

THE 4th ASIA PACIFIC LIFE MATTERS COURSE, INDONESIA 2017



REPORT

Bogor, Indonesia 12 - 20 August 2017

THANKS TO:

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TO ALL FACILITATORS

1. Rob Wood, Australia
2. Cheryl Wood, Australia
3. Siddharth Singh, India
4. Nhat Nguyen, Vietnam
5. Miftahul Huda, Indonesia

TO ALL DONORS

1. Silvia Zuber Fund
2. Initiatives of Change (IofC) Australia
3. Peace Generation Indonesia
4. The U.S Embassy
5. Tempo Institute
6. Barbara Lawler, Australia
7. Rob Wood, Australia
8. Simon Dennis, UK
9. Joao Felipe Elias, Brazil
10. Desihana Rosita Sari, Indonesia
11. Mahboob Jafari, Afghanistan

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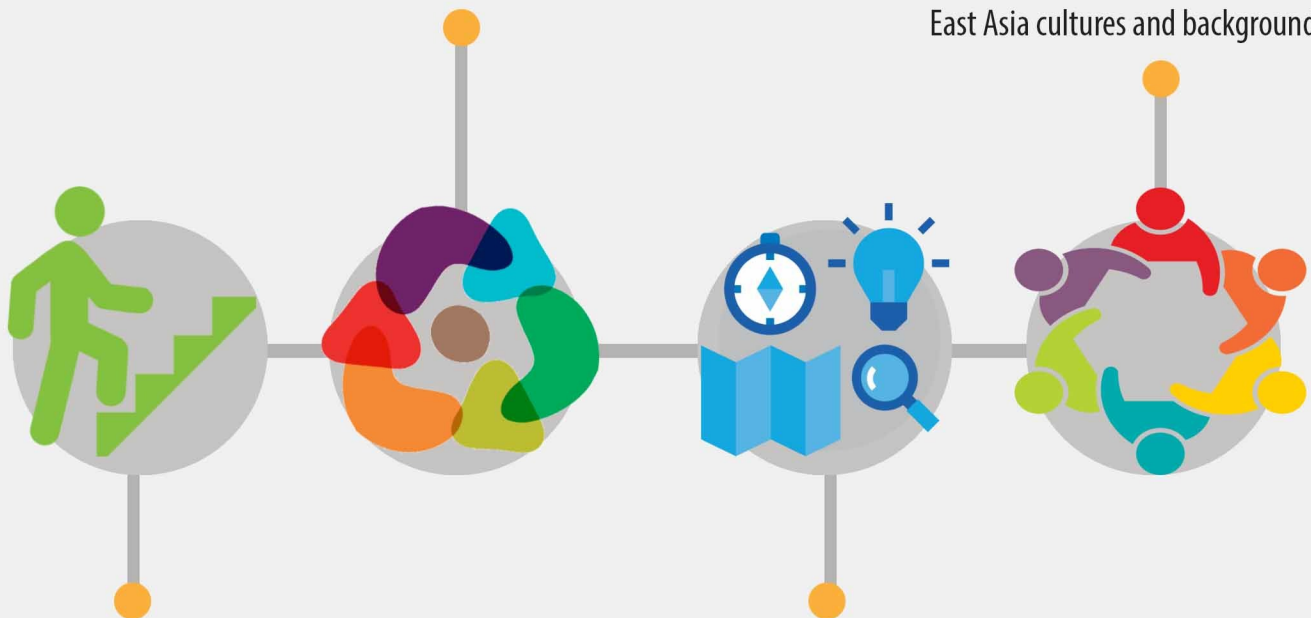


Life Matters Course

The Life Matters Course (LMC) is a residential course for young adults to shape a path and purpose for living. The courses have run continuously since 1995. LMC was originally initiated by Initiatives of Change (IofC) Australia and the 4th Asia Pacific-LMC was held in Bogor, Indonesia. This year's course brought together 33 participants from seven countries and from various backgrounds. The theme was finding a path and purpose in life and the aims of LMC are:

To expand ones' world view and ability to respond to people and situations.

