

ASIA 21 YOUNG LEADERS SUMMIT 2011 CONFERENCE REPORT
New Delhi, India – November 18-20, 2011

WORLDS APART TOGETHER:

SHARED VALUES FOR AN ASIA-PACIFIC COMMUNITY



Asia
Society®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Agenda	4
Lessons in Leadership	9
Out of Iran	10
The Future of Inequality in the Asia-Pacific Region and How to Address It	11
Photos	13
<i>Breakout Sessions</i>	
The Young, the Old, and the Restless: How should Asia deal with its Demographic Dilemma?	15
Can Asia develop a sustainable energy policy?	15
Is corruption hampering Asia’s development? If so, what can be done to stop it?	17
Should Asia feed itself before thinking about civil rights?	18
Will social media transform the Asian political landscape? Should it?	18
What are the biggest impediments to the development of Asia’s next Generation Women Leaders? How can they be overcome?	19
Public Service Projects	21
Asia Society-Bank of America Merrill Lynch Asia 21 Public Service Award	23

FOREWORD

For six years, the Asia Society's Asia 21 Young Leaders Initiative has been bringing together amazing young leaders from around the Asia-Pacific region to build a community of next generation leaders committed to values-based leadership and public service. The 2011 Asia 21 Young Leaders Summit took that mission to heart with the theme *Worlds Apart Together: Shared Values for an Asia-Pacific Community*.

We had formal discussions focused on issues of leadership, inequality, demographics, sustainability, amongst others, but it was around the stories, best practices and case studies shared that our conversations coalesced. As always, we strove together to learn more not only about each other, but also about our host country, through interactive nightcaps and cultural performances. Additionally, building on our public service focus, we celebrated *Roots of Health*, recognizing their important work as the winner of the annual Public Service Award, while also identifying a number of group public service projects for action throughout the year.

The world has been transformed in ways unimaginable when the Asia Society first opened its doors over fifty years ago, and the global challenges confronting Asia and Asian leaders have also changed significantly in recent decades. The dominant issues today are less country-specific and increasingly transnational in nature. Some of the region's greatest challenges including leadership, sustainable economic development, globalization, terrorism, public health, environmental degradation, and human rights can only be addressed by leaders who not only understand their own communities and the issues, but also know how to work effectively across borders.

This is our task. By bringing our different worlds together we can build the shared values necessary to address our greatest challenges. We are committed to continuing these efforts in the coming years and beyond.

Special thanks to our founding international sponsor, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, for their continued commitment to and partnership in all things related to the Asia 21 Young Leaders Initiative. Our gratitude as well to all members of the Asia 21 India Committee, who provided crucial support and assistance in making the Summit a reality.



Executive Director, Global Leadership Initiatives
Asia Society

AGENDA: Asia 21 Young Leaders Summit

New Delhi, India – November 18-20, 2011

Friday, November 18, 2011

Morning & Afternoon Arrivals

6:00pm Opening Reception
Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom
Foyer, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon
Dress: National/Business

Networking Activity

7:00pm Opening Dinner
Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level,
The Westin Gurgaon

Welcoming Remarks

Vishakha N. Desai

President
Asia Society

Introductory Remarks

Jamie Metzl

Executive Vice President
Asia Society

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Vinita Shetty

Journalist and Writer

Keynote Address

Shri Baijayant "Jay" Panda

Member, Parliament of India, Lower House
(Lok Sabha)

9:00pm Cultural Performance – Mohiniattam, Chau,
and Odissi Dances
Manjula Murthy and Troupe

9:30pm Closing Remarks
Michael G. Kulma
Executive Director
Global Leadership Initiatives
Asia Society

9:30-11:00pm

Nightcaps

- **Bollywood**
Venue: Renew Room, First Floor, The
Westin Gurgaon

Led By
Anmol Handa
Choreographer

Nitin Das
Director
Filmkaar Productions

- **Drum Circle**
Venue: Energise & Elevate Room, First
Floor, The Westin Gurgaon

Led By
Sanjay Arora

Vinita Shetty
Journalist and Writer

- **Mehendi and Palmistry**
Venue: Nurture Room, Lobby Level,
The Westin Gurgaon

Led By
Pawan ji

Acharya Brijesh

Vani Tripathi
National Secretary
Bhartiya Janta Party

- **Puppets**
Venue: Refresh Room, First Floor, The
Westin Gurgaon

Led By
Anurupa Roy
Founder
Katkatha Puppet Arts Trust

Saturday, November 19, 2011

7:30am Breakfast
Venue: Seasonal Tastes, Lobby Level,
The Westin Gurgaon

8:30-10:00am Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level,
The Westin Gurgaon
Dress: Business Casual

Brief Opening Remarks

Jamie Metzl

Executive Vice President
Asia Society

Session 1: Lessons in Leadership

Articulating the meaning of leadership, specific characteristics that exemplify leadership, and the lessons that can be drawn from leaders.

- The four discussion facilitators begin the session by stating a word that best exemplifies their leadership styles, followed by a brief discussion on three key points about what constitutes able leadership.
- Delegates are then invited to state a word that they associate with leadership and share an example of renowned leaders they think exhibit this quality and how.
- A conversation at each table where delegates are required to jointly choose one word that they most associate with leadership and think of a renowned leader who in their opinion exhibits this quality. Designees from each table will then share this with the rest of the delegates.

