

081213-PR0812-AECNET
13 December 2008**FOR EMBARGO UNTIL 13 DECEMBER 2008, 6:00 PM**

**Outstanding Asian and European online learning projects honoured
7th Asia-Europe Classroom Network Conference
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, 12 – 16 December 2008**

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) recognised three of the best online learning platforms through the Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) Awards during its 7th Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) Conference in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

It was an occasion in recognition of the three most outstanding online collaborative projects from the more than 70 entries submitted earlier this year. The Awards seek to encourage the development of innovative, effective and sustainable online intercultural learning platforms by high school teachers and educators to connect students from Asia and Europe.

Winners were judged based on the level of participation and involvement of students and the contribution that the project can make towards advancing intercultural understanding among high school students of Asia and Europe. Effective application of ICT tools in promoting collaborative learning and quality of the overall presentation of the project (design and structure) were also considered.

The three AEC-NET Award winners are Mastering Media Goes Digital, Toys of Our Youth [T.O.Y.S], and Young Diplomats – International Ambassadors. All three projects will each receive a cash grant of 2,000 Euros to be used to further develop their project or to develop a new one (please see attached winners' brief project profiles).

Mastering Media Goes Digital

"Since 2002, we have worked on many interesting projects and have gained valuable learning experiences while broadening our horizons to new cultures and making friends across continents. Best hands-on lessons with the double aims of implementing ICT at schools as well as promoting peace and intercultural understanding! It is wonderful that the online projects have also spawned some face-to-face student exchanges," said Sinikka Laakio-Whybrow, Kaarina Senior High School in Finland.

Toys of Our Youth [T.O.Y.S]

"The AEC-NET is a platform which engages pupils from various countries in cross-cultural activities in cyberspace. We wished to leverage on this opportunity for our students through the common medium of toys," said Ms Yuen Chai Lin, from Pioneer Secondary School in Singapore.

Young Diplomats – International Ambassadors

"Promoting respect for other cultures and peoples around the world - this is the core idea of the 'Young Diplomats,' which is realised with multimedia stories made by young people from Asia and Europe," said Ms Halina Bednarz, from Zespół Szkół Zawodowych nr 5 in Poland.

Excellence Awards were also conferred to three other shortlisted project groups, namely Brick&Mortar@VirtualHomestay (Singapore), Literary Corner (Malaysia) and Tailor Inc. (please see attached the brief project profiles).

The AEC-NET Awards is under the framework of the Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) Programme, whose objective is to promote intellectual and inter-cultural exchanges among high school teachers and students from Asia and Europe. The project also recognizes ICT (Information and Communication Technology) as an effective tool for enhancing such academic and cultural exchanges. It's AEC-NET Conference, now on its seventh edition, brings together teachers and educators from Asia and Europe to exchange their views, methodology, and tools in enhancing cross-cultural learning.

The 7th AEC-NET Conference is made possible through ASEF's partnership with the Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO, with the support of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, Sabah State Education Department, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Sabah, Maktab Sabah, Sanzac National Secondary School, Sekolah Menengah Sains Sabah and the European Commission.

For further information on the AEC programme, AEC awards, and the 7th AEC-NET Conference, please visit <http://aec.asef.org> or e-mail info@aec.asef.org

Programme contact:

Ms. Angie Toh, Asia-Europe Foundation
T. +65-6874 9716 F. +65-6872 1207 Email: angietoh@asef.org

Media contact:

Ms Kristine Lucero, Asia-Europe Foundation
T. +65-6874 9728 F. +65-6872 1206 Email: kristine.lucero@asef.org

Ms Norfaliza Ismail, Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO
T. +60-3-8884 6122 F. +60-3-8889 5473 Email: fauzaismail@moe.gov.my

The 7th Asia-Europe Classroom Network Conference is a collaboration of:



The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** advances mutual understanding and collaboration between the people of Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. These exchanges include conferences, lecture tours, workshops, seminars and the use of web-based platforms. The major achievement of ASEF is the establishment of permanent bi-regional networks focused on areas and issues that help to strengthen Asia-Europe relations. Established in February 1997 by the partners of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)¹, ASEF reports to a board of governors representing the ASEM partners. ASEF is the only permanent physical institution of the ASEM process. Since 1997, the Foundation has initiated projects engaging 14,000 individuals from Asia and Europe. ASEF works in partnership with other public institutions and civil society actors to ensure its work is broad-based and balanced among the partner countries. <http://www.asef.org>



The **Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM)** exists in fulfillment of Malaysia's obligation as a Member State of UNESCO for the purpose of constituting the main channel of co-operation between UNESCO and Malaysian expertise in the areas of its mandate, and managing Malaysia's relationship with UNESCO. Among the functions of the NATCOM are to advise the Government of Malaysia on all matters pertaining to UNESCO and on all matters referred to the Commission by the Minister, act in an advisory capacity to the Malaysian delegations to the General Conference of UNESCO, other meetings and conferences of UNESCO, and to formulate and execute a national programme of activities to complement UNESCO fields of competence. Malaysia is currently being represented by the Hon. Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Minister of Education Malaysia to the UNESCO Executive Board. <http://www.unesco.org.my>

