



# Crafting the Future of Regional Collaboration in the Yushan Forum

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A Young Leaders Conference Report  
of the 2018 Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for  
Innovation and Progress

By  
Carl Baker  
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## ISSUES & INSIGHTS CONFERENCE REPORT

VOL. 19, CR 5 | DECEMBER 2018

TAIPEI, TAIWAN



## **Pacific Forum**

Founded in 1975, the Pacific Forum is a non-profit, foreign policy research institute based in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Forum's programs encompass current and emerging political, security, economic, and business issues, and work to help stimulate cooperative policies in the Asia-Pacific region through analysis and dialogue undertaken with the region's leaders in the academic, government, and corporate areas. The Forum collaborates with a network of more than 30 research institutes around the Pacific Rim, drawing on Asian perspectives and disseminating its projects' findings and recommendations to opinion leaders, governments, and publics throughout the region. It regularly co-sponsors conferences with institutes throughout Asia to facilitate non-governmental institution building as well as to foster cross-fertilisation of ideas. A Board of Directors guides the Pacific Forum's work. The Forum is funded by grants from foundations, corporations, individuals, and governments. The Forum's studies are objective and non-partisan and it does not engage in classified or proprietary work.

## **Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation**

Founded in 2018, the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) is the first policy-oriented think tank in Taiwan with a focus on Southeast Asian and South Asian affairs. In the spirit of the New Southbound Policy (NSP), the goal of the TAEF is to promote comprehensive ties between Taiwan and the 10 ASEAN countries, 6 South Asian states, as well as Australia and New Zealand through cooperation and exchanges in three major fields – including think tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and young leaders – to consolidate a sense of regional community in Asia and establish long-term cooperative partnerships. TAEF is devoted to building new mechanisms for regional cooperation among Asian societies. It is our goal to cultivate common policy blueprints for Taiwan, ASEAN and South Asian countries through frequent regional dialogue, while also highlighting Taiwan's commitment and contributions towards Asia's development through concrete initiatives for cooperation. In addition, the TAEF hosts various international conferences – including the Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for Innovation and Progress – with the aim of strengthening ties with New Southbound Policy partner states and societies, while also inviting other like-minded countries to participate in regional dialogue.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication results from *The Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for Innovation and Progress* (ADIP), a track II dialogue held on October 11-12, 2018, hosted by the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF).

The opinions, findings, views, conclusions, or recommendations contained herein are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies or endorsements, either expressed or implied, of the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) or Pacific Forum.

Pacific Forum thanks TAEF for organizing this important dialogue and empowering the next generation.

# ENGAGING MYANMAR THROUGH THE YUSHAN FORUM

BY AMARA THIHA

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As the Obama administration's pivot to Asia and Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) are gone as part of the Trump administration's withdrawal from Asia, balancing the rise of China and its regional influence has become a cliché and central topic in all strategic meetings and forums. With the Belt and Road Initiative taking shape to supplement the infrastructure needs of Southeast Asian nations, countries including Myanmar welcome the investment while seeking alternatives to balance the hegemony of China in the region with the options of India's Look East policy and the Japanese new Tokyo 2018 strategy for Mekong-Japan cooperation. Although Taiwan's New Southbound Policy (NSP) is another good option for Myanmar to consider, foreign policy has limited the engagements between the two states.

Supporting and adopting "One China" as its foreign policy stance means that official relations between Myanmar and Taiwan are almost nonexistent and that the NSP cannot be a part of Myanmar's rebalancing strategy. However, the relationship between the two societies go beyond official engagement of diplomatic missions and ties are strengthened through shared historical experiences and development. Indeed, Taiwan has the Yushan Forum to overcome diplomatic

constraints, while implementing its strategic position through engaging with the region's civil societies.

The Yushan Forum and the NSP are new to Myanmar's people and engaging with Taiwan was never considered as a strategic option. With the incentives of the foreign investments coming from China, actively engaging with Taiwan is not common. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean there is no space for Taiwan. Strengthening engagement through communities is not difficult – China has tried to use this approach for decades. Unlike China, Taiwan has the comparative advantages of collective memories between communities in previous decades. Having that as leverage, people-to-people engagements should be the priority for Taiwan to project the NSP on Myanmar – trade and investment may follow. It may be asked though, why Myanmar would still be in need of Taiwan's investments despite receiving billions of dollars' worth of investment commitments from China. The answer is simple enough: like other Southeast Asian states, it is to balance China's influence over the country.

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With the Yushan Forum as a platform, community leaders from Myanmar can participate and experience Taiwan's vision for engagements in region, as well as to explore possible collaboration in the region. This would create the much needed but currently absent

space for Taiwan and Myanmar to balance against China. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Eurocentric concept of balancing – in understanding and interpretation – may not work in such an environment. It may be wise to limit the scope of influence in areas with the most proactive engagements – that is looking through the lens and rules of playing “GO” but not the “Western Chess.” Here there is no king to checkmate. The objective is to keep occupying spaces until such time that we are made to count just how much ground has already been occupied. Undoubtedly, China has the resources and may occupy many areas, but the same holds true for Taiwan given its own advantages, and the Yushan Forum is the platform to do just that.

# FINDING COMMON GROUND

BY HING PHORPMINEA

*Hing Phorpminea is deputy governor of Kampong Chhnang Municipality in Cambodia, previously serving as Kampong Chhnang Provincial Hall's Administrative Division deputy director. Hing's main area of interest is good governance.*

The New Southbound policy (NSP) is a part of Taiwan's foreign policy under President Tsai Ing-wen that aims to promote increased cooperation with Southeast and South Asian states, as well as New Zealand and Australia. Under pressure of the "one China" policy, it might be difficult for Taiwan to promote the NSP given its economic size and political clout. But how does Taiwan address these issues? It has established four pillars under the NSP: economic collaboration, talent exchange, resource sharing, and forging regional links. There are many components under each pillar aiming to accomplish the NSP's main goals.

