

## **In-Person International Exchange Activities for Children of New Immigrants Resume**

(Image/Original Text:Shen Tung-I,Division of Education for Indigenous Peoples and Special Education)



To promote the diverse cultures of new immigrants to Taiwan, the K-12 Education Administration of the Ministry of Education resumed the in-person International Exchange Activities for Children of New Immigrants program in 2023, which encourages local schools to conduct two-way exchange and learning experiences with seven Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Myanmar. The activities aim to enhance students' international perspective and strengthen their understanding of different cultures, thus showcasing the multiculturalism and multilingual skills of children of new immigrants across Taiwan.

The K-12 Education Administration launched the International Exchange Activities for Children of New Immigrants program in 2017 to build international friendships through two-way exchange and learning experiences. As an example, program participant National Yuanlin Senior High School became a sister school with a high school in Surabaya, Indonesia in 2018. In 2018 and 2019, inter-school exchange trips were held, and the participating groups experienced local

cuisine, tried out the traditional musical instrument – Gamelan, and visited a submarine museum and mosque. During the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022, the schools continued to keep in touch by video, introducing each other to local traditional culture and sharing their experience of life during the pandemic.

In October 2023, a group from National Yuanlin Senior High School once again travelled to Surabaya and visited the governor's office, a tobacco museum, and a monument of independence, and arranged for class exchanges with their sister school. Students lived with host families to further interact with local teachers and students. They experienced local educational activities, broadening their international perspective by understanding the similarities and differences between the cultures of Taiwan and Indonesia. Teachers and students from the sister school then paid a return visit to Taiwan in December to strengthen their relationship and learn even more.

The K-12 Education Administration stated that the 2023 International Exchange Activities for Children of New Immigrants program saw participation from 108 students from Taiwan, including 92 children of new immigrants and 86 students from Southeast Asian countries. It is hoped that in the aftermath of the pandemic, educational exchanges between schools in Taiwan and Southeast Asia can be expanded, and friendship and cooperation can be deepened so as to begin a new chapter for the program.