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Outlining Onboard Training for Cross-Cultural Understanding: Possibility of The Ship for World Youth Program

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Abstract

The Ship for World Youth (SWY) program, operated by the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, is a program that involves youth from 18 to 30 years of age from Japan and countries around the world. It aims to promote cross-cultural understanding and international cooperation among youth by exchanging knowledge and experiences, and developing their leadership skills through open dialogue and practical learning activities while they live onboard for 43 days. The SWY program has been administered for the past 22 years, but objective evaluations on educational effect have not been fully implemented. This study examines how one discussion course of the 22nd SWY program in 2010 tried to connect intercultural communication theories to onboard practices, and gives one aspect of an evaluation using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) to evaluate participants' development of cross-cultural sensitivity. The result of the IDI showed the participants' growth in cultural acceptance as well as their struggles with intercultural interaction in a unique closed environment; limited space, time pressures, different languages and behaviors, and no "target culture" with which to adjust were some of the challenges.

Key words: international youth program, program evaluation, cross-cultural sensitivity

Background of the "Ship for World Youth" (SWY) Program

The Ship for World Youth (SWY) program, operated by the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, is a program that involves youth from Japan and countries around the world. Each year, approximately 140 Japanese youth and a similar number of youth from overseas (12 youth from 12 different countries) board the SWY for a 43-day journey. This program aims

to promote cross-cultural understanding and international cooperation among youth by exchanging experiences and knowledge through open discussion and practical learning activities. Every day, voluntary active discussions take place while living aboard the ship. Aside from those spontaneous discussions, the onboard schedule is fairly strictly designed with structured activities including national presentations that showcase the traditional culture of each country and club activities where participants teach or are taught a country's traditional cultural heritage, such as dance, music or arts. The main or core educational program is called Course Discussion and has seven different themes. Participants are assigned to one course discussion theme group and advisor before they arrive so that they can prepare for this series of discussions.

This year, with approximately 280 participants, the 22nd SWY left Yokohama port on January 22nd, visited Dubai and Chennai for three days each, and returned to Tokyo Bay on March 5th. Except for the days with port-of-call visits and a day each in Singapore and Okinawa to pick up water and food supplies, participants stayed onboard. For residential space, each participant shared a cabin with two participants from other countries. Many challenges were faced by participants, such as communication gaps, differences in life style and personality, not to mention cultural and language differences, although most of the participants were fluent enough in English to carry out discussions. The program literally isolated youth from the Internet, mobile phones or even a TV, and forced them to cooperate and train themselves to be leaders in future society. They had to solve problems and challenges within this limited space on the ship.

Cross-cultural Understanding as a Discussion Course

As previously mentioned, one of the structured activities onboard and the most focused curriculum was the course discussion. Six different themes were offered for these discussions: Youth Development, Volunteerism, Education, Environment, Corporate Social Responsibility, and cross-cultural understanding. All participants were assigned to one course, based on their theme choice for the most part (some arrangement was done to even numbers). This study focuses on the participants of the Cross-cultural Understanding course (CCU hereafter), as the author requested to be the advisor (the person who facilitates and teaches the CUU course) this year. During the voyage, seven sessions of the course were held. Participants implemented what they learned in the course during their daily lives onboard the ship.

1) The participants

The CCU course had 42 participants (from ages 18 to 30 years). Among them, 20 were overseas youth, with one or two from 12 different countries (Australia, Bahrain, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, India, Kenya, Oman, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UAE, and Yemen) and the rest were Japanese participants. Among the 42 course members, 27 were female and 15 were male. All of them had either graduated from or were still attending universities, the length of stay in countries other than their own ranged from 0 to 2 years (each person), and the average length was 1.5 months. Most of their former cross-cultural learning/training experiences were limited to courses at their universities. None of them had taken specific training for cross-cultural communication or cross-cultural understanding. The type of exposure to "cultural others" varied; some of them were interacting/working with cultural others in offices or universities, and some explained, "I do not recognize any foreigner in my daily environment." Some common aspects of the CCU course participants were their keen interest in the subject of cross-cultural understanding and their desire to work effectively with cultural others after the program. In short, participants were not those who were already knowledgeable about or had experiences in cross-cultural settings. The common language on the ship and in the course was English, and most of their language skills were sufficient enough to handle discussions on various topics related to cross-cultural understanding.