For Cambodia-Taiwan relations, it is imperative to consider the political views of the Cambodian leadership. Prime Minister Hun Sen has consistently held his view of the One China Policy. While there is no formal diplomatic relationship between Cambodia and Taiwan, the former welcomes investors from all over the world and there is a sizeable number of Taiwanese investors in the country. As evidence that the two countries are on amicable terms, there are direct flights between Cambodia and Taiwan, which have been instrumental in promoting better exchanges in recent years. With these in mind, it can be said that Cambodia's stand on the "one China" policy is entirely a political decision, but does not mean that there is "no relationship" with Taiwan.

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Cooperation among think tanks is the most applicable to Cambodia at present. Awareness of Cambodia's stance on the "one China" policy and its support of the "One Belt, One Road" is a good starting point for discussions with Taiwan think tanks. It might be possible to recommend ways to improve relations with Taiwan, to encourage cooperation in key development areas such as agriculture, healthcare, culture and education, as well as increased dialogues with civil society and the youth. For long-term cooperation and change in views, education, cultural exchange, and youth engagements are very important.

When I was awarded an educational scholarship in Japan, I learned about Japanese culture, its people, diplomatic behavior, etc. Since graduating, I developed a stronger interest in pushing for better relations and cooperation with Japan. This experience would probably be the same for Taiwan and ASEAN countries – Taiwan should provide more scholarship opportunities. Doing so would give people from ASEAN countries the opportunity to understand Taiwan's policy, its people and culture better, and the graduates from such programs could be advocates for better international cooperation in the future. Another suggestion is for the Taiwan government to promote a comprehensive exchange program similar to what Japan has with ASEAN countries called the "Ship for Southeast Asian and Japan Youth Program (SSEAYP)." The January 1974 Joint Statement states that this program, it aims to:

*promote friendship and mutual understanding among the youths of Japan and the ten Southeast Asian countries, to broaden their perspective of the world, and furthermore, to strengthen their spirit of international cooperation, and practical skills for international collaboration. As a result, it is expected to cultivate youth who are capable of exercising their leadership skills in various fields in the globalizing society and to contribute to society in areas such as youth development. These aims can be achieved through sharing their lives onboard the ship, introducing each other about their countries, and participating in discussions and various exchange activities both onboard and in the countries to be visited.*

Comprehensive exchange programs like this would benefit Taiwan's efforts in promoting cooperation with ASEAN countries.

Finally, it should be of interest to every country to include sports in its goodwill agenda. Athletic exchanges are some of the best ways to promote a better understanding among countries as evidenced by global and regional sporting events. It would be interesting to include a session in the annual Yushan Forum tackling international exchanges and communication through sports.

# THE NSP MUST BE PEOPLE-CENTERED

BY KEITH LEONG

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Having attended the 2018 Yushan Forum in Taipei, it appears that a lot has changed in both Taiwan and Malaysia over the past decade. In Taiwan, Tsai Ing-Wen has completed about two-and-a-half years in office. In Malaysia, the new government of Mahathir Mohamad has also just marked six months in power.

Taiwan and Malaysia are very different, but in many ways the two have a lot in common. Malaysia, like Taiwan did decades ago, made a transition toward a more genuine form of democracy after its 14<sup>th</sup> General Elections in May 2018. Malaysia, too, has broken the stranglehold of decades-long, one-party rule and is finding its way forward, seeking to make newfound freedoms more rooted. Like Taiwan, Malaysia is working to diversify and move its economy up the value chain, but also to nurture and retain the best local talent. Malaysia's and Taiwan's leaders face the same task of creating a shared sense of national identity and purpose. And Malaysia, like Taiwan, faces the challenge of positioning itself in an Indo-Pacific that is increasingly driven by the caprices of great power rivalry.

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Indeed, most countries in Southeast Asia are struggling with variations of these weighty conundrums. Moreover, as developing countries, they are constantly pressed to create growth, jobs and infrastructure for their people. They grapple with the legacies of colonialism, including of wonderfully pluralistic, but also in all too many cases, deeply-divided societies. In light of this, Taiwan's desire to engage the region via its “New Southbound Policy” (NSP) is highly astute and welcome.

It is perhaps unlikely that the NSP can do anything to alleviate the unique restrictions that Taiwan has to operate under, at least in the formal diplomatic sense. But a comprehensive engagement with Southeast Asia can never hurt and, given that the region is the fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific, Taiwan will never find itself isolated or friendless if this can be brought about. There is certainly much good Taiwan can do here and beyond. The opportunities for Taiwan to be “indispensable and irreplaceable” in Southeast Asia are manifold. In terms of economics, there's definitely room to grow. In 2016, ASEAN-Taiwan trade stood at [US\\$92 billion](#), but from 2010 to 2016, the ASEAN-6 only accounted for [just 13%](#) of the latter's overseas direct investment. ASEAN countries can definitely learn from Taiwan's achievements in food security and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Further cooperation in these fields can be brought about via existing frameworks. But it is not enough for investment to be of high-quality to create local jobs and technology transfers.

Southeast Asia is now entering an era of maximum scrutiny of foreign investment and trade deals. Civil society is increasingly less willing to defer to states in these matters. The controversies over the People's Republic of China's projects in Malaysia is just one example

of how this can have both domestic and geopolitical implications. Investment and trade must hence adhere to the best practices in terms of governance, transparency and environmental sustainability. Taiwan must bear this in mind as it seeks to forge ahead with the NSP and avoid the mistakes that other countries have made.

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People-to-people ties are crucial. Engagement with all sectors, including the media and civil society, is mandatory. Such good ties must subsist beyond the official level, should not and cannot be based upon the goodwill of specific individual leaders or party regimes. This is crucial to ensure that ties between Taiwan and the NSP target countries endure regardless of what happens on the political or diplomatic front. The presence of around [260,000 Indonesian workers in Taiwan](#), as well as of the 37,999 students from NSP target countries who studied in Taiwan last year—including [17,070 from Malaysia](#) (the second-largest origin country)—are just some examples of how people-to-people ties can be cultivated.

