1. **Committee: Education**

2. **Topic:**
    The practical impact of all types of exchange programs among Northeast Asian countries and new initiatives

3. **Problem:**
    1.1.   Language barrier

    In the exchange program, there are many obstacles we need to overcome. For example, the culture gap, the spending, and the most important and the most difficult one must be the language. It not only directly affects the life we have in the different countries but also influences the relationship with our classmates. So here we put the language barrier as the first discussion we need to resolve.

    1.2.   Financial barrier

    Another obstacle to participating in exchange programs is the financial barrier. Living costs are different among North-East Asia countries. For example, Japan is known for its high living expenses, while exchange students in Mongolia have to pay relatively less money for their life, such as food and house rent. In order to allow students whose financial situation is severe to take part in exchange programs, we need to find solutions for financial barriers.

    1.3.   Lack of interaction in online classes

    Due to COVID-19 pandemic, many exchange programs shifted to an online platform. While an online exchange program allows students to take courses from universities across borders from their home country, the online program appears to have many following problems. Not limited to the academic issues; however, the online program makes it hard for the students to have interactions with each other. As they cannot talk or communicate in person, they are required to use chat applications or talk via online meeting programs. Furthermore, being disconnected from physical communication makes students have difficulties in learning or experiencing cultures. Since learning about cultures is one of the common purposes for students to participate in exchange programs, it is inevitable to say that the current online program does not offer enough opportunities. Therefore, sharing cultures between students should be promoted. In addition, the students may suffer through the distance between them and professors in online classes, limiting them from freely asking questions or having casual conversations.

    Considering these problems, establishing improved online exchange programs requires focus on enabling students to build stronger relationships within classes despite the physical distance.

1.4.   Transfer of credit

Finally, another obstacle that is limiting students from joining the exchange program is the difficulty of credit transfer. Although exchange students take courses from another university abroad, they are worrying about their credits, as not all courses are promised of being able to transfer to their own university. As this problem can directly relate to their graduation year or job hunting, some students are hesitant, reluctant or feel restricted from participating in exchange programs. Therefore, promoting exchange programs in Northeast Asian countries will require methods to solve the difficulty of transferring credits.

4.   Solution

4.1. For problems Language barrier brings we might can do…

1) What government can do
    1. Enhance the entire English system

    For an exchange student, the most common language they use in a different country is probably English, so it is still a very important part for using English well. The government in each country should enhance the English-teaching system to boost the aspiration of exchange programs.

2) What university can do
    1. Increase the number of English courses in university

    Especially in Japan, only a few courses are provided in English, which make it difficult for exchange students who do not speak Japanese to understand the class content. By using English in university classes, we may be able to attract potential exchange students in North East Asia countries.
    2. Developing human resources

    If universities increase the number of professors who can provide courses in English or those who can teach their native language to exchange students, the language barrier will be solved. Especially in Japan, there are only a few teachers who can actually speak English well in middle and high schools. It is also necessary to improve the English abilities of teachers in middle and high schools.
    3. Compulsory credits of language

    In some universities in Taiwan, there is a special way implemented by colleges to let the exchange students adapt to the differences in different countries. That is, the compulsory credits for the local language. Take National Chengchi University, as an example, the exchange/foreign students should learn Chinese as the necessary credits they need to acquire. This helps the exchange students to fit into this unfamiliar world faster.

3) What students can do
   1. Go to language school for half year to 1 year before the exchange program

   For students who are really eager to experience a different culture, always want to go for an exchange program. But how can a student experience the whole sophisticated culture without learning the local language? He/She can go to the language school in a different country to fit in the local life in the early time to lessen the pain brought from culture gap.

   2. Usage of simultaneous transformation app(for an online course)

   What the professor says will be translated and be shown on the screen as subtitles. Then students would easily understand the lecture even if it's taught in a different language.

   3. Language buddy before exchange

   Students from each country may help each other learn different languages. For example, students from Mongolia who are going to South Korea may make a pair with students from South Korea who are going to Mongolia, and they might be able to exchange language together.

   4. Organizing a talk group

   Organizing a talk group may improve their language skills that are more attractive in the communication and help express their culture with local students. It can help students to adopt cultural differences and get used to being with classmates without language barriers.

