

Photo Journal: Campus Asia Social Innovation Forum in Singapore experience



Being part of the students who attended the 2023 Social Innovation forum in Singapore as a segment of the Campus Asia Program was one of the best learning experiences for me. I was able to not only experience bits of Singapore history and culture but also that of South Korea, and China through interactive group sessions and external outings with the students from Peking University, Korea University (KU), and Nanyang Technological University (NTU). The 2023 Social Innovation Forum was held at NTU for almost one week, but it felt like we stayed in Singapore for a month due the immense quality of learning I acquired. There were several aspects of the forum that stood out to me and contributed to my growth as a social science student. But the ones I hold dear to me are first, the Culture, history and Innovation, second, Daily life, Food and Diversity, and finally, International Student Discussions and Language Exchange.



(With Treasure hunt team -KU and Peking students- at Merlion Park)

Culture, History and Innovation: During the forum, there were several learning activities in the schedule that gave me the opportunity to learn about Singapore culture and history. On day one, we had a campus tour of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) which in itself is a stunning example of innovation. The NTU campus is very beautiful, a depiction of smart living, and a great model of a sustainable campus. One of my favorite buildings at the campus is the HIVE, which has a very unique architectural design. Next, we had a Social Innovation Treasure Hunt, and during this time I had the opportunity to have a practical learning of the culture, history, and innovation in Singapore. I joined my group in exploring the West, East, and North regions of Singapore. In one of the shops, we visited during the treasure hunt, we met a shop owner who enlightened us on some of the cultural history behind *Batik* a material used to make some of Singapore traditional attire. I also found that this material is linked to other Southeast Asian cultures like Indonesia with differences in pattern designs.



(With KU and Peking students wearing Singapore Traditional attire made with Batik)

Daily Life, Food, and Diversity: Aside from the stories told to me by the NTU student about what Singapore daily life usually looks like, I got to experience part of that while living in the NTU dormitory. During forum sessions such as Heritage tour and after forum sessions when we had free time, there were several opportunities for us to interact with locals and we did. In this time, I noticed how diverse Singapore was, it was also really interesting to see all the diverse cultures of people living together.



(On heritage tour, Singapore)



Curry Puff snack



with KU and Peking students)

And it is important to note that, the food is also a representation of the daily life of these diverse cultures. Singapore foods and snacks always had a cultural history behind it as well as reflection of the daily life. For example, Curry puffs is usually bought from a street vendor and eaten on the go. This reflected the time culture and the busy work or school life of the people. The interaction with locals was so much fun.



(Singing with a Singaporean in public, with Waseda Students at Singapore Little India, At the Singapore National Gallery)

International Student Discussions and Language Exchange: The innovation forum was a platform for sharing and discussing various topics on innovation, social issues, and international relations. However, these discussions were held in English, and despite that there were hardly any language barriers. Even outside of discussion sessions, I was able to interact with students who spoke other languages and through this, they taught me some phrases in Korean, and Chinese. This language exchange added to the uniqueness of the forum, and despite varying cultural backgrounds we were able to get past uncertainties and make new friends. I highly encourage Waseda students to join take part in the next Campus Asia forum regardless of language concerns because the experience would widen your perspectives, help meet and make friends with amazing people. It will be an empowering yet unforgettable experiences of your student life.