

The University of Tokyo Program for Leading Graduate Schools
Integrated Human Sciences Program for Cultural Diversity (IHS) × The Toyota Foundation

The Ways to Have a Better Dialogue for Empathy

Mutual Learning and Exchanges

Event
Report

May
2020



The University of Tokyo



THE TOYOTA FOUNDATION

FOREWORD

This booklet introduces the content of a joint symposium between the University of Tokyo Program for Leading Graduate Schools Integrated Human Sciences Program for Cultural Diversity (IHS) and the Toyota Foundation, which was held on February 7 and 8, 2020.

In today's increasingly globalized world, dialogues and collaboration across national, cultural and sectoral boundaries have become an indispensable approach to solving complex social issues.

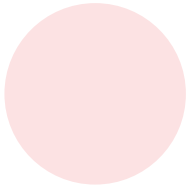
In this symposium, the grantees of the Toyota Foundation who are working towards solving social issues in collaboration with people from a variety of nations, cultures and sectors, and the researchers and students in IHS who offer a high level of expertise and a broad perspective, in addition to insights and integrative abilities to apply academic learning to actual practice in society, have gathered and discussed various methods and experiences in project management as well as raising public interest in social issues, focusing on dialogues with society.

The University of Tokyo's Integrated Human Sciences Program for Cultural Diversity (IHS) was inaugurated in 2014 to train proactive leaders. Meanwhile, the Toyota Foundation's International Grant Program (IGP) focuses on deepening mutual understanding and knowledge-sharing among people on the ground in their target countries who are finding solutions to shared issues. Through promoting direct interaction among key players, the grant program aims to survey and analyze situations in those areas, obtain new perspectives and expand the potential of future generations.

The IHS and the Toyota Foundation collaborate beyond the differences in their priorities on the academic side and practice and invite researchers and students as well as the IGP grantees from the past few years. The co-organizers aim to share the successes and trials in project management across sectors as well as their efforts on the dissemination of the project outputs with the audience, especially from the perspective of communication with society.

In this report, we introduce the highlights of the two-day session from the perspectives of the participating IHS students. We hope that the dialogues between the grantees of the Toyota Foundation and the researchers and students of IHS, along with the learnings of the students gained from this symposium, will provide insights into the potential of integrating research and practice.





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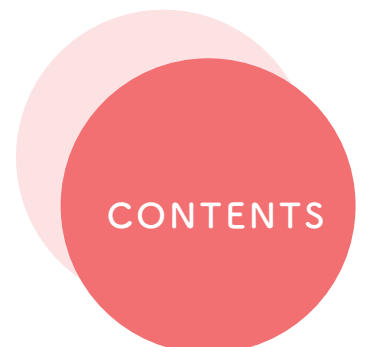
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ABOUT THE TOYOTA FOUNDATION

The Toyota Foundation is a grant-making foundation established in 1974 by the Toyota Motor Corporation. It views events from a global perspective as it works to support activities that bring broad, long-term benefits to society. The Toyota Foundation identifies issues in a wide range of areas in line with current needs, including human and natural environments, social welfare, and education and culture, and provides grants for research and projects that address these issues.

ABOUT THE TOYOTA FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL GRANT PROGRAM

Since 2013, the Toyota Foundation has set its main focus on common issues in Asia for its International Grant Program (IGP). At first, it set its target on the three significant themes of aging, international migration, and renewable energy. In the course of running the program, the Toyota Foundation has learned that cultural and philosophical dimensions are critically important in understanding the backgrounds of the issues in local communities.

Also, the approaches that were supported, mutual learning through exchanges and sharing experience beyond sectors as well as international boundaries, are integral and can be applicable to other efforts. In this regard, the Toyota Foundation has been continuously redesigning the IGP. As the result, the current IGP is promoting direct interaction. It aims to deepen mutual understanding and knowledge-sharing among key players in the target countries in East and Southeast Asia who are finding solutions to shared issues. Through promoting direct interaction among key players, the grant program aims to survey and analyze situations in those areas, obtain new perspectives, and expand the potential of future generations. Current and upcoming challenges in the world are complex and cross-border, multi-sectoral cooperation is essential to find solutions. The Toyota Foundation hopes that the IGP contributes to connecting leaders in all sectors from the ground up in East and Southeast Asia.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO PROGRAM FOR LEADING GRADUATE SCHOOLS INTEGRATED HUMAN SCIENCES PROGRAM FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY (IHS)

Launched in 2014, this program that is subsidized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology aims to demonstrate a new direction for education at graduate schools. It enrolls around 50 students, some of whom major in this program and others take this program as minor while majoring in their respective subjects.

Integration stands as a key part of the concept behind this program. It suggests that the program seeks studies that transcend the boundaries of fractionalized academic disciplines. In the program, students study methodologies and mindsets in different areas through lectures. It aims to help them acquire multi-disciplinary literacy and to understand the significance and potential of the latest research in areas other than their specialty.