2) Main learning objectives and theoretical frameworks

The main objective of the course was to find individual answers for better cross-cultural understanding. The main course questions were: what is cross-cultural understanding and how can we be successful with it? I used three main key words for the CCU course: empathy, suspension of negative judgment, and acceptance. These are described as follows.

- Empathy

Empathy has been recognized as one of the key elements in communicating across cultures (Bennett, 1986a; Bennett, 1986b; Broome, 1991; and Calloway-Thomas 2009). Participants reached a common recognition that "empathy" was the key for the cross-cultural understanding; it was important to put yourself in the other person's shoes.

- Suspension of negative judgment

Besides "empathy," another essential concept for CCU was to "suspend judgment," or avoid an attitude of value judgment (Ataman, 2005). Since the program had youth from many different regions, countries, and religions, with intense everyday interactions, this was

the attitude on which I wanted to focus.

- Acceptance

Acceptance is one of the fundamental concepts for diversity training (Sonnenschein, 1999). Acceptance can vary from "a tendency to recognize patterns of cultural difference in one's own and other cultures" (Hammer, M. R.) to "acceptance of or adaptation to cultural difference" (ibid). In this CCU course, the focus was to "indicate a worldview that can comprehend and accommodate to complex cultural differences" (Hammer M. R. & Bennett, M. J., 1998).

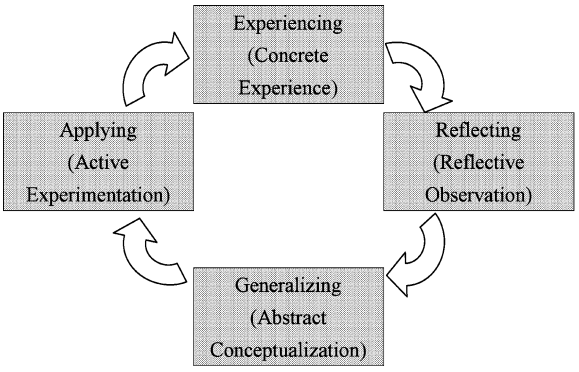
In this diverse multicultural context, it was important to give participants some framework to develop their attitudes toward cultural sensitivity, so the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986a) was introduced for this course, where "acceptance" was considered to be a crucial step to an ethnorelativistic attitude. Throughout the program, participants were encouraged to reflect upon their own learning strategies and to apply their experiences to Kolb's model of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).

3) Method of teaching

i) Applying the Experiential Learning Cycle to onboard cross-cultural discovery

Kolb's model of Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1983) was introduced to the participants as a way to apply their learning processes to their onboard cross-cultural discoveries (Fig.1). The Learning Style Inventory was also introduced to uncover their individual learning styles.

Fig.1: Kolbs' stages of Experiential Learning



The learning styles inventory is said to be useful within a fairly limited range of cultures, so there was a need to consider differences in cognitive and communication styles that are

culturally-based (Anderson, 1988). However, there seemed to be no obvious cultural or regional characteristics of learning style variations for the participants in my group. Recognizing their own learning styles brought participants' individual attention to the styles that work best for them.

Learners choose various ways to accelerate their own learning (Hawk & Shah, 2007) but the model for learning styles was not used to limit them to one learning style. Rather, the model was introduced so that they can visualize their "Experience" (Concrete Experience) of their cross-cultural incidents on the ship, first by "Reflecting" (Reflective Observation) and then by objectively analyzing them, and conceptualizing them using some theories of cross-cultural communication for "Generalizing" (Abstract Conceptualization). By consciously and objectively analyzing their experiences onboard, each participant would supposedly increase their confidence in "Applying" (Active Experimentation) or actively experimenting with what they have understood. In concrete ways, they were able to apply these ideas to solve cultural dilemmas of their own, and sometimes help their cabin mate or use it during whatever group tasks they were assigned.