To provide an opportunity to live, work and study with people from different South East Asia cultures and backgrounds.



To help develop the skills and character strengths needed to contribute to positive change in today's world.

To help each person explore and discover their own distinctive purpose.

OPENING CEREMONY



In the opening ceremony, Irna Yugaswatie, the president of lofC Indonesia delivered her opening speech to welcome all participants and to thank faculty members for their hard work and support. She also thanked all donors for their contributions to make this course happen. Umam, a former participant of LMC shared his experience while attending the LMC in Australia. "We are sometimes too busy to think about other people, till we forget to think of ourselves." Umam realized that he had a family conflict which he used to ignore. After joining the LMC, he reflected and wanted to connect more with his family.

In his welcoming remarks Rob Wood, the main facilitator of LMC invited the participants to think deeply about their readiness to be change makers in society. "May LMC be a space for us to reflect on our path and life purpose and make friends for life". At the end of the opening ceremony, students of Jagat Arsy boarding school, a partner of lofC Indonesia performed a dance. At last, we were ready to learn and experience the course.

WHO AM I?

We were led by Nhat Nguyen, a facilitator from Vietnam for the session – Who am I? As quoted from Aristotle - knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom. So the participants began to get to know themselves.



During the session, the participants had a time to choose a picture which best described themselves. Noni from Indonesia chose a picture of a boy who rescued a cat. She said - "One of my life purposes is to be an animal rescuer." Iskandar, from Indonesia shared the journey he has been through and how he finally discovered himself. "I grew up in a family in which both of my parents are civil servants. My parents wanted their children to be civil servants too. I did not have any passion to be a civil servant. In 2012, lofC Indonesia fellows and I hosted our annual Youth Camp in my hometown, Semarang. I managed to invite my parents, little brother and little sister to attend the camp. Afterwards my parents got to know what I have been doing as a part of lofC Indonesia and I started to share my thoughts openly to my parents. Gradually they got to know what I had been doing as a member of the lofC family. Now my siblings and I easily express what we want to our parents and have no fear of being ourselves."



We can be ourselves and let people understand us. We can only identify our past by understanding who we are and accepting who we are. The last exercise in the session is how we define who we are to ourselves, to people around us, and to our community.

THE DREAMING FACTOR



During the dreaming factor session, Cheryl Wood a facilitator from Australia shared two of her big dreams; less plastic products in the world especially plastic bags & no refugees in the world. These two are very hard to achieve, but everyone can do small things related to their dreams, no matter how big it is, it will bring some change. Neas, one of the participants from Papua said "I want to introduce Papua to the world maybe by working in an international organization like the UN or whatever opportunity that comes to me in the future." Mario, from Timor Leste wants to erase two big problems in the world; corruption & discrimination.

"How do we make our dreams become reality?" was the question given to the participants. Think positive, share with others, start from ourselves, and persist" - were some of the insights that the participants contributed. "You are the one who makes the decision, but listening to others is also important." "Dreaming is free." "To make the dream come true, we need to be ready to take risks."

WHERE AM I COMING FROM?

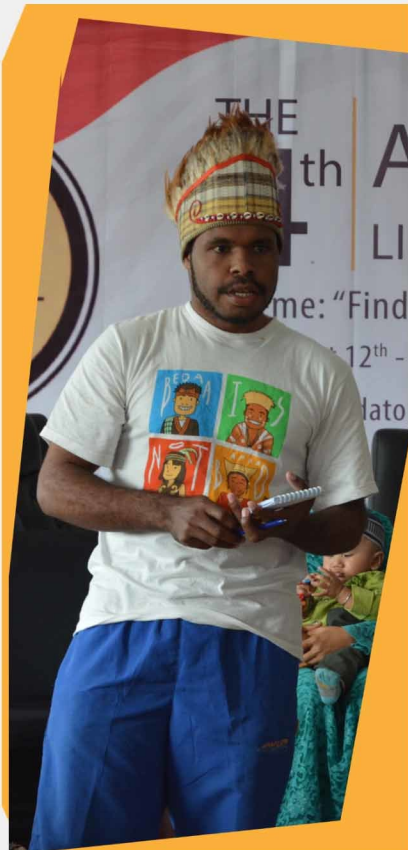
The past and present is the foundation of everybody's future. The participants were asked to bring one particular item that represents themselves or where they come from. "One who forgets where he comes from will never be a man" is a Vietnamese saying. Participants were asked to not only bring their unique item but also to share any of their unique family traditions.