There were repeated mentions of Southeast Asian migrant workers in Taiwan and the youth at this year's Yushan Forum. Engaging and empowering them will give the NSP depth, substance, and reach, especially when one considers that these groups are often the most marginalized in our region. If Southeast Asia is to survive and thrive, it must move beyond its culture of impunity. All who wish it well must support this and not turn a blind eye to abuse of any kind. When all is said and done, what is needed is imagination, boldness, patience and hard work. Taiwan's

engagement with the region cannot be a top-down phenomenon, dictated by the vagaries of its politics or even the state of cross-strait relations.

Understanding Southeast Asia – to say nothing of succeeding in it – requires persistence and a willingness to commit to the long-haul. It will be exciting to see how the region and Taiwan will evolve over the next 10 years.

One certainly hopes that the NSP will continue and go from strength-to-strength. There will no doubt be many difficulties that will need to be overcome. But, as the Harvard economist David S. Landes wrote, “In this world, the optimists have it, not because they are always right, but because they are positive.... That is the way of achievement, correction, improvement, and success. Educated, eyes-open optimism pays; pessimism can only offer the empty consolation of being right. The one lesson that emerges is the need to keep trying.”

# THE YUSHAN FORUM AND THE NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY: REFLECTIONS, PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

BY MARIA KRISTELA  
CASTRONUEVO

*Kristela Castronuevo is legislative staff officer for Sen. Ralph G. Recto, Senate of the Philippines. She is primarily responsible for public policies on health, social services and community development, defense and security, as well as peace process and unification. She previously served as a researcher at the Armed Forces of the Philippines.*

Participation in a Pacific Forum's Young Leaders Program in 2011 first exposed me to Taiwan's political universe. My interaction with key government officials and political parties gave me varying viewpoints on the Taiwanese political scene, the history that shaped it, and the role of economics in it. The discussion was focused mainly on the cross-strait relations. There was, however, an emerging discussion on the changes in generational perspective with regard to the cross-strait relations. It appeared that the younger generation in Taiwan was keen on maintaining the status quo with China based on the realities of economic survival. They also wanted Taiwan to participate in the international community.

When I returned to Taiwan in 2018 as a part of the Taiwan Young Leaders Engagement Program (TAYLE) to attend the Yushan Forum, I was exposed to a new political universe and economic

dynamic of Taiwan. This time, there was not much emphasis on cross-strait relations, but a more encompassing New Southbound Policy (NSP). Prior to attending the Yushan Forum, my understanding of the NSP has been limited to it being a strategy to promote trade diplomacy and economic cooperation with countries south of Taiwan, the old Go South policy. However, the Yushan Forum left me the impression that the NSP is different. It is more comprehensive and planned and is geared toward a more people-centered approach. While Taiwan has always wanted to expand its role in the international community, the NSP serves as the strategic action plan to achieve such goal. The NSP capitalizes on the economic advantage of Taiwan in fostering cooperation between Asian countries not in areas of traditional security but more importantly on socioeconomic sectors and non-traditional security like agriculture, healthcare and technology, education, civil society, culture, youth engagement, and think tanks. These are the areas that are most relevant in most Asian countries like the Philippines.

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The sensitivity of the cross-strait relations, the “one China” policy and the ASEAN's non-interference policy has compelled the Philippines to be neutral in dealing with Taiwan. Some many argue that the relationship between the two countries can be described as “love-hate.” A

public opinion poll released by the Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation in mid-2018 listed the Philippines as the second most hated country by the Taiwanese population. Clarifications have been made that the same survey ranks Manila as the ninth-most-liked country for the people of Taipei. The disparity in the results of the same survey reflects the highs and lows of the two countries' relations over the years. The Philippines and Taiwan are both young democracies that share the same values: democratic processes, basic human rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law. While there was a hiccup in the relationship between Taipei and Manila due to an incident that involved the death of a Taiwanese fisherman in 2013, the two countries overcame it. Over the years, the number of tourists coming in and out of both countries has increased. Taiwan's recent visa exemption for Filipino tourists is one of several indicators of good relations. Taiwan has also been considered as the second home for many overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who have been in Taipei for quite a number of years due to the fact that these OFWs are treated with dignity and in accordance with the law. Trade between Taipei and Manila also increased in billion dollar terms. There is also an increased number of Filipinos studying in Taiwan and a number of people-to-people exchanges in the recent past.

The relationship can be further improved under the NSP framework. The most interesting and relevant areas of cooperation under the NSP are healthcare and technology, agriculture, and youth engagement. The Philippines is now in the process of transitioning to a universal healthcare system which focuses on an integrated healthcare delivery system and health technology assessment. Taiwan, having been tagged as one of the countries with the best healthcare system and outstanding healthcare technology, can serve as a model for the Philippines. It can also provide capacity building to improve Philippine capability in shaping and implementing its universal healthcare system. In agriculture, Taiwan, which uses modern agricultural technology, could help the Philippines, which lags behind in the areas of mechanization and

technology. Finally, Taiwan could provide opportunities for young Filipinos through engagement and cooperation agendas in the region.

One area of cooperation outside the NSP that could be explored is disaster response. Having been similarly devastated by natural calamities like typhoons, the two countries should explore the establishment of a regional humanitarian response in Southeast Asia. Taiwan and the Philippines can possibly take the lead in convincing other ASEAN countries to develop such a regional force. The severity of the effects of disasters in the recent past demand that various response frameworks developed in the past and the individual state's capacity for response should be harnessed for regional response. Taiwan, with its resources and technology, can serve as the training hub for disaster response team in Southeast Asia.