Another key element is coexistence. The program uses the term of coexistence instead of cultural diversity to pay attention not only to the state in which various individuals live in comfort but also the state in which they are mutually respected and valued.

Beyond the boundaries between academia and society, students will acquire skills in acting and planning through different training sessions outside the university.

The IHS program will address the future challenge of seeking a method for returning the results of multi-disciplinary exchange to the real world. For this purpose, the program has organized riddle-solving events and research in sparsely populated regions as well as other events outside the university aimed at promoting outreach beyond academic studies and hands-on research activities based on communities (see pp. 18-19). To tackle questions such as what results are expected from multi-cultural coexistence, whether the closeness of relationships and other qualities can be visualized as achievements, which results should and should not be presented in the form of numerical figures, and what actions are needed to prevent events and gatherings from only occurring once, students use trial and error and conduct activities based on their ideas.

The Ways to Have a Better Dialogue for Empathy

Mutual Learning and Exchanges

Program

Date: Friday, February 7, 15:00-18:00

Saturday, February 8, 10:00-16:30

Venue: Hall and Collaboration Room 3, Bldg 18,

The University of Tokyo Komaba Campus



Friday, February 7

15:00-18:00

Session 1 Film Screening and Cross Talk : Their/Our Views

About the Toyota Foundation

Hideo Tone, Program Officer, The Toyota Foundation [Coordinator]

Film Screening and Cross Talk “Their/Our Views”

Chou Yun Ju, Specialist, National Culture and Arts Foundation

J. Yoohyun Lee, Ph.D. Researcher at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

“Through Visual Expressions: Retrieving Confidence within Marriage Migrant Women”

Dipesh Kharel, Ethnographer/Filmmaker, Researcher at the University of Tokyo

“Capturing Multiethnic Japan: Foreign Students and Japanese Learning to Live Together”

Suyheang Kry, Executive Director, Women Peace Makers

“Understanding ‘Us’ to know ‘Them’: Employing Facilitative Listening Design regionally to build empathy towards the Other through understanding those to whom we can relate”

Saturday, February 8

10:00-12:30

Session2 Symposium : The Ways to Go Beyond the Boundaries

Shigeto Sonoda, Selection Committee Chair of International Grant Program, the Toyota Foundation; Professor, The University of Tokyo [Coordinator]

Hidemi Takahashi, Professor, The University of Tokyo

Napisa Waitoolkiat, Director, Center of ASEAN Community Studies and Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University

“Locating Peace through harmonizing Religion, Gender, and Age: The Cases of Thailand’s Deep South and Indonesia’s Aceh”

Shuko Ebihara, Founder, Kuriya

“Empowering Intercultural Youth from a Creative Approach”

Mai Yoshikawa, Founder, Napura-works. Co., Ltd

“Practice of Co-Learning for Community Based Tourism in Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia and in Nanjyo Okinawa Through Online Experience Sharing and a Social Platform”

14:00-16:30

Session3 Closed Workshop

Session 1 Film Screening and Cross Talk “Their/Our Views”

Audio-visual is an effective tool for transmitting messages to society. Recently, the international grant program has produced audio-visual products as deliverables in several projects. In Session 1, the three groups screened the work with presentations, and discussed the background, aims, and methods of using video media.

Introduction of the Speakers



Chou Yun Ju and Jen Yoohyun Lee

Yun Ju and Jen first met in Thailand in 2016. Shortly after that, they discovered that they both were interested in socially engaged art and ended up designing a cross-national project together. Jen is a community art practitioner, currently earning a Ph.D. in social design. Yun is an art event programmer, currently working for the Art Council of Taiwan.

*With the latest change, only Jen participated in the symposium.

Abstract for the Project Information

Through Visual Expressions: Retrieving Confidence within Marriage for Migrant Women (Project countries: Taiwan and South Korea)

South Korea and Taiwan are both facing the effect of the dramatic economic boost in the late 20th century: a hike in marriage immigration. The majority of immigrant partners are women from China and Southeast Asia that arrived through international marriage agencies. Society positions them as passive strangers and they have been overlooked in their marriages and society. Their children are named after their fathers, speaking the father's language. Accordingly, they have low self-esteem. The children not only consider their mothers' heritage to be lowly, but also to lack education, and they are less competent among peers.

This project frames this matter as a human rights issue, and empowers the women and their children to become activists, to speak out about their side of the story and to gain self-esteem through artistic approaches and have the confidence to speak up about themselves in society.

The significance of relationship building for all participants became clear as the project unfolded. By gathering once a week, the women and their children were able to interact with other participants and local volunteers all while acquiring different languages, skills, and tools in order to share stories and transform their position in society by forming a new kind of community.