"I've been betrayed by so many people and not built healthy relationships. I easily trusted all people then I realized I needed to be more aware and discern who I should trust" said Mustafa as he shared some of his past.

J.K. Rowling said: "differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open."

IDENTITY



Three participants shared their life-changing experiences. Dessy, one of the participants from Indonesia shared "My identity was in crisis, I used to be a bad girl that had a bad attitude. But after I knew lofC, everything changed. It was my turning point. I had a reason not to give up." Although her family doesn't really support her, she still loves them - the way they are. "I grew up in an inland tribe of Papua. I had the priceless opportunity to be the king of the tribe. But I was really curious about the outside world, outside my community. I asked myself, how can I get there? And my inner voice said; by education" Neas from Papua said education really helped him to discover the world.



LEARNING FROM DIVERSITY



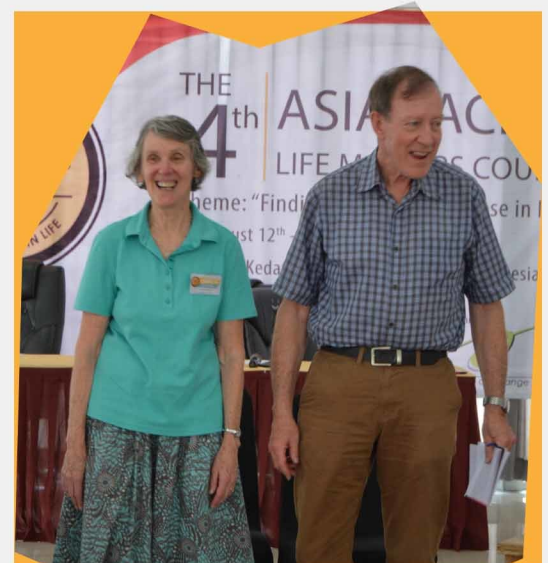
All participants gave a presentation about their culture and their country so that everyone could learn about each other's cultures. As Rob Wood said, "We only have to understand each other's cultures so that we can respect them. Be open to the world, respect each other, and peace will come out of it"

FRIENDSHIP & RELATIONSHIPS

The session was opened with a question from Cheryl, the facilitator. "What makes a relationship healthy and strong?" Commitment, unconditional love, sensitivity, compromise, and sense of humor, were several suggestions that came from the participants. Cheryl shared about her relationship with her mother - "have patience, have vision, and continue to love" - is what she aimed to do to build her relationship with her mother. Showing love does not always have to mean giving presents or giving something expensive, we can simply give time or if that seems hard, we can pray for the relationship.

Iskandar, also the facilitator, made his 'relationship mind map' where he identified what kind of relationship he had with someone he feels is important to him such as - a close relationship, a good relationship, a relationship that needs special care, or maybe a broken relationship. "We can do something about it if we know what kind of relationship we have with someone important to us."

Two big questions were also raised in this session; "What are the qualities you want your future partner to have?" and "What are your qualities that you can offer to your future partner?"



CREATIVE WORKSHOP



This session was delivered by Khilda, the Garbage Queen. She gave the participants an assignment to make their own name card by using recycled paper and recycled tea bags. The name cards that were created had many eye-catching drawings. Some drew flowers, some drew birds, and some were abstract. "If you can discover the creativity inside you, it can create the life you long for".



LIFE STORY SHARING



Nenden from Indonesia shared her life story - how her parents treated her, how she found happiness, and finally, how she discovered her inner voice. "I used to be alone when something bad happened to me, but after I knew the power of sharing, it relieved me it really helped me. Since then sharing is very important to me". It is okay to cry, it's a part of body-healing, the body can express the pain inside by crying.

