

# The current situation and prospects of education for international understanding in Korea

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## **1. Introduction**

Education for international understanding (hereafter EIU) has been led by Korean National Commission for UNESCO. It was initiated by the Associated Schools Project (ASP) in 1953 and made a big advancement with the establishment of Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) in 2000. A report by Korean National Commission for UNESCO in 1985 told that a quarter century had passed since the introduction of education for international understanding and the related projects in Korea had been mainly based on the ASP as an extra-curricular activity in a limited scope. The report added that, despite the increase of the ASP schools, there was no actual progress in EIU coupled with disagreement among the project coordinators on its purpose and the direction of how the content should be structured. The report concluded that it was not clear whether the project could achieve its original mission in the situation where international cooperation was extensively pursued with the development of domestic and international affairs.<sup>1)</sup> The situation of EIU in Korea has not gone through substantial changes since the report.<sup>2)</sup>

Nevertheless, the establishment of APCEIU has made a great change in EIU in Korea. APCEIU was established in August 26th in 2000 as a result of the agreement between the Korean government and

1) UNESCO Korea: Studies of Development and Planning of Education for International Education, December, 1985. pp. 8-10.

2) Realities of International Understanding Education: Tasks for Korea. Paper presented at summer conference of Korean Association of International Studies. June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

UNESCO based on the resolution from the thirtieth general meeting of UNESCO. The organization was founded for the purpose of developing education for international understanding to spread the peace culture to 46 countries in the Asia-Pacific area.<sup>3)</sup>

The purpose of this study is to explore the current situation and prospect of EIU in Korea as a foundation for development and understanding EIU in Korea.

## 2. ASP

### (1) What is ASP?

The active use of the term, “education for international understanding “has initiated since the 7<sup>th</sup> General meeting of UNESCO in 1953. Although the term is being used by many scholars variously,<sup>4)</sup> the terms are in common in that every term implies promoting international understanding through education.

The 7<sup>th</sup> general meeting of UNESCO established ASP (Associated Schools Project) in order to promote peace in the world and to encourage active participation of the member countries. From the year of 1942 EIU began in Korea as four schools, including a senior high school affiliated to Seoul National University, joined the ASP project. In the meantime Korea UNESCO hosted <Asian Regional UNESCO ASP Council> in 1971 and 1981, and consequently promoted the development of EIU and the organization of regional cooperative system.

### (2) History of education for international understanding

The first Article of Korean Education Law is based on the humanitarian ideal in pursuit of mutual prosperity of mankind. Irrespective of intention of Korean people to devote them to mutual prosperity of mankind, Korea has been stereotyped by Korean civil war and dictatorship. After 88 Olympics, Korea was depicted as Seoul Olympics and the country to pop champagne too soon, and since 2002 Worldcup game, Korea has been well known for ‘Dae~hanmingook’ and ‘Red devil supporters’.

The initiation of EIU in Korea was triggered by the participation of four Korean secondary schools (a Seoul National University-affiliated high school, Ewha Women’s university High School, Sookmyung Girl’s High School) to the ASP project.

As of April, 2006, the numbers of schools joining the project has grown to 101 (including 20 primary schools, 24 middle schools, 53 high schools, and 4 universities of education).

The history of EIU in Korea is divided into four periods:<sup>5)</sup>

① **Quickening period:** From 1961 in order to promote and to reinvigorate EIU, UNESCO of Korea held the domestic research committee and wrote a manual for EIU.

② **Working period:** Since the mid 1960s several schools were involved with Korean UNESCO, and in 1971” Asia region Associated Schools Meeting was held in Seoul. In 1973 Ministry of Education added “Emphasis on EIU” as a guiding principle

③ **Stagnant period:** From the second half of 1973 to the early of 1980 EIU in Korea was inactive.

④ **Resurrection<sup>2</sup> period:** Research council of EIU was resumed in 1981, and EIU worked up steam.<sup>6)</sup> As of April, 2006, the numbers of schools joining the project has grown to 101<sup>7)</sup> (including 20 primary schools, 24 middle schools, 53 high schools, and 4 universities of education).