Dipesh Kharel

Dipesh is a visual ethnographer and a filmmaker. He received the President Award 2018 at the University of Tokyo for his novel application of the visual ethnographic method in studying transnational migration. His fieldwork data have already resulted into manuscripts as well as several award-winning ethnographic films. Currently, as a JSPS post-doctoral researcher at Sophia University and a researcher at the University of Tokyo, he is doing visual ethnographic research on the migrants as well as foreign student from South East Asia to Japan.

Abstract for the Project Information

Capturing Multiethnic Japan: Foreign Students and Japanese Learning to Live Together (Project Countries: Nepal, Vietnam, and Japan)

Recently, the number of Vietnamese and Nepalese students coming to Japan has dramatically increased, making them the second and the third largest foreign student communities in Japan, respectively. Indeed, these student migrants are becoming important for labor in the rapidly aging society of Japan. Both the young migrants and Japanese are sharing a number of challenges and opportunities while living together and creating an inclusive society. The main purpose of this ethnographic film project is to document the experiences of Kyosei (living together) and disseminate this knowledge throughout the world.

Gaining mutual understanding of the causes, processes and social consequences of international migration from Vietnam and Nepal to Japan could contribute to shaping a comprehensive policy on international migration in Japan, Vietnam and Nepal as well as other countries.



Suyheang Kry

Serving as the Executive Director of Women Peace Makers Organization (WPM) in Cambodia. Founded in 2003, WPM works to support the empowerment of women and youth, transform conflicts, and prevent violence by providing the tools and space for dialogue, deeper understanding, and strategic intervention into issues of gender and peace. Suyheang holds a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, USA, and a Bachelor of Education from the Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Abstract for the Project Information (Ongoing)

“Understanding ‘Us’ to know ‘Them’: Employing Facilitative Listening Design regionally

to build empathy towards the Other through understanding those to whom we can relate” (Project countries: Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam)

Understanding “Us” to know “Them” employs a community-based action approach developed by Women Peace Makers in Cambodia to collect information and subsequently foster better mutual understanding and empathy towards others. By training Khmer minority participants from outside of Cambodia to use Facilitative Listening Design (FLD) to gather opinions and perceptions within their communities, they will provide a new understanding of the strengths and challenges in a minority context. By having Cambodian participants take the same approach with minorities inside of Cambodia, there will be a range of data for analysis and comparison of two different minority settings. Bringing the whole group together, the connection of being Khmer or Cambodian will also show that the Other inside Cambodia has similar experiences and perceptions as Khmer minorities in Vietnam and Thailand. The ultimate goal is to understand the experience of other minority groups by understanding the concept of us in a more familiar context.

Report from the IHS

Findings Gained through Filming ● Jen Yoohyun Lee

Use of video media has the advantage that both shooting and viewing are close to people. Holding cameras inspired mothers and their children to actively communicate.

Jen organized art workshops in Taiwan and South Korea from two standpoints: as a planner and as an artist. The events targeted migrant mothers and their children. According to the initial plan, the two workshops would have identical proceedings. In reality, the workshop in South Korea featured art production while the one in Taiwan featured filming. The organization of different programs in the same period allowed participants at two locations to present their respective works to each other and to have dialogues through video conferencing.

The art therapy encouraged the children to open their minds and allowed the mothers to gradually talk about their feelings. In one film, a mother said that she gained new understanding about the relationship between the mother and children and learned as a human being. Stating that her team as the planner had learned a lot from the workshops, Jen concluded her report by expressing gratitude.

As a future task, it was pointed out that preparations should be made to attract parents and children in various living conditions. The team had intended to study with a focus on mothers under difficult living conditions, but many of the actual participants in the workshops were mothers with a somewhat stable livelihood. It will aim to develop a system that will be able to empower not only mothers but also their children.

Films for Motivating Storytelling and Dialogues ● Suyheang Kry

The appeal of film as a communication medium lies in the breadth of its reach. While taking about their respective experiences, presenters repeatedly stress that film is an effective means of making issues that are unlikely to attract attention known profoundly at a low cost.

Suyheang Kry is engaged in the empowerment of women and youth and works to promote understanding through dialogues for the prevention of conflict and violence. In this project, the team practiced the three steps of listening, recording and conducting a joint analysis. They had originally been designed for cross-cultural understanding of ethnic minorities in Cambodia. By filming themselves, these minorities were able to recognize their life history that focused on individuals as well as their links to their community.

The films were edited in a style in which viewers are gradually drawn into the world of personal stories. Hearing individual speakers' voices and talking rhythms and seeing their atmospheres while taking about what they do for living, what languages they speak and how often, whether they have families, what they think about their traditional ethnic culture, what difficulties they have experienced, what differences they perceive between the past and the present and so forth, viewers will naturally feel attached to speakers and think that their conditions are no longer someone else's affair.

The team actively worked to show the films and to provide opportunities for dialogues. It was meaningful to provide the works for those unfamiliar with the hardships and social issues of minorities. "We would like to help people reconsider who they are and who others are, realize with surprise that they share many things in common and commit to living with others as humans," said Suyheang.