COMMUNITY BUILDING



During the community building day, the participants visited the Hope Learning Center (HLC), a center for refugees located in Cisarua. Mustofa, from Afghanistan was inspired by the children and he loved to see children smiling. "The children struggle to continue their life and I see it as hope."

HLC is a symbol of commitment of people working together. They may struggle with their financial situation as well but they learn to face their difficulties. The community gives hope and embraces the refugees as part of the world.

Mudit, from India shared that it was the second time for him to interact with a refugee community. "It was clear to see that there is hope in their life. No matter what they have been through in their lives, they struggle and want to learn more and more." People were touched when being welcomed by the children.



Rera, from Indonesia realized after the Community building day that gratitude is such an important key to having hope in life.

Rob Wood said that we could not fully answer all their needs but we could build relationships with them and he hoped the lofC Indonesia team would continue visiting the refugees.



Miftahul Huda, from Indonesia said that seeing the children is so touching. "The ideology of radicalism should be eradicated. Saying I am always right and others are wrong is a wrong perspective. He said he was thinking about how the lofC team should have a strategic plan as to what we can do to help these people."

Irna Yugaswatie shared that she could not imagine how the refugees dealt with hard things in their childhood. "When I asked them to draw pictures, a child drew a bird in a cage that the child wished had freedom."

COMMUNITY BUILDING PANEL

In the evening we had a panel sharing session. Deon, a Christian man from Indonesia shared his experience about religious intolerance. "My church has been legalized but some intolerant people distracted our Sunday service. They protested and had a black flag? campaign to question the existence of our church." Deon attended a Student Interfaith Camp held by lofC Indonesia in 2011. "During the camp, I met Moslem participants and they treated me as a good friend. People should get to know each other to overcome intolerance." He said that radicalism exists because we do not know each other.

Nenden, from Indonesia shared about a program called Inner Growth Companionship Program (IGCP) also known as "Sekolah Rekonsiliasi." IGCP is a program to understand ourselves better, to reconcile within and with others, and to develop inner peace. Nenden said that people should be aware of family issues. In IGCP, we listen and share with one another about family issues and also learn about family reconciliation.



Dr. Agus Mulyana, said that we should create peace through the values of religion and respect other religious beliefs. Family problems will never end. He runs some classes for children and adults to learn about the Al Qur'an at his mosque. "We should create peace and share goodness to fellow humans. It is good to see people concerned enough to want to create a peaceful life so that we can all feel secure."

The participants learnt to love, be sincere, and respect one to another. Everyone can be community builders wherever we are by starting conversation and building relationships. "Acceptance is the key and understanding one another makes everything possible."

INDEPENDENCE DAY

This session was special as we celebrated the 72th Independence Day. Before we started the session, Indonesian participants sang the National Anthem and Farhan, a faculty member from Indonesia read the proclamation of Indonesian Independence day.



In the afternoon we had a session of sharing and of collaboration among countries. In one of the group discussions between Indonesia and Vietnam, we planned to build more partnership such as outreach programmes between the two countries.

MORNING REFLECTION



Each morning there was time for quiet reflection after some input was given on a topic such as: the standards we aim to live by: apology and forgiveness: gratitude.

Saying sorry is a commitment because when we say sorry, we commit not to repeat the mistake. When an apology is given and responsibility is accepted, we may find ourselves feeling free. When we forgive, it doesn't automatically make things right but it can take us a step forward.

We so often feel guilty when we make a mistake or do the wrong thing. Yet, if we only remained in the feeling of guilt we do not change, we should take a step of responsibility. "Have courage to take responsibility when we feel guilty and have willingness to understand each other." The participants had quiet times with the following input: "Do I have a broken relationship where I need to apologize or forgive?" - "Does the group I identify with or belong to have broken relationships where we need to apologize or forgive?"

EVERYONE CAN BE A CHANGE MAKER



We all need a spark of inspiration and at times are given ideas which can make things possible if we pursue them. Wendi Wijarwadi shared from his experience as part of lofC Indonesia since 2006. "As an auditor in a government office, I was challenged to apply honesty, a value which I learnt from lofC. "Commitment is the most important aspect. I commit to work professionally and honestly in my work place, moreover I have to deal with the corruption issue. When I continued my master's degree in the United States, I realize how my involvement in lofC has a big influence in my life."