Facilitators

John D. Ciorciari

Assistant Professor
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
University of Michigan

Menaka Guruswamy

Advocate
Supreme Court of India

Rabi Karmacharya

Executive Director
Open Learning Exchange Network

Martin Tan

Co-Founder & Executive
Director
Halogen Foundation
Singapore

10:00-10:30am Cultural Interval & Break
Shipra Avantica Mehrotra
Odissi Dance Instructor & Performer
Artistic Director, Avantica

10:30-11:00am **Session 2: Out of Iran**

Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level,
The Westin Gurgaon

Kamiar Alaei

Director
International Education Programs

Jamie Metzl

Executive Vice President
Asia Society
State University of New York at Albany

11:15am-12:00pm **Session 3: The Future of Inequality in the Asia-Pacific Region and How to Address It**

Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level,
The Westin Gurgaon

Three 3-minutes-long scenario presentations on: ***A World of Inequality in 2020.***

Special focus on whether the state of inequality will remain as is, deteriorate, or improve. Discussion to follow.

Facilitators

Natalie Christine Jorge

Executive Director
Bato Balani Foundation

Shaffi Mather

Advocate
Supreme Court of India

Mei Pin Phua

Writer

12:00-1:00pm Lunch
Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom Foyer, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon

1:00-2:30pm **Session 4: Breakouts**
Breakout sessions will explore issues of relevance to the region and will ask the overarching question: How do these issues impact the ability of individuals, communities, countries, and the region to achieve unity?

Each group will designate a rapporteur to summarize key points to be shared on the Summit blog by the end of the day.

The Young, the Old, and the Restless: How should Asia deal with its Demographic Dilemma?
Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon

Session Organizers
Satchit Balsari
Emergency Physician
New York-Presbyterian Hospital

Gregory Fox
Clinical Associate Lecturer
University of Sydney

Daisuke Kan
Executive Director
Cheerio Group

Can Asia develop a sustainable energy policy?
Venue: Renew Room, First Floor, The Westin Gurgaon

Session Organizers
Jamie Choi
Campaign Director
Avaaz

Rashneh Pardiwala
Founder & Director
Centre for Environmental
Research & Education

Is corruption hampering Asia's development? If so, what can be done to stop it?

Venue: Refresh Room, First Floor,
The Westin Gurgaon

Session Organizers
Tsogtbaatar Damdin
State Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Mongolia

Anita Ramasastry
Professor of Law & Director
University of Washington School of Law

Mohammad Omar Sharifi
Director
American Institute for Afghanistan's Studies
Kabul office

Vinita Shetty
Journalist and Writer

Should Asia feed itself before thinking about civil rights?

Venue: Elevate Room, First Floor,
The Westin Gurgaon

Session Organizers
Bhavani Fonseka
Senior Researcher
Centre for Policy Alternatives

Martin Tan
Co-Founder & Executive Director
Halogen Foundation Singapore

Will social media transform the Asian political landscape? Should it?

Venue: Energise Room, First Floor,
The Westin Gurgaon

Session Organizers
Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy
Journalist/Documentary Filmmaker
Channel 4 (U.K.)

Lotfullah Najafizada
Head of Current Affairs
TOLONEWS

Kathleen Reen
Vice President for
Asia and New Media Programs
Internews

What are the biggest impediments to the development of Asia's next Generation Women Leaders? How can they be overcome?

Venue: Nurture Room, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon

Session Organizers
Mei Pin Phua
Writer

Zakia Soleiman
Grants Manager
Ambassador's Small Grants
Program (ASGP) Afghanistan

Vani Tripathi
National Secretary
Bhartiya Janta Party

2:30-3:45pm

Public Service Project (PSP) Fair

Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon

At the Fair, project proponents deliver 1 minute introductions of their plans to seek the participation of one or more of the incredible people at the Summit. Following these brief introductions, delegates will have an opportunity to learn more about the projects by visiting the proponents stationed at poster presentations set up on the walls along the periphery of the ballroom. By the end of the Fair, delegates are required to sign up for one of the projects. Delegates signed up for each of the PSPs will then meet the following day to develop a plan of action for going forward.

3:45-4:15pm

Asia Society-Bank of America Merrill Lynch Asia 21 Public Service Award

Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon

Award Presentation By
Kavish Arora
Head of Corporate Banking
Bank of America (India)

Bryan Albert Lim
Doctor
San Pablo Doctors' Hospital

Martin Tan
Co-Founder & Executive Director
Halogen Foundation
Singapore

Award Winner
Roots of Health

Presentation by Representative from
Awardee Organization
Amina Evangelista Swanepoel
Executive Director
Roots of Health

4:15-4:30 pm

Break

4:30-6:00pm

Session 5: Speed Networking

Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon

The main objective of this exercise is to provide one-on-one opportunities for delegates to get to know each other.

Delegates will be seated in three separate concentric circles (25 chairs facing each other). After three minutes of conversation between delegates facing each other, those seated at the outer rings move one spot to his/her right.

6:30pm

Dinner Departure
From: Westin Vatika Ballroom Foyer, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon

8:00pm

Offsite Dinner
Residence of **Sheila Dikshit**,
Chief Minister of Delhi
Dress: Casual

Sunday, November 20, 2011

7:30am	National Breakfast Tables Venue: Seasonal Tastes and Patio, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon
8:30-10:00am	Leadership in Action: Moments of Truth Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon Speakers describe critical choices made at turning points in their lives that have shaped their identities and careers. Moderators Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy Journalist/Documentary Filmmaker Channel 4 (U.K.) Gregory Fox Clinical Associate Lecturer University of Sydney
10:00-10:30am	Break
10:30am-12:00pm	Breakout: Public Service Projects Venues: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Renew Room, Refresh Room, Energise Room, Elevate Room, Nurture Room, The Westin Gurgaon Building on the public service projects presented at the fair from the day before, groups work to finalize the processes and timelines for moving forward. Each group will produce a two-page summary and timeline for the project to be shared at the end of the Summit.

