The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.
Program Agenda

The New Generation Seminar provides rising leaders with an intensive learning experience through a unique combination of study, dialogue, leadership development and travel. The first week of the New Generation Seminar is held at the East-West Center in Honolulu and consists of briefings by EWC research staff on key regional developments such as security, international relations, economics, population, health and environment, as well as sessions directly related to the seminar theme. The Honolulu program also includes relevant field visits, and an opportunity for the participants to engage with each other in dialogue on issues of importance to their countries. Each participant will be asked to come prepared to share a short presentation and lead a discussion with their colleagues in the program.

The second week of the program involves field travel to either the Asia Pacific region or the United States mainland to enhance participants’ knowledge of a specific theme. Recent themes have included: Asia Pacific security and the US role, innovation and industrial policy for job creation, the US middle class, and social and economic transformation in Asia Pacific and climate change. Field travel provides participants with an opportunity for in-depth, first-hand perspectives through travel and meetings with policymakers, civil society and business leaders, analysts, experts and others to gain strategic insights, best practices, and new understanding to apply to challenges in their own countries.

26th NGS Theme: Cultural Heritage and Identity in a Globalizing, Urbanizing World

Over the past 20 years, the increasing pressures of intensive urbanization, globalization and a trend toward modernization have been threatening cultural and architectural heritage around the world. In many urban areas, the legacy of the past is rapidly disappearing. In October 2016, global leaders will meet at the UN international Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) to create a new urban agenda for the world, and, for the first time, issues of cultural heritage and its importance to cities will be part of the agenda. There is growing recognition that cultural heritage and architecture can be a key resource and asset for building sustainable, livable, and dynamic cities, with evidence that conserving unique heritage can bring significant economic value through tourism and creative industries. Beyond that, it also plays an important role in fostering national and local pride and a sense of identity for its residents. In communities across the world, but especially in rapidly modernizing and globalizing developing countries, government leaders and officials are expressing a strong interest in placing culture at the core of development strategies, to consider what is important to keep for future generations before it is lost forever. But doing this is not easy as leaders must also meet the enormous pressures to provide efficient infrastructure, housing, sanitation, commercial development and jobs for their communities.

The 2016 NGS participants will explore the role of cultural heritage in economic development, urban planning, tourism, and in preserving and promoting a sense of local and national identity through meetings and visits with leaders and policymakers, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, academic experts and practitioners in Honolulu, Phnom Penh, and Yangon. Honolulu will provide an example of a US city struggling to preserve its local identity and culture in its tourism development and as it upgrades its aging infrastructure and revitalizes its urban core. Phnom Penh and Yangon represent common challenges in developing nations of rapid urbanization, a need for development and threats to preserving their urban culture, including both colonial and post-colonial architectural heritage. Both are at a critical juncture in their development strategies. Phnom Penh is on a rapid growth trajectory after many years of war and internal conflict; Yangon is emerging from decades of economic and social isolation with a new democratically elected government. All three cities must manage break-neck growth, provide infrastructure and services to growing populations, attract outside investment and industry, and manage burgeoning tourism, while trying to figure out how to maintain and preserve that which represents and can foster their sense of national identity, culture and place.