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3) Retrieved from <http://www.kr.unescoapceiu.org/>

4) The terms designating EIU are as follows: Education for World Citizenship, Global Education, Global Studies, World Studies, Peace Studies, Global Education Studies, Global International Education, International Education, Education for International or Global Understanding, International / Intercultural Education, Cross Cultural Education, Bi-Cultural Education, Multi-cultural Education, Citizenship Education, Multiethnic-Multicultural Education, Global Citizenship, Interdisciplinary-Cross Cultural Education, Cultural Pluralism, Educational and Exchange

5) UNESCO Korea: Studies of Development and Planning of Education for International Education, 1985. pp. 13-19.

6) Refer to the book previously mentioned, pp. 17 <Table 1>

7) <http://asp.unesco.or.kr>

8) Chung, woo-tak “UNESCO Associated Schools Projects in the Republic of Korea” UNESCO ASP Regional Seminar, 1996, 2, pp. 12-15.

9) Education in multicultural society: The problems and solutions. EIU forum. Asia-Pacific Education Institute for International Understanding. June, 2006, pp. 93-94.

10) *EIU for the world citizens*. UNESCO Asia Pacific Educational Institute (Ed.) 2003. pp. 16-83.

In the meantime Korean National Commission for UNESCO has published books and collected and distributed resources. Korean National Commission for UNESCO described major tasks of Korea ASP as follows:<sup>8)</sup>

- practicing teacher training for teachers in ASP schools
- developing teaching materials, including videotapes
- reorganizing Korea ASP
- establishing EIU Center
- inaugurating Korean Research Associate of EIU

### 3. APCEIU

#### (1) Purpose and activities<sup>9)</sup>

Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (hereafter, APCEIU) is the only EIU education institute which was established on 25 August 2000 by the agreement between UNESCO and the Government of the Republic of Korea. APCEIU has been trying to promote EIU towards a culture of Peace in Asia-pacific region together with 46 member States in the region by researching ideology and policy for EIU, by developing teaching resources by teachers or teacher trainers, by hosting the international symposium, and publishing English magazine, *SangSaeng*.

##### (1) Purposes

- Strengthen national and regional capacities in planning and implementing a broad range of practices in EIU toward a culture of peace.
- Encourage and facilitate collaborative links between Asia-Pacific initiatives and other regional, international and global efforts in education.
- Implement research and development with regard to the philosophy, teaching methods and curricula for Education for International Understanding towards a culture of peace.
- Organize training workshops and seminars.
- Produce and disseminate teaching materials and other publications.

##### (2) Major activities

- Hosting an international symposium on a culture of Peace
- Workshop for teachers/ teacher trainers
- Training leaders in a citizen society
- Development of EIU teaching materials and dissemination of the information on EIU
- Establishment cooperation with experts and institutions and EIU Information infrastructure

#### (2) EIU curriculum for primary and secondary schools in Korea<sup>10)</sup>

##### ① Elementary school level

Category	Content	Activity topics
Understanding different cultures	1) Interest and concern about different cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Trip to the country I want to visit</li> <li>▫ Searching for global news</li> </ul>
	2) Understanding and accepting a different culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Different food, clothing, and housing</li> <li>▫ Manners of different countries</li> </ul>
	3) Precious our culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Introduction of Korean culture</li> <li>▫ Experiencing different cultures</li> </ul>
Life in global village	1) Our town, global village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Where do my things come from?</li> <li>▫ Market play at the global village</li> </ul>
	2) Two faces of globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ The global village getting smaller</li> <li>▫ Rich and poor countries</li> </ul>
	3) We and globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ I am a person in the global village</li> <li>▫ Things we can do for friends around the world</li> </ul>
Respect for human rights	1) Precious human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Myself as a sole being</li> <li>▫ Life with dignity-freedom and equality</li> </ul>

