

Report

Event: The ICP Council Plus meet

Dates: 27 – 30 October 2022

Venue: Swissotel, The Stamford, Singapore

Attended by: Dr Indu Khetarpal and Ms. Rashi Oberoi

Reporting Authority: Rashi Oberoi- Head of Primary. Salwan Public School Rajendra Nagar

Section-A

The ICP Association for Salwan Education Trust

Takeaways

The commonality of issues, challenges and initiatives was the most striking feature of the meeting. It also was a matter of immense pride that the country through New Education Policy and Our Institutions through our strong practices are at par with global approaches and a futuristic vision. What we can learn through such interactions are the new strategies and approaches being used for teaching and assessing students which will further strengthen our practices.

Learnings and Highlights

Takeaway:1: Future Schooling

Area-1: **Curriculum Redesigning:** Developed countries are in the process redesigning their curriculums to include

- Skill Development: With Skill and vocational learning being the future requirements skilling curriculums with life skills are being introduced.

Where do we stand: With our Clubs, sports, and entrepreneurship programs we are already on board. We must further strengthen the initiative by introducing summer internship programs through parent collaboration.

- **Non-Weighted Assessment:** Under the primary curriculum design and New Education Policy we have already moved towards non weighted assessment at Primary level. It is now being planned for Middle school. This will however be directed by government guidelines.
- Addressing Primary and Middle schools as independent learning units whose outcomes are established through the Learning standards paid down in policy as benchmarks. It is understood that Children at primary school must be taught with an activity-based approach and not be treated as mere feeders to the next academic level.

Where do we stand: Not only does the New Education Policy lay down this distinction with enlisted minimum learning standards, Salwan schools, have also been steering the primary years curriculum approaches in this direction.

- Incorporating SDG's: To promote global citizenship and emphatic schools are making Sustainable goals an integral part of the curriculum.

Where do we stand: All Salwan Schools are engaged in SDG and Community outreach programs at various levels. Our efforts must continue with positive reinforcement.

- Global Diversity: Schools in the developed countries are seeing a vast ethnic and cultural diversity making it important to introduce empathy/ sensitive and inclusive mindsets.

In India we have long since begun looking at our books with caste/religious and gender sensitivities.

- CWSN Inclusive practices: Most members agree that enough is not being done in this area and policies promoting forced inclusion do not have desired results.
- Technology: The use of technology is acknowledged as a must in school systems.

Where do we stand: Our School is not only tech enabled but we have involved in cyber safety and AI initiatives. **We must move towards AI and Robotics labs and invest in a 3D printer for Inquiry based learning**

- Hybrid Schooling: There is a consensus that a 5-day school is not how future schools will function, so a hybrid model is being experimented.
- As Salwan we have also initiated the hybrid model and continue our research on more possibilities

Takeaway:2: Student Agency: A greater need is felt for empowerment of students. They must lead the change. Enabling student participation in policy making is essential and they must have first-hand experience in management and leadership skills.

At Salwan: Through Student led webinars, entrepreneurial activities and conferences our Student Councils have been actively involved in multiple school activities. We are in the right direction and must continue such initiatives.

Takeaway:3: Collaborative management: This is a practice which was highlighted by Singapore. All school level leaders have short term postings in the Ministry and members of the Ministry are deputed as school leaders. We can initiate this program for the Principal/Vice Principal and Heads of Primary wherein they complete short tenure service at the management/Trust level for empathic understanding of policy framing at both levels.

Takeaway:4: Socio-Emotional Needs.

Mental strength is most important to prepare students towards a changing world and schools are coming up with new and intense efforts.

At Salwan we have always stressed on emotional well being and holistic well-being. Our initiatives were well received and our community involvement and Private Public partnerships are role-models.

Takeaway:5: Redesigning classrooms physical and demographic sensitivity.

Equity is built by making students understand the idea of shared resources. With increased refugee movement, these countries are experiencing these issues.

This is our strength as we have always enjoyed a mix of students from socio-economic backgrounds.

Takeaway:6: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - (OCED) and European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE)

: The OCED plays an active role in data analysis. During my interaction with them, I have emphasised that they need to involve and feature India and include our perspective in their webinars and data collection. We need to establish effective communication with them to take this further.

Takeaway:7: Networking and Contacts: The meeting offered a chance to meet and interact with school leaders at Primary and senior level. Their details have been acquired and will be shared with other branches to initiate dialogue and students exchange program opportunities

Takeaway 8: No assured Tomorrow: in the post pandemic world it is imminent that education providers must look at the outcomes of schooling. As we move away from the need to meet Industrial skills major investment needs to be made in Life Skills. Fast changing Industry needs,

emerging new global career trends and a globally inter connected world requires 21st century skills.

