

IA-CEPA Economic Cooperation Program – Katalis

(Nursing and Aged Care Projects 2022-2025)

Introduction:

The primary funder of Katalis projects is the Australian Government through DFAT official development assistance, under the IA-CEPA Economic Cooperation Program. **DFAT budget is managed by Katalis and totalled A\$40 million over 5 years (2020–2025).** Within that A\$40 million, around would appear to be A\$ 2 million was nursing and aged care training related across 3 projects:

Project 1 2022-23: Comparative Assessment and Analysis of Nursing Standards between Indonesia and Australia

Awarded to La Trobe University. While DFAT may not publish specific project amounts, research indicates it was worth approximately AUD \$650,000.

English-language issue:

The project report explicitly notes that English testing requirements (OET/IELTS) are a barrier for Indonesian nurses *but* the funded activity itself was **analytical only** – there was mention but no **analysis of English-language barriers to entry** in the project scope. What to do about this obvious barrier to an outcome was not part of the final project report.

Historical analysis issue:

Ramsay Healthcare (Ramsay (ASX: RHC).

There appears to have been no historical analysis of previous Australian business investments in the hospital sector in Indonesia and nearby Malaysia, to learn about the challenges in nurse training certification and pathways. In particular the substantial 15-year investment in Indonesia by then AIBC National Corporate member, Ramsay Healthcare with vast in-country experience of the challenges of nurse training skills gaps, English language risks, and peak body blockages. Time with Ramsay would have been very valuable, particularly with its Australian and Indonesian nurse educator team members. Perhaps the IA-CEPA project was seen by its architects as an Aid and Development project rather than a business development pathway project.

With over 15 years' experience of Nurse Training in Indonesia it seems inconceivable that Ramsay and its nurse educators with vast experience on nursing standards and job readiness were not key informants in the project design and analysis stage.

UTS Nursing Faculty

It also appears there was no historical analysis of Australian university nurse training project investments between 2005 and 2010 and the lessons to be learned in assisting in project design for the various Katalis Projects.

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) established an Indonesia nurse pathway program in 2006/7 with Jakarta based Yayasan Binawan Health Institute (now Binawan University of Health Sciences). UTS at that time was also a member of the Australia Indonesia Business Council (AIBC).

English Language Issues:

Once English was recognised as a barrier, this joint program included an intensive English language program managed by the Australia Centre Medan-ACM (established by Insearch Language Centre UTS in 1994, with seed funding from DFAT). ACM experts taught English at Binawan in Jakarta for around 15 months to help bring students up to an English Language standard required by UTS. At the same time the students studied some initial UTS nursing subjects.

Students who met agreed academic and English standards transitioned from Jakarta to UTS in Sydney for additional English and academic pathway support, before continuing the Nursing degree. Some managed to graduate and take up positions in Australian hospitals, others sought jobs in the aged care sector. Some had to return to Indonesia. Binawan also had a role as sponsor of student fees

After this initial attempt to create a nursing pathway between Indonesia and Australia, the program ended and UTS, the Australia Centre Medan and Binawan parted ways.

English language levels were increased by the Australian Nurses and Midwives Registration Board to 7.0 IELTS shortly afterwards, putting a pathway to professional recognition out of reach for most Indonesian nurses.

With over 30 years' experience of English language training, ESP Nursing, Academic preparation, and IELTS Testing in Indonesia, it is disappointing that the Australia Centre Medan senior management were not sought as key informants in the Katalis project design and analysis stage.

Project 2 Nursing project with the Australia Indonesia Centre, Monash University.

This was the follow up Katalis Project in nursing collaboration with a new partner and another substantial budget. Its purpose was to build a pathway for nursing skills development between Indonesia and Australia to align nursing standards, education, and skills.

The project design document did not include any reference previous Australian experience of the nursing sector and in addressing English language as a barrier, even though the work was tasked with addressing nursing standards and mobility. Any mobility and job creation outcome is dependent on achieving a recognised level of English proficiency to work in Australia.

- **Budget:** Public documents confirm Katalis support but do not state a specific dollar amount for the nursing package; it is within the same A\$40m program.

English-language issue:

The AIC/Katalis nursing work acknowledges the importance of English for mobility, but **no** explicit English-bridging course or OET/IELTS preparation is in the published activity descriptions, nor in its policy, standards, and pilot design.

Project 3 UNE Partnerships / aged-care pathway pilots

Funder: Publicly described as a Katalis-supported industry pathway, so again DFAT money via Katalis, with co-investment from Australian aged-care providers and UNE Partnerships. australiaindonesiacentre.org+1

Budget: No public figure for the value of the nursing/aged-care pilot is included here but sits inside the A\$40m Katalis envelope.

English-language issue:

Pathway documentation stresses that participants must meet Australian regulatory English standards, but English training is treated as a prerequisite or industry add-on, not a funded part of the Katalis DFAT project design.

Australia Indonesia Business Council: The AIBC Chair Education and Training Industry Group was invited to a Katalis workshop on the sidelines of the AIBC Business Conference in Sydney in October 2024 to meet project managers and partners. The Chair suggested that the project team speak with the Australia Centre Medan as UNE were partnering with Binawan University.

Visa Issue: It appears that graduates of the UNE Program have not yet been able to secure visas to undertake work placement in Australia

Lessons to be learnt:

1. Historical Experience is important and available – speak to people who have experience of Indonesia in running hospitals and the issues around Nurse Training;
2. English is vital-speak to people with Indonesian on ground experience in ELT delivery particular to the nursing sector;
3. Do due diligence;
4. Include AIBC Education and Training Industry Group representation on the project design and management team.

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