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# Asia Literacy For Every Young Australian

## Asia Education Foundation National Summit

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### Leading 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools: Engage With Asia Project

In launching the project on May 20, 2008, the Hon Julia Gillard, MP Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education charged the nation's peak educators to create a nation-wide student body of global citizens, literate in the cultures and languages of Asia.

To support principals, the AEF initiated the **Leading 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools: Engage with Asia Project** (L21CS project) in partnership with all peak principals associations and all state and territory education jurisdictions. The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations funded this project.

*'We are the drivers of engaging with Asia ... We need cultural literacy, we need Asia literacy and our challenge is to make engagement with Asia sustainable from this point on.'* Andrew Blair, President, Australian Secondary Principals Association

*'Australian students need to be prepared for an interconnected world and where better to start than in our own backyard – the Asian region'.* Leonie Trimper, President Australian Primary Principal's Association

### Professional Learning and School Action 2008

In 2008, a cohort of 118 primary and secondary principals across Australia undertook a fully supported professional learning program commencing with a two-day professional learning program. Principals worked through process that modelled effective change strategies and were provided with a set of resource materials to support the development of an implementation plan.

#### What was achieved?

Phase 1 of the L21CS project concluded in December 2008. By working closely with these principals the project has reached over 6,000 teachers and has the potential to impact on the learning of nearly 70,000 students across Australia.

As a result of their participation principals in the L21CS project:

- 98% had increased in their understanding of why the study of Asia in schools is important
- 96% had increased their capacity to lead school change
- 98% had significantly increased their awareness of resources
- 87% had significantly increased their awareness of processes that support studies about Asia in schools
- 50% had increased their knowledge of Asia generally

*'The starting point for implementing this change strategy was to engage the school community. My School Council members showed a profound*

*response following a viewing of the 2020 Schools Engage with Asia DVD.' Mary Pendergast, Principal, Warrnambool College, Victoria*

*'The project is process based and therefore highly likely to work and achieve sustainable change. The whole school needs to be on the journey ... I organised an event to launch our plan ... conduct an audit of what is already happening and examine the skill set of staff, students and parents' Carol Buchanan, Principal, The Willows State School in Queensland.*

*'As a result of our school audits we have worked to close the gaps in our curriculum and to increase curriculum content about Asia using AEF resource materials.' Lyndall Bain, Principal Banksia Park International School, South Australia*

Some schools worked with their local feeder schools to develop coherence and depth in curriculum across primary and secondary school thus obviating repetition in the curriculum and building sequence and rigor. Others have worked in clusters to share their subsequent curriculum development across curriculum areas.

*'It is the leadership that matters. One of my greatest challenges is to ensure 'sustainability' of the content of embedded studies of Asia. We are aiming to facilitate collaboration with feeder primary schools to build a sequential and consistent approach to embedding the studies of Asia into school curriculum' Sheree Vertigan, Principal, Reece High School, Tasmania*

In addition to the professional learning in Australia, the AEF provided a range of international opportunities for principals and their staff including:

- 20 principals and schools leaders participated in the Korean Studies Workshop Program
- 33 educators participated in AEF study tours and exchanges
- 10 schools applied to participate in the *Australia Indonesia Myer Foundation School Bridge* project to establish long-term relationships with schools in Indonesia

### **Subsequent School Grants 2009**

Sixty-three L21CS project schools received grants to embed studies of Asia in the curriculum. Project activities being undertaken include:

- curriculum mapping
- whole school curriculum planning and development
- professional learning for teachers
- integrating community links to strengthen cluster networks
- improving resource provision
- extending Languages programs to include Asian languages; and
- special projects including construction of an Asian garden to support related curriculum development.

Studies of Asia Advisors actively support these schools to achieve their goals. The project concludes with a two-day National Reporting Forum is to be held in Canberra on August 24-25, 2009 to showcase the work of these schools.

The Asia Education Foundation and the State and territory Studies of Asia Advisors offer national and international professional learning programs, access to the award winning Access Asia resources for schools and opportunities to link with key educators via the Asia EdNet discussion group. Go to the AEF Website: [www.asiaeducation.edu.au](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au)

Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia website contains all project materials including key presentations made at the 2008 National Forum and case studies of change featuring nine participating principals. [http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public\\_html/21c\\_schools.htm](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public_html/21c_schools.htm)