



26th New Generation Seminar

September 18-October 1, 2016

Cultural Heritage and Identity in a Globalizing, Urbanizing World

Honolulu • Phnom Penh • Yangon

Background Summary

Background Information

Each year, the East-West Center (EWC) identifies participants from the younger, rising generation of leaders from the United States and Asia Pacific for this two-week intensive educational and dialogue program developed around a thematic focus. The purpose is to help create a better-informed younger generation of leaders who have a greater understanding of regional issues and challenges. The New Generation Seminar (NGS) also provides these younger leaders with a network of counterparts throughout Asia Pacific and the United States upon which to draw as they rise in their leadership positions. Since its launch in 1988, a total of 368 participants from 26 Asia Pacific countries and the United States have participated in 25 NGS programs.

The program is funded by the East-West Center and private donations. Through this funding, the East-West Center covers a limited number of spaces in the program, covering participant air and ground travel expenses, meals provided by the program and lodging. Participants are responsible for any visa fees or expenses, health or travel insurance, and their incidental expenses. Additional cost sharing by participants and nominators is strongly encouraged.

The East-West Center seeks nominations for participants from a variety of organizations and individuals: US Embassies and Consulates in Asia Pacific; the Japan Center for International Exchange in Tokyo; the American Council for Young Political Leaders, and the New Generation Seminar alumni. Self-applications are also accepted through our website. Nominations/applications are accepted in May-June, with selections made by early July. The New Generation Seminar is a *competitive* process; a selection committee at the East-West Center makes the final selection of participants.

Participant Criteria

The New Generation Seminar involves 10-14 participants aged 25-40, from Asia Pacific and the United States. The program seeks to engage those in a position to influence policy, shape public opinion and lead action. An important selection consideration is demonstrated leadership in current and past positions, and the potential for future leadership. The program has targeted elected officials because of their direct role in policymaking, but also includes those who influence policy and public opinion through leadership in political parties, civil society organizations, business, law and the media. Past participants have included members of national, state or provincial government assemblies or ministries; mayors and governors; city council members; leaders in political parties and party youth wings; policy advisors; business and community leaders; entrepreneurs; and others.

The NGS is not geared toward academics, researchers or individuals who are specialists in the program theme; rather it seeks to engage leaders with broad-based policy knowledge, responsibility and influence who can benefit from learning about a range of Asia Pacific issues in addition to the theme. Fluency in English is required.

Program Agenda

The New Generation Seminar provides rising leaders with an intensive learning experience through a unique combination of study, dialogue, leadership development and travel. The first week of the New Generation Seminar is held at the East-West Center in Honolulu and consists of briefings by EWC research staff on key regional developments such as security, international relations, economics, population, health and environment, as well as sessions directly related to the seminar theme. The Honolulu program also includes relevant field visits, and an opportunity for the participants to engage with each other in dialogue on issues of importance to their countries. Each participant will be asked to come prepared to share a short presentation and lead a discussion with their colleagues in the program.

The second week of the program involves field travel to either the Asia Pacific region or the United States mainland to enhance participants' knowledge of a specific theme. Recent themes have included: Asia Pacific security and the US role, innovation and industrial policy for job creation, the US middle class, and social and economic transformation in Asia Pacific and climate change. Field travel provides participants with an opportunity for in-depth, first-hand perspectives through travel and meetings with policymakers, civil society and business leaders, analysts, experts and others to gain strategic insights, best practices, and new understanding to apply to challenges in their own countries.

26th NGS Theme: Cultural Heritage and Identity in a Globalizing, Urbanizing World

Over the past 20 years, the increasing pressures of intensive urbanization, globalization and a trend toward modernization have been threatening cultural and architectural heritage around the world. In many urban areas, the legacy of the past is rapidly disappearing. In October 2016, global leaders will meet at the UN international Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) to create a new urban agenda for the world, and, for the first time, issues of cultural heritage and its importance to cities will be part of the agenda. There is growing recognition that cultural heritage and architecture can be a key resource and asset for building sustainable, livable, and dynamic cities, with evidence that conserving unique heritage can bring significant economic value through tourism and creative industries. Beyond that, it also plays an important role in fostering national and local pride and a sense of identity for its residents. In communities across the world, but especially in rapidly modernizing and globalizing developing countries, government leaders and officials are expressing a strong interest in placing culture at the core of development strategies, to consider what is important to keep for future generations before it is lost forever. But doing this is not easy as leaders must also meet the enormous pressures to provide efficient infrastructure, housing, sanitation, commercial development and jobs for their communities.

The 2016 NGS participants will explore the role of cultural heritage in economic development, urban planning, tourism, and in preserving and promoting a sense of local and national identity through meetings and visits with leaders and policymakers, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, academic experts and practitioners in Honolulu, Phnom Penh, and Yangon. Honolulu will provide an example of a US city struggling to preserve its local identity and culture in its tourism development and as it upgrades its aging infrastructure and revitalizes its urban core. Phnom Penh and Yangon represent common challenges in developing nations of rapid urbanization, a need for development and threats to preserving their urban culture, including both colonial and post-colonial architectural heritage. Both are at a critical juncture in their development strategies. Phnom Penh is on a rapid growth trajectory after many years of war and internal conflict; Yangon is emerging from decades of economic and social isolation with a new democratically elected government. All three cities must manage break-neck growth, provide infrastructure and services to growing populations, attract outside investment and industry, and manage burgeoning tourism, while trying to figure out how to maintain and preserve that which represents and can foster their sense of national identity, culture and place.