



Australia Awards Indonesia – Short Term Award

Leadership for Senior Multifaith Women Leaders



The 'Leadership Course for Senior Multi-Faith Women' provided opportunities for senior interfaith women leaders from Indonesia to improve their leadership and organisational management skills. The course aimed to empower these women to be key players in improving economic, social, and cultural development in the organisations and the wider community, and in building global networks for future women leaders. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the entire program was delivered online in 2020-21. The program included a three-day pre-course workshop in December 2020, followed by six monthly meetings before the implementation of the main course over a two-month period in mid-2021.

This was followed by a three-day post-course workshop in Nov/Dec 2021. The course was delivered by a two-person team from Deakin University: Dr Rebecca Barlow, Senior Researcher and course designer and leader and Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Research Professor and project manager. Throughout the course the participants engaged in one-on-one and small group mentoring to support the development of their Award Projects, which were designed to disseminate course learnings and outcomes in local communities throughout Indonesia.



Pre-course Workshop

At the pre-course workshop, participants presented their Award Project plans and shared their personal journey and experience in leadership. The Course Leaders organised participants and their projects into five groups, in the areas of community service provision, religion & interfaith dialogue, women's health & preventing violence against women, economic empowerment, and children and youth. The Course Leaders took on the role of a mentor for each group. Participants were encouraged and supported to draw on one another's experiences and expertise to enhance their own Award Projects.

"All the participants are great inspiring women with common ground and work. We agreed to share resources, invite[d] each other in our works and projects, [and] even developed some collaborative work and activities in the future."

"Through this course I've meet a lot of great leaders from different backgrounds and a variety of experiences which I can reflect [on] to my work. Mentoring group is [an] available method to share ideas and learn together."



Awardees hear from Dr. Regina Torres-Quaizon, from the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Course Workshop

The course workshop focused on key learning objectives, including strengthening the skills of women leaders to think and work politically, identifying ways to improve leadership skills and influence change, and identifying challenges women leaders face in their organisations and developing strategies to address those challenges. Each session was delivered using a combination of learning methods, including interactive lectures, discussion groups, case studies and other training techniques.



Awardees hear from inaugural Ambassador for Women of Colour, Tasneem Chopra

Awardees noted the beneficial components of course:

- Increased knowledge about women's leadership, gender equality and intersectionality
- Expanding networks and connecting with similar minded people
- Course leaders, noting their expertise, professionalism, encouragement, and guidance throughout the course
- Content experts, noting their expertise and knowledge as a source of being a source of motivation and inspiration for future work
- Project planning and evaluation

Throughout the course, the participants heard from a range of high-level experts from Australian organisations working for women's empowerment in multicultural and interfaith contexts. These organisations included the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, the Women's Information and Referral Exchange, the Council for Single Mothers and their Children, the Queen Victoria Women's Centre, and Fitted for Work. During these sessions, participants gained a valuable insight into how Australian women's NGOs are working on the ground to combat gender stereotypes, prevent violence against women, increase women's participation in the public realm, enhance women's health and wellbeing, and nurture women leaders in areas such as politics and community service. Participants were provided with practical resources that could be adapted and reproduced for the Indonesian context.

"Learning from leaders in Australian organizations that attend various women needs was a highlight of the course. Their objectives and programs stimulate[d] ideas on how to apply values and concepts to serve my own community."

"I learn[t] a lot about women, gender equality, and leadership. I also learn[t] about myself. I also learn[t] from the organizations presented that there are so many works [we] can do related with women[s] issue, some of them I never know."

"I have met people that encourage me [to] succeed [in] my work. Their expertise on conducting women[s] empowerment, designing field projects, and implementing gender equality and values-based leadership inspire[d] me to integrate the values into my own project."

Post-course Workshop

Peer group and one-on-one mentoring sessions were provided at regular intervals throughout the program to provide intensive support for participant Award Projects. The post-course workshop provided an opportunity for awardees to reflect on the key messages of women in leadership and to present their Award Projects. The Deakin team felt that the quality of participant Award Projects was outstanding. A post-course evaluation by Deakin University showed participants dramatically increased their knowledge and understanding of women's leadership frameworks and practices.

"The AAI interfaith course provides a number of life values for being women leaders, allowing us to learn from different women leaders and organisation[s] which focus on empowering women... guiding us [to] develop ideas in designing a program, and reminding us to take care ourselves as a woman and leader due to health and wellbeing."

"This course has provided additional new insights into women's empowerment in various fields...the speakers are very experienced in their fields, as well as the materials provided are very complete and inspiring to make improvements in my organization and surrounding environment."

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