12:00-1:45pm	Group Presentation Preparation Venues: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Renew Room, Refresh Room, Energise Room, Elevate Room, Nurture Room, The Westin Gurgaon Each group will be given a box filled with recyclable and traditional Indian supplies. Using these “tools” and drawing from the experience and lessons of this Summit and the farthest limits of group creativity, delegates work to develop a presentation to be shared with all in which they bring <i>Worlds Apart Together</i> . <i>Lunch served during the breakout</i>
1:45-3:15pm	Group Presentations Venue: Westin Vatika Ballroom, Lobby Level, The Westin Gurgaon Groups reconvene to present their ideas to the other delegates.
3:15-3:30pm	Closing Remarks Jamie Metzl Executive Vice President Asia Society

SESSION 1: *Lessons in Leadership*

In the opening session of the Young Leaders Summit in New Delhi, young leaders articulated the meaning of leadership, suggesting specific characteristics that exemplify leadership and lessons that can be drawn from leaders. Discussion facilitators began the session by stating a word that best exemplified their leadership style. Delegates then were invited to state a word that they associate with leadership and to share examples of renowned leaders whom they thought exhibited this quality and how. Leaders:

- **Build team spirit**

They empower, coach, teach and mentor. Being a leader is not so much about doing well yourself but making sure the team around you moves ahead.

- **Are lonely**

Leadership is a lonely place. No matter how many people you consult, ultimately you have to take a decision and live with it.

- **Inspire**

Leadership is inspiration—reimagining systems and laying down clear values and principles that are not fungible or malleable. Apartheid was a dehumanizing experience, but Nelson Mandela’s resilience in coming out of prison after decades and remaining focused was an example of inspira-

tional leadership in action. Leaders inspire through their courage—whether they are raising a child as a single mother in a conservative part of India or working as a freedom-seeking activist before a hostile government.

- **Demonstrate humility**

Despite all of their achievements, true leaders are those people who remain on the ground. Sometimes we get too intellectual and do not remain connected to the people. We do not talk the language of the masses. If you want to be a leader, you have to speak the language of the masses. Leadership is about listening. It is about being patient. Societies take time to react to ideas, work, and vision.

- **Overcome hurdles**

Leadership is about risk—if you are not willing to put yourself on the line every day, you are not a leader. Leadership is time consuming, and its rewards come late. Leadership is perhaps about adaptability.

- **Can laugh**

Leaders sometimes take themselves too seriously. The world today needs authentic leaders—people who can laugh at their own mistakes.

There are many different kinds of leaders in the world. Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Albert Einstein—they all were or are great leaders. But to be inspired, one need not think about those people. Instead, one can think about everyday people and try to understand what makes them leaders. Many people are transactional leaders who are placed in positions of artificial leadership. In other words, they are put in leadership positions to achieve an end. Transformational leaders are those who naturally show people the way forward. They are usually empowering and bring out the best in people. Leadership is not something you are born with, it is something you learn.

As this meeting and session show, it is possible for people to inspire and be inspired by each other even when they come from very diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. The ideas and themes of leadership emerged through the energy of the delegates in the opening session. It was clear that leadership and its values transcend nationality, gender, age, and language.

SESSION 2: Out of Iran

Although the speaker for this session had been introduced to the audience the previous evening, the moment that he began to narrate his story, everyone was spellbound. His story was about how to never lose hope and about his work among victims of HIV/AIDS in his home country of Iran, even while spending several months in prison.

His befuddling detention could have thrown a less strong person off balance. But he made the most of his circumstances and changed the lives of those around him, even while he was in prison. “When I was 9 years old I wanted to be a doctor. I saw a 19-year-old boy from Azerbaijan who was isolated. They said he is isolated because he has HIV/AIDS. There was huge shyness about AIDS in Iran,” he began, explaining that his biggest challenge was helping people understand that there was hope against the disease.

In many Muslim countries, including Iran, policy makers are afraid of their religious leaders, he said. But he figured out a way to tackle this perception. Use the tactic of “if there is bad and worse, take the bad option.” He explained how he first convinced religious leaders that their efforts to help HIV/AIDS victims were not as bad as they were perceived to be. Then they approached policy makers to help change the attitude of the government. Soon enough, they were successful in setting up a National Committee for AIDS.

During the course of his work, he and his brother were arrested and detained. Then began a two-and-a-half-year prison term, during which time he did not lose hope. Instead, he continued with his work. When people asked him how he was able to work even though he was in prison, he said that his target groups were right there before him. A large number of AIDS victims are drug abusers, and so they were in prison. He started talking to them about drugs, smoking, safe sex, and better living. He explained that some of them did not even know about basic hygiene such as washing one’s hands after using the restroom.

Prison authorities got frustrated with the brothers, so they moved them around the prison, into different departments, in a bid to stifle their efforts to treat HIV/AIDS patients.

The story of this doctor who did not lose hope even in the most adverse circumstances was engaging, with many lessons embedded at various steps of his journey. Perseverance, dedication, and an unflinching faith in his actions were the key factors that enabled him to successfully treat patients and save lives.

SESSION 3: The Future of Inequality in the Asia-Pacific Region and How to Address It

Three-minute-long presentations on the theme of “A World of Inequality in 2020” got the conversation rolling in this session. Would inequality get better, stay the same, or get worse by 2020? Current and future problems were discussed.

