Located in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Netherlands Inter-community School is an early years and primary school offering two language streams: Dutch and English. The International Primary Curriculum is delivered through both streams. Most students are expatriates from a wide range of countries and there are a few local children of Indonesian descent. NIS has an open policy, and students with any level of English ability are permitted to study in the English stream in the grade that matches their age. In recent years, the IPC has proved to be a powerful tool in unifying and strengthening both streams, and to bring the whole school community together.

Primary years co-ordinator Leona Dauphin, language co-ordinator Christina Shala, and their colleagues describe the way the IPC has helped them to transform the school:

The IPC has been used for many years in the school. With the current team, we have set out new guidelines and defined what IPC means to us.

Since the implementation of the IPC, it has been a prominent factor in our classrooms. Through recent alignment practices we have been able to streamline the implementation of the IPC in a more collaborative way. There is a coordinated effort by milepost teachers to plan and teach the units through team teaching. The alignment efforts across the school have had a positive impact on our school community as teachers and students are teaching and learning together across the different language streams.

Connecting language streams with the IPC

A change in leadership resulted in structural organisation and streamlining of processes. A philosophical shift also occurred with a focus on enquiry based learning across the school and IPC was identified as a tool to assist in this process.

Now our Milepost Two and Three classes from both language streams meet up three or four times a week to do their IPC learning together. We have a Dutch teacher explaining and facilitating in Dutch, and an English-speaking teacher doing the same in English. As a result, the children collaborate more and English and Dutch stream students work together, particularly during research tasks. Entry and exit points are shared events as well.
Our specialist subjects have also come on board with the IPC. For example, because our music teacher knew about a forthcoming IPC unit, he planned for the students to write a song related to the theme, using the common vocabulary. It was amazing; the children loved it! All the staff are starting to see the possibilities and having fun with the IPC now.

Our EAL team prepares flash cards, scaffolding activities, strategies and resources to allow EAL students of all levels to access the learning that’s going on, supported by local Indonesian English teachers in every class. This enables EAL students to work at the same pace as their classmates without missing out on any particular subject learning; fully supported to understand the learning tasks. The practical, student-led activities of the IPC encourage the EAL students to work alongside their peers, participating in group work and maintaining a strong relationship with classmates. Subject learning and language learning are not separated for the EAL students, allowing them greater freedom to engage.

Our IPC units across the different Mileposts are organised around similar themes.

The collaborative efforts in connecting our two language streams has impacted the whole culture of our school; the teachers are working together, the children are loving it, even the parents are aware of the change; they are seeing their child learning in three different languages, and playdates are now happening between the streams. We’ve also become so much more internationally minded, simply as a result of how we are delivering the IPC. We’ve become a true inter-community school.

Planning is key in successfully implementing the IPC. Everyone prepares their IPC unit planning ahead of time so that we have the opportunity to invite guest speakers, organise school trips and make connections between the streams. This has all come about because of the timetabling. Cross planning and collaboration has had a positive impact on our teaching and learning practice. The IPC is fantastic for working organically across dual languages if you have your planning in place.

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**Linking learning with multiple curricula**

Because of being a dual stream school, we work with a range of curricula. We follow Cambridge Curriculum in our English stream, and meet the Dutch Primary Care Goals in the Dutch stream, identifying as many opportunities as we can to link to our IPC units, including Maths and English.

This takes time and careful planning but the teachers are seeing the benefit of connecting all our subject learning - including Maths and English - to the theme; making learning engaging and meaningful.

Our Modern Foreign Languages include English for our Dutch stream, Dutch for our English stream, and Bahasa (Indonesian language) lessons are mandatory for all. In advance of a new IPC theme, our MFL team dissects the unit and identifies learning opportunities for children at beginner, intermediate and advanced level in all three languages. The theme’s vocabulary helps to focus the learning. Because the children are seeing and using the vocabulary in Dutch, English and Bahasa, everything becomes connected. Now the children are writing stories, performing plays and doing many other activities linked to their IPC unit in their MFL classes.

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Everyone is now able to do their IPC learning in three different languages: English, Dutch and Bahasa. In our recent student-led conferences, the children were able to show this to their parents. It was an amazing experience for the parents.

**The value of linking IPC to specialist subjects**

Language co-ordinator Christina Shala describes how the IPC has helped her to deliver engaging MFL learning:

Before we made changes to the way we used the IPC, I didn’t have any connection with the IPC. My English class was based on the Cambridge Curriculum text books and it wasn’t very exciting for the children. Within one single class, I’d have many distinct language level groups, and multiple topics happening within the different groups. I was managing more than I was teaching.

The IPC has proved to be a powerful tool in unifying and strengthening both streams, and to bring the whole school community together.

