

Campus Asia Plus Social Innovation Forum 2025 Report

Introduction

The Campus Asia Plus Social Innovation Forum 2025 focused on *inclusive development* as a fundamental pillar of the contemporary global development framework. The main objective of this forum was to recognize Asia's extraordinary cultural diversity alongside its shared development imperative. By doing so, the forum provided a critical platform for emerging scholars and future leaders to advance intercultural understanding, stimulate innovative thinking, and develop collaborative approaches to address pressing regional and global challenges.

The entire program was structured around two main parts: cultural city exploration in the morning and lectures and discussions in the afternoon — both designed to deepen our understanding of how inclusive development can be approached in real and diverse contexts.



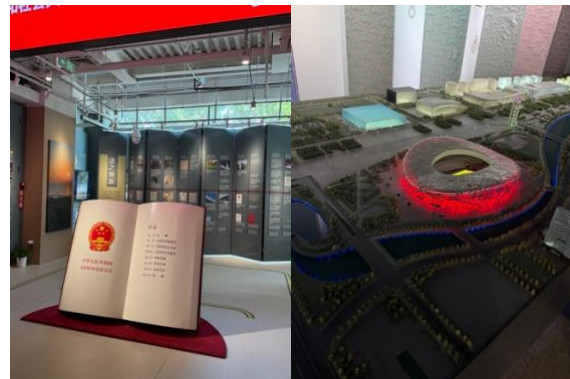
1. City Exploration

Our official morning itinerary allowed us to learn about Beijing as a living example of how history, culture, and urban development intersect. We began with a tour of the Peking University campus, where I was reminded of my previous days studying abroad in Beijing. Walking through the familiar paths made me

feel emotionally enriched, bringing back memories while helping me see the campus through a new, more critical lens.



Afterwards, we visited the Olympic Tower and an exhibition related to Beijing's Central Axis, which offered insights into how the city was built and how its unique historical and cultural values have shaped its identity. I appreciated that before visiting these sites, we attended lectures explaining their historical significance. This context helped me grasp each location's deeper cultural meaning rather than just seeing them as tourist spots.



One of the highlights was visiting the Forbidden City. Walking through its vast courtyards, I could vividly imagine how imperial life once unfolded and how this legacy still influences Beijing's cultural landscape today. This made me realize that cities are more than just physical spaces — they are living narratives that connect the past and present.



In the evening, after the official program, some of us gathered by the Shichahai lakeside area. Together with friends from Waseda, Korea University, Peking University, and Nanjing Tech University, we explored Beijing's night markets. It was fascinating to observe how local people enjoy their evenings, socialize, and build small moments of community. This informal exploration allowed me to see a side of Beijing life that is vibrant and authentic, and it was a fun way to bond with other participants outside the classroom.



2. Lecture & Discussion

The afternoon sessions consisted of lectures delivered by professors from Peking University, Waseda University, Korea University, and Nanyang Technological University. Each professor brought a unique perspective on inclusive development, and it was fascinating to see how differently the same theme could be approached.

The lecture I found most captivating was *“The Idea of Tianxia and China’s Perception of the World”* by Professor He Jiani from Peking University. She took a historical approach to show how the ancient concept of *Tianxia* continues to shape China’s worldview today. I had never studied inclusive development through such a historical and philosophical lens before, so this perspective was refreshing and thought-provoking. After the lecture, I asked Professor He a few follow-up questions, which led to a brief but meaningful exchange that helped satisfy my curiosity. During the group discussion and presentation, I played an active role by guiding our mixed team — which included students from Korea, China, and Singapore — to consolidate our ideas and approach the critical questions thoughtfully. Despite our different backgrounds, we worked together to analyze what inclusive development means to us and to identify the biggest problems Asia faces today.



As part of our final presentation, I opened with this introduction:

“Today, I’d like to begin by asking: What does inclusive development really mean? Inclusive development means ensuring that everyone — regardless of their background — has equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from economic growth and social progress. However, in many Asian societies, this ideal remains mostly aspirational. Deep inequalities still exist across social classes, regions, and different abilities. Whether a

society feels inclusive often depends on an individual's social position. But in reality, the true baseline for genuine inclusion should be measured by universal access to human rights and fair opportunities for all. One critical challenge that highlights this gap is unequal opportunities in education — combined with a harshly competitive system that often pushes disadvantaged groups even further to the margins."



We then discussed specific challenges faced by Korea, China, and Singapore and proposed an overall solution for building more inclusive societies.

3. Final Reflections

Attending this forum made me realize that *inclusive development* can feel both close and distant at the same time. On the one hand, countries like Korea, China, Japan, and the ASEAN nations benefit greatly from their geographic proximity and long histories of interconnection, which often gives the impression that we are growing together. On the other hand, the limits of inclusive development can appear even in everyday situations.

For instance, although I participated as a Waseda University student, my Korean background sometimes made it challenging to feel fully included with the Japanese student group. After the official activities, Japanese students often formed their own groups to hang out, while Korean students like myself were more often approached for help with translation or

practical tasks rather than being naturally invited to join as peers. I suspect similar dynamics may have played out for students from other countries when informal groups split along national or linguistic lines. I realized this is exactly what inclusive development is about — identifying invisible barriers that can exist even among well-meaning people. It reminded me that building truly inclusive spaces requires not only structural solutions and policies, but also a conscious effort from each of us to bridge divides in everyday interactions.

This experiences from participating the forum has motivated me to think more deeply about how to help create spaces — big and small — where everyone feels equally welcomed and valued.

