EARCOS

Global Issues Network Conference Handbook

We Can. We Will.

Dedicated to all those who have made a difference.

East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools

Revised March 2018

The Global Issues Network (GIN) Conference empowers young people to develop sustainable solutions to address global problems and to implement their ideas with the support of the network. The key ideas are based on the book, *High Noon- 20 Global Problems, 20 years to Solve Them* by Jean Francois Rischard.

"I strongly believe that it will take the combination of a new method of global problem solving and a new mindset …. Schools have a pressing responsibility in this regard to expose the next generations more systematically to these global problems and to help develop the new mindset that is needed --- the 'global citizens first' mindset… tomorrow's generations must develop a networking-oriented mindset if they are going to solve the burning global problems that stare us in the face."
   - Jean Francois Rischard

Global Issues Network Vision:

To help students realize they can make a difference by empowering them to work with their peers internationally to develop solutions for global issues. The GIN philosophy encourages all people, especially our students, to embrace the idea that they are changemakers and that they can make the world a better place.

The East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools (**EARCOS**) sponsors the EARCOS Global Issues Network Conference. Typically, a middle school GIN conference is held annually at an EARCOS member school. High school GIN conferences now take place on a bi-annual basis. This Handbook was originally copyrighted in 2009 under the EARCOS name.

EARCOS GIN: HS Conference Locations

History:

 Western Academy Beijing - 2008
 International School Bangkok - 2009
 Chinese International School- Hong Kong - 2010
 Jakarta International School - 2011
 International School Manila – 2012
 International School Beijing – 2013
 Bali Island School – 2016
 Concordia International School Shanghai - 2018

Using one of our EARCOS schools as the venue has been a very wise decision. Our schools are wonderfully equipped to host these events. These schools have the support personnel who are highly talented to make this work well for all of the participants. There is a sense of well-deserved pride among the students and faculty who host the conference. The GIN conference proves to be a celebration of the host school community.

There have been some benefits established for the host school. The host school may receive scholarship awards for the registration fees for their team(s) for "hosting" the conference. A keynote speaker may arrive early and could be invited to present to students from the host school who are not participating directly in the conference. Student Workshop Teams may present an additional time to the host school students as a benefit to both the presenters and the students. Additionally, having the conference at a participating EARCOS member school is very cost effective. Rental of a conference facility could be cost prohibitive and result in a need to raise the cost of the registration.

Conference dates range from January – March each year, depending on the host school's calendar and other key dates to consider (such as IB or AP assessments).

Number of Conference Participants

Typically, conferences involve between 250 – 400 participants (combined numbers of students and teachers). A host school should set a target for registration based on facilities and budget, and then aim to promote the conference ahead of time in a way that allows the registration goal to be fulfilled.

Registration Fees

Registration fees typically fall in the $150 - $200 USD range. Attempts should be made to keep registration fees low in order to encourage as much participation as possible. Teachers, as well as student delegates, generally pay registration fees. Host school student leaders may or may not pay fees; host school organizers should make this decision based on the overall budget and on the ability of host school student leaders to contribute monetarily to the conference. Scholarships may be extended to

local students to encourage host country participation in the conference and in exposure to GIN ideas and ideals.

Registration Dates & Numbers

Typically, an early bird registration date is set approximately 2 months ahead of the conference, usually with a registration discount or some other incentive, and a final registration deadline is set approximately 1 month in advance of the conference. For initial registration, schools are usually limited to 6-8 participants, with the possibility of extending team size based on registration overall. This encourages participation from a wide variety of schools. Typically, 2 teachers accompany each visiting team to ensure proper supervision of students at hotels and on site.

Once teams are registered, host schools should collect specific information from all delegates necessary for travel and organizational purposes (passport information, genders, ages, names for conference name tags, t-shirt sizes, food preferences), and school workshop information (each participating school should host a workshop for peers about a school project or global issue). As well, invoices should be generated and sent electronically to all registered schools in a timely manner so registration fees can be collected in advance of the conference.

Website:

Each host school develops a website to promote the conference. Pages/categories that are helpful in constructing a conference website include:
- What is GIN?
- Conference theme
- Schedule
- Registration (processes, links, instructions)
- Speakers and Panels
- School Workshops
- Teacher Workshops
- About the host school

During the conference, it is advisable to add a page for GIN media.

Budget

Registration fees will provide some of the necessary revenue for hosting a successful GIN conference but will not cover all costs. Most schools will need to seek corporate sponsors to cover some key expenses, such as specific keynote speakers, food, etc. The amount of sponsorship needed will depend on each specific conference in terms of speakers selected and other key costs.