This year there’s been a total change in my classroom. Because all learning is now planned across the two streams, we are able to use the vocabulary from the IPC unit to support our MFL learning. We take a different spin on the IPC theme in each of the different languages; using the vocabulary and grammar in different ways with each MFL lesson. I still use the textbook for odd bits of grammar, but now that our learning is so connected to the IPC unit, I’m able to be more creative, making my own resources and finding new ones.

Our Dutch stream students who have been doing their IPC learning in Dutch, are now seeing the same words in English and making the language connection. Because the children are excited about the theme, they’re already engaged, they know the vocabulary in Dutch, and so the English comes much easier for them. They’re just doing it! It’s empowered them because they have the background knowledge. As a result, their English levels are moving forward at a fast pace. Exactly the same is happening with our English stream students and their learning of Dutch.

**Integrating the IPC in a dual language or multiple curricula school: advice from NIS**

IPC is a wonderful tool for connecting dual languages and multiple curricula. Here’s our advice:

- The teachers must have planning time together and IPC time slots must be co-ordinated.
- Work together with everyone and plan your IPC units early; well in advance of introducing them to the class.
- An IPC co-ordinator is vital to oversee the planning, and to make sure that everyone is given time to plan prior to each unit.
- It’s a process that needs time to embed so don’t give up! It will take time in the beginning. Each teacher goes through the journey at their own pace – you’ll not get all your staff on board at the same time. Don’t expect everyone to ‘get it’ after a one-day workshop. Each time they do the IPC unit planning they will see something new and understand it a little more.
- Encourage classroom observation, identifying those who are fully vested to share best practice. Some people need to see it for themselves to realise the impact.

**What we love about the IPC**

- We like the fact that the IPC is not restrictive; it gives us guidelines and suggestions but gives us lots of flexibility too. There’s plenty of room to do your own activities.
- We like the focus on skills and understanding as well as knowledge, and that it’s enquiry based.
- IPC doesn’t require teachers to come up with lots of lesson plans and new materials; it’s easy and it works naturally for every teacher in the way they want to use it.
- IPC opens children’s and teacher’s minds to international mindedness. It helps children to get a better understanding about the differences and also the similarities between other children. It connects learning with different parts of the world in so many ways.
- We like the IPC’s Brainwave units; they’re enormously valuable. They’ve helped our children to learn how to learn, the process of learning, and the attributes to help learning.
- IPC is a great way to make cross curricular vocabulary accessible to EAL and MFL students.
- Our children are happy and very engaged and like talking about their learning. The IPC is fun – for the teachers as well as the children. It helps teachers want to teach. It involves parents in lots of positive ways too.
The structural and organisational changes in hand with the philosophical shift allowed us to maximise the implementation of IPC at our school.

Even if you’ve been a teacher for a long time, and even if you’ve been teaching with the IPC for several years, the IPC is ever-evolving. It is always being updated and improved which keeps it current and relevant for children, and for what’s happening in the world today.

Purposefully planned service learning activities, as such, are facilitated by the IPC. The IPC makes our children look at their learning in a different way; from the point of view of other people in other countries as well as from their own perspective. It’s transforming the way our children think about their place in the world.

Now that our learning is so connected to the IPC unit, I’m able to be more creative, making my own resources and finding new ones.

The IPC’s focus on international mindedness is helping our children learn about their place in the world and about the place of others. One example of this was our Walk for Water.

During the IPC Clean Water unit, we were inspired by the stories of children having to walk to collect their water. We talked about what it must be like to carry so much water in the burning sun. This gave the children the idea of a sponsored walk and that’s how we came up with our Walk for Water. Teachers, parents and children all carried 4 litre bottles of water for six kilometres, just like many children have to do every day as part of their normal life – with no choice.

From the start of our walk to the finish, you could see the change in the children. Some of the children were very determined to keep going, but of course there were lots of complaints and children saying they couldn’t do it! The teachers, parents and children had to provide encouragement to each other to keep going and to remind everyone there wasn’t a choice; it had to be done, which created real community spirit. Everyone finished the walk and this had a huge impact. It was very tough for many and they all felt so proud of what they’d achieved.

IPC got us walking for water
The International Primary Curriculum’s growing learning community includes schools in more than 90 countries around the world. Learning with the IPC means that children focus on a combination of academic, personal and international learning that is both exciting and challenging.

The aim of the IPC is to help every child enjoy learning a wide range of subjects and to develop an enquiring mind, the personal attributes that will help throughout teenage and adult years, and to develop a sense of their own nationality and culture, whilst developing a profound respect for the nationalities and cultures of others. Through the IPC approach to learning, children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to confidently face the world of tomorrow.

The IPC was introduced in 2000 and its continued development today ensures that children are learning a current and highly relevant curriculum based on the very latest research and understanding of how children learn.

The IPC is a part of Fieldwork Education which, since 1984, has been helping schools all around the world to develop children’s learning.
For more information about the International Primary Curriculum visit www.greatlearning.com/ipc