Visualizing Viewpoints of Migrants ● Dipesh Kharel

Film production is something in which anyone can take an active role, because of its simplicity and the breadth of its outreach. Video media appear to be fairly compatible with the philosophy behind activities conducted by the presenters. The following outlines the presentation delivered by Dipesh Kharel.

“There is still a huge divide between migrants and society. Many Japanese are unaware of their hardships. Is it appropriate to adopt a solution in which the majority empower the minority (migrants)? The answer is no. We should build a community where we learn and discuss together. I believe that our role is to act as a bridge between them.”

Dipesh is a visual ethnographer. Based on his field work, he published a large number of articles and videos. In this project, migrants and students from Asia living in Japan carried out filming activities to keep visual records in a way in which they were involved in the production. Their films featured the actual living environment of young people, such as sharing of a small room for sleeping and their part-time jobs at a monjayaki (pan-friend batter) restaurant, a convenience store and other places. The film depicted the heavy burdens and hardships they faced. For example, they worked for money to be sent to their families in their home countries in addition to their tuition. They cannot take days off work even after they are injured. Their visa applications are not easily approved. Their future remains uncertain, whether they return home or stay in Japan. A mixture of their fatigue and faint hope for the future was seen in their comments. The team interviewed personnel in Tokurinji Temple in Nagoya as providers of support. This Buddhist temple erected a Vietnamese temple on its premises and has been conducting memorial services for young students from overseas who have lost their lives. The cases of their deaths vary, including suicide, traffic accidents and unknown causes. The temple also provides support for overseas students. When there is a festival on its premises, it has food stalls run by Vietnamese students.

Dipesh’s activities are not confined to visual ethnographic fieldwork at different locations. They include the organization of filming workshops. He emphasizes the point that overseas students visualize their own perspectives when they interview each other in their films. In view of a sharp growth in students from Vietnam and Nepal, Dipesh is thinking of continuing to uncover the reality of Japanese society that is shifting towards a multi-ethnic community.



Film Work as a Process and Communication

Finally, the coordinator asked about what the presenters did to build collaborative relationships. While speaking about their respective stories, they pointed out the importance of taking plenty of time to communicate.

Suyheang explained that she did not immediately start filming a documentary. She spent at least one and a half years on building personal relationships of trust. She also said that it took her an extra six months until interviewees spoke about their life histories. After the completion of her film, she asked the interviewees to review it before it was shown. She always provides an opportunity for dialogues at each screening.

The cross-talk session repeatedly highlighted the importance of flexible planning, according to which each project should plan activities suited to its purpose at different stages from the viewpoint of regarding film production and screening as a process rather than focusing on film works as finished products.

Session 2 Symposium: The Ways to Go Beyond the Boundary

Session 2 began with a summary of the previous day and the questions raised by Professor Shigeto Sonoda, who contributed to designing the IHS Program and is also the chair of the Toyota Foundation International Grant Program Selection Committee.

Dr. Hidemi Takahashi, the coordinator of the IHS program, and two students from the IHS program, followed by three recipients of the Toyota Foundation International Grant Program spoke at this session.

Introduction of the Speakers



Shigeto Sonoda

Professor of Sociology and Asian Studies, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (IASA), The University of Tokyo; Selection Committee Chair, International Grant Program, The Toyota Foundation



Hidemi Takahashi

Coordinator of the IHS program. Professor at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo, and a philologist specializing in the study of Syriac and medieval Arabic literature. D.Phil. (Frankfurt)

Hiroko Tanabe (2nd year in IHS Doctoral Program)
Minami Iizuka (1st year in IHS Master Program)



Shuko Ebihara

Founder of kuriya, the non-profit organization (NPO) that provides opportunities for career education for immigrant youth (age 16 to 26) in Japan. With a mission to engage and empower immigrant youth in Japanese society, Shuko founded the organization in 2016 after 10 years of operating more than 100 art and cultural workshops to engaging 300 youths. She was selected for the Global Cultural Leadership Programme by the European Union. Since 2019, she also serves as an advisor for MEXT in Japan.

Abstract for the Project Information

Empowering Intercultural Youth from a Creative Approach (Project countries: Japan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia)

This project perceives the potential for intercultural youth in society, with so much cultural diversity. The project has supported the empowerment of intercultural youth through a creative approach by providing opportunities to 1) visualize the perspectives of intercultural youth through art and media to advocate for them in society, 2) to connect intercultural youth across Asia to create a dialogue on common global issues and potential in our society, and 3) to build a global network and to consider together possible actions to be taken in order to create a better future for our lives. Artists and NPOs practicing empowerment programs through art in Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Penang visited project sites in each country and shared knowledge and experiences, and have developed a program addressing the common issues.



Mai Yoshikawa

Founder of Napura-works Co., Ltd. Creating transformative travel programs with the local community at the Sambor Prei Kuk site, under the concept of “Connecting the ancient world and modern society to design our common future” by growing “Heritage Ecosystems,” linking heritage, nature, and people—those living in the community and those visiting.