Key considerations in most budgets include:
- Keynote speakers (speaker fees, airfare and hotel costs, possibly visa fees, thank you gifts)

- Student leadership training (some schools opt to use an organization like the Jump! Foundation to provide leadership training to student organizers and facilitators in advance of the conference and during the conference)
- Food (typically a morning snack and lunch is provided to delegates each day, along with food and drinks for advisors in a designated advisor room). A teacher social one night might be an additional expense, along with a celebratory dinner for keynote speakers and invited guests.
- Delegate t-shirts
- Entertainment (most schools arrange cultural entertainment in advance of keynote sessions to expose delegates to the host country's culture and/or to highlight global issues)
- Banners and programs: most schools print a hard-copy program for delegates and a variety of large banners for keynote sessions and for promoting aspects of the conference on site.
- Set-up costs (some schools may need to rent extra chairs or even rent a separate facility outside of the school to host the conference)
- Bussing (depending on where delegates stay, bussing may be an expense in terms of getting delegates back and forth to the conference site; bussing to and from the airport for visiting teams is also a consideration)

Sponsorship

Using the wisdom and advice of the host school's development office is key in determining potential sponsors. It is helpful to identify key expenses in advance and then approach sponsors in relation to specific needs. Schools can train student leaders to make presentations to potential sponsors as a way to further student leadership. Sponsors should be acknowledged in the conference program, possibly on t-shirts and by announcements (as appropriate) during the conference. You could invite sponsor representatives to attend keynote sessions and other portions of the conference, as well.

Food and Beverage

Host schools usually use their in-house catering services to provide morning snacks and lunch on each conference day. This should be arranged well in advance. Schools may wish to theme snacks and lunches according to GIN principles. For example, consider the carbon footprint of a meal and promote a vegetarian lunch, or a 100-mile diet lunch. This allows your food plan to support the overall vision of the conference and its messaging.

Consider setting aside a specific room for advisor snacks and beverages (tea, coffee, juice, water). Teachers appreciate having a quiet room to network and grab a snack throughout the day.

Try to avoid the use of single-use items throughout the conference. For example, ask all conference delegates to bring their own reusable water bottle to the conference and then provide water dispensing stations. This eliminates the need for additional single-use drink bottles.

Housing

Usually students and teachers book rooms at local hotels during a GIN conference. The host school should identify an appropriate number of hotels near the school campus and then negotiate conference room rates in advance. These hotels should be promoted on the conference website and visiting teachers should make their own hotel arrangements. If the hotels are within walking distance of campus, student ambassadors can meet visiting teams each morning to walk delegates to campus on time. If busses are needed, this can be arranged in advance to make sure all delegates get to campus on time for the first event of the day. It would be wise to ensure that the local hotels serve breakfast at an early hour so that delegates will have time to eat and still get to campus on time.

Schedule

Two, or two and one-half days, seems ideal for a GIN conference. Saturday - Sunday or Friday – Sunday are good options. Schedules typically include the following components each day:

* keynote sessions (usually one hour)
* sustainability team sessions (mixed groups of students from a variety of teams, led by a host school student leader; typically, these include ice-breakers on day 1 and some sort of meaningful activity or reflection on day two; sessions are usually 1 hour)
* student and teacher workshops (usually 45-60 minutes)
* simulations (1 hour)
* panel discussions (possibly themed around global issues and featuring local experts – usually 45-60 minutes)
* team debrief time
* morning break (half hour) and lunch (one hour)
* NGO fair on one day over lunch
* evening activities (optional: could showcase local culture or exploring)

See a sample 2-day schedule in Appendix A

Student Leadership and Roles of Student Involvement

One of the wonderful outcomes of hosting a GIN conference is growing student leadership in the host school. Using an outside organization that specializes in student leadership is helpful in terms of orienting students to their role and growing/practicing small group facilitation skills. Student leaders should also be trained to serve as ambassadors throughout the event (meeting visiting teams at the airport, serving as ambassadors on site to help usher visitors and direct traffic, serving as trouble-shooters to answer questions from visiting advisors and students, etc.). Students should sit on organizing committees to plan the conference. Leaders should be designated as keynote aides. Two – four students should be designated to serve as conference emcees and be trained in public speaking skills. As much leadership as possible should be given to the students to allow them to grow their leadership potential before, during and after the event.