Arguments that inequality would not change were as follows: World population is growing by 78 million people per year. By 2020, more than half of the world’s population will live in Asia. Many will live on less than \$1 per day. South Asia is expected to make progress on poverty; however, if efforts to improve education are not increased, much of this progress could be undone. We will soon be approaching the deadline for meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, yet almost all of them will be missed at the current rate. In 2020, world inequality will be about the same.

Arguments that inequality will get worse were as follows: Health care in Asia will see tremendous innovations in the future, but they will be available only to a minority at the very top of the income ladder. The rest of Asia will still have third-world health care standards. The most urgent needs in health care require holistic responses, of which there is a deficit in Asia. In education, technology looks promising, but in reality, a Technorati elite has emerged rather than a leveling of the playing field. In terms of gender equality, it may seem as if we are doing better, with more women in parliaments and on corporate boards,

yet we run the risk of formalizing inequality through quotas. Also, there will be many more marriageable men than women in 2020; this will mean that women may become a “commodity” for marriage as their numbers decrease relative to men. In terms of demographics, Asia will increasingly become divided between the very old and the very young. In terms of climate change, many Asian countries will be seriously affected by rising sea levels, which will cause mass migration and conflict. In fact, a whole class of people displaced by climate change could arise. New frontiers in space may become available, but they will only be available to rich people.

Arguments that the Asia-Pacific region will be more equal in 2020 were as follows: Many low-cost technologies are beginning to bring quality health care to the masses. A cheap \$20 tablet computer is being developed that will make educational access inexpensive for everyone. Government policy and intervention are working to narrow the gap between rich and poor. There are many current government policies that are helping bring the poor into the middle class, particularly in India and China. Civil society programs also are helping transfer wealth to the poor. Finally, tremendous overall economic growth in Asia is moving many millions of people into the middle class.

Responses to these scenarios were varied, including the following:

- For the poor, basic needs must be met; otherwise, all other innovations are meaningless. Affordability of basic goods and services at the grassroots level is absolutely critical. People need to be able to live and satisfy their primary needs before all else. As climate change gets worse, it will exacerbate other economic factors. Fewer resources and larger populations will put a premium on the essentials. There are protests in New York (i.e., Occupy Wall Street) against inequality. The elite want to retain their position of wealth and power, but they soon will realize that this is not a sustainable societal model. Social security is the right of everybody—the right to access the basics in order to survive. Grassroots and rural entrepreneurship are critical for economic development among the rural poor.
- Our goals are too far-fetched. For example, the Millennium Development Goals were too ambitious, and we are not on track to meet deadlines. Governments should focus primarily on delivering education, health, and governance; by focusing on these three things, we can eventually address the problem of poverty. Often, we are too focused on specifics, such as the current unemployment or growth level. However, if we give people good education, good health care, and good governance, then other pieces will eventually fall into place. Women have a very important role to play in this process.

- Conditions may need to get much, much worse before everyone “wakes up” and takes action to address the problem of inequality. Within Asia, some countries are doing much better than others—some are well on their way to meeting their Millennium Development Goals, while others are not even close. Grassroots social movements, combined with good governance, can make a difference.
- The issue of inequality has been well recognized by Asian countries.
- Governance is important. Politicians and policy makers share the blame for the problems of inequality in Asia.
- Health care needs to be a focus of many countries in the region.
- One delegate spoke of interviewing children in various Asian countries about their dreams for the future. When he interviewed these children, they did not have the same notions of inequality as adults; for example, poor children in Sri Lanka said that they wanted to be doctors and were not deterred by the fact that they came from a social situation that would make it difficult to achieve such a dream. Positive attitudes can be important.
- It is critical that we understand the particular social characteristics of the societies in which we are working; otherwise, many anti-poverty campaigns are doomed to failure.
- China in the 1980s was a much more equal society because everyone was poor! In order to fight poverty, you must be willing to take a practical approach and make sacrifices. People must realize that if there is sustained inequality in the world, then the bottom 90% of society will make it known to the top 10% that it is unacceptable; eventually, the top 10% will realize this is not sustainable.
- Environmental sustainability is crucial, as climate change threatens whatever progress we may have made in addressing inequality. Likewise, ocean conservation and deforestation are important because they threaten fisheries and wildlife that are critical to sustaining the human population.
- Conflict resolution and justice delivery systems are important if there is to be confidence and rule of law within a society. This will also aid the economy, as it will provide certainty to investors. All of the developed countries have recognized global inequality. Within the ASEAN experience, developing countries have the economic blueprint to build for success. In the travel and tourism industry, the number of women lost to marriage and motherhood is large—until expectations of women as wives, girlfriends, and mothers change, there will be fewer women in the workforce.
- Historically, we have had genocide, hunger, war, and so on. The very fact that we are now arguing about inequality is a sign of progress. It is difficult to argue that China today is worse off than it was 25–30 years ago. Today, poor children growing up on the side of the road want to be doctors. We need to harness this hope.

The verdict

A quick survey of delegates at the end of the session, by a show of hands, revealed that few delegates believed that world inequality would stay the same in 2020. Most of the delegates were either optimistic about the scenario or thought that it would get worse, with a slim majority choosing the former.

PHOTOS





BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Breakout sessions explored issues relevant to the region and asked the overarching question, how do these issues affect the ability of individuals, communities, countries, and the region to achieve unity? Six questions were framed, with delegates broken into the same number of groups.

