstrated to have made innovative practices when it comes to teaching philosophy, and some examples were shared at the Manila meeting. This innovative spirit can be engaged in using the rich human and intellectual potential underlying each country's educational system to the best advantage.

Strengthen the place of philosophy in schools

- Accord a full, complete, autonomous place to philosophy. In doing so, a complementary and interdisciplinary approach in relation to other disciplines can be envisaged.

Initiate innovative approaches

- Foster creativity and innovation with regard to methods of teaching philosophy. To this end, draw in particular from the store of innovative practices developed for learning to philosophize, such as according value to oral expression in the evaluation process, the use of philosophically oriented discussion, etc.
- Support the exchange, diffusion and circulation of knowledge and practices relative to the teaching of philosophy at intra-regional and international levels.
- Optimize the production of philosophy teachers' and students' manuals and textbooks through a permanent search for quality. This requires incorporating innovative teaching methods and taking into account challenges facing philosophy teaching.

Conceive adequate training for philosophy teachers

- Accord value to specializing in philosophy in order to ensure specific professional opportunities, knowingly to ensure that philosophy teaching posts at secondary level are filled by faculty members who are specifically trained for that function.
- Guarantee the training of philosophy teachers at primary level that combines both a didactic and pedagogical content and a specialization in philosophy.
- This training could be sustained and updated with relevant in-service training.

Ensure the impact of Asian and Pacific philosophies

- Collect the philosophical knowledge of the region by and for Asian and Pacific countries, which is an indispensable and effective prerequisite for philosophy textbooks and teacher's manuals. In this respect, regional and international cooperation as achieved through UNESCO networks, such as the Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND) are high potential support systems.
- Benefit from the informal teaching relays for the diffusion and dissemination of philosophical knowledge.
- Comparative studies of philosophy in most countries usually include only a few key Asian philosophers, if any, with more numerous references to European and Greek philosophers. UNESCO is working with philosophers from many countries in the world to create more diverse teaching resources from different philosophical schools of thought and regions.¹⁹

Use the multilingual dimension to its best advantage

- Facilitate access to texts written and/or translated into common regional languages.
- Develop a multilingual lexicon collecting the important philosophical concepts, accompanied by their differentiated meanings in the languages of instruction of schools.
- Encourage philosophical work directly using Asian and Pacific languages, especially through philosophically oriented discussion where oral expression is an asset when it comes to reflective thinking.

¹⁹ This includes inter-regional philosophical dialogues between Asian and Arab philosophers and an International Network of Women Philosophers.

Teaching philosophy in

higher education

The hybrid nature of university teaching – a mixture of teaching/educating and research – is all the more at work in the area of philosophical studies since they do not in general have other institutional places where they can develop. University teaching does not only contribute to shaping characters and to building up of human beings in their multiple dimensions – cognitive, emotional, moral, cultural or social. It is above all intent upon putting students in a position to produce new knowledge and making them capable of reacting to the incessant transformations that characterize knowledge within different cultures.

Philosophical knowledge is taught at universities in the form of research methods, categories, concepts, criteria of valid argumentation and more or less formal structures enabling people to construct physical, historical, moral and rational worlds. Whether it is a matter of educating teachers, of nurturing historical culture, of learning universal structures of reasoning or of building up the culture of tomorrow's teachers-researchers, it is definitely the presence of technical knowledge of the field and of a properly philosophical *savoir-faire* that sets university teaching apart and is the basis of all its relevance. Moreover, in the countries where philosophy is taught in the schools, the dynamic between secondary school teachers and those in higher education constitutes an essential asset in the philosophical educational process.

It is worth noting that this part does not deal with the question of actual philosophical research, but of philosophy teaching at university level. Even though it is obvious that the university structure encompasses the research component, this will be the subject of a separate UNESCO study, since the issues involved there are of different nature than that of actual university teaching.

Overview

In most countries in Asia and the Pacific, philosophy departments are present in almost all faculties of arts and humanities and of social sciences, and a majority offer doctoral courses in philosophy. Philosophy courses are not always taught in philosophy departments, but are also occasionally consigned to law schools, schools of economics, social sciences or education.

Where there are tertiary institutions of learning and universities, there are usually philosophy courses, but these tend to be optional for students in most countries. There are a few cases where philosophy is taught as a mandatory course for all students, and further review of the status of the courses is underway.

To illustrate the diversity of structures and modalities of philosophy teaching in Asia and the Pacific, a mention can be made of specific cases in countries of the region. This is not an exhaustive list of countries, but a collection of experiences that can provide food for thought.

In Kyrgyzstan, philosophy courses are taught in all universities and institutions of higher education for all first-year students. In the Philippines, the University of the Philippines has philosophy in its College of Social Sciences and Philosophy; and the Catholic Ateneo de Manila University has a Philosophy Department which has contributed to the development of the teaching of philosophy in Filipino language by publishing over half a dozen Philosophy textbooks in Filipino, and is part of the Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND). Philosophy courses are taught to all students in this

institution. Furthermore, the Commission on Higher Education of the Republic of the Philippines requires all students to study at least one philosophy subject as part of the undergraduate general education curriculum in all fields of study at university level.

There is a UNESCO Chair on Philosophy and Democracy in the Philosophy Department of the Seoul National University in the Republic of Korea. The Chair has been central to the survival and functioning of the regional APPEND network. Members of APPEND come from many countries, and are all involved in philosophy teaching. There are also many countries with national associations of philosophy, in addition to associations of applied philosophy, philosophy of science, semiotics, and new areas such as bioethics.

APPEND also includes the Philosophy Department of the University of New South Wales of Sydney, Australia. This Department is involved in interdisciplinary and international programmes that tackle both theoretical and applied philosophy. While there are philosophy courses at all major universities in Australia and New Zealand, they are not mandatory. In the Pacific islands there are few universities, but some colleges teach philosophy. In Palau, for example, philosophy is taught at higher level in the form of an introductory course to philosophy and religion at the Palau Community College.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, introductory courses on Islamic philosophy are obligatory in all faculties. Private universities are being founded rapidly and can play an important role in philosophy teaching. In Cambodia, for instance, there are around ten private universities where students are required to take at least one philosophy course. This also holds true for Japan, where there are more than 500 private universities providing philosophy courses. Japanese national universities also usually include compulsory general studies courses, which often include philosophy components.

Challenges

Philosophy studies and then what?

The links with the working world and the essential question of professional opportunities for philosophy graduates play a key role in the responses to the UNESCO Questionnaire.²⁰ These responses reveal a sense of the weakening of philosophy teaching throughout the region due precisely to the lack of job opportunities after specializing in the field. In the Republic of Korea, research professors have noticed a loss of interest in philosophy among students and their tendency to take more practical subjects.