Specific leadership tasks can encompass the following types of jobs:

- Student leadership team (these students lead sustainability teams, serve as ambassadors, emcees and are hand 24/7 during the conference; they serve as runners to set up rooms, putting up room signage and directional signage, finding materials and supplies, running errands and doing anything necessary before and during the conference)
- Committee leaders and members (Host schools may create specific committees to plan the conference. For instance: committees to organize workshop options, the NGO fair, student artwork and bulletin boards around school for display during the conference, panels, budget, keynote speaker recruitment and organization are all helpful)
- Media (before, during and after the conference it is helpful to have students manage social media and the capturing of photos, video clips and articles from the conference)
- Sponsorship (students can be trained to make sponsorship pitches, follow up with potential sponsors and handle all communication with corporate partners)
- Arts liaisons: including your school's visual and dramatic arts teams in the event is a rich experience

Keynote Speakers

Based on your conference theme, identify speakers who would deliver powerful and meaningful keynote messages to your delegates. You may invite some speakers who are more well-known and whose speaker fees may be higher. You should invite a balance of men and women, and you should ensure that at least one keynote session highlights a youth speaker. It's important for GIN delegates to hear from a peer on the stage during the conference. Keynote speakers may offer to participate in panel discussions and run additional student workshops, as well. Arrange all of these details with your speakers in advance and be sure to have a detailed schedule for your keynote speaker that they agree upon before they arrive. Have a student leader that has no other responsibilities, or even better, a dedicated fellow faculty member, as an aide to each keynote, helping them get to rooms on time and ensuring there is water, snacks, assisting them with transportation, food and hotel and airport arrangements.

Student Workshops

The idea that every GIN participant is involved in presenting at the conference is definitely a big part of what creates the "magic" of the event. This universal involvement is key to the empowerment and energy that the conference supports. Promote guidelines for hosting a successful workshop on your website well in advance of the event and help support visiting teams in planning organized, interactive well-executed workshop. Workshops should be 45-60 minutes in length. Try to limit workshop offerings to a reasonable number to ensure that there are enough participants to fill each workshop and spread participants around in an equitable manner. Your student leaders could put together a fun how-to video for the website in advance of the conference.

Some sample workshop guidelines could be:

* Focus should be on a global issue OR a school project/campaign OR something related to sustainable development.

* Workshops should include an interactive component: simulation, game, activity (something active where people are moving). Ex: Make a game with blocks on the ground to take up the whole room and use a big die; Ex: create a water walk with actual big jugs and rope and water if you're educating participants about access to clean water.

* Workshops should be informative: students should learn something valuable.

* Workshops should pass on important tips and info: if your school project was awesome, teach us how to replicate it.

* Workshops should be fun.

* Workshops should allow everyone, in some way, to speak and be heard.

* Workshops could include a handout or some sort of take-away so people can reflect or capture their learning.

* Workshops could include digital resources so students could use those later.

* Workshops should be led, ideally, by your team of 8 or by specific students allocated to this task. You decide, based on the make-up of your team.

Small Groups: Global Village Groups/Sustainability Teams

To facilitate students meeting new friends from other schools, it is a good idea to create small mixed groups to be led by your student leaders. On day 1, sessions can include ice-breaker activities and goal-setting. On day 2, sessions could focus on a reflection activity or a simulation. Use this time to facilitate dialogue and connections among the GIN delegates, fostering a greater sense of community and camaraderie.

Teacher sessions

While small group sessions are happening, teachers can meet and network in the advisor lounge. You can use those sessions for formal introductions and networking or brainstorming activities, as well. During student workshops, it is nice to recruit some GIN teachers to lead 1-2 workshop options for teachers, as well. Some teachers will be busy during those sessions helping their student teams lead workshops and that's okay; for teachers who don't have team responsibilities during sessions, it's nice to offer some teacher workshops.

NGO Fair

A nice way to involve community organizations, as well as expose students to the work of local NGOs and groups, is to host an NGO fair during lunch on one of the conference days. Invite groups that would like to promote their activities and share information, or even sell products that would appeal to high school students. While the fair is going on, you could also showcase local entertainment from your school or community. This is a fun event that allows delegates a chance to engage with community members beyond your teachers and students.

Calculating and offsetting the Carbon Footprint

It seems imperative to calculate the carbon footprint of a conference and then to offset it. In past years, ClearWorld Energy has been used to offset the carbon footprint of some GIN conferences. Calculation of the carbon footprint is another activity that the students handled on their own. The following websites offer carbon footprint calculators:

http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.html

http://www.safeclimate.net/calculator/

http://www.myfootprint.org/en/

http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/

EARCOS-GIN Film Festival

The inaugural Global Issues Network Film Festival was a huge success and some conferences will feature a film festival component. Each team of students could be invited to submit a film illustrating a project or to "share message that must be heard". During the conference, the best films could be viewed, perhaps in advance of keynote speakers. Host schools should determine if they would like to include this component and, if so, how to handle submissions and judging.