Abstract for the Project Information

Practice of Co-Learning for Community-Based Tourism in Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia and in Nanjyo Okinawa Through Online Experience Sharing and a Social Platform (Project countries: Cambodia and Japan)

Focusing on the surrounding area of the Sambo Precook Archeological Site, which was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2017, and the Nanjo City, Okinawa Prefecture, where the Sefa Utaki World Heritage Site is located, the project created an opportunity to study and learn about common issues and future prospects for sightseeing, living, and the future of the area. We implemented a field study program in Japan, Cambodia and Italy to connect community members who are involved in community based tourism at each site. Through these experiences we could create partnerships to share the experience and the issues as the hosts and guests in deeply and directly, and have confidence to design our own future for own community.



Napisa Waitoolkiat

Dr. Napisa Waitoolkiat, Assistant Professor, is the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand, and former President and current Executive Secretary of the Asian Political and International Studies Association. Her research interests include party/electoral politics, democratization, peace studies, human security and migration in Southeast Asia.

Abstract for the Project Information

Locating Peace by Harmonizing Religion, Gender, and Age: The Cases of Thailand’s Deep South and Indonesia’s Aceh (Project countries: Thailand and Indonesia)

This project examined the multigenerational and multicultural issues, including women in the conflict zones of Thailand’s Deep South and Indonesia’s Aceh who have experienced armed conflict and secessionist movements. What we learned is that peacebuilding needs democracy and participation from all walks of life. We also learned a lot from other partners because the peace building phase and religious situation are different. We organized four forums and a symposium in several non-Deep South provinces to disseminate information, raised awareness about Deep South issues among Thai people and sought to place these issues atop the national agenda in Thailand to help end the violence. Our outputs, such as a booklet, video clips with Thai subtitles, and articles in two peer-reviewed papers will aid in disseminating the collected information to contribute towards peace.

Report from the IHS

Borders and Divisions —A Question Raised in This Session

Professor Shigeto Sonoda served as the coordinator for this session. He referred to the argument of Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist, on transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity to raise a question over the idea that evolution of society meant the change from a society consisting of homogeneous members to a society consisting of heterogeneous members united by division of labor.

According to him, it would be favorable if heterogeneous members were organically combined, but in reality, organic division of labor does not occur. Especially at graduate school, where students strive for a doctoral degree in their specialized subjects, nothing but deep exploration with a focus on specific matters was considered to be important and collaboration based on shared interests has not been encouraged. As a result, the divide between disciplines, society and universities may be intensifying.

Formulated from this sense of crisis, the IHS program aims to develop personnel who will fill the gap between academia and society. The program emphasizes insight, creativity, cooperativeness and integration. They are closely associated with the points stressed by the Toyota Foundation's International Grant Program, namely transnational, cross sector, mutual learning and foresight. In view of this relationship, the talk session discussed the subject of borders.

Cultivating Attractions Through Empathy ● Mai Yoshikawa

Regarding the question of how to overcome the challenge from outsiders doubting the significance of the enthusiastic planning of an event, Mai said that the experience of her own pregnancy and childbirth was similar to her feeling at the time of carrying out an experimental project. It is the challenge of trying without knowing how the results will be. She said, "The best way of increasing our personal network is to talk with them frankly face to face. It is just like holding hands with a person who is sensitive to cold temperatures."

She engages in community-based tourism, which she considers to be tourism that energizes local communities. The subsidized project reviewed the desirable form of tourism through exchange based on mutual visits to two regions, Nanjo City and Sambor Prei Kuk. Common aspects of the two regions are proximity between a World Heritage site and the everyday life of local people, and the vastness of the heritage that makes it difficult to grasp its overall picture. It is more important to image what happened there in the past than to view the visible buildings.

In areas with World Heritage sites, the relationship between locals and the heritage site tends to be weaker as the areas are turning into tourist destinations. There is a vicious circle in which visitors to the heritage site decline as it is more separated from locals. For the tourism industry, it is imperative to maintain the relationship among the local community, the heritage site and the tourists. With the stance of regarding a World Heritage site as including the whole town and people living there, the team explores a form of tourism that will shake the values of visitors.

The project provided several opportunities for simple but heart-warming exchanges. For example, participants ate home-prepared meals in the kitchens of regular homes and received guidance on the district from local people. Then, they talked not only about superficial attractions but also real problems. People are not moved by looking at positive aspects alone. They feel empathy when they understand the problems. Project activities revealed that it was important to think about the sustainability of local lifestyles when discussing sustainability in tourism. In the process of developing a tourist destination, it is often a case of bringing what is lacking in the region from outside. However, that does not produce a solution. Local charm that still remains invisible is very important, and it is necessary to allow a good deal of time for discovering it. The project succeeded in attaining the discovery through mutual learning between people in different areas. Mai presented a photo of all participants of her projects, and passionately emphasized their big smiles.