Grooming of children to be sensitised individuals and solution providers is a must as post pandemic we have realised that for survival we need to look at collaborative growth and growing in silos is self-destructive. Wars and pandemics have given rise to need to look at situations with a design thinking approach.

The world will require design thinking and prototype solutions.

Where do we stand: Salwanians are groomed to be sensitive and emphatic students. We need to focus on critical thinking skills. I propose introduction of one semester of **Project Based Learning class IV onwards to develop the thinking process.**

Common Struggles

- All participating members shared that they struggled with getting their faculties tech enabled during pandemic times.
- All member countries are facing a staffing crunch with good teachers leaving due to increased stress and documentation
- All countries have seen an increase in student dropout
- Emotional health of students and staff post pandemic has taken precedence.

Where were we different

- Member countries were stunned with the size of our schools and student enrolments. They usually have a 500-600 student strength in the entire school.

The ICP Key Points:

- The ICP Council Plus meet offered an extensive platform for collaboration and open discussions on best practices

- Their charter states that they plan to organise three conferences in a 2-year period which is the duration of membership.
- Past records indicate that they have been successfully organising one conference or Council meet in a year.
- All members present in the Council Meet were registered with the ICP, though the registration form offered a choice of member/non-member category.
- Through interaction with members present it is understood that the conferences offer participation on a larger scale and is open for both members and non-members.
- ICP is a non-government organisation which focuses on bringing school leaders from the Primary-Senior levels.
- It acts as an outside agency voice highlighting trends and developments in the field of education as discussed by member partners.
- Australia has the highest member enrollment
- All participating members were part of a principals' association body. It be noted here that these countries/states have a central body of principals akin to a union controlled or monitored by their respective governments.
- As is the case in most of these countries, Education is a state run and controlled affair they had direct links with the ministry of education of their countries/states
- Presidents and representatives of the Ministry of Education from Finland, Kenya, Singapore were also resent.
- South Africa and India were the only representation from a private body school

Section: B

Detailed Report of the event

About the Council Plus Meet:

The council meeting was spread over 3 days. The meet was organised for ICP by the Academy of Principals, Singapore with almost forty participants from five continents.

Day-1 27th October 2022. Council Dinner: The Evening was an ice breaker. All attending members met over High Tea. New connections were initiated, and the Executive body moved around interacting with delegates. Delegates also had the opportunity to set the base for building new connections and preliminary introductions. By the end of the meeting 20 out of 24 contact details were collected and initial contact has been established.

Day 1 of Council Meet. was an all-day program of round table discussions and presentations on various issues pertaining to the architecting of future schools and a focused presentation by Anna Pons on How would Future Schools look like.

Taking forward the 'Get to know each other' initiative we began the first day of the council meet.

- **Dr Peter Kent, President ICP** welcomed the delegates expressing his pleasure of meeting offline after a gap of 2 years. He further congratulated the members for ensuring continuity during the pandemic.
- **The Academy of Principals, Singapore** made a presentation on the Singapore Model of Education and how they have redesigned the approach. It was a moment of pride to see the design along similar lines of our 'New Education Policy'. The Key Points were

1. Investing in leaders and faculty capacity building: To enable the shift required in teaching methodologies it is important that leaders form collaborative support groups and communicate regularly.
2. **Moving away from weighted assessments.** progressive educational practices require a focus on soft skills rather than taking part in the stressful practices of grading. All members agreed that the most important lesson from the pandemic is that we are looking at an uncertain world and uncertain tomorrow. we need to equip our students with strong mental health and resilience as they need to use their knowledge to improve the world and tackle new concerns. running after marks/grades internalises a child's sense of accomplishment creating a threatening competition. Non weighted assessment will broaden the child's thinking and promote collaborative learning. It will also remove the bias which it brings as we are dealing with more inclusive classrooms which house different ability students. the focus must be on ensuring learning and meeting essential levels.
3. Assessments in **Primary Level** only at the end of each benchmark level. As in the New Education Policy, globally also the focus is on learning not testing. Therefore assessment is done at the end of the year and to test minimum learning standards.
4. Focus on Citizenship building. For nurturing proud and responsible citizens schools must inculcate citizenship values in students.
5. Focus on Skilling will be the key to groom resilient children. Schools and skilling have not been integrated smoothly. As emphasised in the NEP skilling must be woven into the educational journey.
6. Lateral entry programs to ensure lifelong learning opportunities. This is seen as a progressive step to keep learning relevant and allow flexibility in learning. Singapore has designed a model where dropouts can join back/enter the formal school program at distinct levels

7. Establishing clear Benchmark developments: The organisation representatives emphasises that each level, **as stated in the NEP, Elementary/Middle/Senior/Pre-College**, must be expected to deliver its outcomes and schools need to move away from the blame game. Each level of school years play a vital and diverse role in nurturing the child.
8. Moving away from Industrial Skills to Future Skills or Life Skills with focus on Efficacy/Ability/Values and Learning for life.