One unique cross-cultural learning aspect aboard the ship was the context of "cultural general" (Cushner, 1996) approaches; there was no particular "host culture"[1] with which to adapt themselves so the participants would establish their own multicultural rules for working together.

ii) DIE training and Cultural Assimilator for forming Culturally Relativistic views

One of the training methods that I used to change the awareness of participants' from cultural incidents "Experiencing" to culturally sensitive "Reflecting" was called DIE training, created by Janet Bennett and Milton Bennett.[2] DIE is an abbreviation for Describe, Interpret, and Evaluate. This training allows people to examine their subconscious stereotypes, helps them discuss ways to overcome these stereotypes, and shows them how to begin to "Describe" a culturally challenging situation more objectively. This leads them to "Interpret" the situation in culturally relative ways and raise their awareness to "Evaluate" the situation in a non-judgmental way. It also helps a person to be more culturally sensitive and empathetic to others.

1 Although, Japanese law was enforced onboard for legal matters.

2 Sassy Fragger (2008) Methods of Cultural Interpretation-Achieving Intercultural Competence, on http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1123733/methods_of_cultural_interpretation.html?singlepage=true&cat=4 (retrieved 2010, April 10)

A typical DIE training uses pictures, and it is said that "The best pictures are the most ambiguous ones, photographs which depict a form of interaction or a scene which is not familiar to participants."[3] Nevertheless, for this program, I intentionally used pictures and scenes that stirred participants' emotions, since the training started with an exercise to see how "objectively" participants could describe the photographs and incidents.

For the onboard DIE training, the DIE method was combined with another method called "Cultural Assimilator." This method was first developed in the 1960s for the U.S. Office of Naval Research to train sailors and ambassadors of the U.S. Since Cushner and Brislin published their book, "Intercultural Interactions, 1st edition (1986)", the technique has been used for various training occasions (Landis, D. and Bhagat, 1996; Bhawuk, Podsiadlowski, Graf, & Triandis, 2002; Shaules & Katsura, 1998). The cultural assimilator technique involves one episode or a story called a "critical incident" that involves two parties from different cultural backgrounds and beliefs (usually a typical belief of that culture), (Wang, M. M., et.al, 2000).

When the critical incident is used for a training session, typically the participants are closer to culture A, and they are surprised and confused by the behavior of culture B. The training reveals how the participants from culture A feel about the incident, and aims to decipher why culture B behaves in such a manner. This leads to a discussion on how to avoid negative judgment and see the situation in a culturally relativistic manner. In essence, by implementing the DIE training method along with the cultural assimilator, most of the participants were aware of the main goals, and could see why and how one easily gets trapped by our "common sense."

"David used my toothbrush"

Chart 1 is used to introduce the way IDE works in communication. Some of the learning outcomes from this activity would be:

- Sometimes the reason why the other person does "such a thing" is very different from what you think.
- It is easy to be judgmental about another person's behavior if you don't understand the reason.
- We have to suspend negative judgment, because it will enforce a negative stereotype.
- If you are unsure why the other person does "such a thing," simply ask him/her the

3 For a train sample, view "The Description, Interpretation, and Evaluation Exercise" on the Webpage of Intercultural Communication Institute. http://www.intercultural.org/die.php

reason.

- Understanding reasons for the behaviors of other people is the first step to forming empathy.
- It is important to understand the differences and accept other cultural values.

Chart 1: Different perceptions of two people using DIE

E	I	D	I	E
Your Evaluation (feeling and judgment)	Your Interpretation (your reasons of evaluation)	Description (Objective description of the incident)	Other person's Interpretation (other person's reasons of evaluation)	Other person's Evaluation (feelings and judgment)

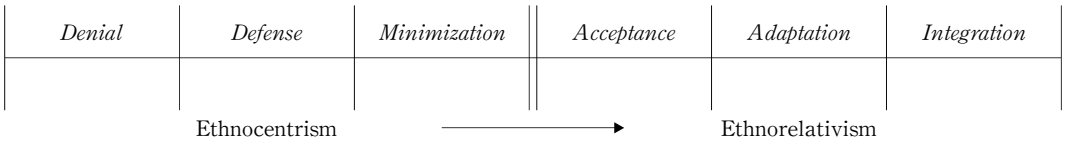
Many concrete incidents arise during this type of program that allow participants to discuss these concepts, but incidents that embarrass participants should be avoided. For this training, the statement, "David used my tooth brush" was used as a critical incident, even though the incident did not actually happen in this program (it came from the author's former experience). Strong reactions may develop if the participants are not aware of variations of personal/public properties' boundaries, and more so, if the incident is related to hygiene issues. It always takes some discussion for participants to find out that "David" may be from a culture where a toothbrush is considered public property, which was the case with this incident.

