

Australia Awards Short Course The Role of Government and OPDs in the Implementation of Policy Reform for Inclusive Development



Participants of The Role of Government and OPDs in the Implementation of Policy Reform for Inclusive Development Short Course and the course leader from the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre at the University of Sydney.

Over two weeks in January 2023, a group of disability advocates and policymakers from across Indonesia participated in the latest iteration of an Australia-based short course that aimed to strengthen their capacity to develop inclusive disability policy and practical reform. The course focused on the role of government and Organisations for People with Disabilities (OPDs) and was built on the success of several similar courses.

The course was delivered by the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre (SSEAC) at the University of Sydney, in collaboration with the Centre for Disability Research and Policy (CDRP) and the Centre for Disability Studies (CDS). A key goal of the course was to strengthen collaboration between civil society and government to advance disability inclusion. The group consisted of 22 participants, including, for the first time, an even split of government officials and disability advocates. Thirteen participants reported living with a disability.

During the action-packed and productive course, the group engaged in a range of activities, workshops, site visits and coursework. Sessions covered a variety of themes, from advocacy and campaigning, to engaging with policymakers, project management, harnessing quality evidence and using research tools. Participants then applied these skills and knowledge in devising group projects that each tackled a pressing aspect of disability policy in Indonesia.

Course schedule:

- Pre-course workshop held in Jakarta on 8 – 10 November 2022
- Two-week short course held in Sydney on 16 – 27 January 2023
- Post-course workshop held in Jakarta on 9 – 11 May 2023
- Three-online mentoring sessions on 1 December 2022, 16 February 2023, 6 April 2023



Among the highlights of the course were the guest sessions, each run by experienced advocates and professionals from organisations including the Australian Human Rights Commission; Council for Intellectual Disability; Disability Council of NSW; People with Disability Australia; Plumtree; and Resilience to Recovery, alongside core SSEAC staff and Sydney academics. The diverse professional and personal backgrounds of program staff ensured participants were exposed to a range of views and insights into Australia's disability landscape and policy, advocacy and campaigning methods and approaches more broadly.

"This was a really comprehensive and intensive course," said one participant. "I learned a lot about theory, policy and lived experience, as well as how different actors work to implement measures related to disability rights. The course gave me a very rich perspective from which to continue the struggle for the rights of people with disability and other marginalised groups."



Participants on a campus tour at the University of Sydney

The course also included site visits to the National Disability Insurance Agency and the Disability Council of NSW, among others, which helped participants build a nuanced understanding of the disability policy context in Australia through a practical lens. On 26 January, the group attended the early morning smoking ceremony at Barangaroo Reserve. Then, having observed the annual wheelchair race at The

Rocks, they travelled on to the Yabun Festival in Victoria Park, an annual celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. These events gave participants a deeper understanding of Australia's history and Indigenous culture and prompted many insightful discussions.

A key goal of the course was to strengthen collaboration between civil society and government representatives, and the participants worked well together, taking steps to understand each other's roles and perspectives, and forming collegial relationships that have continued after the program.



Participants on a campus tour at the University of Sydney

The fostering of connections between activists and advocates in Indonesia and Australia was an important feature of the program. Participants were able to share goals, ideas and experiences, and spoke constantly of finding ways to keep in touch with each other and collaborate after returning to Indonesia. Government participants commented that the course had changed their outlook on the work and role of OPDs back home. "Before doing [the course], I kept my distance from OPDs," one participant observed. "This has changed. I enjoyed working with them and I now feel like I can support what they do, including by putting them in touch with people in my networks within government to make their work easier."

In the post-course workshop, held over three days in Jakarta, participants related the progress they had made on disability-focused projects covering issues ranging from improving data collection to establishing village-level disability support groups. There were many success stories to share. These included a group that had prepared a pilot project on improving access to healthcare after discussions with the Ministry of Health; a group that had prepared a guidebook for medical workers and held a workshop on disability-friendly health services for over 350 people; and a group that surveyed some 70 people with disabilities to determine barriers to accessing National Health Insurance.

These experiences and outcomes illustrate how a program such as this can have a meaningful impact on disability policy and advocacy, broaden and enrich perspectives, and bring people together from different walks of life to collaborate toward a common goal. These programs have also forged lasting connections and mutual understanding between Australian and Indonesian advocates and laid the groundwork for future engagement.



Participants and the course leader attending Australia Day activities in Sydney

For further information about the course, please contact:

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