

PRESS RELEASE

INOVASI joins the 4th Islamic Schooling Conferences and Forum in Melbourne, Australia

“A Focus on Social Justice”

Melbourne, 14 July 2019 – Innovation for Indonesia’s School Children (INOVASI), a partnership program between the governments of Australia and Indonesia, this weekend participated in the 4th Islamic Schooling Conferences and Forum AAISC 2019, held in Melbourne, Australia.

In their panel presentation, INOVASI’s Program Director Dr. Mark Heyward, along with Dr. Bahrul Hayat, Education Specialist for the Australian Government supported Technical Assistance for Education Systems Strengthening (TASS) program in Indonesia, and Education Pathways for Peace (PATHWAYS) program in the Philippines, provided an overview of the Islamic schooling system, its challenges and opportunities.

Over seven million Indonesian children attend Islamic schools in one of the largest Islamic education systems in the world. While these schools are well integrated into the national education system, they typically serve poor communities, they are generally under-resourced, and they produce lower results in national tests than regular schools.

Social justice is an issue not only at the system level, but at the school level in Indonesia. Many children do not attend school due to disability. Many do not perform as well as their peers due to poverty or isolation. Many also begin school unfamiliar with *Bahasa Indonesia*, the language of instruction. These children are at risk of falling behind and dropping out of school. INOVASI’s work focuses on literacy, numeracy and inclusion. The program is piloting new approaches to identifying and supporting children with disability, to inclusive education, and to language transition for children in remote regions.

“INOVASI aims to ‘find out what works’ to improve learning outcomes for Indonesian children,” Dr. Mark Heyward, INOVASI’s Program Director, said. “Together with the TASS program, we work together with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to improve the quality of Islamic schooling, through the development and piloting of a new approach to continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers. The aim is to lift the quality of education in *madrasah*, closing the performance gap between the Islamic and regular school systems.”

Dr. Bahrul Hayat, also a former Secretary General to Indonesia’s Ministry of Religious Affairs, spoke of the work done by the PATHWAYS program to assist the government to develop a similar approach to Islamic education in the Philippines.

“PATHWAYS contributes to peace-building by addressing inequity and disparity in participation and performance in basic education. The program supports improvements in the participation and performance of children in early grade levels, in teacher education and development, and in the development of a context-appropriate curriculum.”

The INOVASI, TASS and Pathways programs are managed by [Palladium](#) – a positive impact firm.



About INOVASI

INOVASI (Innovation for Indonesian School Children) is an Indonesian and Australian Government education partnership program that aims to find and understand ways to improve student learning outcomes - especially those related to literacy and numeracy skills, both in class and at school. Working with the Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Religious Affairs, INOVASI has established partnerships with 17 districts spread across four provinces, including West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, North Kalimantan, and East Java. The program will run from 2016 – 2020 and is managed by Palladium on behalf of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

For more information, please contact the INOVASI Communications Team, or visit our website, Facebook, and Youtube at the following links: www.inovasi.or.id, Facebook [Inovasi untuk Anak Sekolah Indonesia](#), and YouTube [INOVASI Pendidikan](#).

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