This is the report for the Third Asian Global Justice School of the International Institute for Research and Education – Manila (IIRE-MANILA). As was scheduled, the school was held last July 17 to August 17, 2011 at the IIRE-Manila office. This report includes general pictures from the preparation stage, actual conduct of the school and post-school prospects. It also includes general recommendations and observations.

Generally, the Asian Global Justice School was conceptualized with a purpose of reaching out more closely to various movements and gather activists primarily from the third world in order to collectively reflect on the present realities of the world and to strengthen the social and political agenda towards the New Internationalism through discussions on the praxis of different movements.

The conceptualization and details of the third Asian Global Justice School was initially designed during the evaluation day – the last day – of the Second School. During said day, the dates and the preparation schedules and fund sourcing were being laid down. This was done in order to maximize the inputs, and gain the commitments, of the Second School participants representing their respective organizations.

The Course Program and Design was finalized by a committee from the IIRE Manila and Amsterdam. The references for the 3rd School Program were the previous courses as well as the issues and questions that aroused during the second school. Lecturers were also encouraged to incorporate into their respective topics the international developments and events such as the Arab Uprisings and the incidents in Japan, whenever and wherever relevant. Experiences of the Amsterdam school in organizing international schools, once again, gave valuable inputs.

The 3rd School was planned to primarily focus on inviting organizations which already sent participants in the previous schools, but with special consideration to some identified Left organizations in Asia which the IIRE-Manila and/or its befriended organization/s have already established some form of relations.

Resource generation was agreed to be made in a collective way, which means that sending organizations would also find ways to help defray the costs of their representatives' participation. While on the other hand, joint appeal to sections and other organizations was also planned.

Invitations and Information Dissemination

The schedule of the 3rd School was first formally announced last October 4, 2010 or less than two (2) months after the second school. Invitations were officially disseminated to target organizations in forms of Official Circulars. The IIRE-Manila released two circulars: first in November 15, 2010, which contains basic information regarding the upcoming school; second, was released last May 5, 2011, which is a more detailed circular containing all necessary information and aspects of the 3rd school.

The announcements and circulars were also published in the IIRE-Manila website. Befriended organizations also circulated the Circulars to their network of organizations. The IIRE in Amsterdam also published and circulated a Joint Circular containing the school in Manila and the Schools in Amsterdam.

Participants

Twelve participants, with seven (7) male and five (5) female, attended this year's School. The participants came from befriended organizations in Australia (1 participant), Philippines (five participants from two political blocks), Indonesia (three participants from two organizations), Pakistan (1 participant), Sri Lanka (1 participant) and Bangladesh (1 participant). Two female walk-in participants from two different organizations in the Philippines also attended few selected topics.

Asian School lecturers who stayed several days at the IIRE-Manila also attended the daily discussions in the school. These lecturers came from the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, the Netherlands and France.

To help the participants prepare for the school, an exclusive social networking site where advance reading materials for the school can be accessed was made. Majority of the participants were able to access the advance materials. This exclusive site also allows the registered members to interact with each other. Some of the Resource Persons were also able to send advance reading materials.

Resource Persons

Target lecturers were sent circulars and personalized invitation letters for the school. Details on their topics, as well as suggested guidelines were stated in the invitation letter. Like the previous school, we tried to have more Asian composition of Lecturers for financial and practical reasons.

There are 10 lecturers for the 3rd school. Three were European, and seven were Asian in which five came from various political blocks in the Philippines. Only one Lecturer was a woman, who was tasked to give discussions on Feminism.

During the course of the preparations, an additional short topic was added at the last part of the school. The topic was the campaign on Reclaiming the Commons under the Crisis, which was handled by a campaign movement which is also a network of the Institute in Manila. The discussant is a woman anti-neoliberal activist and Asian campaigner.

Building Physical Preparation

In order to further improve the physical set-up of the building and make it more conducive for a three-week focus school, certain repairs and improvements were made.

An Air conditioning unit was installed in the session hall to offset the warm and humid weather in Manila. A kitchen extension with better ventilation was also made. Classroom type long tables and chairs were provided – a different set-up compared to the second school.

Resource Generation

The primary plan for resource generation works was still the traditional Joint Financial Campaigns and Donation seeking to particular sections and individuals, as well as some registration fee from able-to-pay participants. Other sources such as foundations were also explored for funding but efforts were not successful. Sending organizations were also encouraged to raise funds for their own participants.

The Joint financial Campaigns were sent twice, in 2010 and 2011. It is observable that there were fewer outcomes of the Joint Financial Campaigns compared to the previous years. This is maybe because of the developments in 2010 and 2011 in some countries, like Japan, that needed international solidarity. However, last moment donations and contributions were able to suffice to costs of the school.

Daily Conduct of the School

The daily structure of the school was consist of three parts: a lecture from 9 to 11:45 in the morning, followed by the reading time after lunch, or from 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm. Discussion groups followed in the afternoon from 2:30 to 3:30 and a final discussion between participants and lecturer from 3:30 to 4:30 in the afternoon as the concluding part. Participants were asked to read the reading-materials the night before the topic is discussed in order to maximize the use of the introduction and the discussions.

The participants also joined in a big demonstration in Manila, in time for the State of the Nation Address (SONA), a yearly speech made by the Philippine President to trumpet the government achievements and to pronounce policies. The participants particularly joined the mobilization of the youth and the Philippine Airline (PAL) Workers.

General Recommendations and Observations

There was a greater balance of participation in terms of Gender compared to last year. This is both on the number of participants and on the quality of the daily discussions. However, there was only one (1) woman Lecturer. It was recommended, therefore, that the next schools should have more women lecturers.

It was also recommended that community/organization exposures in Luzon, which originally was part of the concept of the Asian School two years ago, should be realized in the coming schools. Organized urban poor communities and Workers Associations in the Metro Manila will be targeted for these exposures next year.