It is on this note that I would like to highlight the significance of the Yushan Forum. I think that the Yushan Forum is a great platform to highlight the developments of the NSP. Its focus on non-traditional security issues gives a "refreshing" Taiwan experience. It left me the impression that Taiwan has a lot to offer and is indeed a major player in the international community. But more importantly, the Yushan Forum can also be a venue to explore possible areas of cooperation in the future. It is also where the TAYLE Young Leaders can play a vital role by proposing possible future areas of engagement based on relevant and common issues between Taiwan and our home countries and identifying where Taiwan can extend its assistance.

# TAIWAN AND VIETNAM: MOVING FORWARD WITH THE NSP

BY THI MONG TUYEN TRAN

*Thi Mong Tuyen Tran is pursuing a graduate degree in European Affairs. She was previously an intern at the European Parliament, focusing on participatory diplomacy. Her research interests include Sino-Asian relations, ASEAN affairs, and integration.*

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen has introduced the New Southbound Policy (NSP) to strengthen the relationship between Taiwan and the member states of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand. As one of the NSP target countries, Vietnam has engaged with Taiwan in areas such as trade, investment, healthcare, education, and tourism. Among these, education is the most relevant to Vietnam as it addresses the NSP's "people first" agenda.

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The number of Vietnamese laborers in Taiwan had been increasing in recent years: 66,900 in 2017, which accounts for 30% of Taiwan's labor

force, ranking Vietnam second only to Indonesia as a source of foreign workers.

The common practice for Vietnamese laborers is to bring their family, including children, with them. This raises the question of how the education of children of migrant workers is addressed. While it is true that the needs of these children are different from local children, this should not put them at a disadvantage in Taiwan. In fact, such differences offer the advantage of enriching culture and language values for Taiwan and their country of origin. As "second generation immigrants" who offer important interpersonal resources and partner networks, children of migrant workers are beneficial in facilitating the development of deeper relationship between Taiwan and NSP target countries.

The opportunity for better cultural exchanges lies in the need for migrant children to sustain their knowledge of the Vietnamese language. Taiwan has taken an initiative to protect the identity interests of migrants and their families by teaching Vietnamese to migrant children to allow them to remain in-touch with their mother tongue. Such efforts were strengthened through increased language teacher exchanges in recent years. For instance, Taiwanese language teachers are sent to Vietnam to teach Chinese while Vietnamese language teachers are sent to Taiwan to teach migrant children Vietnamese. To improve these existing programs, they should be extended to student exchanges and summer camps focusing on culture and language sharing. The promotion of Vietnamese facilities in schools and public areas such as reading corners and accessible online language programs would greatly benefit migrant children in Taiwan as well as locals who are interested in learning about Vietnam's cultural traditions and language. Celebration of social events promoting both Vietnamese and Taiwanese cultures should also be carried out.

Through education scholarships, Vietnamese students are able to pursue their studies in Taiwan's higher education institutions in areas such as industry, technology, and medicine. For

some, this has opened doors for opportunities to work for Taiwan companies in Vietnam or work in fields that help advance further connections with Taiwan.

Another issue that could be addressed by Taiwan-facilitated education is the integration of Vietnamese migrant brides in Taiwan. Mostly coming from the rural parts of Vietnam and with basic to no education, they account for more than 70% of foreign-born brides in Taiwan. Language difficulties, culture shock, and domestic violence sometimes culminates in suicide, where the foreign bride felt more and more isolated in her new environment. To minimize casualties, the Taiwanese and Vietnamese governments could collaborate on culture and language classes for Vietnamese migrant brides before moving to Taiwan to equip them with the knowledge and basic Chinese language to better adjust to their new life in Taiwan. Similarly, Taiwanese would-be husbands should attend classes about their bride's culture as well. International unions should be founded on mutual respect, including respect for cultural differences. With a better understanding of each other's differences, each partner can be seen as an asset in the marriage rather than being an obstacle. Domestic violence should also be addressed as migrant brides tend to be at higher risk than their locals. Helpdesks and organizations providing rescue and psychosocial assistance should be made available to protect the rights of victims. It may be helpful to recruit Vietnamese staff as migrant brides are afraid to disclose their experiences to foreigners due to cultural or language barriers.

Cooperation between Taiwan and Vietnam in areas such as agriculture, healthcare and technology can be further explored. Taiwan's experiences in dealing with hot and humid environments of subtropical and tropical regions would benefit Vietnam's agricultural sector given the latter's similar farming conditions. Further cooperation in agriculture can be done through knowledge and technology transfers such as in the use of appropriate machinery and crop species. On healthcare and technology, Taiwan's healthcare sector is world-renowned—providing

high quality services at lower costs while Vietnam's efforts in the same sector are lacking advanced technology. Recently, Taiwan has chosen Vietnam, along with four other countries (Thailand, the Philippines, India, and Indonesia) to establish specialized medical centers. This bodes well for medical collaborations between Taiwan and the ASEAN, but particularly Vietnam.

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At present, the New Southbound Policy facilitates significant cooperation between Taiwan and Vietnam in several areas, but where it delivers the most visible impact is in education. I hope for these two countries continue to build on the positives of their existing relationship to maximize the benefits from the New Southbound Policy for the people of both countries.

# CRAFTING REGIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE YUSHAN FORUM

BY ALAN HAO YANG

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Taiwan's *Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for Innovation and Progress* has successfully held two sessions since 2017, with topics ranging from Taiwan's socio-economic link with neighboring countries to the crafting of regional prosperity with its neighboring partners (aka “partner-tunity” in social and economic linkages). The Yushan Forum highlights the innovative and valuable experiences behind Taiwan's development and how it continues to promote partnerships with the international community and governments in a complex diplomatic environment.

Some may liken the Yushan Forum to the Shangri-La Security Dialogue held in Singapore or the Boao Forum in China. The former stresses the importance of dialogue on high-level national security and regional strategies, inviting defense ministers, high-level diplomats and think tank leaders from key Asia-Pacific countries, while the latter invites economic and trade leaders from Asian countries to discuss the rise of China and its implications to Asia. However, what the Yushan Forum wants to highlight is neither the grand strategies nor hard security issues, but instead to emphasize that, by sharing Taiwan's experience, we further promote the idea of

innovation and progress where every member of the Asian region can think and work together.