Miftahul Huda, shared how he faced the challenge of being a Muslim in the face of various conflicts in Indonesia. He reflected on what it means to be Moslem and Indonesian and that through his life's journey he wants to create peace and have dialogue with those from different religions.

Nhat Nguyen shared an experience he had with his team in Vietnam. To create dialogue with the neighboring country of Cambodia, they run a Cambodia Vietnam Exchange program. "When we look back, we found there were prejudices between Cambodia and Vietnam. Then we had several conversations, we began to get to know each other, and developed friendship between our two countries. Once I had a vacation in Cambodia, my parents were worried, but my Cambodian friends said that I had family in Cambodia."

Recently we ran a Cambodia Vietnam Dialogue program in Cambodia. We spent time at a peaceful children's orphanage there and visited the Vietnamese community in Cambodia. We hope small actions such as these can create genuine friendship and acceptance and also build communication for a better future. "To be part of a change making initiative, we should be very clear about the needs of our team, otherwise we cannot change."



HOW CAN I BECOME A CHANGE MAKER?

The participants were divided into groups, they reflected on some questions and then shared within the group. The questions were - What qualities do I have that are important to be a change maker?; What is a first step towards being a change maker that you can take right now; and What challenges do I see in the journey? The challenges always exist such as financial issues and human resources. Anne, from Indonesia said that everyone could be a change maker as long as we have a willingness to make a positive change.



COMMITMENT

Changing ourselves, engaging others, creating answers, and giving hope to humanity are all part of this session. The participants took a pause and reflected on the journey they had been through. They thought about the issues they were concerned about and what actions they were going to take.



TESTIMONY



Nashat Jihad (Iraq)

I spent an amazing time with full of encouragement and motivations. I found out that my path and life purposes are clearer and I am ready to face it in my life. I wish to meet my new family, LMC participants in the near future.



Thanh Nguyen (Vietnam)

I would like to express my gratitude to all LMC committee. I really appreciate your care, warm heart and support. I also enjoyed the practical lessons I got. I love to call lofC Indonesia fellows as my family. I wish each of you all the best!



Mochammad Chasan Fauzi (Indonesia)

LMC gave me valuable experiences and lessons in living my life. I could learn and understand about diversity. I want to apply what I learn during LMC in my life. I love to stay connected with lofC family after this course.



Elia Da Costa Araujo (Timor Leste)

I felt blessed to be part of this amazing course. I learn to accept myself and create changes for my community and my beloved country. I want to be a more positive thinker and also would like to share my experiences during LMC to my community.



Mudit Surana (India)

The amount of effort and time put in by the host team is something which I will never forget and take it as a learning on how important synchronization is mandatory in making this course successful. The diversified group from various ethnic groups and countries, broadened our awareness and how unity in diversity to be part of this year's LMC. Having said that, we all are looking forward to be the change makers to make the world a better place.



Adi Rahajo (Indonesia)

I learn many things during this course. One of them is how to be more relaxed and peaceful. I was really keen to join each session that gave me lots of learning. After the AP-LMC, I want to practice what I have learnt and find a path and purpose in my life.



Rob Wood, Australia

A high point for me was the morning our Life Matters group spent at the Hope Learning Centre with our refugee friends. They are mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran and have incredible stories of what they have survived in getting from their home countries to where they are today. The people we met were both dignified and purposeful and the welcome we received was so wholehearted. I was inspired by the graciousness of their hospitality and the fact that in spite of the very real difficulties of life, they are not without hope. They reminded me that I don't need to be controlled by my environment and that each of us can choose to give our best whatever our situation may be.

On the Saturday morning I was thinking about all the preparations that would have to be done to prepare for the final presentation that night. And I really couldn't see how Cheryl and I would be able to have the quality time we wanted with around ten Indonesians who had been LM participants in Australia years ago and who had driven from Jakarta and brought wives and in most cases children to meet us. Yet I was sure our meeting was meant to go ahead.