Then the question becomes, "Now that I know the reason, what can I do to 'accept' the cultural values of this other person and still live happily in the same cabin together?" The participants' discussion was guided to the conclusion that there is no one "correct" answer, but both parties have to communicate when a similar incident happens. You could still say you are not comfortable sharing a toothbrush with someone, even after recognizing David's reason. Cultural acceptance does not necessarily mean you "agree" with the value (Bennett, 1986). The two parties could also establish rules when needed. Communication was always noted as the key to expand participants' views of "common sense", which is the first step to acceptance of other cultural values. Participants were encouraged to use their own cultural experiences in their daily lives onboard to apply the model of the Experiential Learning Cycle with DIE analysis.

iii) DMIS theory

The growing discovery and awareness of the participants was guided through the stages of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) introduced by Bennett (1986a, 1986b, and 1993). This model is based on cognitive psychology, using the perspectives of phenomenology and structuralism. According to Bennett (1993), this model explains the reactions of people to cultural differences and describes predictable ways to become more competent as intercultural communicators. The six stages of the DMIS model show the cognitive structure of the individual's "worldview" or perception toward cultural differences. The way the individual interprets the cultural experience and places it into her/his worldview can be seen as a result of her/his complexity of cognitive structure.

Fig.2: Six stages in the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)



As seen in Fig.2, the first three DMIS stages are called *ethnocentric* stages, where "one's own culture is experienced as central to reality" (Hammar and Bennett, 2003). Hammer and Bennett (1998) explain these stages as follows:

- ***Denial*** of cultural difference is the state in which one's own culture is experienced as the only real one. Other cultures are avoided by maintaining psychological and/or physical isolation from differences...
- ***Defense*** against cultural difference is the state in which one's own culture is experienced as the only good one... People at the ***Defense*** stage are threatened by cultural difference, so they tend to be highly critical of other cultures...
- ***Minimization*** of cultural difference is the state in which elements of one's own cultural worldview are experienced as universal...People at ***Minimization*** expect similarities, and they may become insistent about correcting others' behavior to match their expectations.

The second three DMIS stages are *ethnorelative*, meaning that one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures.

- ***Acceptance*** of cultural difference is the state in which one's own culture is experienced as just one of a number of equally complex worldviews...People in the *Acceptance* stage are curious about and respectful toward cultural differences.

- ***Adaptation*** to cultural difference is the state in which the experience of another culture yields perception and behavior appropriate to that culture...People at the *Adaptation* stage are able to look at the world "through different eyes" and may intentionally change their behavior to communicate more effectively in another culture.
- ***Integration*** of cultural difference is the state in which one's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews...[4]

Hammar and Bennett (2003) state that "The DMIS constitutes a progression of worldview 'orientations toward cultural difference' that comprise the potential for increasingly more sophisticated intercultural experiences" (Hammer & Bennett, 2003). In other words, if the intercultural experiences and training are successful, the participants' worldview will progress in the direction shown by the arrow in Fig.2.

In the CCU course, "acceptance" was one of the important learning objectives, so discussions about how to pass the "minimization" stage and move toward "acceptance" were carried out from time to time. It was also explained that when different cultural groups are in conflict and trying to solve their problems, an approach that allows them to find a commonality would be one of the solutions. However, this includes the risk that people could stay at the "minimization" stage; focusing too much on commonality will take away the possibility of viewing a person at an individual level. This misses the whole point of appreciating diversity in an intercultural program such as SWY. The theory itself was introduced to the course participants in the latter part of the program when it was observed that participants would feel comfortable learning about the stages of their own development.