Only some philosophy graduates manage to find employment corresponding to the training received. The UNESCO Questionnaire confirms the perception of a considerable philosophical presence in Asia, but also reveals how the image of philosophy has been tarnished in the eyes of the general public. A large number of testimonials lament a slowdown in philosophy teaching when compared to technical disciplines and applied sciences. In all countries in the region, academics note that an increasing number of students want to take economics courses, followed by engineering and science courses in order to gain practical

²⁰ UNESCO online Questionnaire on the state of the art of philosophy teaching, whose results are published in the UNESCO Study *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001541/154173E.pdf>

qualifications, and point out that the emphasis on business studies and the sciences has led to the marginalization of philosophy and to excessive compartmentalization of disciplines.

Philosophy is often considered as not being apt to contribute to economic and scientific progress. It is as if economic development might display contempt for philosophical reflection. Philosophy also suffers from the redeployment of resources to satisfy other priorities, especially those of the applied sciences and industrial research – a phenomenon which is found in other regions of the world and could be an area for possible intervention. To overcome this difficulty relating to a general neglect for disciplines that do not generate direct income and that focus mainly on theoretical thinking, the Manila debates consider it essential for philosophers to strive to make their voice heard through the media. Philosophers in Thailand for instance should show to the general public that the questions of violence, social injustice or democracy do have philosophical foundations and that thereby philosophers can help analyse them.

However, many opportunities are also offered to students in philosophy, underlining the comparative advantages philosophy training should instill in terms of intellectual tools in cultivating critical thinking, sensitivity to opposing viewpoints and the ability to ask fundamental questions. The Philosophy Department of the National University of Singapore, for instance, explains on its website portal that “an undergraduate degree in philosophy prepares students for many different careers, including teaching, journalism, diplomatic service, administration and general management in both private and public sector organizations, which value critical and analytical skills, flexible and integrative thinking, capacity for research and independent thought, knowledge of intellectual traditions of both East and West”.²¹ To this extent, a minor course in philosophy could add value to students’ degrees in other disciplines.

Human resources above all

It is important to give thought to the ties and interaction between secondary and higher education, particularly from the angle of professional opportunities and in-service training for philosophy teachers. Porosity between the two levels seems endangered in many cases.

Testimonials from Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic point to a substantial deterioration of philosophy teaching in these countries, due to the lack of qualified philosophy teachers and of teaching materials. These two countries are far from being unique cases, and pre- and in-service philosophy training for teachers remains one of the most important concerns. In this context of insufficiency in teacher-training, one of the solutions is to send future teachers to study abroad. Indeed, this solution is often adopted by many Asian countries which send students not only to well-performing universities in the region, but also to universities in Europe and North America.

However, this solution must not exacerbate the problem of the exodus of local researchers to European and especially North American universities, or to richer universities in the region itself. This phenomenon is experienced in the majority of countries in Asia: postgraduate studies are very often followed by a specialization (doctoral or post-doctoral) sojourn abroad, generally in the USA, in Western Europe or in Australia. Attempts to reverse the emigration of educated scholars are being made in several countries,

²¹ <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/philo/undergrad.html>

such as China, which has even established a public agency aimed at repatriating researchers from abroad, but a net loss of academics still remains.

Innovative, varied written resources

The challenges in strengthening and enriching the holdings of university libraries in the field of philosophy are not limited to the university domain, but have a much broader dimension. The task of supplying university libraries with philosophy works is paramount. These libraries serve to effectively transmit knowledge of philosophy to the general public.

Moreover, information and communication technologies today can offer certain solutions, provided that they are well-conceived and adapted. Access to computer technology in fact constitutes an essential factor in strengthening university training and teaching. Most researchers who are philosophers make up for the lack of local servers by using the e-mail services of international servers like Yahoo, Google, MSN, or networks like Refer. In this way, professors and students can have access to a variety of written material on the subjects of their interest.

Within the evolving context of publishing in human sciences which, particularly in the case of journals, finds most publishers more and more focusing on publishing and distributing in a digital format, a new challenge arises when it comes to the means of acquiring access to these intangible collections. Most academic publishers today propose distribution contracts on a nation-wide basis enabling networks of libraries and teaching establishments to acquire access to all their publications.

Governments and educational institutions have often expressed their wish to support text book writers and produce teachers' guides in order to facilitate and popularize the teaching of philosophy in basic education. However, practical ways need to be found to translate this desire into reality.

Philosophy: Agora for public debate

One of the major roles of the university, and of teaching philosophy at this level, is to foster the debating of ideas in order to advance the state of knowledge. In these debates, what is political or, in other words, matters concerning the evolution and future of the *polis*, has a very significant place. However, for philosophy to be a genuine agora for public debate, academic freedom must be guaranteed at university.

The problem in many countries in the world is to reach an adequate conception of the ties uniting philosophy, politics and academic freedom. Indeed, it frequently happens that philosophy teaching is politically oriented, and thus becomes mere ideology. The danger arises when political regimes or systems claim the right to impose forms of obedience, even of political fidelity, on teachers-researchers and students. This is the case, for example, when oaths of fidelity or political orthodoxy are periodically imposed on academic communities. Political constraint also concerns the prohibition that is still found in many circumstances to include certain subjects in the teaching programmes, the banning of scholarly theories considered contrary to the ethical principles affirmed by the states, or yet the imposition upon a country's researchers of a philosophical orthodoxy to which they are expected to conform. These are just some of the hypothetical situations that may interfere with freedom of research, of teaching and learning

of the academic community and students, especially when their field, philosophy, is specifically based on constantly questioning certainties. There exists also a more subtle form of pressure on teachers and students, difficult to detect, and which several teachers-researchers have denounced. This pressure is caused by the political climate, established within a scholarly community, taking the form of self-censorship on the part of the members of this community, particularly where politically sensitive or controversial subjects are concerned.

With regard to countries in Asia and the Pacific, it is undeniable that the economic growth of the recent years and the subsequent social and cultural transformations open space for reflection and questioning about the future and the sense of development, about changes in people's ways of life, about traditional and modern identity, and about the dynamics between local cultural values and values and norms claimed to be universal. This context is a unique opportunity to develop philosophical thinking and dialogue, which would offer students, researchers and the civil society at large, some specific tools to analyse, criticize and propose solutions.

For instance, some Thai respondents to the UNESCO Questionnaire emphasize among other points their desire to improve students' abilities to come to grips with social and economic problems. Philosophy teaching in Thai higher education exists in some universities, such as the Chulalongkorn and Thammasat Universities in Bangkok which have Philosophy Departments. In Chulalongkorn University, for example, courses on history of philosophy, on aesthetics, on political sciences and epistemology are offered, as well as a core programme on Buddhist philosophy.