## **Promoting Taiwan's participation in regional integration**

For Taiwan, the significance of the annual Yushan Forum is threefold. First, the Yushan Forum is closely related to the progress of the New Southbound Policy. It serves as a platform for Taiwan's government to show international policy achievements and soft development every year. At the same time, discussions in the Forum have successfully guided Taiwan to revise and adjust the implications of the New Southbound Policy and Asian policy. In other words, the Yushan Forum is a reminder for Taiwan to participate in regional integration and strengthen national development.

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Second, the Yushan Forum gives great importance to civil engagement and social connectivity between Taiwan and Asian civil society. It is a dialogue and cooperation mechanism initiated by the people and supported by the government through normalized management, think tank partners, NGOs, universities, art institutions, and other long-term partnerships with Taiwan, focusing on common interests and innovative development models through mutual learning.

Third, the Yushan Forum shows Taiwan's interest in the new generation of Asian leaders. Both iterations of the Forum arranged a session on youth leaders dialogue, focusing on experience exchange particularly on start-up enterprises and the advocacy of reinvigorating regional society. The future of Asian integration lies in the participation of new generation leaders, where Taiwan also hopes to promote dialogue and co-working experience between Taiwan and Asia's young leaders through the Forum. The first cooperation with the Pacific Forum Young Leaders Program in 2018 was a successful experience, which invited young leaders from Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Vietnam and the United States to engage in the dialogues.

#### **Providing multi-channel cooperation between Asia and Taiwan**

The role and social energy of the Yushan Forum, as well as the successful development experience of Taiwan and its achievements in Asia, are also of great significance to Asian governments. Governments tend to be constrained by the "one China" policy and have concerns about cooperating with Taiwan. However, it can be seen from the Forum that, on and through key areas – medical care, public health, higher education, personnel training, agriculture, and economy and trade cooperation – the Taiwan government actively promotes collaboration, which also directly contributes to the social and economic development of its Asian neighbors. For example, the agricultural demonstration zones that Taiwan has partnered on with Indonesia are a pragmatic and concrete contribution to the economic development of the latter's rural areas. Similarly, Taiwan's cooperative projects with Thailand and Vietnam in education and healthcare also contribute to the development of these fields in these two countries.

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### **The role and social energy of the Yushan**

### **Forum, as well as the successful development experience of Taiwan and its achievements in Asia, are also of great significance to Asian governments.**

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For Asian civil society, Taiwan's development experience is a resource for sharing warm power. The second day of the Yushan Forum was mainly organized by the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation and other member institutions of the Asia Engagement Consortium (AEC), whose network of partners in South and Southeast Asia have become invaluable in spreading Taiwan's experience across the region. For instance, Taiwan AID's partner institutions in Asia are mostly local NGOs, which combine Taiwan's social input and capacity building projects to enrich the local agenda for economic and social development.

The Yushan Forum serves as a reminder of the implementation of the New Southbound Policy as well as an important reference for Asian countries to keep track of its achievements. The TAEF, as the organization responsible for managing this regional forum, expects it to not only be an annual leadership dialogue, but also link Taiwan's overall relations with Asia to normalize relations and institutional connectivity with its Asian neighbors. Through this, the Forum can gradually accumulate various partners for progress and innovation from its daily operations, truly making Taiwan an important part of the Asian community. This is the most obvious difference between the Yushan Forum and the various strategic dialogues in Asia, and is probably the most important contribution to Taiwan's international space.

# THE YUSHAN FORUM AT TWO

**Taiwan's very own socioeconomic vision  
for Asia and the World**

**BY JEREMY HUAI-CHE CHIANG**

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As President Tsai stated in her 2018 Yushan Forum opening speech, “Taiwan can help Asia, and Asia can help Taiwan,” Taiwan is genuine with its cooperation-first, people-centered New Southbound Policy, seeking relationships that emphasize bidirectional assistance and common prosperity. Instead of competing with its neighbor's ostentatious infrastructure plan for the world, Taiwan, as the leading progressive democracy in Asia, is tapping in its strengths in the socioeconomic realm to redefine its presence in the region.

The solidification of this approach is reflected in the 2018 Yushan Forum. Strongly supported by Tsai as one of the New Southbound Policy's flagship projects, the annual Yushan Forum has positioned itself as an Asian platform for social connectivity and progress since its inauguration in 2017. But it was in 2018 that the Forum's emphasis on regional socioeconomic development became more pronounced. Socioeconomic development had long remained an unoccupied niche, since most large-scale international forums in the region tended to focus on security and geopolitics, with famous examples such as the Shangri-La Dialogue and the Raisina Dialogue.

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inauguration in 2017.**

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In terms of regional socioeconomic development, Taiwan believes that not only bridges and dams, but also “soft-infrastructure” such as smart agriculture and high-quality public health systems contribute to development in the region. While grand projects may deliver statistical growth, they need to be combined with people-centered efforts that assist in comprehensively uplifting the lives of individuals and local communities. As Asia prepares for a more materially prosperous future, Taiwan is using the Yushan Forum to present this vision to the region, and hopes to highlight the contributions Taiwan offers to make these ambitions a reality.

So far, the Yushan Forum is gradually but positively making a mark for itself. The 2018 Yushan Forum hosted more than 1,000 participants from Taiwan and neighboring countries, while also featuring 51 representatives from 17 countries, including international leaders such as Nobel Peace Prize laureates Frederik Willem de Klerk and Kailash Satyarthi. As Taiwanese officials and experts presented the country's efforts alongside the achievements of the New Southbound Policy, Asian counterparts also shared their experiences in tackling shared socioeconomic challenges, while like-minded countries such as US and Japan weighed in with their tested expertise. These were all crucial conversations that pertain to shared regional challenges.

