

Emerging leaders share skills and knowledge to foster transformative adult and community education in the Asia Pacific

Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC)

25-30 November 2018, Auckland, Aotearoa



The BLDC 2018 was held in Auckland and was hosted by ACE Aotearoa, the lead body for Adult and Community Education (ACE) in Aotearoa New Zealand.

ASPBAE's pioneering Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) was held in Auckland this year. The course is held once every year, but special to this 2018 course was the integration into the content of Maori cultural practices and understanding. This was made possible by the very considerable input of the hosts, ACE Aotearoa, the lead body for Adult and Community Education (ACE) in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Twenty-three participants took part from 13 countries of ASPBAE's Asia Pacific sub-regions, with a strong contingent from the South Pacific. The Course Faculty was diverse and rich too. Course Directors were experts from ASPBAE's Executive Council (EC) representing East Asia, Eri Yamamoto; Southeast Asia, Kim Anh Nguyen; and the South Pacific, Peter Clinton-Foese. Analiese Robertson, from ACE Aotearoa, Sandy Morrison, from the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE), and ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove joined as course facilitators along with Anita Borkar who joined virtually. Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara from RMIT University (Melbourne) was a course facilitator and provided mentoring support to the faculty. Bronwyn Yates, *Tumuaki* (CEO) of Literacy Aotearoa, gave a session helping reflect on their learning from their visits to organisations in Auckland.

The BLDC is a participative and experiential learning course, its content and method reflecting the principles of adult education. From the start, the course established essential strands reflecting Maori culture and wove them into the programme, focussing on the participants. It gave them a sense of place, allowing them to reflect on their own personal journeys, the importance of cultural history, local knowledge, indigenous culture, and the expertise gained from experience.



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The New Zealand hosts presented opportunities for participants to experience Maori values first-hand through interactive sessions, visits to a *marae* (meeting ground - focal point of Māori communities throughout New Zealand), the museum, local community organisations, and through cultural performances.

Participants learnt of the importance of *Whakawhanaungatanga* – a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging; *Ako* – the interchangeable role of teaching and learning, based on the relationship of the educator and their learners; and *Manaaki* - essential social behaviours of showing respect, being generous, and caring for others.

The course content advanced the agenda of Education 2030 in the region, and there were sessions on the SDGs, SDG 4.7 (skills) in particular, and on platforms for regional and global advocacy.

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Course Directors for the BLDC 2018 were ASPBAE Executive Council Members Eri Yamamoto, Kim Anh Nguyen, and Peter Clinton-Foase.

Other sessions explored advocacy more deeply on a practical level for participants. There were sessions demonstrating how the SDGs are interconnected, on resilience in development and education, and the meaning of global citizenship education.

Linking to the SDGs, a film festival was organised to demonstrate the importance of the work of educators, advocates, community builders, and change agents. There were promotional materials on SDGs, films about poverty, education, environmental and globalisation issues, and films about creativity and practical solutions to bring about change.

Gender featured strongly in the content, with participants presenting on their own gender work. Participants broke into groups and presented short dramas on issues in their sub-region - how women are marginalised in organisational discussions and decision-making, how males can be privileged from birth, gender stereotyping, and domestic violence.

There was plenty of skills-building advice and sharing, sessions including active listening, negotiating, team building, leadership, and understanding group dynamics.

One of the most inspiring parts of the course was the learning exchange to local community organisations in Auckland. Included in the visits were - *Do Good Feel Good*, a Pacific health innovation project creating a safe space for youth voices to be heard; the *Great Potentials Foundation* that works in low-income New Zealand communities, giving education and parental support; *E Te Whānau*, a Māori designed and led movement to create positive change that strengthens the extended family and prevents family violence; *Deaf Aotearoa*, an organisation working closely with deaf communities, government agencies, and other organisations to increase awareness, promote New Zealand sign language, and strengthen the rights of deaf people; *Ranui 135*, an organisation engaging young people through positive events and activities, growing youth leadership and community pride using digital storytelling to allow youth to tell their stories.



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A strong feature of the BLDC was the daily reflection by the participants on their learning. Every morning groups presented on the previous day using different media - song, video, drama, slides, trivia games. What was striking was the confidence of the presenters, clearly comfortable in the trusting and supportive atmosphere. A final reflection was made in the sub-regions at the end of the course, with participants considering their future actions, and writing themselves a postcard, which will be delivered to them in six months' time.



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Finally, and in keeping with the Maori cultural theme, there was a *poroporoaki*, a Māori farewell ceremony that is usual at the conclusion of a *hui* or gathering. It is an opportunity for *manuhiri* or the visitor to thank the hosts or *tangata whenua*. Analiese Robertson from ACE formally closed BLDC 2018.

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