



Building Demand - What Works For Studies of Asia

Building Demand: providing students with quality programs

Teacher immersion in Indonesia: short courses in Yogyakarta

The Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) is a non-profit international consortium of 25 universities based at Murdoch University in Western Australia. It was established in 1994 and has to date sent over 1300 students to study in Indonesia. ACICIS has offices in Yogyakarta and Perth.

Originally ACICIS was involved principally with sending tertiary students to Indonesia to undertake accredited courses there. More recently, partly in response to dwindling numbers of Australians studying Bahasa Indonesia, ACICIS has also facilitated short courses in Yogyakarta for teachers and others.

One of these, the Indonesian Language Teacher Immersion (ILTI) short course program, has been supported by National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) funding to provide opportunities for Australian teachers to study in Indonesia.

The ILTI program

The ILTI short course is an intensive three-week program, which was piloted from December 2010 – January 2011 and was run again in January 2012.

While anyone can apply, the course is aimed at teachers who are already in the workforce and wish to upgrade their skills or move into a new area of teaching. It is not only for teachers of Indonesian, and language classes are provided according to the level of the learner, even for beginners. Participants can use this opportunity as part of retraining as an Indonesian teacher.



The course is also for teachers who may not ever teach Indonesian but who use the course as professional learning so that they are better equipped to teach about Indonesia, or studies of Asia more generally.

Indonesian language teaching and learning

Participants have classes at Universitas Sanata Dharma (USD) in Yogyakarta for ten hours per week, in small groups of between two and five students. Each group is for a different skill level and participants are matched as closely as possible to their existing skill level.

Beyond that, each participant has an individual tutor for four hours per week for one-on-one practice and learning. Feedback indicates that this is a highly valued aspect of the program.

A teaching methodology and materials course based on the proven FLOTE methodology takes a further 2.5 hours per week.

Indonesian language and culture courses for teachers

The NALSSP-funded Indonesian Language Teacher Immersion program provides teachers (whether of Bahasa Indonesia or not) with an opportunity to experience three weeks of cultural immersion in Yogyakarta. Subsequently, participants bring new studies of Asia knowledge and understandings to their students back in Australia.

'What a difference three weeks can make to your language skills and understanding of Indonesian culture! Priceless.'

Participant, Indonesian Language Teacher Immersion program

Other aspects of the program

The program is designed to be educationally rigorous, but fun as well. Formal classes usually finish by lunchtime, and many other activities take place in the afternoon. These include:

- >> three visits to Indonesian schools in Yogyakarta: a Catholic school an Islamic school and a state school;
- >> structured out-of-class language activities, practising language skills in real life situations;
- >> end of program demonstration lessons;
- >> student reflective eJournal;
- >> student volunteer *pendamping* (colleague) to help with living in Yogyakarta;
- >> field trips to places such as Prambanan and Borobudur, Merapi relief work, the royal tombs at Imogiri, Indonesian films, karaoke, and collecting realia, games, DVDs and other materials for their classes;
- >> homestays.

Comments from participants

Feedback from participants suggests that the course is highly valued and effective. Some comments include:

'I am delighted that my language has improved and my understanding of how Indonesian could be taught in the classroom has really given me a new confidence to give it a go and succeed in helping kids get enthused about learning Indonesian.'

'The ILTI short course has made me think about simple but very important aspects of teaching a language that I had not even considered.'

'If you want a truly unique experience with study and culture, the ILTI short course is your best bet.'

'A hands-on, intense and fulfilling course that will make me a more competent LOTE teacher.'

'This has been one of the best PD I have ever done as it has given both my teaching and my language skills a welcome boost.'

'What a difference three weeks can make to your language skills and understanding of Indonesian culture! Priceless.'

Conclusion

The ILTI short course is an intensive, well-planned and implemented in-country language and culture course for teachers. Such courses are an effective way of assisting teachers to provide their students with authentic studies of Asia programs.

Although not discussed here, it is worth noting that a new ACICIS initiative Indonesia from the ground up is now providing high quality cultural immersion study tours for teachers in Indonesia as well.



About AEF

The Asia Education Foundation provides teachers, education leaders and school communities with innovative programs, curriculum resources and networks to support the achievement of Asia literacy for every young Australian.

AEF is a joint activity of Asialink at the University of Melbourne and Education Services Australia. It receives core funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

AEF leverages funding to support Asia literacy in Australian schools from a broad range of government, philanthropic and corporate partners in Australia and Asia.

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