Translation Capacity for Transcending Positions ● Shuko Ebihara

In response to the question about how to overcome boundaries, translation capacity was proposed as a requirement. It means the communication ability premised on positional differences, not the skills for translation between different languages. Serving as the representative director of the NPO kuriya, Shuko is engaged in a project for human development through art for multicultural youth. Her group has conducted activities in Hong Kong, Penang and Tokyo, regarding multicultural youth not as a problem but as a source of potential.

In parallel with the implementation of on-site activities, the organization made policy proposals. Until then, on-site activities always faced a dilemma. While witnessing the severity of the environment surrounding multicultural youth, the group noticed the incompetence arising from the absence of any tangible support system. Young migrants to Japan leave school before graduation, cannot obtain higher education even if they want to or they are exposed to abuse and other forms of violence in daily life. After realizing the limitations of its art programs, the non-profit body decided to make a policy proposal with an emphasis on the inadequacy of mechanisms for supporting high schoolers of foreign origins. The translation capacity was needed when delivering the voices of these young people in the form of a policy proposal to the government. That produced positive results, such as complementing fact-finding surveys.

“When you project yourself into someone else’s situation, you can understand the way they interpret your words and that will prompt you to improve how you use words.” In response to this remark from Shuko, Hiroko in the IHS program said that the translation capacity might be needed at the level of logics. A different position leads to different logic. The difference in position between teachers and students in the IHS program is an example. In this case, the party at the position where logics of the two sides and their mismatch can be observed, such as the administrative office, will play a coordinating role. Hiroko argued that close communication with the coordinating party had paved the way for translation of logics in the IHS program. Professor Takahashi remarked that there was an issue about invisibility of students’ conditions to teachers and that it was similar to essential difficulty in the majority understanding the status of the minority.

Arousing Interests Beyond Interference ● Napisa Waitoolkiat

In response to a question on what boundary posed the greatest difficulty, Napisa mentioned interference by the military. In Thailand’s Deep South, conflicts, violence and deaths are intensifying. In this region, Muslims are the majority, making up 77% of the population. It is exceptional, given that they are a minority throughout Thailand. The situation is so serious that genocide is occurring there, claiming at least 7,000 lives by 2020. Data on casualties according to faith shows that deaths are concentrated among Muslims. Among the two genders, males make up 80% of the deaths, and among the age groups, 18- to 59-year-olds account for 70%. The group of unknown ages make up 20%. It should be additionally considered in view of the fact that the dead could not be identified. In addition, there are 10,000 orphans.

They are supposed to have the right to live in peace. Those in conflict-affected areas are filled with unrest while living in their everyday lives, while the military budget has continued to increase. When asked about this issue, most of the university students in the country say that they are unaware of the situation. People in non-conflict areas tend to regard the issue as distant or having nothing to do with them.

With the aim of stimulating a sense of involvement in people, the project team held forums and conducted field work in three cities, both in an area where there was an ongoing conflict and in an area in which a conflict had been settled. It is working with determination towards strengthening the support systems of citizens’ groups and raising public awareness.

Why We Try to Cross Borders

At the end of the session, each presenter discussed what they paid attention to when crossing borders and what inspired them to carry out their projects. Shuko said that, for the purpose of gathering people from all walks of life, it was important to provide a place that would offer psychological security and peace of mind. Her motivation to continue activities with this stance stems from her experience of living as a minority. Mai attached importance to the action of eating and sharing time together. She said that she was most inspired by the potential of the people living in the district. Napisa remembered the days when there was peace in Thailand's Deep South. Buddhist priests and Muslims had daily exchanges with considerate attitudes. She bears this picture in mind when conducting her activities. For improving the situation, dialogues need to be repeatedly held to build favorable relationships between the non-profit organization, the community concerned, and the military. Napisa stressed that peace is a political matter. They find issues to be tackled and shed light on them in places where plenty of difficulties and problems are entangled. What the three presenters, Shuko, Mai and Napisa, have in common is insights into key areas of focus. It is linked with researchers' activities in organizing questions and deepening speculation through academic papers. The session provided some clues on generating interactions between practice and research, instead of confrontation between them.



Session3 Closed Workshop

Designed by the IHS students, Session 3 was an opportunity in which the students and guests who received grants from the Toyota Foundation had closer exchanges of opinions. With their respective ideas, the students worked on the issue of how the accumulation of cross-sectoral activities should be returned to society. Three groups of students delivered reports on their respective projects. In the second half, the participants were split into smaller groups to closely discuss key concepts that emerged from the reports.

Concept of This Session

The relationship between research and practice cannot always be summarized as a direct one-way relationship between theory and application. As a specific issue is studied more deeply, it becomes clearer that any practice involves problems and risks. While grass-roots empowerment is needed, we should never turn away from the problems that lie in the abyss. We should consider the entire society while looking at specific individuals, and we should also consider individuals while viewing society as a whole. There is a proverb that goes: “You cannot see the forest for the trees.” The concurrent implementation of research and practice may be likened to the alternate shifting of our focus between the forest and the trees.