	2) The world without discrimination and prejudice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Who are discriminated?</li> <li>▫ Uncomfortable friends</li> </ul>
	3) The world to get along with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Ourselves and other people</li> <li>▫ Diversity of the world</li> </ul>
A peaceful world	1) Conflicts in life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Why do people conflict?</li> <li>▫ Violence is simply one of options.</li> </ul>
	2) Pains caused by wars and conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Pains by Korean War</li> <li>▫ Pains of refugee children</li> </ul>
	3) Ways of achieving peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Peace that makes all win</li> <li>▫ Those dedicated to World peace</li> </ul>
Environment protection	1) Nature and our lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Mutual relationship between man and nature</li> <li>▫ My life that makes the world suffer</li> </ul>
	2) Development and the Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ The earth is suffering.</li> <li>▫ Our natural resources are limited.</li> </ul>
	3) Ourselves who should get along with Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Save the world.</li> <li>▫ Take an initiative of protecting the environment</li> </ul>

## ② Secondary school level

Category	Content	Activity Topics
Cultural diversities	1) Understanding cultural diversities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Cultural diversities in the world</li> <li>▫ Understanding of cultural background</li> </ul>
	2) Breaking cultural barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Misunderstanding of foreign culture</li> <li>▫ Cultural shock</li> </ul>
	3) Commonalities among cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Acculturation rituals in different cultures</li> <li>▫ Different culture, same person</li> </ul>
	4) Cultural exchange and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Our culture from foreigners' eyes</li> <li>▫ Acceptance and exchange of foreign culture</li> </ul>
Ourselves and globalization	1) Globalization in daily lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ The global villagers reliant on each other</li> <li>▫ Different images of globalization</li> </ul>
	2) Light and shadow of globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Those welcoming globalization</li> <li>▫ Those opposing to globalization</li> </ul>
	3) Globalization and Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Globalization and change of Korea</li> <li>▫ Globalization and our town</li> </ul>
	4) Globalization and international order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Globalization and international organization</li> <li>▫ Globalization and non-government organization</li> </ul>
Protection of human rights	1) Human dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ You and I are special beings.</li> <li>▫ Human rights encroachment in our neighborhood</li> </ul>
	2) Sufferings of friends in poor countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Children suffering from famine</li> <li>▫ Children suffering from cruel labor conditions</li> </ul>
	3) Social discriminations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Women suffering from social customs and injustice</li> <li>▫ Hardships of migratory workers</li> </ul>
	4) Efforts for the protection of human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Understanding of international organizations and groups for human rights protection</li> <li>▫ Global human rights activists</li> </ul>

Peaceful world	1) Tensions and conflicts around the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Countries having tensions with our country</li> <li>▫ Countries having tensions with one another</li> </ul>
	2) Reasons threatening the peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Visible violence</li> <li>▫ Invisible violence</li> </ul>
	3) Dissemination of peace culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Efforts for peace and reconciliation</li> <li>▫ Active and passive peace</li> </ul>
	4) Making peaceful world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Those making peace</li> <li>▫ Learning of how to live peacefully</li> </ul>
Global environment	1) Economic development and environmental pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ The Wheel of cause and effect</li> <li>▫ Environmental problems and their damages across the globe</li> </ul>
	2) The suffering earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Water shortage and polluted world</li> <li>▫ Global warming</li> </ul>
	3) Movement for reliving the earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Fully crowded earth</li> <li>▫ Everlasting development</li> </ul>
	4) New way of life for saving the earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Efforts from the global village</li> <li>▫ Environment-friendly manner of living</li> </ul>