In general, cross-cultural training requires the trainer to observe three dimensions of the participants, as it also requires handling complex situations (Paige & Martin, 1983). Those dimensions, as applied to this course, would be:

1. Behavior requirements-whether the participants are actively involving themselves in cross-cultural interactions onboard.
2. Culture learning focus-whether their cultural learning is happening at cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral levels.
3. Risk of failure and/or self-disclosure-low risk can result in a low-level of learning; high risk

4 modified from Hammer, M. R. and Bennett, M. J (1998). The intercultural development inventory: Manual. Portland, OR: Intercultural Communication Institute.

or unexpected self-disclosure, such as disclosure of their hidden biases, could form an attitude of resistance and/or result in withdrawal from further learning.

When introducing the DMIS model, the level of the risk of self-disclosure should be monitored, as the model can be taken as judgmental and a threat to participants (Shaules, 2008). Fortunately, the CCU course had very open-minded and potentially accepting youth, so it did not require too much effort for me to create a safe learning environment. Nevertheless, I acknowledged that for some participants this would be a distinctive learning experience that might make them uncomfortable if their beliefs and values are challenged.

4) Evaluations of the course

The CCU course had never implemented a particular objective educational evaluation during the previous 21 years of the program. The concept and goal of the SWY program itself had been to provide opportunities to the world's youth to exchange knowledge and experiences, and to promote friendly international relations. Also, the administrators of the program did not have an educator on staff or in the program for longer than two years. It has been (and still is) difficult to carry on a longitudinal educational analysis, which is understandable. Nevertheless, the current format of the program has been slightly changed to put more weight on systematic learning, such as the discussion courses with advisors. Thinking that the potential of the program was so large, I thought that it was time to introduce objective evaluation to the course (and to the whole program), rather than totally depending on a questionnaire about the participants' impressions of the program.

IDI

To determine the education measurement of the CCU course, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), which is based on the theory of DMIS, was used. IDI was developed by the collaboration of Hammer and Bennett (1998) and is currently in its 3rd version of the computer-based edition. For an onboard activity without PCs, the IDI version two was used, which is a 50-item paper and pencil instrument that measures six stages of DMIS. It has been translated into twelve languages, and the participants were able to choose between the English and Japanese versions. The 42 CCU participants took the inventory twice, three days before the onboard program started (Jan. 18, 2010) and three days before the program finished (March 2, 2010).

Results

The results are summarized in the following table. In Table 1, Perceived Sensitivity indicates "how you rate yourself in terms of intercultural sensitivity" (Hammer & Bennett, 1998); in other words, it is a person's idealistic worldview that does not include the person's actual development. On the other hand, Developmental Sensitivity indicates a person's "developmental" intercultural sensitivity that is "adjusted to show the effect of ethnocentrism on the development of ethno-relativism" (ibid.); this is the way a person can actually rate him/herself on intercultural sensitivity. The result shows the overall increase of both "Perceived" and "Developmental" scores by percentage.

The second section, Worldview Profile, indicates the changes of a person's actual development within each stage of DMIS. The actual "Profile" explains (ibid.):

- DD (denial-defense) Scale: Indicates a worldview that simplifies and/or polarizes cultural difference.
- R (reverse) Scale: Indicates a worldview that *reverses* "us" and "them" polarization, where "them" is superior.
- M (minimization) Scale: Indicates a worldview that highlights cultural commonality and universal issues.
- AA (acceptance-adaptation) Scale: Indicates a worldview that can comprehend and accommodate complex cultural differences.
- EM (encapsulated marginality) Scale: Indicates a worldview that incorporates a multicultural identity with confused cultural perspectives.

Table 1: Changes measured by IDI (group average, n=42)

	Before the program	After the program	Change before and after the program
Intercultural Sensitivity	(out of 145)	(out of 145)	
Perceived Sensitivity	120.00	124.48	3.1 % ↑
Developmental Sensitivity	88.94	96.50	5.2 % ↑
Worldview Profile	(out of 5)	(out of 5)	
DD (denial-defense) Scale	**3.92**	**3.92**	0 %
R (reverse) Scale	3.56	**3.78**	4.4 % ↑
M (minimization) Scale	2.78	3.00	4.4 % ↑
AA (acceptance-adaptation) Scale	3.43	**4.00**	11.4 % ↑ ↑
EM (encapsulated marginality) scale	**3.80**	**4.00**	4 % ↑

The calculated numbers in Table 1 show the average scores of the 42 participants. When the figure is larger than 3.66, developmental issues in this area are said to be "resolved"; these are shown in bold-face numbers. If the figure is between 2.33 and 3.66, developmental issues in that area are "in transition." The figures lower than 2.33 indicate that developmental issues in that area are "unresolved." For this group, none of the issues were in the "unresolved" condition.