4.2. Solutions for Financial barriers

1) Increase the chance of scholarship
   For the exchange students, they indeed have the special reason to go to different countries for learning. For example, learning a new language, loving the foreign culture, wanting a better learning environment….etc. The government can have a more reward-orientated scholarship to encourage foreign students to study in different countries. For example, in Taiwan, there is a Huayu scholarship that encourages foreign students to come to Taiwan to learn traditional Chinese. This method can be used in a different country, too.

2) Support mandatory things for exchange students
   During the exchange program, students must pay for lots of mandatory things including accommodation and meals. If a university or country could support these things, it would lessen the burden of exchange students. Also, universities could allow exchange students to get discounts in the school cafeteria if they show their student card. If the exchange program is held online, it would be helpful if electronic devices and mandatory programs are provided to students.

3) Internship work with Non-Governmental organizations

Such as United Nations organizations and nongovernmental organisations function in the Northeast Asian Countries. As they support these countries' exchange programs students who work with projects and internships with salaries. As long as exchange program students may decide financial issues.

4) NEA foundation by non-governmental organization

The North-East Asia foundations aim to provide aid for exchange students who go to study abroad within the North East Asia countries and regions. Unlike the scholarships provided by the government, non-governmental organizations will provide exchange students with more flexible, benefit-type aids. These scholarships will lessen the financial burden of exchange students.

4.3. Solution for lack of interaction in online classes

4.3.1. From the perspective of students

1. Share social media accounts to increase interaction.

These days most students have social media accounts. It is much easier to interact than in class. We can have casual conversations via SNS.

2. Hold activities by students themselves (Club, movienight, SRT mid-event)

Students can hold some events like club activities, movienight (in Japan), some online games (like SRT mid-event) etc, by themselves. Because the formal courses would be a little boring and focus on academics, so that students would not be willing to interact. So students can find the club or events they feel interested in participating in and get acquainted with people who have the same interest. Students can meet each other online and know each other in detail. And through holding events together, students can make a good relationship with each other and have a nice teamwork.

3. Online Buddy Program

The buddies can interact with each other on designated days (ex. Friday or Saturday) to talk about the culture in their country, teach each other their language, and have daily conversations. So that when the pandemic ends, they can make a better relationship with each other offline.

4.3.2. From the perspective of teacher

1. Separate students into small groups

Universities can enhance small group learning in order to make interactions among students more active. In lecture-centered courses with quite a few students, students do not have enough opportunities to have conversations with each other

in classes, especially in online classes it is hard for students to talk with classmates in the class. Hence, it can be proposed that universities provide small group discussion-centered classes, which introduce discussion in small groups in courses, and it is an effective way to facilitate interaction among students even in online classes.

2. Group report
   The professor can change the format of the assignment to a group report. There are two advantages of group reports. First, it can increase students' interaction during the online courses. Due to the teamwork required in group reports, it could strengthen the connection between students. By providing students opportunities to work with others, it can further increase their interaction. Second, group reports can enhance the ability of communication and teamwork. Through teamwork, students will be able to learn how to coordinate with others. Thus, changing the form of assignment would be a considerable way to deal with the problem of lacking interaction.

3. Interaction course
   Unlike physical courses, online courses are not able to provide chances to interact with classmates during the break times nor after classes. Thus, universities can start courses of interaction. Through course design, students would get a bigger chance to establish connections with others. The courses can be designed to cultivate students' communication skills by letting students interact with each other. After finishing the task given by the courses, students would be able to get 1 credit. Since the courses are provided by universities, students would get more motivation to take part in.

4. Study group
   Interactions outside of classes are also necessary for students to get closer to each other. Universities can allocate students into several small study groups. Here, a study group is defined as a group in which members are helping each other's assignment or asking questions about the contents of classes. This is different from small groups in classes or group reports, it can promote communications beyong courses. Thus, it can be proposed as one of the methods to increase interactions among all students in the university. Furthermore, in online conditions, it is hard for students to get advice or ask for help from friends. Therefore, this system also assists students' academic lives in the university.