1. The Young, the Old, and the Restless: How Should Asia Deal with Its Demographic Dilemma?

Three Groups, One Continent, Several Verdicts

Three groups across Asia were identified as most vulnerable to changing demographic trends on the continent. The “theme” that eventually emerged was to summarize these groups and the concerns they pose: “The Young, the Old, and the Restless: In Asia and in a State of Flux.”

For Asia’s “young,” the challenges identified are perhaps the most complex in recent history. Never have so many minors coexisted in such numbers across the continent or the world. Though the “axis” of Asian minors is centered in South Asia, the challenges that they face (limited access to health and education, questionable protection from sexual or labor slavery, increasing vulnerability to the effects of natural disasters and war) have effects across Asia.

For Asia’s “old,” the center of gravity of their presence shifts across the continent toward East Asia. But the human toll from the escalating and complex market of senior citizens in relevant parts of Asia (especially Japan) raises policy options and economic opportunities that could

have pan-Asian implications. For example, it is only natural that Japanese firms as well as the government would adapt senior-centric products and policies. But why are all of those options “inward” looking? If the young nursing industry in the Philippines provides services to Japan and other aging political economies of the region, why cannot retired Japanese engineers service (relevant and needy) Philippine or other Southeast Asian universities and businesses as trainers, teachers, or consultants? A pan-Asian “rethinking” of immigration and retirement policies, made with regional collaboration and continent-wide collateral, could redefine what it means to be “old” or even “vulnerable.” So, for Asia’s old, the challenges will remain the same—health, social security, and access to public goods and networks. But some of these challenges could be easily countered by the ability to do in another country what they cannot do in their own: work with pride and dignity.

Most complicated, perhaps, is the demographic challenge of dealing with Asia’s teeming millions: the increasingly disenfranchised, unemployed, out-of-the-loop, and angry youth—the “restless.” Here, the linkages with real-world threats as well as promises are almost phenomenal. This huge demographic entity across Asia has connections to every imag-

inable negative force—international terror groups, crime syndicates, and the drug, prostitution, and illegal immigration industries. There are positive or “socially advancing” associations as well—a driven and skilled workforce and pioneers in science, art, culture, and entertainment. Though overwhelming in numbers, the restless are underrepresented in almost every forum of almost every government across all political systems in Asia. Their involvement with their states’ political processes is the key method for engaging Asia’s youth and politicizing them. The verdict was that the vote should replace the grenade as the instrument of choice for this group, inflicting change for themselves, by themselves. As youth will “inherit” Asia, and perhaps the world, they need to engage and affect political processes rather than merely being shaped by them.

2. Can Asia Develop a Sustainable Energy Policy?

This breakout session examined the issues and geopolitics surrounding energy resources and policies on energy usage. Delegates discussed the meaning of sustainability, countries’ policies toward energy, strategies to promote sustainable consumption, and changes at the individual level.

What is sustainability? Energy pricing and energy access are important parts of sustainability. A country's mix of energy sources is also vital to the sustainability of energy. Of course, sustainability involves the consumption of resources in a manner that provides for immediate needs without compromising the resources available for future generations. However, underlying this "formal" definition of sustainability is an assumption that human behavior toward energy consumption must change. Sustainability involves changing the modes and manners of consumption of energy. An effective way of catalyzing this change in behavior would be to introduce equitable distribution of energy into the traditional "supply and collection (of charges and dues)" paradigm of energy distribution. This would force policy makers to look beyond traditional notions of "expanding the grid." In the end, sustainability must be seen as comprising social, financial, and economic aspects. Education of consumers is a long-term answer to bringing about changes in consumption behavior. The role of the media and communication in educating consumers is also important.

What is the value of a country's energy policy? Governments must be shown the path forward, and presenting them with the results of private-sector initiatives could do this. Many countries were mentioned during this portion of the discussion.

- Afghanistan is a country that is rich in mineral and natural resources but also has very high rates of poverty. Afghanistan's policy makers must promote regionalization of energy consumption to fix this problem. They must ask neighboring countries to cooperate to meet this end.
- Canada's experience shows that it is difficult to get countries to think of energy sharing.
- In Pakistan, government policy has often focused on the short term and on energy production. In doing so, little attention has been paid to sustainability, giving rise to rent seekers who wish to protect their interests and the status quo. The Indus Water Treaty of 1960 (which led to the development of Pakistan hydropower resources) is an indication that the possibility of an Afghan-Pakistan water accord does exist.
- German energy patterns are an example of hypocrisy in sustainable energy policy. Whereas there was great demand for clean energy, few are willing to live with the repercussions of wind energy—this is a classic example of NIMBYism (not in my backyard) in action. It is important for countries to learn from examples of government interaction in energy.

What can we do to promote energy sustainability? With renewable energy, the best way forward is to give smaller, cheaper solutions a chance and exploit these markets. Solar solutions in urban domestic markets are an area in which such markets could be exploited. Also, "big money" (i.e., coming from multilateral agencies) should be diverted

to encourage entrepreneurship in these markets. The Chinese decision to treat sustainability as a strategic concept is appreciable. Carbon trading can remain an important tool in driving change toward sustainable energy solutions. China is a "last hope" in driving change toward sustainable energy. The intense demand for energy in China and its appreciation of sustainability may make China a "window of opportunity" for sustainable energy. A "solar club" could be created consisting of countries with high solar potential to lead market change. Similarly, an energy agreement could be concluded between countries that could act as a bulwark against those trying to use trade restrictions as a means of stalling momentum in renewable energy.