### ③ High school level

Category	Content	Activity Topics
Understanding between cultures	1) Understanding the overall picture of culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Various elements of culture</li> <li>▫ Different cultures in different environments</li> </ul>
	2) Birth and change of culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Preserving traditional culture</li> <li>▫ Changing culture</li> </ul>
	3) Multi-cultural understanding and co-existence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Cultural commonalities and specificity</li> <li>▫ Co-existence of multi-cultures</li> </ul>
	4) Conserve of natural and cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Sharing of natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>▫ Efforts for developing and preserving culture</li> </ul>
	5) Cultural exchange and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Travel to different culture</li> <li>▫ Establishment of cultural identity</li> </ul>
Globalization in a right direction	1) Globalization and our lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Cooperating countries</li> <li>▫ Unified world</li> </ul>
	2) Globalization and localization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ International standardization</li> <li>▫ Local community and international exchange</li> </ul>
	3) Challenges in the times of globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Forces moving the world</li> <li>▫ Mediating international conflicts</li> </ul>
	4) Anti-globalization movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Internationalization from the bottom</li> <li>▫ Establishment of local bonds</li> </ul>
	5) The world for my dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Creation of global culture</li> <li>▫ Myself in the world</li> </ul>
Valuing human rights	1) Democracy and human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Human rights and basic freedom</li> <li>▫ Encroachment of individual rights by authoritative power</li> </ul>
	2) Human rights in everyday lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Women suffering from discrimination</li> <li>▫ Violation of human rights of immigrant workers</li> </ul>

	3) Situations of human rights in the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Violation of human rights in the world</li> <li>▫ Human rights for minorities</li> </ul>
	4) Conflicts against racial discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Discrimination based on racialism</li> <li>▫ Fights of human right activists</li> </ul>
	5) International bonds for the improvement of human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ International agreements on the protection of human rights</li> <li>▫ International organizations for protecting human rights</li> </ul>
Culture of peace	1) Understanding peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ World peace agreement</li> <li>▫ Value and virtue of peace</li> </ul>
	2) Unending wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ A vicious circle of violence</li> <li>▫ New threats to peace</li> </ul>
	3) Possibility of peaceful order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Violence agitators</li> <li>▫ limits of peaceful order</li> </ul>
	4) International organizations for peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ International activities for peace</li> <li>▫ Organizations for mediating conflicts</li> </ul>
	5) Peace in Korean peninsula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ My peaceful country</li> <li>▫ Awareness of co-existence</li> </ul>
Everlasting development	1) Environmental problems without borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Diversity of ecosystem</li> <li>▫ Causes and shapes of environmental problems</li> </ul>
	2) Depletion of natural resources and the future of human race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Solving food shortage and poverty problems</li> <li>▫ Solutions for natural resources depletion</li> </ul>
	3) Tension around everlasting development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Solving environmental problems and the related tensions</li> <li>▫ International inequality and unequal development</li> </ul>
	4) Global effort for everlasting development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Options for environment and development</li> <li>▫ A sense of citizenship and stewardship</li> </ul>
	5) Return to the nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Transforming into environment friendly life styles</li> <li>▫ Rights of future generations</li> </ul>

#### 4. Prospects of EIU in Korea and suggestions

Woo-tahk Jeong pointed out the problems of ASP-based EIU in Korea as follows: 1) excessive reliance on Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 2) lack of support from the government, 3) limit of the activities and programs in school levels, and 4) frequent replacement of ASP principals and teachers, and suggested two solutions of the establishment of international exchange programs between ASP schools and the construction of the Asia-Pacific center for international understanding education.

At present time, EIU should be developed to adjust to the open atmosphere. The problems of international understanding education will be dealt in terms of their content, practice, and method in the rest of this paper.

##### (1) Content of EIU

The most important point to keep in mind when selecting the topic of international understanding education is that the topic should not be restricted to a particular field. The history, geography, culture of the diversified world and the different ethnic groups should be chosen as a topic of EIU. In addition, matters of international common interest should be introduced as a topic of EIU. Topics of EIU in Korea should include the following that many countries already selected as major themes: (1) international cooperation

and understanding (2) human rights (3) understanding different cultures and countries (4) environmental problems. However, it is very important that we need to reorganize these topics to be suitable to Korean culture and society.

For this purpose, first, regarding international cooperation and understanding it is important to know international organizations including UN and to understand international problems, but it is also necessary to develop education programs dealing with international and regional problems directly related to East Asia, Korea, and the Korean Peninsula.