I needn't have fretted – a real energy waster - because by mid afternoon the rehearsal was somehow miraculously completed and we were able to have an hour of quality conversation followed by photos with our Jakarta friends. We discovered that most of them are now educators in responsible jobs in different schools and universities. A couple of days later one of them took us to the Islamic boarding school he teaches at and we had a chance to speak with some of his very bright students. He also told us that most of the valuable tools he was using as a teacher he had learnt from his connection with LM and lofC.



Cheryl Wood, Australia

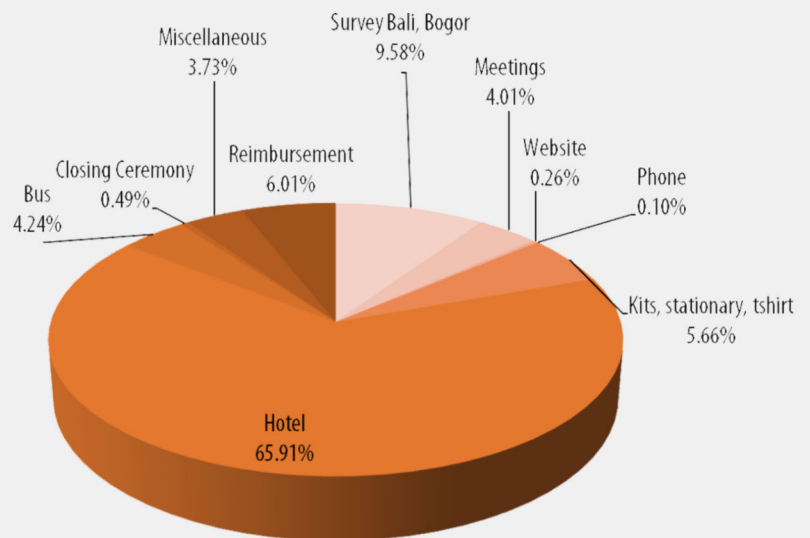
Really appreciated being a part of the LM Course in Indonesia. As an Australian it gave me another precious chance to connect with young people from our neighbouring country. I believe the links between our two countries are important for what we can each give each other, and what Indonesia has to give the world at this point in time. Being the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has a special contribution to make at this time of turbulence and unrest.

The other aspect of the course that I found encouraging was the involvement of the two refugees who currently live in Indonesia, one from Iraq and the other from Afghanistan. They helped us all re-evaluate what life has to offer those of us who are living in our countries of birth. It was also a very good community service to be able to offer English classes at the Hope Learning Centre for refugees. Another factor that made working with this group rewarding was the fact that I was working with an International group. Each person had different skills and gifts and it was fascinating to see us coming together and complimenting each other, after we had talked over skype in preparation - numerous times! A big Thank You to the Indonesian core team for all their preparation of materials, logistics and practical needs – for those of us from overseas ur every need was taken care of.

EXPENSES

This year's AP-LMC would not be possible without the generous support of our donors. We would like to thank all the individuals, corporations and organizations that have supported us. We also would like to thank all volunteers for their times and efforts.

Description	IDR
Survey Bali, Bogor	9,705,000
Meetings	4,065,000
Event Website	260,000
Phone	100,000
Kits, stationary, tshirt	5,740,000
Hotel	66,800,000
Bus	4,300,000
Closing Ceremony	500,000
Miscellaneous	3,780,000
Reimbursement	6,094,900
Total	101,344,900



Income Received:
IDR 122.017.500

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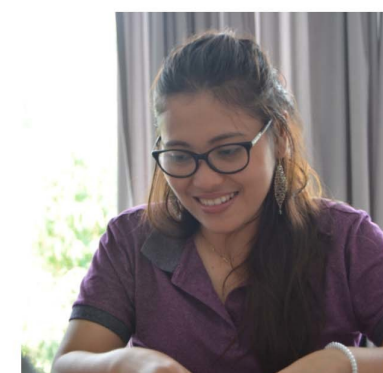
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