Concerning Central Asian countries, some changes have occurred during the last ten years. Whereas in the middle of the 1990s one of the priorities of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) consisted in promoting the spread of philosophical thought to counter the successive sectarian impulses that arose after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, today the academies of Central Asian countries appear more focused on a political and cultural reflection aimed at reinforcing social reconstruction and the memory of their cultural identities. It is in this context that, for example, the Philosophy Faculty at the National University of Uzbekistan fuses together courses in sociology, political sciences, psychology and pedagogy.

Teaching philosophy and interdisciplinary approaches

An interdisciplinary approach that constantly inquires about the connections between philosophical thought and the different forms of cultural expression would be a good means of restoring dynamism to the field of philosophy itself. Indeed, it seems difficult and reductive to limit the teaching of philosophy to works or authors who would be recognized as properly philosophical in a purely academic sense, given the high impact examples of political philosophy, such as Mahatma Ghandi and the successful struggle for freedom of the Indian subcontinent in the 20th century.

The interdisciplinary approach is all the more well-founded today since cultural studies centres are in fact places of philosophical research as important and as rich as the philosophy departments. This expansion reflects a desire for interdisciplinary approaches that many researchers share, and plays a growing role in the organization of academic teaching and research. More generally, the examples of reflection on neo-

Box 15 - Philosophy teaching in Korean universities

According to Professor In-Suk Cha, holder of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy and Democracy at the Seoul National University, and President of International Council of Philosophy and Human Sciences (ICPHS), the social and political implications that have accompanied the development of philosophy in the East has strongly influenced the type of philosophies prioritized by Korean intellectuals. Because philosophy was used against forms of traditional spirituality, it was initially appreciated as a practical approach, a guide for action anchored in an historical contingency and able to provide answers to the practical questions posed by Korean society. This approach went as far as inspiring reforms in higher education that, since the 1980s, have allowed the proliferation of philosophy curricula and enabled philosophy departments in Korean universities to multiply. Philosophy has been regarded as an essential subject in education for citizenship and, more generally, as an intellectual tool in the service of democratic development.

Today, more than eighty Korean universities have a philosophy department or offer degrees in philosophy. A rapid overview of courses offered in the principal higher-educational establishments shows the massive presence of practical-oriented subjects: logic and critical thought, a philosophical understanding of contemporary society, bioethics, cyber-ethics, a philosophical understanding of science, environmental ethics or social philosophy. The literature used in these fields comes largely from the USA. The majority of students read English and in most universities a second foreign language (French or German) is obligatory.

This system has also produced a substantial assimilation of traditional Western philosophy, regarded today as an integral part of Korean philosophical culture, almost on an equal footing with Neo-Confucianism. The principal classics of philosophical thought, from Plato to Wittgenstein and Rawls, are systematically read and commented on in Korean classrooms; Confucianist and Neo-Confucianist thinkers are also interpreted.

It is also interesting to observe that scientific and technological development has led to philosophy teaching playing a more important role than in the past. A strong sense of philosophy's capacity to encourage social and political modernization seems gradually to have been replaced by an awareness of the educational capacities of philosophy to benefit all curricula.

Today, Korean professors place a high value on the diversity of students attending philosophy courses, and see such courses as an opportunity to develop the critical and intellectual capacities that are essential to reaching a level of excellence in their own disciplines. In this evolving context, lessons in critical thinking or simply an introduction to philosophical thought seem destined to play an increasing role.

UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*,
Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007, p. 141

Confucianism in China and East Asia, the dialectic interplay between religion and secularization in the West, or yet again the connections between philosophical rationality and Indian values, all illustrate the cultural significance that all philosophical reflection has. Such an approach will give to the debates about Asian philosophical specificities all their richness and complexity, to the extent that it can take into account the tendencies that have appeared over these last years regarding the definition of 'national philosophies'. It also allows researchers to take on board traditional literary forms of expression, such as the proverbs, myths or rituals that societies have passed on. Since philosophy is a critique of knowledge, or a general theory of cultural forms, its impact on cultural traditions is significant, while at the same time they considerably nourish philosophical reflection.

As an example, the complex relationship between philosophical inquiry and traditional knowledge at the heart of philosophy teaching in India can be quoted. Far from being an insurmountable challenge, this issue has always been a great opportunity for Indian and world philosophers to nourish their inquiries and thoughts. The numerous academic centres that offer philosophy degrees throughout the country make the Indian philosophical community one of the largest in quantitative terms. India has established an Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), a support organization for philosophical research which for some years now has played a pre-eminent role in the development of studies on a national scale and has contributed considerably to embracing international relationships with the Indian philosophical community, as well as to the development of interdisciplinary approach to disciplines of human sciences.

Philosophy teaching and the promotion of languages

Philosophical practices such as discussions, debates or community of inquiry, engage a specific relationship with language. This relationship is two-faceted.

Firstly, at all levels of education, fostering philosophical questioning and thinking stimulates students' faculty of refining their own language. Because philosophizing is about questioning, providing arguments or counter-arguments, refuting or explaining thesis, mastering one's own language is essential. Concepts have to be defined or redefined; usual meanings of words can be further completed and detailed; search for etymology can open new pathways for thought; wording of ideas and theses must be well formulated and sharply synthesized for better understanding, etc. These intellectual procedures are invaluable instruments by which students can rediscover their own language in depth. This advantage of philosophical thinking can benefit even more students who are highly exposed to foreign influence, either through their studies or through the media in a globalized world.

Multilingualism can be fostered through the teaching of philosophy, provided the latter gives adequate space for such an opportunity. The history of philosophy has shown that it is through interactions between different cultures and traditions that philosophical thoughts emerge. It is incontestable that interactions between different concepts in different languages produce new ideas and innovations, but it is also through the meeting with otherness that self-awareness sometimes arises. Therefore, philosophy teaching has to take foreign as well as indigenous languages on board as useful instruments to open and for enlightened thoughts. In Asia and the Pacific, for instance, English as a foreign language is very commonly taught in schools and universities: philosophy courses can time to time tackle philosophical concepts in this foreign language, and analyse how their meaning varies when compared to their equivalents in national languages.

Box 16 - The unique support structure for philosophical and interdisciplinary research in India

Since India's independence, there has been a persistent demand on behalf of the country's intellectuals, expressed in different professional philosophical and non-philosophical forums, to re-examine both ancient and modern philosophical systems so as to evaluate them and derive from them new directives for today's changing conditions. There is a definite impetus towards an independent Indian philosophical identity. There is a sense of an urgent need, on different levels, to reinforce research and philosophy studies in India.

