

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP STORY

Education Partnership Advisers Present at Congress on Creating Inclusive Schools in Sydney



Participants in the New School Induction Program training consist of the new school's principal, a teacher, a school committee representative, the school treasurer, and the supervisor assigned to the school by the district.

On 1 and 2 May 2014, a team of national and international advisers presented the work of Australia's Education Partnership with Indonesia in Social Inclusion at an international conference in Sydney, Australia.

The conference, titled "Reflect, Shift, Transform: the First Asia Pacific Congress on Creating Inclusive Schools", featured eight international keynote speakers recognised as experts in inclusive education, as well as a range of presenters. More than 200 professionals from the Asia Pacific region attended, including a team of three presenters from the Education Partnership's Professional Development Program meeting at developing education leaders.

Dr. Alison Atwell, International Adviser for Provincial and District Development; Dr. Siti Zulaiha (Izul), National Adviser, New School Induction Program; and Ratna Hapsari (Nana), Lead Facilitator, New School Induction Program presented their paper, *Simulating social inclusion issues for new school communities in Indonesia through creating a 'School Committee Meeting' to focus on social inclusion concerns*, at the Congress. Their presentation focused on the Education Partnership's New School Induction Program, a week-long training offered to those

involved in managing new schools built through the Education Partnership. The training demonstrates how to put systems and processes in place to create a positive school culture founded on the principles of social inclusion, to ensure that all children can participate in schooling regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location or disability.

A total of 59 workshops involving participants from the 451 schools built last year were completed in early June. A further 316 more schools will be trained beginning in August 2014. Participants consist of five nominees from each school: the new school's principal, a teacher, a school committee representative, the school treasurer, and the supervisor assigned to the school by the district. Principals are asked to ensure that at least two of the five representatives are women.

The training emphasises strong participative leadership and management, providing a framework for good quality teaching, transparent financial practices, strong asset management, continuous improvement, community involvement, staff professional development, and strong coordination with district personnel.

At the Congress, the Education Partnership team highlighted its main social inclusion activity, which is introduced on the second day of the training and simulates a school committee meeting focused on social inclusion issues. After a presentation on social inclusion supported by readings and discussion, each school takes part in a simulated school committee meeting. This involves four participant "groups of experts" presenting their solutions to each of four given scenarios that highlight issues of disability, gender, rights of the child and inclusive education.

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Each group decides a creative means of presenting its solution to the school committee via role-play, drawings, etc. Positive feedback from all of the 58 workshops has highlighted the simulation as an innovative and successful means of understanding social inclusion issues.

What stands out about the Social Inclusion Session is that it is designed to create an environment that can be applied outside of the training because it models a School Committee Meeting. Participants already have knowledge of such an environment and expectations of the manner in which this kind of meeting will be conducted, as School Committees are mandated practice in Indonesia.

“During the two days of the Congress, I was able to reinforce my understanding and belief in what we are doing in our New School Induction Program and how it fits into the broader field of social inclusion with a global perspective,” said Dr. Izul.

International education leaders at the Congress seem to agree. Keynote speaker Professor Brian Caldwell attended the New School Induction Program presentation. He commended the New School Induction Program’s approach to social inclusion during his keynote address, because it involves the community as well as the school. He suggested that this type of professional development program can serve as a benchmark for socially inclusive education that could be applied globally.

According to Dr. Izul, “It was an honour to receive such public recognition of our work in the New School Induction Program and a rewarding experience to be able to share our program with other fellow Congress participants.”

“The Congress made me believe in the New School Induction Program even more as what we are doing can make a difference in the lives of school communities and create schools that are inclusive, where all children are valued and have access to equal and quality education,” she said.



Participants of the New School Induction Program training hold the simulated School Committee Meeting to address social inclusion issues that may arise at their new school, including disability, gender, rights of the child and inclusive education.

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