

International Exchange Activities for Children of New Immigrants: Going South and Interacting with the World ---Enhancing Cross-Cultural Advantages

(Courtesy of Hong, Hui-Zhen, Division for Indigenous People and Special Education)



To enhance potential linguistic advantages for children of new immigrants in Taiwan, the K-12 Administration, Ministry of Education, enacted the Directions for Subsidies for Children of New Immigrants in Senior High School to Participate in International Exchange Activities. With a new go-south policy being promoted, this program aims to broaden new immigrants' children's global perspectives so that they may enjoy better advantages amid the development trajectory of the southeast Asian countries in the future.

In Taiwan, the number of enrollments at schools for children of new immigrants increase year on year, most of whom are from southeast Asian counties. As the Ministry of Education puts a great deal of emphasis on their education and development, program such as "International Exchange Program for New Immigrants" has been launched to tap into their inherent linguistic and cultural advantages while promoting diverse cultural education as well as international perspectives, utilizing a wide array of learning resources, and strengthening Taiwan's mobility around the world.

Senior high schools across the country may apply for one of the following subsidies:

1. International cultural trips for children of new immigrants: schools lead groups to visit southeast Asian countries for cultural exchanges to expand students' global perspectives and enhance their cultural core competences. Each teacher-counselor has to take care of five students during a basically 5-to-7-day trip, and there can only be 12 to 18 students in each group during the trip. Each teacher and student will receive a subsidy of as much as NTD\$30,000 for the trip, and no more than NTD\$540,000 can be granted for each trip. Only ten trips will be granted under this subsidy program every year.

2. International cultural events in Taiwan: schools invite the children's collateral relatives who study in high school to visit Taiwan for cultural experience to promote exchanges and harmony on the both sides. Each teacher-counselor needs to take care of five students during a basically 5-to-7-day trip, and there can only be 12 to 18 students in each group during the trip to Taiwan. Each teacher and student will receive a subsidy for as much as NTD\$30,000 per trip, and no more than NTD\$540,000 can be granted for each trip. Only ten trips can be granted under this subsidy program every year.

3. Interschool visits: senior high schools both in Taiwan and southeast Asian countries invite and visit each other. As such, an international model for exchanges and cooperation will be established and learning effectiveness of new immigrants' children will be fostered. Each teacher-counselor needs take care of five students during a basically 5-to-7-day trip, and there needs to be at least 12 students in each group during the trip. Each teacher and student will receive a subsidy for as much as NTD\$15,000 per trip, and no more than NTD\$270,000 can be granted for each trip. Only ten trips can be granted under this subsidy program every year.

Potential applicants, including schools governed by local governments, shall send out a letter to notify their local educational authority of their attempt to join the programs by June 23, 2017. Public schools managed by the K-12 Administration may need to apply to join the programs by June 30, 2017. In addition, local governments shall send an official letter to the K-12 Administration for initial review by July 3, 2017, and the K-12 Administration will complete a review on applications on July 14, 2017. These programs aims to facilitate a more diverse environment for leaning languages so as to unlock their potential for children of new immigrants through the experience of international learning and more frequent contacts with overseas peers. The ultimate aim is to establish their own cultural identity, increase their knowledge of different cultures, and develop co-learning experiences and friendship through international exchanges and educational activities. As such, they will likely gain a broader

international perspective and fulfill the promises of diverse learning, given their strength they have in different languages and cross-cultural backgrounds.