What can be done at the individual level? Duties and other charges should be reduced or eliminated in renewable energy options. Such a step would weaken rent seekers who attempt to sustain the status quo. The role of civil society and parliaments in bringing awareness of sustainable energy is important. However, a question remains as to how civil society and nongovernmental organizations can realign their priorities regarding development funding.

3. Is Corruption Hampering Asia's Development? If So, What Can Be Done to Stop It?

In many Asian countries, bribery has become a way of life. This makes it very hard to stop the practice. However, these “everyday” bribes facilitate transactions and thereby keep the economy moving. This brings us to the theme of inefficient corruption and efficient corruption. Eventually, citizens need to be made aware of the losses to government—which are actually their losses—from corruption. A sense of outrage needs to be propagated in order to combat practices that have become socially acceptable, thereby diluting values. However, in some countries, the public is not entirely opposed to public officials benefiting from greater effort, in the same way that executives in private jobs take home bonuses as rewards.

The concept of “legal corruption” in Saudi Arabia is an example: public servants are allowed to take a 20% “cut” of the financing for a project as long as the project is executed well and does not suffer from any deficiencies in the future. However, if the project does suffer—for example, if a road wears away much sooner than expected—then the Saudi authorities have rather barbaric methods of dealing with the responsible officials. This apparently acts as a huge deterrent. In the United States, too, the concept of “legal corruption” exists in the

guise of campaign contributions and lobbying. Some delegates observed, “It’s ironical that democracies are so corrupt; makes you wonder if it is the best form of government.”

Is the media, through watchdog journalism, doing enough to expose corruption? What about the larger role of civil society? In some countries, the integrity of the media and civil society is in question—a recent example is India. Channels of whistle-blowing are important, and this needs to be facilitated through laws and courts to protect those that risk exposing graft in high places. Daily corruption, which ordinary citizens face, can be weeded out by using rational economic behavior with cost-benefit analyses—meaning proper salaries and adequate transparency, especially in government. Cultural factors could be used—for example, recall the Pakistani bureaucrat who did not want to take his family to the Haj pilgrimage on bribe money. Cultural norms may involve the invocation of a sense of shame or guilt when a person looks to take a bribe or benefit in some way. In the case of India’s Right to Information Act, is it good enough, and is it doing what it is supposed to do as a public disclosure law? This can be successful only to a limited extent because not all transactions are on paper—they do not have to be monetary, and, in the case of a public disclosure, the damage has already been done. Therefore, freedom of information is a deterrent, but not a full solution. However, former British prime minister Tony Blair wrote in his

memoirs that the stupidest thing he did was to introduce a freedom of information act, thereby admitting that such measures do work in exposing dishonest intentions. Social media could be used to create awareness and to educate people on how to stop corruption.

Eventually, the fight against corruption will have to go beyond monetary aggrandizement. It will have to progress to breaking down concentrated power, as this is what usually leads to trouble. In South Asia, corruption could also be viewed as feudal concentration of power. Legislation usually can only catch monetary corruption. Proper use of technology and strengthening of law enforcement and the judicial system can all be used to fight corruption. Through political will, corruption has to be the main issue of the constituents. One cannot fight corruption if people are poor and hungry, as this will not be their top priority. Once basic needs are met, people will care more about other issues such as graft and values.

4. Should Asia Feed Itself Before Thinking About Civil Rights?

The rationale for arriving at democracy in a nation is a phased process: the first step is to fulfill the basic needs of the people before civil rights issues are addressed. Once a threshold for economic development is reached, then civil rights issues should be addressed. In such a case, a democratic dictator who allows space for opposition might be suitable to lead the country for a period of time. However, even with a democratic dictator in place, situations could arise in which civil rights need to be addressed in order to uphold the rule of law. If there is a focus on economic development, it will be a challenge to hold an open debate. The democratic structure of the country must allow the people to voice their opinions on the decisions made by government. Yet how can the population prevent a government from making economic development an excuse to push back civil rights? Do we need a leader or an educated population?

The understanding of democratic practices and their importance depends on the literacy of the population. Therefore, education systems need to encompass a better understanding of democratic values. Education must be provided to the population, and it is the responsibility of the educated to bridge the gap between the educated elite and the rest of the population. There is

no threshold for economic development, but leaders need to find a way to grow their economies without distressing natural resources.

Every country follows a different style of democracy. The size of the population and the scale of the needs of the people dictate the style of democracy adopted by a country. The importance of civil rights may differ depending on the standard of living of the population. Perhaps the solution lies in local coordinated efforts such as media campaigns to increase awareness.

5. Will Social Media Transform the Asian Political Landscape? Should It?

Social media may be increasingly replacing mainstream media as a source for information and organizing. But social media comes with its own unique challenges. Because the experience of social media and its influence in the political sphere is different in each country, the breakout discussion revolved around what is happening in countries around the region:

- **Bangladesh:** Social media has given rise to citizen journalism, becoming a key outlet for freedom of expression.
- **Philippines:** Twitter is now a major news source, and social media is uniquely positioned to investigate government corrup-

tion thanks to a thriving online community of alternative voices and dissent.