- **The Third Session: Panel discussion.** A survey was conducted pre-meet by ICP on 'A voice from the region in framing the future.' This was circulated to members of the ICP (do we have the data filled by us and did we receive it).
The findings of the survey were presented followed by a panel which formed of members from different countries. The questions raised were
 - What are the key challenges faced by leaders? (Staffing and Funding were key points)
 - How can we work towards sustainable leadership? (Initiate a mentoring and support network)
 - What are the lessons from the pandemic?

Following points by the panel the discussion was opened for members on the table with more points emerging.

1. Increased document hampering efficiency
2. Assessment needs to be relooked and revisited to be non-competitive
3. How much and what to teach is extremely critical to support futuristic learning.
4. The need of the hour is Social- Economic gaps and efforts to bridge them.

On the underlying voices of caution remained over emergence of a post pandemic world and the key indicators that emerged strongly through the discussions were:

1. Technology saved the day
2. educational across the world struggled to become tech savvy overnight
3. Issues such as lack of devices and poor Internet connections have resulted in the learning gap for those who did not have access

15th ICP Council Plus meet 2024: Expressions of Interest were presented by Kenya and Singapore and put to vote. Kenya was voted to be the next venue.

The meeting which was scheduled in 2020 and could not be conducted was now moved to Finland in 2023.

Expressions of Interest are Invited for ICP 2025 by members. We can write to them for the same

Day-1 Post Lunch:

Gallery Walk:

Voices from across the continents. ICP World: A summation of major concerns and points of discussion were shown on the continent map with locations and areas of ICP partners highlighted. Members were encouraged to post queries on the map for discussion at a later point.



Anna Pons: OECD Project Leader and Analyst, Director for Education and Skills.

Anna drives home some hard-hitting points during her presentation on 'Reimagining Education'

The key indicators were, how to address and best manage the ever-increasing pressures and responsibilities of leading schools in a world that is both emerging from a Pandemic and seeking to respond to the challenges of education in the 21st century.

Primary areas of focus for Future schools

- Adapting curricula to changing needs: Traditional approaches to schooling need to be done away with and we need to experiment with approaches which will keep children in school and kinder their curiosity.
- Focus on life skills development
- Improving assessment of learning outcomes is important as it has a direct impact on the emotional wellbeing of the child. It must encourage rather than stamp or categorise.
- fostering 21st century competencies. With futures being uncertain and migration happening at a much faster pace it is difficult to keep bias in education. learning will have to foster sensitivities and respect diversity. Compassion, collaboration, empathy, and resilience will be the key
- Investing in innovative technology for teaching and learning. Digital technology is an established presence in schools. we must design new courses and learning modules to use technology in a sustainable manner.
- Outside school learning influences will play a large role in a child's understanding. Let us scale down our syllabus and curriculum to strengthen core values and concepts.
- Empowering Student Agency for change. Today's student wants to be heard and empowered. They are looking for progressive and positive influences and want them to be reflected in subjects.
- Redesigning Workspaces. Collaboration is the key to interdisciplinary planning. Staff rooms must be redesigned to offer seating where such interactions can take place.
- Reimagining Timetables
- Promoting Interdisciplinary approaches
- Assign time to prepare and collaborate for teachers
- Mental Health to take priority

Challenges

- Making systems more inclusive of diversity
- Bridging the socio-economic inequality
- Expanding lifelong learning opportunities upper

The Presentation was followed by group discussions where all present unanimously accepted the points brought forth in the OECD findings.

Day 2. Final Day of the Council Pus Meet:

Student Agency: The Student council of Academy of Principals joined the members for a panel presentation.