4.4. Solution for transferring credits

4.4.1. The disadvantage of limiting exchange programs in only top universities

Since the exchange program is mainly held in only top universities, the range of choosing which school to exchange to would be limited. It causes the credits in foreign universities to be hard to transfer. So if we could expand the program not only in some top universities but also all universities, that would provide students with more choices. In this way, the students' work in foreign universities would not be in vain, but it can also enhance the exchange between countries.

4.4.2. The advantage of expanding the programs in North East Asia: Getting better by Exchanging skills or technology in various fields.

If we can transfer credits easily, it can attract more international students to join the exchange programs. And because students in North East Asia are not all the top students who can enter the top school, we can not just allow the top students to transfer credits and exchange easily. Some students have talents in other fields, like sports, cooking, etc. Although they are not good at academics, they still have the authority and willingness to exchange, and many of them are talented. So if we lose these talented students, it must be a big mistake! While we interact with each other through exchanging skills and knowledge in various fields, we can become stronger at the same time.

4.4.3. How to expand the exchange program in Northeast Asia

In order to expand the exchange program in Northeast Asia, it can be proposed to expand partnership among universities in NEA countries or regions. Referring to the current situations, because the number of partner universities is different from university to university and limited, it makes it difficult to convert credits which students got during studying abroad into their own university's credits. Thus, increasing partnership universities in NEA promote students to go to NEA countries or regions to study and expand the exchange program.

5. Further Concern:

5.1. Deficiency in language learning system

Enhancing the entire English system, developing human resources, or increasing the number of courses provided in English takes a long time to complete. These changes might be difficult to make because they require resources. Even though these ideas bring radical changes in exchange programs, these decisions might be difficult to make because they require money, energy, and agreements.

Language buddy system before exchange programs might be impractical. Not all students are professional speakers of their native languages. This solution might not have the immediate positive effects on exchange students' English ability.

Attending a language school or taking a language program for just a few months might not be so helpful. In other words, the period is not sufficient for students to communicate freely with local people and understand the entire lecture. We might need to find more practical ways to make students be familiar with the language.

5.2. Sponsor issue

We have not yet found the source of scholarships. It is difficult to separate the responsibility of foundations among NEA countries and find the sponsor of these scholarships.

For a government, it might have difficulty facing the fiscal deficit so that it cannot provide the scholarship for exchange students. This situation might make academic interaction overseas become more difficult. For a company, it has no responsibility to fund the exchange students for a better life. Maybe the government can offer an incentive like a tax cut to encourage the great company fund for the high education system. However, this is still a debatable issue and needs to be concerned.

5.3 Limitation of online interactions

In enhancing communication between students during exchange programs, the quality of interaction varies depending on one's enthusiasm. For instance, whether they are able to seek others to talk to or stay relatively conservative can open or limit access to their classmates and professors. However, even if they have opportunities to talk, it will still be different when compared with physical conversation. One example is the lack of smoothness in communication, as overlapping of speech, time lag, and connection issues cannot be avoided easily. Moreover, online communication can lead to misunderstandings, especially because it is likely that students have language barriers. Thus, encouraging students to build relationships online among others across borders has issues that are yet to be resolved.

5.4 Transfer of credit

5.4.1 The program may be hard to practice, because the willingness to integrate with other universities or countries may not be as high as we think.

Although we have come up with an idea to expand the program in Northeast Asia, the willingness of other countries or universities is uncertain. It requires more detail to complete the program. Which country is responsible for assembling all countries? What motivation can the program provide to the top universities, in order to encourage them to participate in the program? These are the details we can discuss more in the future.

5.4.2 Some uni offer courses only in their native tongue

As mentioned in the language barrier section, courses conducted in different languages in NEA countries and regions might be the future concern. Because of the gap of used language, it makes it difficult to transfer credits. So as to realize the smooth transfer, the language integration among universities in NEA is required.

5.4.3 difference in fields of study makes credit integration difficult

Because the field that the university focuses on is quite different, for example, a university which is focused on engineering will not be willing to integrate with a university which is focused on social science. Although it may happen in each country, it is quite difficult for students who study social sciences to take courses about engineering. And the credit transfering would be impossible, too.