Additional Details:

Helpful things to prepare for your delegates:
1) A map of your campus and local neighbourhood
2) Shoulder options for visiting schools to explore your city before or after the conference (you could use a local travel agency for this). Make sure that this is all arranged before schools arrive and promote this on your conference website.
3) A communication plan: advisors should receive regular email updates from the conference coordinator about things to do/prepare. Get advisor telephone numbers as they arrive at the conference (or in advance), or use an app like Wechat if it is popular in your host country. This could make teacher communication efficient and easy during the conference.

4) Registration packs: when schools arrive, each team should receive a registration package including delegate t-shirts, programs and any other information you would like to distribute; it's a nice touch to include a gift for visiting advisors

5) Make a detailed plan for set-up needs and work closely with your Operations team

6) Make a detailed plan for tech needs and support and work closely with your Tech Support team

7) See if your marketing department has any school gifts they can donate; these could be given to visiting advisors or added to keynote/speaker gifts

8) Regular Meetings of the Planning Committee is vital. Ongoing communication of the planning is beneficial to the entire community.

9) Purchase some really nice gifts for keynote speakers; gifts that highlight aspects of local culture from the host country are a good idea.

Timeline:

1 year ahead: begin contacting potential keynote speakers; choose conference theme and design logo

8 months ahead:
- launch major committees and ensure each committee has a clear list of tasks and a timeline for completing those tasks. Have a teacher and a student co-chair these major committees.
- Launch website
- Begin recruiting panelists for panel discussions
- Begin communicating with local organizations/NGOs for participation in the NGO fair
- Begin looking for local entertainers to perform in advance of keynote speakers

3 months ahead: host a student leadership training weekend and follow up with regular meetings of the student leadership team to practice icebreakers, complete tasks and build camaraderie

1 month ahead:
- finalize registration and print conference name tags (consider listing delegate names, school & small group name on the front of the tag; the back of the tag could feature a small conference program)
- design and print programs
- complete t-shirt order based on sizes provided by incoming delegates as part of the registration process; finalize payments from schools before printing tshirts so you avoid having errors in the list of participating schools
- finalize media plan for promoting the event to the local community and beyond
- launch social media plan

- prepare room signage & do a tech trial of each room with the student who will be in that room on that day
- prepare art displays and bulletin boards around school that feature information about global issues
- prepare registration packages for all visiting teams
- finalize food plan
- finalize operations and tech plan
- finalize accounts receivable and make sure all teams have paid registration fees
- finalize transport plan for airport pick-ups and assigned student ambassadors
- prepare thank you gifts and cards for keynote speakers and panelists
- communicate with panelists about arrival procedures and locations for panels
- assign rooms for student workshops and small group meetings and school meetings (create a site plan)
- meet with school leadership to communicate what is happening and to invite school leaders to attend events throughout the conference
- finalize budget
- prepare prompts for teacher advisors to use in school reflection/debrief meetings

Appendix A: Sample Conference Program

Friday January 19th: travel and arrival day, registration for all teams

DAY ONE: Saturday, January 20th

8:15: Arrival for all teams

8:30 - 8:45: Opening Ceremony *(PC gym)*

8:45 - 9:45: Keynote #1: Melati and Isabel Wisjen *(PC gym)*

9:45 - 10: 15: Morning Break *(ES cafeteria)*

10:15 - 11:15: Sustainability Teams *(assigned rooms:* **check your name tag***)*

11:30 - 12:15: Student Workshops

12:15 - 1:30: Lunch *(ES cafeteria)*

1:30 - 2:30: Activity/Simulation with Justin Bedard from the Jump! Foundation *(PC gym)*

2:45 - 3:30: Individual School Meetings *(assigned rooms:* **check with your advisor***)*

3:45 - 5:00: Keynote #2: Kim Phuc *(PC gym)*

DAY TWO: Sunday, January 21st

8:00 - 9:15: Entertainment & Keynote #3: Ishmael Beah *(PC gym)*

9:30 - 10:15: Changemaker Panels

10:15 - 10:45 Morning Break *(ES cafeteria)*

10:45 - 11:45 Sustainability teams *(assigned rooms)*

11:45-1:00: Lunch & NGO fair with music and entertainment *(PC gym)*

1:00 - 2:00: Changemaker Panels

2:15 - 3:00: Student Workshops

3:15 - 3:45: Individual school meetings with pledges or action planning *(assigned rooms)*

4:00-5:15 Closing/Keynote #4: Peter Dalglish *(PC gym)*