In the mid-1970s, a team of academics undertook a study on the question of reviving India's philosophical tradition and suggested that the government found the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR). The basic idea behind the ICPR was accepted in 1976, and became active in 1981, under the presidency of Professor D. P. Chattopadhyaya.

The principal functions of the ICPR are: to review advances in and coordinate the activities of philosophical research, and to encourage interdisciplinary research programmes; to promote research collaboration between Indian philosophers and institutions and those of other countries; to promote teaching and philosophical research; to provide technical assistance and advice for the formulation of projects and philosophical research programmes; and to organize and support education initiatives in research methods. The ICPR suggests fields in which philosophical research should be promoted and takes specific measures for the development of neglected or underdeveloped fields of philosophy. It also provides grants for the publication of papers, journals and studies in the field of philosophy and supports the introduction and administration of scholarships and awards for students, teachers and others, and the development of documentation services and an inventory of current philosophical research, including a national database of philosophers.

Moreover, the ICPR plans to develop a group of young talented philosophers and to encourage research among young philosophers in general. The ICPR also manages an exchange programme between India and other countries to facilitate the flow of ideas among philosophers.

On request, it advises the Indian government on questions concerning philosophy and its teaching. In accordance with these considerations, the ICPR has indicated areas of priority in research, such as the theory of truth and knowledge; Indian cultural values and their relevance to a national reconstruction; normative questions; human, environment, social and political philosophy; philosophy of law, logic, linguistic philosophy; critical and comparative studies of philosophical systems or movements and religions; and philosophy of education.

See <http://icpr.nic.in>

Box 17 - The case of Palau: Philosophy teaching and basic language skills

Without language, there is no thought. Only with strong, well-developed language skills – listening, speaking, writing and reading – will students be well prepared to participate in the world around them. For the vast majority of our students, Palauan is their first language. But, because English reading materials, television and videos are a major force in today's Palau, strong incentives at school or in the community for students to be highly skilled in the reading and writing of Palauan are hardly existent. A consequence of this shift to English is that some of the subtle beauty of our traditional ways of communicating is not being learned, practiced and valued by today's generation. Effective communication requires enough knowledge, vocabulary, practice and skills to express oneself clearly and confidently for a variety of situations and a variety of audiences. Most of our graduates are unable now to do this in Palauan.

Speakers of Palauan language have a unique way of describing things, telling stories and communicating our points of view. Now, too often in our everyday conversation, we are forced to mix many foreign borrowed words and phrases into our discussions. Embarrassingly too often, we struggle to remember the Palauan vocabulary or phrases that convey the same meaning. Also, often we unintentionally show our disrespect to our community elders and leaders because we are simply not well-versed in knowing what the appropriate thing to do or say is.

The reality is that those students who are able to graduate from our school system with strong literacy skills in at least Palauan and English will be the best prepared to be successful in today's Palau economy and job market.

Also, the development of reading and writing skills in one's first language is known to be a definite advantage for learning to read and write in subsequent languages. This means that our students who can confidently and competently compose, think, read and speak in Palauan or Sonsorolese should proceed more easily in their ability to learn to be literate in English, Japanese, Spanish, or any other language.

Our students and society need an educational programme that is relevant. This can be enhanced through the integration of the teaching of philosophy in the curriculum. The ability to communicate effectively to one's own people about one's own reality is a basic need. The aggressive and thoughtful teaching of Palauan language and culture through the integration and teaching of philosophy in elementary and secondary schools should help to fill an important gap which currently exists in the curriculum.

Speech of H.E. Masa-Aki Emesioch
Minister of Education of Palau,
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy
in Asia and the Pacific, Manila, 25-26 May 2009

Suggestions for possible action

It is fundamental to take these challenges into account, to study the suggestions for action and to see to what extent it is possible to implement the educational policies deriving from them.

Protect academic freedom

- Safeguard the principle of academic freedom.
- Ensure that it is actually respected by preventing anybody external to the dynamic of scientific exchanges from laying claim to setting priorities for research, judging the relevance of the discussions, or placing limitations on the range of the field covered.
- Support research and philosophical teaching with a view to strengthening the place of philosophical communities, while leaving them free to develop in accordance with a maximal diversity of approaches and thematic, methodological and conceptual choices.

Promote philosophy as an autonomous field

- Encourage the creation and/or strengthening of autonomous philosophy departments within institutions of higher education with a view to promoting philosophy per se.

Favour interdisciplinary studies

- Develop an interdisciplinary approach to teaching philosophy, in order to contribute in an effective way to academic reflection on the different aspects of traditional and contemporary philosophical thoughts.

Strengthen human resources

- Encourage the creation and/or strengthening of philosophy departments in terms of human resources and budget, so that they may provide possible, valid opportunities for philosophy graduates.
- Support partnerships with the public and private sectors with a view to promoting professional opportunities for philosophy students.
- Ensure durable, systematic interaction and collaboration between secondary school teachers and university professors, especially through in-service training, joint research projects, or teacher assistance, with a view to guaranteeing the faculty's motivation.
- Take steps to encourage "brain-gain" by fostering the development of young researchers within universities and/or recurring to agencies specialized in supporting research, in order to set up programmes to bring students completing their research courses abroad back to the region.

Consolidate documentary resources

- Work to create networks with publishers, or more broadly with the private sector, in order to ensure the acquisition of recent philosophical publications by regional university libraries.
- Encourage the creation of digital portals for the acquisition and distribution of scholarly information in the field of philosophy.