The Yushan Forum is no mere talk shop. Taiwan is utilizing the Forum to connect with regional stakeholders and formulate blueprints for cooperation with regional partners. The New Southbound Policy's five flagship programs — innovative industries, medical cooperation and industrial supply chains, policy forums and youth exchange, regional agriculture, and talent cultivation — were also reflected in the 2018 [agenda](#), which connects Taiwan's regional vision with the discussion on the floor. Compared to the previous iteration, the 2018 Yushan Forum added a new session on cultural exchange, reemphasizing Taiwan's aspirations for “comprehensive” exchanges with the region.

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**The Yushan Forum is  
no mere talk shop.**

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While the Yushan Forum still needs to widen its existing audience base, it is already on track to help Taiwan move beyond the Taiwan Strait and relocate itself within Asia. As Asia enters a new era of uncertainty, it is true that Taiwan can and is willing to help its immediate neighbors. The Forum is a key regional platform in the making, and will assist Taiwan in presenting its contributions and formulate action plans to combat shared challenges in the world.

# A SHARED VISION: ENGAGING ASIAN YOUNG LEADERS

BY KEONI WILLIAMS

*Keoni Williams is director of the Young Leaders Program at Pacific Forum, a Hawaii-based foreign policy think tank focused on the Asia-Pacific region.*

The partnership between the Taiwan-Asian Young Leaders Engagement (TAYLE) of the Taiwan-Asian Exchange Foundation and the Pacific Forum Young Leaders Program is a mutually-beneficial one.

Since 2004, the Young Leaders Program has helped more than 1,200 Young Leaders from 60 countries realize their full potential through mentorship, network building, and participation in senior-level policy conferences and dialogues across the Indo-Pacific. Among other accolades, TAEF's bold efforts to provide a constructive regional platform where the next generation can establish a regional community resulted in its selection as one of the Best New Think Tanks in the *2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report* – an impressive accomplishment for a think tank founded just one year ago.

Beyond our shared vision, our partnership is mutually-beneficial in four key ways. Working together, we are able to access networks that may not otherwise be accessible to our organizations, provide more opportunities to our program beneficiaries, maximize the impact of each dollar spent, and make an investment that will pay dividends in regional peace and stability for years to come.

First, our partnership means we are able to leverage networks that may not otherwise be accessible to our individual organizations. Moving forward, the TAYLE can browse our extensive network of Young Leaders around the world to identify program participants based on

occupation, nationality, research interests, and more. The Young Leaders Program will also benefit from increased access to TAEF's extensive network of scholars, subject-matter experts, and emerging leaders in Taiwan and throughout the region.

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**...our partnership  
means we are able to  
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individual  
organizations.**

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Second, our partnership will provide more Asian emerging leaders the opportunity to participate in senior-level policy discussions in their region. The benefits are twofold. Next-generation participants gain invaluable hands-on experience in the policy making process in addition to horizontal (peer-to-peer) and vertical (junior-to-senior) networking opportunities. Their senior counterparts can also benefit from their participation. When next-generation participants are given the opportunity to contribute to discussions, they tend to think differently about problems and solutions. Ironically, a certain level of naiveté can help push conversations forward.

Third, program-to-program collaboration on regional projects with similar objectives makes financial sense. For example, the Pacific Forum Young Leaders Program and TAYLE worked together to curate a delegation of emerging leaders from South and Southeast Asia to participate in the 2018 *Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for Innovation and Progress*. Syndicating our resources to accomplish shared objectives allowed us to achieve our goals while keeping expenses low. Using resources efficiently

by identifying synergies in program objectives is not just smart for business, it strengthens our partnership.

Fourth, investing in Asian emerging leaders today will pay dividends in regional peace and stability for years to come. A peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific is a future both TAEF and Pacific Forum are working hard to create. “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” said President Tsai in her keynote speech at the 2018 Yushan Forum. It is in this spirit of teamwork and cooperation that the Pacific Forum Young Leaders Program looks forward to continued partnership with the Taiwan-Asian Young Leaders Engagement.

# INVESTING IN THE YOUTH

BY YURI BARAL

*Yuri Baral is program manager of the Taiwan-Asian Young Leaders Engagement (TAYLE) and assistant research fellow for TAEF's Department of International Collaboration. His research interests are international regime theory, geospatial analysis, migration and forced displacement, transnational governance and knowledge production, and regional security.*

*"The young, free to act on their initiative, can lead their elders in the direction of the unknown..."*

*The children, the young, must ask the questions that we would never think to ask, but enough trust must be re-established so that the elders will be permitted to work with them on the answers."*

*-Margaret Mead*

At the beginning of Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen's term in office, she promised to promote a better environment for young people in the island. That promise not only touched on social and economic welfare of the younger generation and their families, but also on the potential behind engaging them in national and regional development. The spirit behind this promise and belief in young talent extends to the branches of government, educational institutions, industries and organizations in Taiwan, but none takes it to heart more than the Taiwan-Asian Exchange Foundation (TAEF).

The TAEF is a young, policy-oriented think tank focusing on Southeast Asian and South Asian affairs, following the spirit of Taiwan's New Southbound Policy of building better ties with the 10 ASEAN countries, six South Asian states, as well as Australia and New Zealand and other like-minded countries beyond the island's immediate surroundings. The Foundation is also responsible for organizing the *Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for Innovation and Progress*, an annual

platform for Asian regional dialogue showcasing the achievements of governmental and non-governmental cooperation between Taiwan and partner countries.

Along with its other core programs — regional resilience, think tank collaboration, cultural exchange, and civil society cooperation, the TAEF puts great value on engaging the youth and their brand of leadership in tackling some of Asia's pressing challenges.

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**...the TAEF puts great value on engaging the youth and their brand of leadership in tackling some of Asia's pressing challenges.**

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Untested, idealistic, impassioned, and predisposed to err, it is not uncommon to find skeptics about tapping young people as agents of social change. Old politics and traditional industries have always had a tight grip on how things are run based on what approaches have worked in the past. But that is exactly what is wrong in the old system — there is no innovation! As new participants to high-stakes and fast-changing environments, where social policy and public discourse, new technologies and industries, have the most potential to affect communities, today's younger generation offer a different approach to old issues.

