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ALIGNMENT, FLEXIBILITY, AND EQUITY – INCLUSIVE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES: NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN PERSPECTIVES

Governments value education. They put in place systems, standards and policies to hopefully improve education outcomes and address issues of inequity. However, the task of doing this is immense as the alignment between policy at a system level and practice at a local school or HE level is an ongoing challenge. If policies are too standardized and fixed, with a lack of flexible and ongoing locally informed professional development and training, then issues of inequity in and through education will most likely remain. If too many areas become the focus through professional development and training, then any change to local practice is minimal due to leaders and teachers being overwhelmed. To experience inclusive and equitable education, both system level leadership and local level leadership are needed. At the heart of this is collaboration, where all involved see themselves as learners. To address issues of inequity and exclusion, local communities and their own cultural groups are involved, along with system and local leaders. A one-size fits all approach from system leaders or borrowing policies from other (Western) nations will not work so well; neither will local leaders with their school or HE institution trying to go it alone. Nations, their regions, cultural groups, and local communities can be encouraged to find their own paths based on their own values to bring together the expectation of policies and support from the system level, with flexibility of practice at their own local level. In this presentation, Howard will provide some examples of where this has been done well in New Zealand, so equitable education is enhanced. He will also discuss what this may mean for Southeast Asian nations in their quest for even more inclusive and equitable education systems and practices.

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