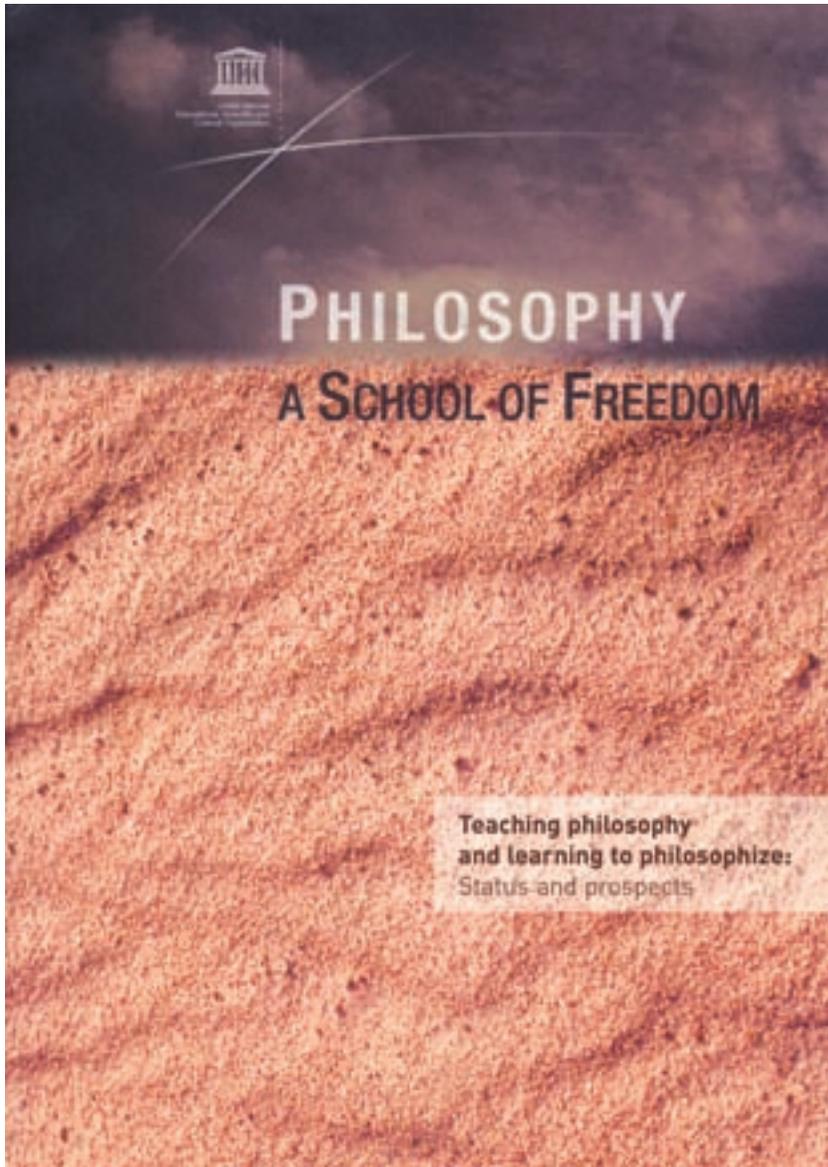
Conclusion

Philosophy is a most useful tool for training a critical mind and responsible attitudes. Philosophy is not impromptu. It is above all a kind of *savoir-faire* that requires responding to its own requisites and confronting the challenges necessary for its implementation. It is a field built up all throughout one's life, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, in an interdependent fashion, be it within an institutional framework or not.

Philosophy teaching must be supported energetically and insightfully, infused with new manners of teaching, transmitting and sharing, just as it must also integrate the legacy of the past, without being imprisoned by it, and take other modes of thought into account, all the while constructing its own identity for today and tomorrow.

Teaching philosophy must endorse its full role of stimulating people to the free exercise of thinking – critical, responsible thinking – just as it must contribute to the construction of peace and the promotion of sustainable development. The emergence of citizens fully conscious of their role, of their responsibilities and the stakes these represent, is an asset in face of challenges that arise.

Envisaged from the perspective of a quality education, philosophy for everyone, at all levels of instruction, is becoming a necessity in today's world. For this to be realized, a decision must be taken at the highest political level, targeting an educational policy formulation that integrates philosophy into an overall process of reform.

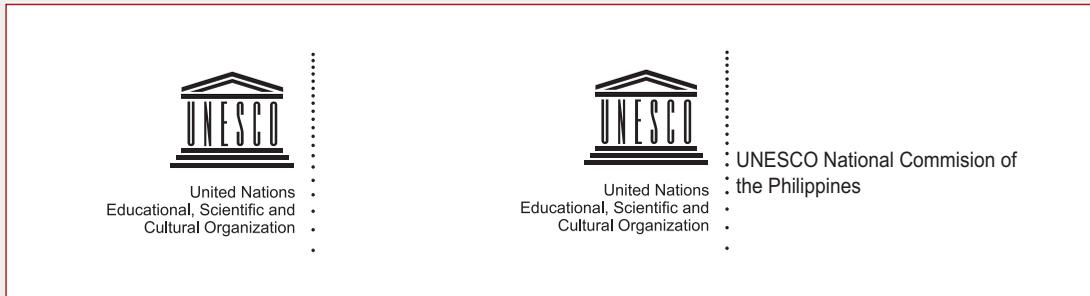


UNESCO Publishing, 2007

Thinking for the future: an Action Plan for the promotion

of philosophy teaching in Asia and the Pacific

High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Asia and the Pacific – Manila, Philippines, 25-26 May 2009



Thinking for the Future: An Action Plan for the Promotion of Philosophy Teaching in Asia and the Pacific

1. Rationale for philosophy education

Philosophy can contribute to reflections on every avenue of society. Given the rapid and major social transformations facing individuals and society, people need to have opportunities to think about the direction, purposes and goals of social development.

Societies and communities progress in a more just, equitable and sustainable direction if the cultural, ethical, and spiritual values of those societies are central determinants in shaping their futures. Widespread informed public participation is necessary for wise decisions about the future. By developing the intellectual tools to analyze and understand key concepts such as justice, dignity and freedom, by building capacities for independent thought and judgment, by enhancing the critical skills to understand and question the world and its challenges, and by fostering reflection on values and principles, philosophy has been described as a “school of freedom”.

The participants¹ recognized that historical reflections across all civilizations can make important contributions to the teaching of philosophy in any society. Given the importance of philosophy and the urgency of deliberations on the future of civilization, a detailed action plan with recommendations are offered below, to be available for countries to use as a point for further development of philosophy teaching in each community and inside each level of education.

¹ See the list of participants in Annex.

2. The mandate for philosophy education

We remind governments and all persons involved in philosophy education of the commitments made by all Member States of UNESCO relating to philosophy education.

We recall Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” This is recognition of a right to do philosophy.

The Paris Declaration for Philosophy (Paris, 1995)² states that development of philosophical debate in education and in cultural life makes a major contribution to the training of citizens in two major ways. First, it exercises their capacity for judgment, which is fundamental in any democracy. Second, it affirms that philosophy education prepares everyone to shoulder their responsibilities in regard to the great questions of the contemporary world – particularly in the field of ethics – by training independent-minded, thoughtful people, capable of resisting various forms of propaganda.

The UNESCO Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy (adopted by Member States of UNESCO in 2005)³ stipulates that philosophy develops the intellectual tools to analyze and understand key concepts such as justice, dignity and freedom. It develops these skills by building capacities for independent thought and judgment, by enhancing the critical skills to understand and question the world and its challenges, and by fostering reflection on values and principles.

Pillar 2 of the above mentioned Strategy urges UNESCO to encourage the teaching of philosophy in all countries, most notably through the development of policy recommendations on the teaching of philosophy at secondary and university levels and on comprehensive curriculum development, which would include the teaching of different philosophical trends as well as comparative philosophy.