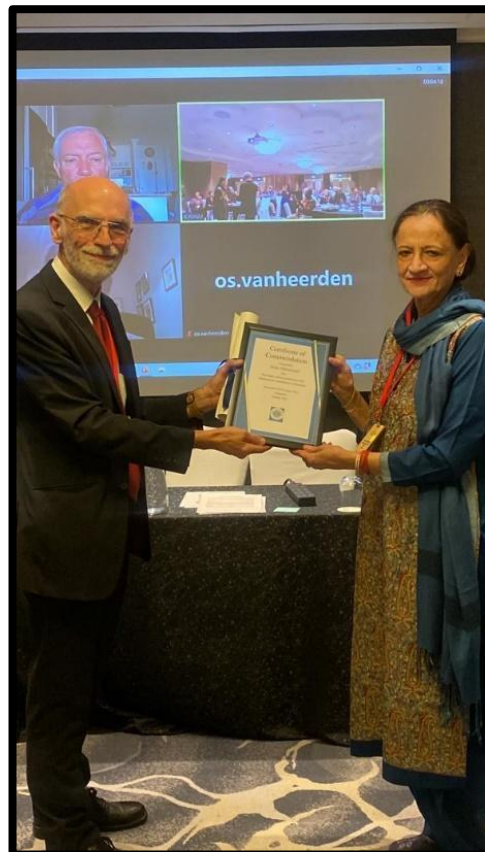
The Session began with recorded responses from students across schools of ICP countries. The same questions were then taken up by the student council representatives. This was followed by a Q n A with the students. The voice of the students had simple yet pertinent demands

- Ensure equal opportunities
 - change the way you teach
 - internships and experiences are exciting ways to learn
 - Make education about students learning
 - Include students in the decision-making process
 - Do not make schools about grades or marks.
 - develop the mental health of students and prepare them for life.
- Information is easily available; it is the human bond which should be the focus.

Don't create a school environment you would not want to go to.

ICP Plus presented their new initiative **Virgin Plus** which is a virtual connect network for people.

Citation and Life Membership Awards: The Highlight of the of the meet was the Citation of Honour awarded to Dr. Indu Khetarpal for her outstanding works and long association with the ICP and in the field of Education at both National and International levels. President Late. Alta Van and Secretary Shree Vertigan were awarded Life Memberships



The next session included a presentation by Daniel Wisniewski from The **European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE)**

The European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) is a dynamic organisation established in 2009 to represent the interests of employers in the strategic and highly diverse European education sector. It aims to improve the quality of teaching and school management through European cooperation and dialogue. EFEE strives to represent the whole of the diverse education sector and is recognised by the European Commission as an official European social partner in the policy

consultation process. EFEE also facilitates access to a range of networks, international projects, and funding.

The federation invited countries across the world to participate in their events and conferences. It also presented an opportunity for countries to join and support research done by OECD. Funding for research projects and collaboration in publication was extended.

Concluding Activity: World Cafe. The Meet concluded with a recap of the last 2 days. Agenda for the next meeting was set as Student Voice and advocacy. A group photograph sealed the rigorous 2-day affair.

The ICP at Work.

The conglomeration of organisations focused on developments in the education sector and to vowed to continue to focus our joint work on topics that have sufficient common ground for discussion and for initiatives with a clear added value for cooperation. The principle behind the ICP is to bring together bodies of principals' organisations. Principals present were a mixed batch of

- Primary School
- Middle School and
- Pre- College

The ICP supports the professional development and work of school leaders. The ICP represents school leaders across five continents; it is non-political and non-sectarian and gives a powerful international voice to school principals. Membership is open to any organisation of school leaders.

The representations were from National Principals associations. Which appears to be the practice in the countries who have subscribed for membership with the ICP.

Lending direction to thought for designing and Reimagining education

Some Pertinent and pressing questions to reimagine education I would like to present to the readers of this report are:

1. How could potential shocks and surprises (natural disasters, economic shocks, cyber war, etc) impact the functioning of education under different scenarios?
2. Can you identify something that your education system should start doing differently / preparing for?
3. What are the main factors behind the persistence of the massive schooling model?
4. In the next 20 years, can we imagine that formal education could be considered less important?
5. What are the ultimate goals and functions of education? Are the goals and structures in your schooling system aligned?
6. Looking at your education system, what can be incrementally improved and what needs fundamental transformation?
7. What is the strategic inventory of actions available (funding something, banning something, promoting a new practice, forming a partnership, etc.)?
8. What is the right balance between digital environments and old-fashioned physicality?
9. What do the scenarios imply for teachers, teaching and teacher policies (human resources in schools; professional status, certification and collaboration, accountability, etc.)?
10. **Are we ready to change the game?**

I look forward to taking your question in person on the information presented.

For implementable action at our schools' level, I shall present another report detailing the action plan.