Second, a matter of human right should be connected with democratic citizenship education. World human rights and human rights in North Korea could be included in the topics of the education programs, and it is also possible that humanity education and constitution education regarding a matter of human rights are selected as the topics of the programs. For example, constitution education studying human rights secured in Constitution and citizen's problems and humanity education dealing with human rights and personality are necessary.

Third, understanding one's own country and culture should be put first before comprehending different culture and countries. I do not mean that we need to remember the past non-democratic and anti-open education program, entitled "education with nationality." I also do not mean it is necessary to pay attention to the criticism that Korean sociology was handed down from the people who washed dishes in the States. However, it is time to take notice of a scholar's statements that Korea's future depends on the development of traditional Confucian culture and Buddhism. We should prevent the situation that accepting foreign cultures without criticism results in misunderstanding Korean culture. Understanding different cultures and countries should be based on Korea and Korean culture. The EIU programs in Korea should be developed in consideration of Korea's surrounding countries and their culture, not focusing only on Europe and America.

Fourth, regarding environmental problems and ecological education, holistic approach such as interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary one is the most effective way to develop the education program. Ideologies and methodologies of environmental protection from both developed countries and developing countries should be included in the education program. With relation with this, the following topics should be holistically introduced: population problem, welfare problem, leisure usage, efficient utilization of national land, and solution to environmental problems with adjacent countries. Environmental education should be interrelated with developmental education, peace education, and human right education.

In the end, the most important thing is to develop new topics besides the topics mentioned above. Since EIU is aimed for extending international understanding and cooperation as well as peace and human rights, the topic of EIU is not necessarily restricted to the themes recommended by ASP or APCEIU. Projects that can achieve the goals for EIU should be developed to be adapted to Korean situation and carried. The recommendable topics are as follows: democratic tasks and international understanding in Korea or Asia, Korean religion and international understanding, Korea's localization, local development and international understanding, cooperative task, Korean teenagers and human society, and social service.

## **(2) Practice and system of EIU**

As it has been reviewed so far, education for international understanding in Korea has not only exclusively relied upon ASP and APCEIU by Korean National Commission for UNESCO, but also lacked the systematic support. In order to ripen the fruit of education for international understanding, the following complementary measures need to be taken in terms of its practice and systematic support:

1. EIU should be included in school curricula in every school level.
2. EIU programs should be provided by teacher training institutes and be included in various educational and promotion programs. Further, it cannot be better if EIU is included in private corporations' training programs.
3. The development and distribution of educational material for EIC is urgent, and the assignment of an administrative office or organization for the task should be followed.
4. Domestic and overseas education for those responsible for EIU is much needed. Instructors and

researchers who are in charge of actual instruction and educational support should be provided special support and opportunities to visit EIU classrooms in overseas countries and maximize their overseas experiences. Further, exchange programs, cooperative research, and joint meetings should be encouraged based upon the support from the related government agencies, including Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Culture and Sports.

5. Cooperation with foreign institutions in Korea should be strengthened. EIU- related agencies such as embassies in Korea, foreign cultural centers, and foreign language centers and educational institutes need to visit each other to exchange and develop the educational material.

### **(3) Method and evaluation of EIU**

In order to achieve the goal of EIU, how to provide the instruction as well as how to evaluate students should be studied. Although what need to be taught as the content of the education is of prime importance, there has been no study yet so far, regarding how to deliver the instruction and how to evaluate students. In other words, no research on its teaching and evaluation method has been conducted so far. Since the focus of this study is on the discussion of the problems of EIU in Korea, the problems of the teaching method and evaluation is limited in this study, leaving the further discussion for next opportunities. The characteristics of EIU in relation to its teaching and learning are briefly discussed in the following:

1. EIU using concrete experiences is more effective.
2. Area study method is desired.
3. Simulation method is highly recommended.
4. Various audio-visual materials should be introduced.
5. EIU should be approached in a unified fashion with interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches that allow the integration of society into education and informal education into formal one.
6. EIU should acknowledge the difference among students and be value-free in teaching cultural differences.