- **Pakistan:** Although social media is alive, the challenge is to convert armchair bloggers into real-world activists. Mostly the upper and middle classes access the Internet. Better Internet penetration might translate into significant action.
- **India:** Social media has played a role in increasing civic participation among the urban middle class, but it lacks the regional flavor of mainstream media because of low Internet penetration in rural areas.
- **Myanmar:** Social media has had a minimal impact—only about 4% of the population has mobile phones, and there is almost no Internet bandwidth.
- **Sri Lanka:** This is a small country with 2 million Facebook users. It is still unclear how people will respond to attempts by the government to control social media.
- **Korea:** Politicians using social media have broadened the range of information traditionally available to voters.
- **Japan:** A new lack of anonymity makes posers more responsible but creates disincentives to outing government corruption.

Challenges to watch:

- Information or disinformation? It is easier for disinformation to spread and harder to stem its flow once it starts. Social media is largely unregulated, and misinformation can easily go “viral.” Traditional media has also played a role in disseminating misinformation, but it has the potential to set the record straight.
- Social media as an alternative nation-state: People increasingly exist in a de-regionalized virtual space. This acts as a frontier state—lawless but with the ability to become a superpower.
- Commodification and ownership: It is a virtual country owned by private companies that have access to the personal information of millions of users.
- Reinforcing existing inequalities in developing economies: If the political debate shifts to the Internet, only people with computers can participate. This is bad for countries with low Internet penetration.
- There are examples of the state usurping control over social media as well: China tracking people and surveillance of Internet use; Singapore’s mandatory “cooling period” before elections, which has come to include social media.

6. What Are the Biggest Impediments to the Development of Asia’s Next Generation of Women Leaders? How Can They Be Overcome?

Young women leaders were brought together to discuss their common challenges in Asia. A unique component of this session was that it began with an icebreaker in which participants spent 5–10 minutes meeting and talking to another person to learn that person’s name, organization, and, most importantly, one embarrassing event that had happened in her life involving gender. Once the participants had learned about one another, they introduced the person whom they had spoken to and told her story. This helped participants immediately build an intimate bond with each other. They then discussed challenges and solutions for the development of women leaders in Asia.

Challenges for Women

Socioeconomic and Cultural Norms

Women in the workplace encounter unconscious bias; a majority of men do not see the “issue.” When women emerge as leaders in rural areas, their limited encounters with men could be a problem. Cultural practices such as not allowing women to study or work outdoors affect their chances of overcoming sociocultural biases. In Muslim societies, women are rarely allowed to lead men, especially in religious fields because of

the sociocultural bias against their gender. Leadership is defined in narrow male terms.

Tokenism

The challenge for women is not being perceived as filling a quota. It is about being organically accepted as part and parcel of a modern, progressive social fabric. Quota systems may eventually set women up for failure.

Marriage

Women usually have competing priorities between their work and personal lives, especially as they grow older. They have to choose between being part of a larger family as a mother, wife, and daughter-in-law and being a leader. Despite having a successful career, women usually take a backseat to their husband’s career. Some wives and mothers experience guilt—the “is there yogurt in the fridge?” syndrome. This is because they are expected to be there to support the family, facing a never-ending list of tasks.

Awareness

In developing and conservative societies, women are troubled by a lack of education and awareness on gender issues. There is a perception that a woman with a career will not make an ideal wife, in countries such as Afghanistan. Because women do not know their rights, they cannot fight for them. Despite governmental efforts to establish laws and policies to protect women, there are inherent accessibility issues because of illiteracy, poverty, and so on.

Examples include crimes against women, rights to land, and emphasis on microfinance but no training to support implementation. There is also inadequate law enforcement on the part of authorities and pressure groups—words rarely translate into action, especially in developing communities.

Solutions

The first step is to include men in the dialogue to advance gender diversity. Women and men can both create awareness of the impact of not including women in leadership and decision making. They can educate men on women's challenges and how to help. Women should be portrayed as role models—they should be cultivated, and the struggles of past women leaders should be acknowledged. The real success stories of women can be showcased to inspire others, especially in rural areas.

Women should have a seat at the table to change the nature of leadership from being male dominated to being more inclusive. Leadership opportunities for girls should be created through education and, at a younger age, through school programs. Women's mental health should be adequately highlighted and addressed by establishing the correlation between mental health and productivity. Efforts should be made to remove taboos surrounding women's health so that they can compete on an equal platform in all spheres of life. The commodification

of women, especially in the media, should be reduced by breaking down stereotypes. Avenues for networking and supporting other women by reaching out to each other can be established to keep women moving ahead. On the whole, it is essential to have simple goals that are easy to implement. Some examples might include changing male characters and superheroes in children's books to female ones, complimenting women's abilities and not just their looks, and reinterpreting religious texts that promote a patriarchal view of society.

Public Service Projects

Participants used this opportunity to exchange project ideas with one another. All projects were given a minute of floor time for introduction, and then delegates were allowed to make deeper inroads into those that interested them. Themes ranged from environmental sustainability to children's literature to geopolitical relations. Projects also involved nearly every Asian country represented at the summit. The following is a brief summary of the projects:

- **Asia 21 Entrepreneurs Network**—Imagine a bookstore owner in Kathmandu facing the same strategic challenges as her counterpart in Taipei. Or a Bhutanese entrepreneur seeking a distribution partner in the Philippines. Picture an investor in Singapore looking for experts in Malaysian real estate. Or a venture philanthropy fund in Pakistan raising funds from abroad. These are the types of connections that Asia 21's Entrepreneurs Network aims to establish and the problems that it seeks to solve. Coming together in Delhi served as a riveting introduction to young leaders in the region, but ensuring that these linkages realize their potential and are extended to Asia 21's alumni around the world are the primary objectives of the Entrepreneurs Network. The network first seeks to establish a forum on the Internet (via Asia 21's intranet) that includes not only delegates who participated in the session but also interested Asia 21 alumni from across the globe. It is then the network's intention to offer users a forum to post questions or request help from other delegates, with the idea that those who benefit from the network will help others in return.
- **Asia 21 Media Network**—This project aims to build a network of Asia 21 members working in media across Asia to share information about its Young Leaders and their work and activities and to increase media exposure not only within their own countries but across all of Asia.
- **Building a Socially Sustainable Microfinance System**—Microfinance encompasses a range of financial services, including savings, credit, remittances, insurance, and pension products, that cater to the special needs of the austere sections of economy. Around the world, institutions providing microfinance services play a vital role in the inclusion of the unbanked population, with the goal of empowering the poor financially. The team proposes to prepare a white paper on the topic that would broadly cover the following issues: appropriate ways to provide need-based microfinance and all-around welfare generation; appropriate ways to enhance practitioner capacity for welfare generation; appropriate regulation and supervision of microfinance institutions; and the potential for microfinance institutions to act as agents for mainstream banking institutions in providing financial services.
- **Call Forward**—This project aims to influence young people in the arts and culture field in Asian countries by utilizing the power of Asia 21's Young Leaders network. (There are many organizations in charge of promoting "culture" in each country, but many focus only on domestic issues. It is important to exchange talents with other countries in order to promote culture). Notably, it will provide a platform for Asia 21 members to invite others to speak at conferences in their home countries.
- **Empower Pak**—This idea emerged after the creator and his wife experienced disabilities. The plan is to establish a social counseling center for women with disabilities.
- **Kopernik** (<http://kopernik.info>) is a technology marketplace for the developing world. Kopernik's mission is to connect people in developing countries to simple, life-changing technologies through an online marketplace. The technologies disseminated by Kopernik include solar light, fuel-efficient cook stoves, water filters, and solar-powered hearing aids. The objective of Kopernik's project for Asia 21 is to broaden its technology offerings, especially in developing countries, connect with local partners in developing countries to devise creative distribution mechanisms, and expand its funding circle.

-
- **Strengthening Scholastic Competitiveness**—This project aims to provide free tertiary education to poor but talented students in Asia, starting in Cambodia and the Philippines. Target universities are the top schools in Asia, North America, and Europe. Target funding sources are the universities themselves or those connected to the Asia Society. The project plans to award up to five scholarships under the Asia Society banner by the end of 2012. The project will equip high school students with the necessary academic and formative skills (including but not limited to language, cultural fit, and self-esteem) to access quality tertiary education. Scholarship recipients would seek mentors within the Asia Society network throughout their tertiary studies. Upon graduation, scholarship recipients must return to Asia to benefit Asian societies.
 - **Solar Lighting for Households without Electricity**—This project would provide solar-powered lighting products, enabling families using kerosene and other fuels to upgrade. Project proponents are especially interested in distribution and educational channels. The focus is on how to make products available through the public health sector, specifically through midwives who serve rural communities.
 - **Syincubate** is envisioned as a mentorship program-cum-incubator that will identify and provide dedicated support for the implementation of high-potential ideas for sustainable projects and ventures. This is will be done by providing seed funding to selected projects; brokering relationships and partnerships relevant to incubatees; providing access to relevant professional and industry networks; and providing mentorship and strategic and business advice to incubatees. The project proposals for incubation will be evaluated on three criteria: sustainability, innovation, and feasibility.
 - **Touchable Earth** is a tablet-based world book in which children in each country demonstrate and explain facts about their country. The project will partner with the largest school network in the world and the largest social network for children to gather and distribute content. The first chapter, on Brazil, will be in beta by the end of March 2012. An Asia chapter is expected to be launched by early May, followed by Europe, Africa, and the Middle East by August. The social aspect of the venture is getting the program into the hands of as many students as possible such as through partnerships with organizations putting computers in schools.

Asia Society—Bank of America Merrill Lynch Public Service Award

This award recognizes an organization that serves underprivileged social and economic groups, communities, and the public in the Asia-Pacific region. The Public Service Award aims to do the following:

- Recognize the achievements of a small to medium-sized organization engaged in public service in the Asia-Pacific region
- Provide an award to recognize the work of the organization
- Provide ongoing support for the organization through the assistance of the Asia 21 Class of 2011 Fellows
- Replicate successful activities of the organization in other countries

Roots of Health won the Asia Society/Bank of America Merrill Lynch Public Service Award for its work in rural Philippines on preventing teenage pregnancy, promoting contraceptive use and family planning, and training teenage mothers. Amina Evangelista Swanepoel, executive director, accepted the award on behalf of Roots of Health. The organization received a certificate, a US\$10,000 cash prize, and a yearlong commitment from the Asia 21 Class of 2011 Fellows during the Asia 21 Public Service Award ceremony.

Swanepoel and her mother founded Roots of Health in 2009 to work with women and girls to secure their rights to health and freedom from violence. It helps women protect the health and well-being of their children by providing education focused on reproductive health, critical thinking, and human rights, as well as access to clinical services. Future plans involve approaching local government to work together on sexual health and reproductive programs in order to make the work of her organization more sustainable.

Previous winners of the Asia 21 Public Service Award have furthered their success and remained in contact with Asia 21 Fellows.

- **2010:** Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics, Singapore
- **2009:** Prisoner Assistance Nepal, Nepal
- **2008:** Mashhad Positive Club, Iran
- **2007:** Odanadi seva Samsthe, India
- **2006:** Chi Heng Foundation, Hong Kong