Results showed that the participants' development on the DD (denial-defense) Scale did not seem to change, the R (reverse) issues are resolved, but the M (minimization) Scale went up, although it was still in the "in transition" stage. From this result, the developmental change in the AA (Acceptance-Adaptation) Scale is the largest. However, when the profile is further broken down to detailed clusters, it disclosed the particular challenges of this program.

Table 2 shows each scale (except for R Scale and EM Scale) broken down to clusters, and further, the Denial Cluster and Adaptation Cluster have two categories under each of them. Among them, "Avoidance of interaction with cultural difference" in the DD (Defense-Denial) Scale decreased by 6.6%, although, it stayed in the "resolved" area. This is the only category where participants' development moved backwards. It is almost as if participants decided to back off from their initially active interactions.

Table 2: Detailed changes measured by IDI (group average, n=42)

	Before the program	After the program	Change before and after
DD (Defense-Denial) SCALE	**3.92**	**3.92**	0 %
〈Denial Cluster〉	**4.00**	**4.00**	0
Disinterest in cultural difference	**3.75**	**4.00**	5 ↑
Avoidance of interaction with cultural difference	**4.33**	**4.00**	−6.6 ⇓
〈Defense Cluster〉	**3.83**	**3.83**	0
R (Reverse) SCALE	**3.56**	**3.78**	4.4 ↑
M (Minimization) SCALE	2.78	3.00	4.4 ↑
〈Similarity Cluster〉	2.80	2.80	0
〈Universalism Cluster〉	2.75	**3.25**	10 ↑ ↑
AA (Acceptance-Adaptation) SCALE	3.43	**4.00**	11.4 ↑ ↑
〈Acceptance Cluster〉	3.60	**4.20**	12 ↑ ↑
〈Adaptation Cluster〉	3.33	**3.89**	11.2 ↑ ↑
Cognitive frame-shifting	3.25	**3.75**	10 ↑ ↑
Behavioral code-shifting	3.40	**4.00**	12 ↑ ↑
EM (Encapsulated marginality) SCALE	**3.80**	**4.00**	4 ↑

Minimization was also an area that participants found difficult to develop. If a person was not used to collaborating with people from so many different cultures, it was understandable that they kept focusing on avoidance of conflict. One way to avoid conflict would have been to enforce the area of "minimization" by focusing on commonalities, which kept the participants in the "In transition" phase.

The development of the AA (Acceptance-Adaptation) Scale is more significant than the other developmental scales. This result shows that the overall targeted educational goal of SWY was achieved in both cognitive and behavioral development.

It is assumed that participants accepted each other's cultural differences and interactions through different tasks and daily activities by living onboard. Nevertheless, they wanted to somehow avoid close interactions with each other from time to time. As formerly mentioned, this program is unique in the sense that no one can physically escape from the closed environment of the ship for 43 days, and additionally, everyday life was filled with the expectation to interact with people from different cultures during the discussions and volunteer activities.

The overall result shows that this program could not simply give seven sessions on "cross-cultural understanding" and expect participants to feel that they "understood" each other. In order to improve results, a number of pre-departure seminars also need to be given, plus full support for those who face culture fatigue, and a more structured CCU curriculum should be provided to all the participants, not only those who take the CCU course. If those who took the course and learned some theories to monitor themselves gave the above results, then I wonder what would happen if all participants took a CCU course. Nevertheless, this program has been known as a life-changing event for most participants of the past twenty years, and keeps its high reputation in and out of the country.

