

Bangkok Workshop To Introduce New Mindful Journalism Curriculum

Communication Arts Faculty of Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University will host a ten-day workshop from 4th to 12th July to introduce the new Mindful Journalism training curriculum that have drawn from Asia's age-old philosophical wisdoms.

This workshop is part of an IPDC funded project implemented by the Communication Arts Faculty of Chulalongkorn University to develop course material and train-the-trainers to implement journalism training in the ASEAN (and SAARC) region that will take a unique approach to developing communication strategies based on Asian concepts of communications that promotes mindfulness and social harmony.

Up to 16 mid-career journalism trainers will be taking part in the workshop along with the project team from Chulalongkorn University led by Dr Jirayudh Sinthuphan and Dr Kalinga Seneviratne. The trainers will come from Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The project team has developed 5 curricula for journalism training in Asia that have drawn from UNESCO's 'Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries & Emerging Democracies', and incorporated Asian philosophical concepts. The curricula include - Media & Society, Human-Centred Journalism, Reporting Climatic Change and Sustainable Development, Development Journalism and Communication Theory. These curricula have incorporate Asian philosophical ideas and communication theories emanating from Buddhist, Hindu and Confucius teachings that cover areas such as social harmony, protecting nature and environment, respecting cultural diversity and encouraging sufficiency economic models.

With development of mindfulness becoming a global movement today, all the curricula have a strong emphasis on mindful communication and its adaptation to the practice of journalism in a secular setting. The 4 journalism curricula emphasize the gathering of wisdom (panna) with the journalist being mindful all the time to peoples' suffering and the need to listen to them with compassion in crafting their stories. The communication theory curriculum challenges many western-centric notions of communications and encourage teachers to look deeper into Asian philosophical concepts in developing new communication theories and models.

Chulalongkorn University hopes to organize national seminars with partner universities in Indonesia, Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia and China in the coming year to promote the curricula and develop cooperative journalism training and practice projects in the Asian region. A paper based on the curricula will be presented to the World Journalism Education Conference in Auckland, New Zealand in July by Chulalongkorn University.

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