The IHS program has the educational aim of helping students acquire academic knowledge to develop solutions to numerous problems stemming from the challenges associated with the need for peaceful coexistence in our globalized society. The students undergo training for developing both their expertise and extensive culture. They not only author papers in their specialty areas but also participate in multidisciplinary lectures in the university and outside training sessions. They are also provided with an opportunity to voluntarily organize events independently from the planning stage. Then, they proactively seek balance between research and practice. The three teams of IHS students that gave presentations in this session attempted to shift their focus between details and the overall picture.



From IHS Activities

Kawachi Nazotoki Machi Tanken (Explore Kawachi to Solve Local Mysteries)

– An event for discoveries in Takachiho-cho, Nishi-Usuki-gun, Miyazaki Prefecture

Hiroko Tanabe and Ryo Nakagawa, who delivered their report, have an interest in storytelling in local communities. This event was held in fall 2019 jointly with the NPO Tabaru Mirai Project, aiming for local revitalization. In the region where the population was shrinking, participants walked around while solving riddles about the history of the town. Through research, a rehearsal, and the actual event in collaboration with local people, the event awoke many different memories and participants were able to hear stories based on local life.

After the report, the audience remarked on two points. One was the relationship between the needs in the area concerned with the event, namely the Kawachi district in Takachiho-cho, and the content of the event. The other was the position of IHS students in the participation of the event and their interests. Participating students majored in subjects with no direct linkage to regional development and public administration studies. They made little contribution as experts at the stages of planning and operation. Focusing on the question of how studies on language, such as studies on theatrical plays, philosophy and linguistics, may be applied to regional development, they cooperated in the activities of the Tabaru Mirai Project as visiting planners to produce the event. Explanations of this point made up a large portion of the question-and-answer session. Closer discussions could have occurred if more detailed reports had been made on interests shared among local inhabitants, the NPO and the students as well as on the background for setting a common goal for the region.

Hajimete no Gakkai (The First Academic Conference) by OFF LABEL

The second group reported about an event that aimed for academic outreach. It was designed by a group called OFF LABEL, established by four students named Minami Iizuka, Rena Takada, Chao Yi and Nan Heejoo, who joined the program in the 2019 academic year. Its objective is to remove various negative images from people, organizations, nations and regions using the power of academic studies and research. They desire to spread the joy of studies in ways that are easy to understand and carry out activities for making studies known to society in order to bridge between the academics and the real world. Its first event, Hajimete no Gakkai (the First Academic Conference), was held in January 2020. A wide variety of researchers ranging from the teaching staff of the University of Tokyo to researchers in the private sector were invited. The event was designed to fundamentally review what research is all about and to discuss the actual state of graduate schools. It thus attracted more than 100 participants. For increasing the recognition of the organization and ensuring its continued activities through the presentation and the question-and-answer session, it was possible to elucidate the importance of clearly setting problems and of having methods for solving them.

Development of educational materials for social studies that visualize cultural backgrounds

The third group reported activities regarding the initiative of Masao Oi, who was highly experienced as a social studies teacher, for building a platform for multicultural discussions. As internationalization advances, deepening of understanding about multicultural coexistence is needed in Japan. However, specific methods for nurturing this awareness in school education have not yet been fully studied. What is even worse, school education focuses so much on questions with one clear right answer that it hardly gives pupils a surprising experience that stimulates their intellectual curiosity. Oi is working to develop educational materials that visualize the existence of history in each country

or culture behind the opinions of individuals and that help pupils actively learn about diversity. He gathered comments from people in more than 100 countries and plotted them on a digital earth. His research explores which methods are effective in the development of multifaceted perspectives among children and what problems lie in Japan's education system. In the question-and-answer session, some audience members posed questions about importance of problem setting and study methods that make learners realize the necessity for holding dialogues with others in addition to meeting opinions that are different from theirs.



Group Discussion

In the second half, the participants were split into small groups for holding in-depth discussions based on the presentations. The event invited suggestions on several key terms to be discussed, and selected four phrases: “empathy”, “school education”, “diversity”, and “the local community and its voice”. Small groups of three to four actively discussed these subjects. That offered an opportunity to talk for a long time with recipients of grants from the Toyota Foundation. The participants gained many different suggestions on how to address different communities in IHS activities.

In the course of attaining a balance between research and practice, it is vital to understand commonalities and differences. This session gave participants the significant opportunity to discover the differences. Processes such as grasping of needs at the planning stage, the determination of positions in activities and presenting results suited to the needs and positions are all significant when conducting activities outside academia.

Students will apply what they learned in this session to their future activities and will continue to seek a balance between research and practice. The knowledge obtained on this occasion will be helpful to the students in the IHS program when implementing long-term projects in the future.