Taking into consideration the results of the Study published by UNESCO in 2007, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom – Teaching Philosophy and Learning to Philosophize: Status and Prospects*,⁴ of the existing literature on the subject, and of the discussions held in the present regional meeting, participants were fully aware of the necessity to overcome the challenges facing philosophy teaching in Asia and the Pacific.

Participants, in agreement to the above, aspire to establish clear goals and strategies for achieving these goals.

² Quoted from the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy, 171 EX/12, UNESCO Executive Board, Paris, 2005.

³ Ibid.

⁴ UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007.

3. Goals and aims of philosophy education

The outcomes⁵ of philosophy education include:

a) Understanding and a search for wisdom. To this end we encourage:

- Development of trans-disciplinary knowledge
- Clarification of concepts
- Enhancement of the ability to integrate knowledge, principles and argumentation in rational discussion
- Understanding the power of questions
- Broadening intellectual horizons
- Knowledge of cultural values in different communities
- Search for meanings
- Living a better life.

b) Development of capacities for:

- Quality thinking and reflective processes
- Wise judgment and decision making skills
- Formulating appropriate questions
- Creative thinking
- Foresight
- Reasoned choice
- Interpretation, construction and communication of knowledge
- Respect for reasons and evidence
- Better understanding of reality.

c) Development of a disposition to:

- Use knowledge and skills for good
- Increasing respect for all forms of life
- Take into account the interests of others and the environment in the spirit of solidarity
- Have empathy and compassion
- Be tolerant, inclusive and reasonable
- Understand better the diversity of views of different persons (listen to others)
- Respect different points of view, people and culture, and their values
- Reflect upon values
- Consider alternative possibilities and world-views
- Build and improve other virtues.

4. Implementation challenges

The participants applauded the efforts made by those involved in philosophy education to date, and UNESCO for convening this conference, with the goal of building capacity in the region for teaching philosophy.

⁵ While it is desirable to find culturally appropriate terms to refer to philosophy, such as thinking for the future, at each level of education these goals apply to broader goals of education and development of thinking in general.

The participants called for increased support in implementing all methods of philosophy education at all levels in culturally appropriate ways. Sound discussion of the underlying values and cultural factors in setting these targets is important.

The participants agreed to work to implement philosophy education by utilizing the following methods:

- a) Training more teachers to teach philosophy
- b) Providing attractive salaries for all teachers at each level of education
- c) Providing employment to philosophy teachers
- d) Elevating the social status of philosophy teachers
- e) Developing a wider range of appropriate support materials for different contexts/situations
- f) Establishing teaching resource and research centres and/or facilities open to all
- g) Considering carefully the time allocated to the teaching of philosophy⁶
- h) Increasing the value or credit given to philosophy components of courses or philosophy courses
- i) Developing teaching and learning methods that encourage motivation to learn about philosophy
- j) Integrating the goals of philosophy, and philosophy education into the core goals of the curriculum at levels appropriate for each culture
- k) Researching the best methods and materials for teaching philosophy
- l) Using objectivity in evaluation.

5. Target groups

There are many target groups, such as:

- a) Educational institutions including: pre-school, primary schools, high schools and universities
- b) Academia
- c) Student and youth clubs
- d) Parents of students
- e) The general public
- f) Government officials and ministers
- g) Media and journalists
- h) Legal professionals and administrators
- i) Publishing companies.

⁶ In most countries it was considered that more philosophy teaching should be included. In one country, however, it was considered that there was too much philosophy teaching at present.

6. Research

Research is critical to the development of appropriate education. This includes a needs assessment as well as an analysis of the impact that values education has on learners' psychology during moral development. A contextual analysis is especially necessary in order to recognize distinct and varied needs.

Continued research is needed on appropriate assessment methods for a philosophy curriculum, student learning and behavioural outcomes, and teaching practices.

Ongoing research and assessment of curriculum and continuing modification are crucial.

Conducting research to find the optimum methods and materials for teaching philosophy is needed.

Stimulating comparative research on the above mentioned topics is essential for the purposes of deeper understanding, increased dialogue and sharing of research.

7. Curriculum development

Philosophy curricula based on research needs to be developed, adapted to local needs and integrated across all levels of education.

Cooperation between different academic disciplines to encourage thinking and development of a transdisciplinary curriculum that achieves the above aims is encouraged. Curriculum development workshops for in-service and pre-service teachers and for all levels of education need to be organized.

8. Teaching materials

Researchers and educators should work together across cultures to compile and produce multicultural materials which can be used at all levels. Participants call for an extension of existing compilations of materials. Materials should bring reflection to bear on cultural and religious practices to philosophical dilemmas. Participants call for all teaching materials to be made openly available.⁷

A repository of case reports by countries/regions needs to be established.

Teaching materials will be richer if they consider different cultural and religious practices in response to ethical dilemmas.

9. Learning activities and approaches

Encouraging different types of learning methods and models for different target groups.⁸

⁷ These resources should use all available materials, and access methods to these materials, including for example, Internet, Web 2.0, DVD, videos, games, etc.

⁸ Many methods have been developed and are used in the region already, including community of inquiry, lectures, seminars, workshops, drama, games, narrative, role plays, case presentation and analysis, essay composition, small group discussion, on-line discussion forums, newsletters, public open discussion, media commentary and critiques.

Researchers should work alongside educators to research into appropriate teaching methods for different target groups, and assess the effectiveness and impact of philosophy education.

Generating sustainable philosophy teaching and promotion programmes in a community of inquiry.

10. Evaluation

Evaluation methods for the effectiveness of philosophy education need to be developed urgently in many dimensions such as: knowledge, understanding, wisdom, developing capacities, skills, personal values, disposition and character building.

Evaluation should be authentic, comparative and on-going to give a better estimate of the way philosophy-related education is received and developed in each group.

11. Human capacity building and networking

Raising awareness within professional communities of the importance of philosophy teaching can be achieved through various measures, including philosophy teaching education courses for related teaching fields and events, e.g. workshops or conferences at intervals to be determined.

Refresher courses are necessary for professionals.

Support from parent organizations, the government and agencies such as UNESCO is required.

The participants appreciate the efforts of the Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND) and will work together with them.

The participants also recognize the importance of utilizing the expertise of philosophers in national associations and the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

Philosophy teachers in each country should establish and support network partners for the development of philosophy education. These partners can include many existing associations as mentioned above, and could also lead to development of new forums, networks and associations specifically linked to philosophy teaching where appropriate.

Networks can support teacher education (pre-service and in-service).

Recommendations for action

Recommendations to teachers

- Teacher-initiated action has been, and remains, essential for development of philosophy education and will continue to be important for evolution of the subject.
- Discuss not just 'philosophy', but integrate philosophy into interdisciplinary education, and relate philosophy to the challenges of life.
- Construct a classroom atmosphere conducive to the education of thinking, e.g. a community of inquiry.
- Share experiences and resources with others, to gather more data from different levels, situations and cultures.

