

ASEAN Regional Orientation-Workshop on Model Journalism Curricula for Developing Countries and Emerging Democracies

UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines – Communication Committee

Overview

In 2007, UNESCO completed and published the proposed *Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries & Emerging Democracies*. The curricula were initially presented during the World Journalism Education Congress 2007 held in Singapore and co-sponsored by the Asian Mass Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC).

The UNESCO initiative to prepare the curricula was in response to numerous requests from UNESCO member states for help in the design of journalism curricula. Thus, in December 2005, an experts consultative meeting was convened in Paris to define the parameters of the envisioned curricula including an initial list of subjects that may be included.

A team of four UNESCO experts finalized the initial draft of the curricula and consulted 20 senior journalism educators who have considerable experience in working in developing countries and emerging democracies. The senior journalism educators provided additional inputs that further enhanced the draft curricula.

The revised draft curricula featured a list of courses for both undergraduate and post-graduate levels, brief course descriptions, and desired competencies per course, among others. Experienced journalism teachers from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North and South America were later invited to write the syllabi for 17 core courses identified. A follow up experts consultative meeting was convened also in Paris to finalize the curricula that was presented in the WJEC July 2007 conference.

A related document is *Criteria and Indicators for Quality Journalism Training Institutions & Identifying Potential Centres of Excellence in Journalism Training in Africa*. This document was also published by UNESCO in 2007.

According to UNESCO ADG Abdul Waheed Khan, “this report is the first of its kind, providing a unique set of indicators and criteria for measuring potential for institutional excellence that can be adapted for use in other parts of the world.”

The report maps the capacity and potential for excellence of almost 100 journalism schools across Africa, highlighting the challenges and opportunities of African journalism institutions.

With the completion of the model curricula, there is an urgent need to “popularise” the report, further review its appropriateness to local (country-specific) situations and adopt mechanisms on how it can be adapted by journalism institutions in developing countries and emerging democracies. The experts drafted by UNESCO can be mobilized once

again to orient journalism educators from intended countries on the philosophy, content, learning-teaching methodology, and resource requirements, among others, of the model curricula.

The ASEAN Region is an ideal venue for a regional orientation-workshop on the model curricula. Many of the countries are developing economies and are emerging democracies. Journalism education in the Region is diverse, from well-established (eg Philippines) to nascent (eg Cambodia and Lao PDR).

The orientation-workshop is also an ideal venue for sharing of lessons and experiences in journalism education as well as platform for exchange of learning resources (including journalism teachers, manuals, CD-ROM).

The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (Communication Committee) proposes the convening of the regional workshop. The Philippines is the first country in Asia-Pacific to offer formal journalism degree. In 1919, the University of the Philippines developed and offered the first journalism curriculum but this was short-lived. In 1936, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) established a journalism major within its Faculty of Philosophy and Letters with the degree Bachelor of Literature in Journalism. Today, there are about 300 communication schools in the Philippines of which, about 20 offer journalism degrees.

Objectives

To organize an ASEAN Regional Orientation Workshop on the Model Journalism Curricula for Developing Countries and Emerging Democracies

The specific objectives of the three-day workshop are the following:

- To provide a brief country situationer on journalism education focusing on curriculum content, faculty and students, teaching-learning methodologies, among others;
- To provide an orientation on the features and basic elements of the model curricula in terms of philosophy, content, approach and methodology, among others;
- To generate feedback and suggestions on how to adapt the model curricula to local settings;
- To propose policies, action strategies, and resources needed to facilitate adaption of the model curricula; and
- To encourage the creation of a network of journalism educators in ASEAN Region.

Intended Outputs

The following are the intended outputs of the orientation workshop:

- Country situationers on journalism education in ASEAN member countries
- Inputs on how to enhance specific elements of the model journalism curricula
- Work plan (including propose policies, action strategies, and resources) in adapting the model curricula
- Network of journalism educators in the ASEAN Region.

Scope and Coverage

The two-day orientation workshop will be divided into three parts.

Part One is Journalism Education Situationer where each country representative shall briefly present a paper describing the context and content of journalism education focusing on curriculum content, faculty and students profile, teaching-learning methodologies, among others. The paper shall also highlight challenges and opportunities.

Part Two is the Model Journalism Curricula. This will be the focus of the three-day forum. UNESCO Experts shall present the model curricula's philosophy, objectives, and elements (features), among others. This will be followed by a group workshop that shall address the following key issues: (a) enhancement of model curricula to make them more appropriate to local settings and (b) proposed policies, action strategies and resources needed to facilitate adaption of the model curricula.

The results of the group workshop shall be presented to the plenary for discussion and perhaps adoption of forum agreements for submission to UNESCO and other relevant organizations (including government ministries in charge of higher education, higher education institutions, etc.)

Part Three is Networking. Participants will discuss the feasibility of creating an ASEAN Journalism educators network that could provide forum for discussion of common issues and concerns, mechanism for sharing of lessons and experiences (including curricula, publications, journals) and exchange of teachers/scholars, among others. The network can be a formal association or a virtual network or both.

The proposed network can serve as mechanism to monitor the adaption of the model curricula by educational institutions in the different ASEAN countries.

A website for ASEAN journalism educators may be created with assistance from UNESCO that would provide a continuing platform for information sharing and exchange as well as an advocacy medium for journalism educators.

Participants

Each ASEAN-member country shall have two country representatives. The representatives should be heads of journalism education schools, preferably one each from public and private educational institutions. If there is no journalism school in the country, a journalism training institution would suffice.

In some countries, an association of journalism educators exists. The participation of the president of such an association would be ideal.

The National Commissions of UNESCO shall be requested to identify and nominate the country representatives.

Recognizing inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary perspectives of UNESCO, experts from other disciplines, particularly the social sciences, shall be invited as resource person-guests.

The regional workshop will have at least 30 participants.

Date and Venue

The proposed forum shall be held in Manila, Philippines. Tentative inclusive dates of the conference are _____ 2009. Participants are required to be in Manila by _____ and leave by _____ 2009.

Organization and Management

The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines –Communication Committee shall be the organizer/convenor of the two-day workshop. It shall coordinate with appropriate Manila-based organizations in the planning and management of the workshop. Among the proposed partner organizations /co-convenors are the following:

Commission on Higher Education-Technical Committee for Journalism
Max Soliven Foundation
Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC)
Philippine Association of Communication Educators (PACE)
Philippine Press Institute (PPI)