Conclusion

For many participants, the environment onboard was tougher than they had expected. No personal space for privacy, challenging language barriers, limitations on food choices, pressure from the group work, conflict in leadership styles, inexperience in cross-cultural interaction, false expectations, time restrictions, and more would make most young people in the world fairly frustrated. Nevertheless, they have their pride and responsibility as representatives of their countries, and moreover, this is a program they chose to join. Knowing that they cannot complain about the environment, they had to choose how much interaction they were willing to undertake, and how they would be willing to stretch their limits to accept

whatever "weird" behavior their peers demonstrated. It was quite commendable that all of them not only survived, but left the ship with strong peer bonding, carrying ideas for post-program collaborations across the world. As Seelye (1996) quoted from Perry (1970), when a person shifts from dualism (in which right or wrong are clearly marked) to contextual relativism (in which one evaluates any position by its appropriateness to a defined context), then one will go into "commitment in relativism", where "it is possible to accept the viability of many points of view but one makes personal choices which are grounded in a critical assessment of context. In this stage, one becomes responsible for creating one's own ethical guidelines and making personal choices" (ibid.). Indeed, this program challenges participants to use their ethical guidelines, and if the individual didn't have much experience of their everyday beliefs or cultural values being challenged, one could have easily felt threatened when they had to choose their actions based on their ethical guidelines. The choice may not have been the same as their cultural peers would have made, which could create further confusion for that person. I observed that the Japanese participants particularly struggled with this since they are used to following a group decision but now had to develop their own ethical guidelines.

Nevertheless, several remarks made me believe in the enormous possibility of the participants' capacity to change. One very religious Muslim participant told me in the early days of the program that Islam was the only way to save "poor" and "confused" people in the world, and he thought it was his mission to save the world. He was pretty serious and somehow judgmental about the other participants' behaviors. His IDI scale showed "unresolved" in the DD and M scales before the program started. During the program, his comments became positive as he was really enjoying the variety of people and thoughts. His worldview changed so much that he even worried about his re-entry culture shock at the end of the program. His IDI scales shifted to "resolved" in DD and AA, with an M scale "in transition." One cannot deny the power of religious beliefs and those beliefs may sometimes make a person stay at the Minimization stage. Nevertheless, my experience on the ship with the young participants convinced me that the openness and flexibility of youth is the power of the world.

Current issues of the SWY program and future direction

The biggest challenge of this SWY program is administrative staffs from the Cabinet Office of the Japanese government, who are in charge of the program onboard, do not have the educational or training background to fully understand the cross-cultural struggle of

participants. Not only that, their stint for overseeing the program is limited to two years, hence there is no commitment to the program thereafter. Advisors are mostly one-timers with no connection to each other and with limited information passed on from the previous years. It could even be a miracle that this program has kept its good reputation among the participants' countries, which gives even more credit to the quality of the participants and IYEO, the alumni association.

It is time to restructure this program incorporating long-term and short-term educational goals. One example would be to give a sequence of cross-cultural information in the pre-departure, onboard, and post-departure programs so that participants can have deeper onboard learning and make use of their concrete experiences back home. An objective educational evaluation should also be given to all participants. My contribution to the program would be to search for all those possibilities and thereby create a better foundation for this program.

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Appendix

About the Ship for World Youth Program
http://www.shipforworldyouth.org/

The Ship for World Youth (SWY) program, operated by Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, is a program that involves youth from Japan and countries around the world. They board the Ship for World Youth, live together, and while on board and when visiting the different countries, they study and discuss common issues from a global perspective and participate in other various activities that involve multi-cultural and multi-national exchange opportunities.

The international youth exchange program of the Cabinet Office originally started in 1959 when it implemented the "Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission Program," which the then Prime Minister Kishi had proposed personally in order to commemorate the marriage of Emperor H.M., who was

at that time the Crown Prince.

In 1967, the "Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise Program" started as one of the projects to commemorate the Centennial of the Meiji Restoration. Both the "Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission Program" and the "Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise Program" inspired a vision and hope to the youth of Japan since the government would take the initiative to send the youth overseas at a time when it was still very difficult for them to go aboard on their own.

Due to the recent expansion of the international role of Japan and the remarkable advancement in internationalization in various fields all over the world, the improvement of the contents of international youth exchange programs of the Cabinet Office has been found necessary in order to cope with such a changing social environment. The "Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise Program" was, therefore, reorganized and upgraded to the "Ship for World Youth Program" in 1988. The main objective of the former program, which was sending Japanese youth overseas, was changed, so that the exchange between Japanese and foreign youth became one of the main activities. The contents also became more academic through the introduction of activities such as discussions and seminars.