Recommendations to philosophers

- Be involved in promoting philosophy education, conducting comparisons of different approaches and contents and developing methods to document this.
- Write papers explaining each country's circumstance and needs to various target audiences⁹ who need to understand the subject more in order to support provision of relevant materials and appropriate pedagogies for philosophy education.
- Network with others to encourage sustainable activities.
- Promote and research how to effectively facilitate a dialogue and build mutual understanding and complementary strategies between philosophers and other professionals.
- Involve the media and publishing companies in communication strategies.
- Rely not only on government initiated schemes, but also take initiatives to develop activities mentioned in this Action Plan.

Recommendations to teacher training institutions and universities

- Employ specialized teachers of philosophy to train teachers how to assist students to develop their thinking skills (in concordance with the goals above).
- Establish or maintain philosophy departments, and involve them in teacher training.
- Establish philosophy teaching and learning resource centres.
- Give adequate resources to support the activity of the centres.
- Establish and provide sustainable philosophy education support courses for building teacher capacity and make philosophy courses compulsory in teacher training.

Recommendations to Member States

- Adhere formally to the importance and relevance of philosophy teaching as a discipline having its own methods and diversely articulated contents to develop a quality education system.
- Accord an equally important place to philosophy compared to other disciplines, in order to achieve quality education.

⁹ These groups include teachers, teacher trainers, policy-makers, media, university faculty, etc.

- Develop trainings that are comprehensive and complete, being able to train reflective citizens.
- Enhance the assets of philosophy teaching in the region, and encourage philosophy teaching in countries where this discipline is not taught.
- Elaborate a national Action Plan on philosophy teaching at all levels of education so as to present the results of this Plan to the Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO. This would allow for international comparisons and knowledge sharing, with the intent to encourage interested countries to promote comparative research, share perspectives and projects.
- Engage in formal or informal consultation between countries where philosophy teaching exists at the different educational levels, so as to benefit from existing experiences both in terms of the curricula content and pedagogy.
- Share national Action Plans on philosophy teaching at the Interregional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy to be organized by UNESCO in 2010.
- Elaborate feasibility studies concerning the introduction of philosophy as a separate and independent discipline in curricula of secondary and higher education, in consultation with the different stakeholders in the field of Education.
- Rethink and analyse philosophy teaching's specific contributions to the implementation of the educational principles stated in countries' official texts.
- Acknowledge the contribution that philosophy can make to improve the quality of education in schools.
- Provide support to develop trainings that are comprehensive and complete, able to train reflective citizens.
- Promote an interdisciplinary dialogue between philosophy and other disciplines, since the philosophical inquiry and analysis allow students to become better thinkers, while shedding light on the modalities of knowledge acquisition.
- Extend philosophy teaching into every branch and level of education.
- Ensure the continuity between philosophy teaching through pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education.
- Undertake pilot experiences in the field of learning to philosophize in basic education.
- Safeguard the principle of academic freedom in a community of inquiry.
- Accord value to specializing in philosophy in order to ensure specific professional opportunities, to ensure that philosophy teaching posts at secondary level are filled by faculty members who are specifically trained for that function.
- Organize workshops to revise curricula and school philosophy manuals, and to promote in-service training for school teacher trainers, so as to sustain and update the skills of philosophy teachers.
- Designate a focal point within the secretariat of the National Commission for UNESCO in each country, to be in charge of the follow-up of initiatives related to philosophy teaching.
- Create national databases on philosophy teaching, including the goals, curricula, schools manuals and activities related to philosophical reflections, teacher training programmes, etc. and to link them through a network.

At pre-school, primary and secondary levels

- Prepare teachers of primary and secondary schools to practice philosophical discussion in their classrooms.
- Foster exchanges of experiences regarding the practices of learning to philosophize in schools,

involving in particular countries of the region where this approach has been elaborated.

- Encourage teachers of the various Humanities disciplines in secondary education to follow in-service training in philosophy at university or competent training institutes.
- Dedicate a specific time slot to philosophical reflection or to the analysis of philosophical texts in secondary education.

At tertiary level

- Encourage the creation and/or the strengthening of autonomous philosophy departments within institutions of higher education with a goal to promoting philosophy as a field in its own right.
- Encourage the creation and/or strengthening of philosophy departments in terms of human resources and budget so that they may provide valid opportunities for philosophy graduates.
- Encourage universities in all Member States to introduce philosophy courses in undergraduate studies.
- Ensure durable, systematic interaction and collaboration between secondary school teachers and university professors, especially through in-service training, joint research projects, or teacher assistance, with the goal of guaranteeing faculty motivation and high standards.

Recommendations to UNESCO

- Continue its promotion initiatives and advocacy action in favour of the teaching of philosophy at all levels of formal and informal education.
- Strengthen its initiatives aimed at creating links and establishing networks between philosophers, teachers and students of different regions of the world.
- Continue and reinforce its actions in favour of a philosophical reflection that is open and accessible to the general public, notably through the celebration of the World Philosophy Day.
- Continue to act as a clearing-house for exchanging the best practices in the field of philosophy teaching, through events at the national, regional and global level.
- Provide special support to countries willing to set up regional exchange programmes between universities and training institutes, in order to build the capacities of philosophy teachers.
- Create dynamics of exchange and interaction between regional networks, national and regional associations of philosophy, experts, UNESCO Chairs of Philosophy, etc. in different regions, so as to encourage the establishment of exchange programmes for students and philosophy teachers.
- Elaborate anthology and commentaries of Asian and Pacific philosophical texts deemed important by the countries' community of philosophers, so as to facilitate the development of school books and manuals for both students and philosophy teachers. Networks such as the Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND) can be a privileged partner in this task.
- Work in partnership with other organizations, such as the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) in order to study the possibility and the relevance of introducing philosophy in the curricula of the different educational levels in the countries of the region. Have a focal point in such organizations in charge of initiatives related to philosophy teaching in the region.
- Foster translation and dissemination of philosophical texts.
- Encourage countries to develop national strategies aiming at enhancing philosophy teaching at all levels.
- Provide special support to countries willing to engage in the process of national policy formulation on