## Taiwan-Asian Young Leader Engagement

In response to fast-evolving and novel challenges that affect Asia, the TAEF launched the Taiwan-Asian Young Leaders Engagement (TAYLE), an umbrella program aimed toward Asian youths working in diverse fields that help facilitate

national and regional development. It sees the potential in initiatives by and/or for young people in addressing shared social realities among Asian states and other Southbound countries, as well as the growing relevance for knowledge building, knowledge sharing, and the continuity of expertise legacies from one generation to the next. It sees great opportunity for collaboration with the youth in the areas of inclusive healthcare, agriculture and food security, civil-society empowerment, technology and innovation, best practices and governance, cultural diversity, and non-traditional security.

In recognizing the potential of the youth, the TAEF, together with its partners, aspires to cultivate a new generation of leaders armed with reliable information, people-centered solutions, and a heart of service for Asia and its people. The program believes that leadership takes many forms and can start even from the youngest individual.

### **Pacific Forum Young Leaders x TAYLE**

In October 2018, a delegation comprised of Pacific Forum Young Leaders from Cambodia (Hing Phorpminea), Malaysia (Keith Leong), Myanmar (Amara Thiha), the Philippines (Maria Kristela Sylvia Castronuevo), and Vietnam (Thi Mong Tuyen Tran) participated in the second Yushan Forum held in Taipei, Taiwan. The participation of the young leaders from Southeast Asia at the Yushan Forum highlights the parallel objectives of the two programs and the value of involving young people in international dialogues.

When asked about their expectations of the Yushan Forum, the Young Leaders mentioned the hope of leaving Taiwan with more answers than questions, with other alternatives to conventional solutions. Indeed, the two-day activity showcased areas where Taiwan could aid other countries in education, healthcare, agriculture, technology and innovation, economics, civil society, think tanks, and the cultivation of young talent. Some

sessions even showed current projects that may be replicated in other countries.

TAYLE hopes to take the partnership further by going beyond having Pacific Forum Young Leaders attend the Yushan Forum, collaborating on projects where young people take center stage. In fact, it has already done so by tapping young leaders as resource speakers and workshop facilitators for TAEF's Asian Dialogues series and its annual SEASAT youth camp.

While it may not be readily acknowledged, young people have much to contribute to the political and development process. The world is now seeing better representation of diverse sectors of the social spectrum in states where the youth are given a voice and involved in the drafting of policies either as part of or as private individuals serving as consultants and dialogue partners to the government.

In the private sector, the younger generation has found a niche in founding startups and social enterprises that provide job opportunities to their peers and the socially marginalized. Innovative technologies that aid in upholding transparency, in safeguarding credibility, and ensuring the continuity of the democratic process are being developed by young minds. These private initiatives prove one has just as much capability to affect change without partaking in politics.

As the rest of the world takes small steps toward progressive reforms concerning social issues such as gender and equality, poverty, job security and unemployment, food security, and health, youth-led efforts are making strides of their own, either working closely for and with communities or mobilizing groups across international borders. Taiwan hopes to continue engaging Asia's young people as they shape the region.

In the words of President Tsai Ing-wen, "Taiwan can help Asia, and Asia can help Taiwan," but this can only happen if the younger generations are involved in the process.

## APPENDIX A

### The Agenda for 2018 Yushan Forum

**THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2018 .....**

**08:00 Registration**

**09:00 Opening Remarks and Keynote Speech**

**09:50 Coffee Break**

**10:10 Session 1: Nourishing the Future**

Talent cultivation is the foundation for development in Asia. This session aims to focus on comparing policies and current development of higher education between Taiwan and other Asian countries. It outlines the potential approaches for effective collaboration between education and industrial development, and explores how Taiwan and its neighbors can work together to incubate young talents and promote the prosperity and development of Asia.

**11:40 Luncheon Speech**

**13:20 Session 2: Facilitating Public Health Collaboration**

Taiwan's successful experience in public healthcare is highly valued among Asian countries. This session will review current development progress and collaboration experiences in medical services, public health, capacity training and epidemic prevention efforts, and will explore options to facilitate health care reform in the Indo-Pacific region through public and private investment, industrial and services innovation, and regional collaboration and integration.

**14:50 Coffee Break**

**15:20 Session 3: Activating Regional Agriculture**

Focusing on Taiwan's "Agricultural Demonstration Farm" and other collaborative regional investment projects, this session will share examples of how countries across Asia can use agricultural technology exchanges to strengthen foreign investment planning and promotion, and to diversify economic engagement.

**16:50 Coffee Break**

**17:10 Session 4: Reinforcing Industrial Innovation**

Industrial innovation contributes to the transformation of economic structures, while achieving mutual gains for the industrial chain of Asian countries. Based upon Taiwan's industrial innovation and cooperation experience, this session examines the capacity and practices of government, enterprise and civil society, and proposes how to implement and deepen the collaboration between Taiwan and regional countries.

**18:40 Welcome Dinner**

**FRIDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2018 .....**

**08:20 Registration**

**09:00 Opening Remarks and Speeches**

**09:40 Coffee Break**

**10:10 Session 5: Connecting Asian Societies**

Not only does the vigorous development of Asia civil societies lead countries forward, but is also becoming a driving force for promoting regional prosperity. This session focuses on the trends of cooperation between Taiwan and Asia civil societies. In addition to realizing the link between Taiwan and Asian countries, the session will also focus on how relevant initiatives achieve global sustainable development goals.

**11:40 Luncheon Speech**

**13:20 Session 6: Linking up the Policy Communities**

Asian think tanks and policy communities have a strong influence on the planning of national strategies and regional integration. This session will highlight the exchange between Asian policy communities, focusing on non-traditional security governance, converging regional interests and community awareness through think tank dialogue. It also explores regional governance architecture to further promote bilateral and multilateral networks between Taiwan and neighboring countries and like-minded counterparts.