The purpose of SWY program is to broaden the global view of the Japanese youth, to promote mutual understanding and friendship between Japanese and foreign youth as well as to cultivate the spirit of international cooperation and the competence to practice it, and furthermore, to foster the youth with the capability of showing leadership in various area of international society.

In addition, this program aims at establishing networks and promoting joint activities among youth around the world by providing, as the concrete and practical opportunity, the cohabitation and the joint activity on the board of the "Ship for World Youth," which is the epitome of international society with wide variety of cultures and ideas, to make an visible international contribution from the perspective of human resource development.

In this program, approximately 120 youth from Japan and 140 youth from various areas of the world live together on board the ship and engage in various multilateral exchange activities such as studying and discussing common issues from a global viewpoint on board and in the countries visited.

Number of Participating Youth by Countries

Area	Country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Total
Asia	Japan	103	100	103	101	103	114	112	114	118	116	116	122	117	119	117	124	120	118	117	116	108	120	2378
	Bangladesh				11				12															23
	India		18		9		19				12		9		10		11		10		9		12	107
	Nepal						9																	9
	Pakistan		12																					12
	Sri Lanka		12		20		20		19		20				10	10							12	111
Africa	Algeria				10																			10
	Cameroon															11								11
	Egypt		21		20		11		11		20		9		10		12			11		12		137
	Kenya				12		19		13		19				11			11	12				12	97
	Mauritius														11			11	12			12		46
	Morocco		9																8					17
	Senegal						10																	10
	Seychelles												9				12			11				32
	South Africa								18		13		9		11						10			61
	Tanzania								20		13		9	9			12				10			73
	Tunisia		12																					12

Area	Country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Total
Europe	Belgium								13				8											21
	Finland						12								10						11			33
	Germany		12																					12
	Greece		20				20				10				10				10				12	70
	Hungary				12																			12
	Italy		11																					11
	Netherlands													9										9
	Norway								13				9				12					12		46
	Poland								12									12						24
	Russia													9			10			11				30
	Spain				20								9	9		11					11			60
	Sweden				12						13								12					37
	United Kingdom						12				13				10					11				46
Middle East	Bahrain										12		9		10		11		12		10		12	64
	Jordan						11				10													21
	Egypt																						12	
	Kuwait		11																					11
	Oman		19		20		12				12									7	10		12	80
	Qatar								9				8											17
	Turkey				12								8					12					12	32
	UAE		11		9		6		12		11		9		7		9		9			9	12	92
	Yemen								12											10		11	12	33
Oceania	Australia	10		10		10		20		13		13	9		9	12		11	12	10			12	139
	Fiji	10		9				19		12		13		9		10		12		11		12		117
	New Zealand	10				10		12		20		12		9		11	12	12			10	12		130
	Papua New Guinea					13																		13
	Solomon Islands							12				13					10			11	10			56
	Tonga			9						13		13		9		10			11	11		12		88
	Vanuatu																				10	11		21
	Western Samoa					13																		13
Central/ South America	Argentina			14																				14
	Brazil			15				13							10				12		11			61
	Chile					12				18				9		10				11				60
	Colombia	9						13																22
	Costa Rica	10		20		21				20				9				12			11			103
	Dominican Rep.			15		21																		36
	Ecuador	25				13		20		13		13		9									12	93
	Honduras	9																						9
	Jamaica							13																13
	Mexico	25		20		13		19		25		13	9	9		11		12		10				166
	Panama	25																						25
	Paraguay													9										9
	Peru			14						13		13	9				12					12		73
	Uruguay					13						13												26
	Venezuela	25		20		21		13		13		13		8		11		12				11		147
North America	Canada			10				13		12		13	9	9		11		12	12	10		12		123
	USA	15		15		15		12		13		13		10	10	12	11	11			11			148
Total		276	268	274	268	278	275	291	278	303	294	271	263	252	258	247	258	260	250	252	250	246	264	5612

The number on the top raw indicates the year of the program. Year 2010 was the 22nd program. Countries are assigned by the Japanese government.