philosophy teaching at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

- Provide assistance, as much as possible, for the implementation of national policies in favour of the introduction of philosophy in curricula. Foster the sharing of experiences between countries which are at different stages in the process of policy-formulation, notably through expert meetings.
- Make expertise available to all countries on practices, pedagogy and material development for philosophy teaching. Make expertise available to interested countries on the practice of learning to philosophize. Help elaborate, produce and make use of educational materials, including resources already available in the country, or translation initiatives.
- Support the gathering of pilot experiences and case studies in the field of philosophy teaching, particularly concerning the learning to philosophize in primary schools.
- Work together with teachers, philosophers, institutions and member states to continue the ongoing work to elaborate the summary documents on goals of philosophy education in each state.
- Work together with teachers, philosophers, institutions and Member States to collect philosophical texts that are specific to the countries of Asia and the Pacific region, in order to value and exploit philosophical texts that belong to the country's intellectual heritage.
- Help Member States access anthologies of materials and philosophical texts from all regions and traditions of the world. Further expand from across the region, an anthology of philosophical texts that are deemed important by countries' community of philosophers so as to facilitate the development of school books and manuals for both students and philosophy teachers. Networks such as the Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND) can be a privileged partner in this task.
- Foster multilingualism in philosophy teaching.
- Encourage philosophy departments in universities to address contemporary stakes and challenges in the region.
- Hold regional and interregional meetings on the teaching of philosophy at all education levels, as well as their follow-up.
- Support the exchange, dissemination and circulation of knowledge and practices relative to the learning to philosophize in primary schools, at intra-regional and international levels.
- Develop and support exchange systems between universities in the region so as to foster and disseminate best practices in terms of philosophy programmes and pedagogical training.
- Carry on the Interregional Philosophical Dialogues.

Annexes

Addresses Participants

Address by H.E. Mr Jesli A. Lapus, Education Secretary of the Philippines

Delivered on the occasion of the Opening ceremony of the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Asia and the Pacific, Manila, Philippines, 25 May 2009

Attaining the benefits of peace, prosperity and security through an enlightened citizenry

This two-day Regional High-Level Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Asia and the Pacific is taking place at a most auspicious time for the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and the Government of the Philippines (GOP) who will assume the presidency of SEAMEO in Year 2010.

In addition to being a member of the UNESCO Executive Board and in my capacity as the Philippine Secretary of Education, I have the privilege of also now serving as vice president of SEAMEO. But it is also in my capacity as the incoming president of the SEAMEO Council in 2010 that I wish to share with you the preamble of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). I do so in the hope that you will have a better appreciation of the goals of SEAMEO and realize how similar and significant are these goals, to those of UNESCO in general and to the objectives of this regional meeting in particular.

The purpose of SEAMEO

Just like UNESCO the purpose of SEAMEO as an Organization of eleven (11) Member States, eight (8) associate Member States, two (2) institutional members and fifteen (15) regional specialist centres is to “promote cooperation among the Southeast Asian nations through education, science and culture in order to further respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are the birthrights of the peoples of the world.”

When SEAMEO was organized in 1965, the founding Member States including the Philippines declared for and on behalf of the peoples of Southeast Asia that SEAMEO is “desirous of attaining the benefits of peace, prosperity and security through an enlightened citizenry.” To realize the purpose of SEAMEO, the Organization has been collaborating in the work of “advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of the peoples in Southeast Asia as well as the rest of the world.”

Meeting EFA and MDG targets

I am glad to note the participation of high officials representing the ministries of education of Asia and the Pacific region, experts from the Asia-Pacific Education Network for Democracy (APPEND), ‘thought’ leaders and practitioners from various countries including from the Philippines, representatives of civil society and non-government organizations, members of the academe and concerned parliamentarians.

I cannot imagine any better opportunity to ‘make a difference’ in improving the quality of education for our people than when like-minded ‘thought’ leaders convene for the purpose of institutionalizing sustainable development by building a nation’s social capital.

Improving the quality of life of the peoples in Southeast Asia by improving the quality of education in Southeast Asia is a commitment of each Member State of SEAMEO. Meeting the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets by 2015 remain our most important individual and collective challenge. With the EFA and MDG targets in mind, I am especially happy to welcome the introduction of ‘new thinking’ approaches to our schools’ teaching and learning processes.

Perhaps as a result of the conversations and exchanges of ideas at this meeting we shall all be made ready to ‘open’ doors and ‘unlock’ the secrets of authentic learning!

‘New thinking’ approach

To be fair to most educators I want to believe that creative, innovative and higher-order thinking is not entirely new. Still I must assume that many, if not most of us, will be excited to learn ‘new approaches’ to new thinking. Especially the kind of thinking that will help develop the fullest potentials of all the children and youth of the Asia and Pacific region. The purpose being that all may grow up with a strong sense of community and nationhood.

The principles espoused by UNESCO as the four pillars of learning, i.e., learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together, are even more relevant today than at the turn of the 21st century when the four pillars were first introduced by Jacques Delors. Truly, today’s children and youth deserve an education that is most appropriate for the challenges of the 21st century.

We who are tasked to manage and facilitate learning must do so for the purpose of helping develop their fullest potentials. The purpose being to enable our children and youth to create a new world that is peaceful, prosperous and secure not only for themselves and their families, but also for the next generation.

Priority learning areas

It is correct to say that improved student achievement in the critical learning areas of science, math and the languages is a priority in SEAMEO both individually among Member States and collectively as an Organization. But it is not correct to say that there are no other priorities.

We celebrate in Southeast Asia a rich diversity of culture and tradition among our peoples. In our different ministries of education we recognize certain learning areas as the entry point for the social and human sciences dimension in basic education.

Civics education is therefore as much a priority learning area as science, math and the languages. For it is through civics education that we can pull together a strong sense of community and nationhood among our children and youth.

Social studies in the Philippines

In the Philippines we have also made science, math and the languages our priority learning areas. But not to the detriment of an equally important learning area in civics education that we more appropriately call in our national language *Makabayan* which literally means patriotism.

Makabayan is an integration of competencies and values in such learning areas as social studies, home economics, industrial arts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, fisheries, music, arts, physical education, health education and values education. Also included are the contemporary topics on common good, social development, critical thinking, rational thinking, human rights, living the law, socio-environmental impact, emergencies, disasters and local leadership.

Even now I would like to know what our students are really learning in *Makabayan* and more importantly how the lessons in *Makabayan* are preparing students to become the kind of Filipino citizens we need for the 21st century.

Beyond the workshops and training courses, I hope there will be a transformation among our *Makabayan* teachers so that they will discover in their hearts a genuine interest to nurture young learners towards a new 'thinking' world.

The programme of activities for this 2-day High-Level Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Asia and the Pacific is an inventory of papers to be presented by distinguished experts and specialists. I am certain that we will all benefit from the talks. I look forward to the conversations during discussion sessions and even during coffee and tea break.

Let me close by thanking you all for your presence at this meeting and by encouraging us all to work more closely to achieve for our peoples in the Asia-Pacific region a better future.



Hon. Jesli A. Lapus
Education Secretary
Department of Education
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