¹ The **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation. It brings together Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam, the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Commission. <http://www.aseminfoboard.org>

Supported by:



Ministry of Education Malaysia
<http://www.moe.gov.my>



Maktab Sabah (Sabah College)
http://www.sabah.edu.my/maktab_sabah/



Sabah State Education Department
<http://www.sabahedu.gov.my/>



Sanzac National Secondary School
<http://www.sabah.edu.my/sanzac/index.htm>



Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment Sabah
<http://kepkas.sabah.gov.my/home.php>



Sekolah Menengah Sains Sabah (Sabah Science Secondary School)
<http://www.smesh-online.com>



ASEF's contribution is with the financial support of the European Commission

The AEC-NET Awards Winners:

Mastering Media Goes Digital

The *Mastering Media Goes Digital* project focuses on how young people today use different technology in their daily lives—to learn, to communicate and to spend their free time. The students will look for relevant research and statistics from their countries about young people (if available) and compare this to their realities. Groups will, for example, deal with the use of mobile phones, computers, or Internet security issues. The final group tasks will be discussed and decided on by the participating teachers and, once the project starts, modified with the participation of the students. In addition, an online social network will be created for students to socialize in. **Project Co-ordinator:** Ms. Sinikka Laakio-Whybrow (Finland)

Toys of Our Youth [T.O.Y.S]

Toys of Our Youth showcases students' perspectives on toys and their experiences, and allows them to research on toys, its origins and significance in terms of social, economic and psychological characteristics. The origin of toys is prehistoric. Dolls representing infants, animals, and soldiers, as well as representations of tools used by adults were readily found at archaeological sites. Toys and play are important to the process of learning about the world and growing up. The young uses toys and play to discover and explore relationships while adults use toys to form and strengthen social bonds, reinforce lessons from their own youth, and exercise their minds and bodies. Toys are more than simple amusement, and the way they are used profoundly influences most aspects of life. Through this project, participants will deepen their understanding of toys of past generations and their geographical origins. The students would look into the social and economic facets of toys and exchange information with other participants. The evolution of toys from prehistoric times to the present day would lead participants to develop a toy which they believe would be the toy of the future. **Project Co-ordinator:** Mrs. Yuen Chai Lin (Singapore)

Young Diplomats - International Ambassadors

The *International Ambassadors* project allows the participating school to choose one other country across continents to become Ambassadors for that country in their own local community. The students will study traditions and prepare multimedia presentations (in Powerpoint and Flash formats) of national celebrations (to be published online) and/or quizzes about the country (to create an online bank of educational resources). Additionally, the schools will contact the embassy of the chosen country for an interview and prepare a presentation/exhibition to promote that country in their local community. They will also prepare a celebration and/or take part in one national holiday or event in the chosen country and send a multimedia report for online publishing. **Project Co-ordinator:** Ms. Halina Bednarz (Poland)

Excellence Awardees:

Brick&Mortar@VirtualHomestay

Brick & Mortar@VirtualHomestay is a project that focuses on architectural structures of the host country. The host (3-4 students from one school) will plan a three-day itinerary which includes visits to local places with unique architectural attractions. This project allows the participants to: (a) share knowledge from different background, cultures and geographical regions; (b) develop understanding and appreciation for local and foreign historical origins of their architectural structures; (c) engage the pupils in authentic learning and creative thinking; (d) initiate pupils to take ownership of their learning; (e) develop socially responsible participants; (f) acquire collaborative skills through working in a team to achieve common goals; and (g) help forge lasting friendship and understanding amongst the students. **Project Co-ordinator:** Ms. Yong Caiyu (Singapore)

Literary Corner

Literary Corner is a project that requires students to write poems, short stories or even dialogues or plays based on given themes. This project allows students to express themselves in short stories, poems, plays etc. given certain themes throughout the project timeline. With guidance from their teachers and from the works of other student participants, it hopes to develop their writing skills. The students will be expected to critique the work of other students, even if it is only to say that they enjoyed reading the piece of writing as it caught their interest. At the same time, they will learn more about the different cultures of the participants from their writing. They will have an opportunity to question the 'writer' about his/her subject matter. In this way, communication will be encouraged. Ultimately, the aim is to have an online publication which can be printed out or read online by students in other schools. **Project Co-ordinator:** Ms. Leonora Anne Peers (Malaysia)

Tailor Inc.

Tailor Inc. allows students to know more about the traditional costume of different participating countries. Through the exchange of information, students will get the opportunity to know and understand the traditional costume worn by different countries and cultures. The end-product aims at synthesising the new knowledge they have obtained to develop a new product. The objectives are to: (a) allow participants to share knowledge and experiences from different backgrounds, cultures and geographical regions; (b) engage the pupil participants in authentic learning and creative thinking; (c) encourage pupils to take ownership of their learning in their areas of synthesising the information to produce brand new knowledge; (d) acquire collaborative skills through working in a team to achieve common goals; (e) help forge lasting friendship and understanding among participants; and (f) help the students to know more about other countries' culture and heritage through their traditional costume. **Project Co-ordinator:** Ms. Chua Cheng Bee (Singapore).