Report from Activities of IHS Students

In this program intended to encourage cross-sectoral exchanges and off-campus studies, students often obtain unexpected inspiration from what seems to have nothing to do with their specialty areas. For example, a student majoring in the analysis of dramas started rethinking the fundamental concepts of theatrical plays after viewing dialogues where mental health welfare services are provided. Another student studying migrants was inspired to review the inside and outside of the community through the discovery of the significance of tradition that supports the ethos of the community after watching the long-inherited sacred music and dancing in a mountainous region. Each student has internal dialogues about experiences and intellectual inspirations that they could never obtain if they only read papers in a specific discipline.

The IHS program offers unique inspirations unavailable elsewhere not only for individuals but also for voluntary study groups. One example is a reading session that was joined by students in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities and discovered a basic fact about the difference between academic papers and books. When authoring books targeted at the general public, researchers in the natural sciences may add their messages to the public, which they never included in their papers. Books in the natural sciences differ significantly from those in humanities and social sciences in the sense that they are intended for the dissemination of knowledge rather than for strictly mastering the expertise. However, students studying experimental sciences began to think that they should be aware that the authors' authority as scientists will accompany such messages and scientists may present their personal views outside their area of expertise.

Apart from that, a workshop on the Ainu had been organized. Under the principle that it is important to start by learning the language to learn about their culture, their members learned the Ainu language and read Ainu stories in that language. Students majoring in many different subjects ranging from linguistics and literature to photography and geology joined the workshop. Although it is unusual that 10 students gathered on the subject of the Ainu on a campus in Japan, this workshop was realized because students in many different fields had a major question with which they could associate, even though the Ainu was not their specialty.



Participants from the IHS

The IHS program has about 50 major and sub-major graduate students.

Here we introduce 11 members who were involved in the symposium.

Rena Takada : Major

Chao Yi : Sub-major

Minami Iizuka : Major

Nam Heejoo : Sub-major

Masao Oi : Sub-major

Natsuki Takamura : Sub-major

Pyai Phyo Myint : Major

Yuki Nagae : Sub-major

Hiroko Tanabe : Sub-major

Ryo Nakagawa : Sub-major

Akihiro Miyata : Sub-major



Shigeto Sonoda

Professor and Deputy Director, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (IASA), The University of Tokyo;
Selection Committee Chair for International Grant Program, The Toyota Foundation

Usually we start to gain some research interests through our connection with society. In all disciplines, ranging from the humanities to the natural sciences, our research questions, such as “Why did such event occur?”, “Why cannot this issue be solved?”, “How can these accidents be prevented?”, will be formed and developed in particular social settings in which researchers are located.

Our connection with society will be barely maintained after the research starts. Our research will be sharpened to be an original one through exchanges with others or by reviewing previous research, presenting research designs and receiving comments on it.

When we ask ourselves what we can do and contribute to society, we find it difficult to answer, because we, especially young researchers, might say, “I haven’t thought of this,” or “I’m not sure whether I can really contribute to society through my research.”

In rapidly changing research environments, young researchers, especially those in the humanities, are likely to become isolated. It is far from ideal if we are losing our connection to society in the course of pursuing research. An increasing number of Ph.D. students are experiencing mental disorders, which is partially caused by their loss of connection with society.

Many factors, including differentiation from other’s research as a result of seeking originality, a decreasing number of those who can discuss the same research topic in the course of deepening research, and losing self-esteem due to the lack of expected results, contribute to the separation of researchers from society. Thus, we need to take a variety of actions to regain the connection between researchers and society.

When the IHS program launched in 2014, we prioritized the mission of restoring the connection with society. “Society” here means not only the group of researchers in the same discipline, but those who might be inspired by or benefit from the research, those who might share the same research interests abroad, and others. This is why cooperativeness is included in the four abilities that our program students should acquire.

I feel very lucky to have been able to serve as Selection Committee Chair for the Toyota Foundation International Grant Program since 2019 FY, because I can directly learn about the content of the programs financially supported by the Foundation and the people who are running them.

I have confidentially started to think the possibility of whether our program students can be inspired by the recipients of the project grant since the staff of the Foundation started to discuss on the content of the events with me. The result is, needless to say, this joint event between the Toyota Foundation and the IHS program. This report takes the form of a joint event organized by the Toyota Foundation and the IHS program. However, I think that it is a report of the event in which the program made use of human resources of the Foundation.

We cannot foresee the results of the project before we start. Simply because the results are invisible, it is difficult for us to persuade our colleagues to join our project. Simply because the results are invisible, we sometimes ask ourselves whether we are on the right track. IHS program that we are running is in the same situation.

Positive attitudes while looking ahead when we are in totally difficult situations and patience to repeatedly ask our colleagues to believe what we cannot currently see are indispensable not only to young students in the program but also to those of us who are managing the program.

Through this joint event, I realized that outstanding personal qualities are indispensable for carrying out the project to gain something invisible and unpredictable, and I believe that our program students will agree.



The University of Tokyo



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