**14:50 Coffee Break**

**15:20 Session 7: Engaging Asian Young Leaders**

Leaders of the next generation in Southeast Asia and South Asia are at the turning point-full of impetus for national development, economic prosperity and social transformation. This session will focus on supporting the young leaders' regional engagement and international development strategies. The panellists connect Taiwan and Asia's young leaders in the fields of entrepreneurship, economic empowerment, regional resilience,

local culture and social practice by strengthening a common prosperous future through mutual learning and sharing.

**16:50 Coffee Break**

**17:10 Session 8: Sharing Cultural Richness**

Asia's multicultural heritage is very distinctive. It is a language for people to communicate, as well as a flexible link for cross-border exchanges. This session hopes to highlight the cultural origins and institutional linkages between Taiwan and Asia, and to focus on a dialogue among cultural leaders, arts platform institutions, and community opinion leaders to discuss the cultural basis of economic prosperity in the Asian region. Leaders of the next generation in Southeast Asia and South Asia are at the turning point- full of impetus for national development, economic prosperity and social transformation.

**18:40 Farewell Dinner**

## APPENDIX B

### 2018 Taiwan-Asian Young Leaders Engagement (TAYLE) Young Leaders Delegation



**Amara Thiha** is a Senior Research Manager (Security) at the Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security (MIPS). He is also a non-resident fellow at the Stimson Center. From October 2015 to 2016, Amara served in the Technical Secretariat Center (TSC) of the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC) as a research manager. In this role, he served as the person responsible for the organizational development of the JMC, and for the establishment of the TSC. He was also a member of a technical assistance team to the Government negotiators during the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) drafting process. Amara was involved in the drafting process from the beginning through its signing, and helped establish the implementation bodies of NCA. A Rangoon native, Amara Thiha is a Ph.D. candidate (ABD) from Coimbra University, Portugal and holds the postgraduate degrees from Uppsala University and Orebro University in Sweden.



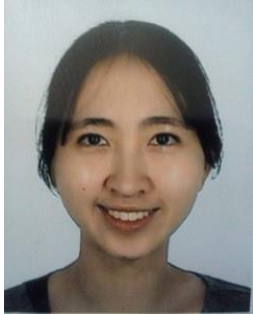
**Hing Phorpminea** is the Deputy Governor of Kampong Chhnang Municipality in Cambodia. Before he was promoted, he was a deputy director of administration division in Kampong Chhnang Provincial Hall. He graduated with a Master of Arts degree in public management and policy analysis from the International University of Japan in 2013. As a graduate student in Japan, he wrote his thesis about the impacts of administrative barriers on investment decision in Cambodia. Mr. Phorpminea's main interest is good governance.



**Keith Leong** is Head of Research of the KRA Group, a Southeast Asian-focused public affairs consulting firm with offices in Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Singapore and Manila. Mr. Leong's duties include overseeing the research work of the Group and its internship program. He was previously a Researcher at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, the nation's premier think-tank. Mr. Leong holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Masters of Arts (MA) from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) as well as a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) from the University of Cambridge. He was a winner of the Endeavour Malaysia Award from the Commonwealth Government of Australia. He has appeared as a commentator on various international news outlets, such as Al-Jazeera English and Channel News Asia. His published work includes *The Future of Pakatan Rakyat: Lessons from Selangor*. Mr. Leong's main interests are Southeast Asian democratization and geopolitics.



**Kristela Castronuevo** is a Legislative Staff Officer at the Office of Senator Ralph G. Recto, Senate of the Philippines. She is primarily responsible for public policies on health, social services and community development, defense and security, as well as peace process and unification. Prior to becoming a Congressional Staff, she served as a Researcher at the Armed Forces of the Philippines, where she worked on financial and resource management issues and reforms in the military. Ms. Castronuevo holds a B.A. in public administration from the University of the Philippines. Her professional interests include public policy management, public administration, legislative procedures and governance.



**Thi Mong Tuyen Tran** is from Vietnam and is currently based in France while completing a Master in European Affairs degree. Previously, she was a part of the Erasmus Mundus scholarship program in Europe in 2014 and completed a Master in International Relations degree in the UK. She has completed a study visit in European Parliament (the European Union) and an internship that focused on people diplomacy in the Vietnam government. She became a Pacific Forum Young Leader in 2017. Ms. Tran's research has focused on "China-Japan relations after the Senkaku island issues and its impact on Vietnam" and her dissertation is titled, "Towards a common currency in Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN): compared with the EU's".

## Staff



**Yuri Baral** serves as Assistant Research Fellow in the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF)'s Department of International Collaboration. He obtained his A.B. in International Studies from De La Salle University and his M.A. in Asia-Pacific Studies from the National Chengchi University. His research interests cover migration and forced displacement, transnational governance and knowledge production, international regime theory, regional security, and geospatial analysis. Prior to his employment at TAEF, Mr. Baral was Senior Program Assistant for the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) where he was key liaison for awardees across Asia and government/NGO counterparts. He was also responsible for database management, project planning and monitoring, as well as serving as a field investigator for RMAF's East Asia research team. He has spearheaded public thematic dialogues between private (industry leaders, development sector) and government partners, youth mobilization, and online information drives. Mr. Baral also served as KDC Coordinator for the World Bank-RMAF knowledge management initiative, worked for the British Council Philippines and China, and was a creative writing intern at Soulfire Radio Shanghai.



**Keoni Williams** is Director of the Young Leaders Program at Pacific Forum, a Honolulu-based foreign policy think tank. He was previously a program assistant, where he organized multilateral policy meetings and dialogues in the Asia Pacific region. Prior to joining Pacific Forum, he worked on public policy in the Hawaii State Legislature and US Senate. Mr. Williams holds a dual bachelor's degree in Korean and communications from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, having studied for one year at Korea University. His research interests include regional security in Northeast Asia, AI governance, and public policy.