



Students Provide Free IT Services to Rural Communities

Families and small businesses in East Borneo benefit from a collaboration between Cisco and the local government.

Practical Experience for Students



"I can get more skills in computer hardware and software by sharing knowledge and experience with others."

Ahmad Indra, Student
SMK Negeri 7 Samarinda

Computers are becoming commonplace in East Borneo, Indonesia, yet access to IT support is often limited.

To help address this need, SMK Negeri 7 Samarinda, a Cisco Networking Academy® center, launched a program called IT Care from February through April 2010.

Students participating in the program provided free IT maintenance services to local community members and businesses in Samarinda.

A total of 118 students and 13 instructors got involved, with the students splitting up into teams of four or five people and visiting participating districts for two days a week throughout the three-month period.

The goal of the program was to help the Networking Academy students, roughly a third of whom were women, enhance their IT skills while providing a valuable service to local communities, some of which are in remote areas.

Working with the Government

The students, mostly aged 15 to 18 and studying IT Essentials or Cisco CCNA® Discovery courses, volunteered their time and skills for free and their travel costs were reimbursed from a school fund that was subsidized by the local government.

The students worked out of government-owned buildings and offered help with common IT challenges such as setting up LANs, eliminating computer viruses, and repairing printers for local businesses and individuals.

In three months, the students dealt with 714 IT problems and gained a wealth of practical experience to supplement their theoretical knowledge.

Future Plans

"The school has now opened a business incubator offering IT support with low service fees, to help the local community and further build on students' business skills," says Adhe Widi Astato, area academy manager for Cisco® Indonesia.

"The students really enjoyed this program," says Astato. "It gave them a chance to demonstrate their capabilities, develop their technical and communications skills, and come up with ideas for businesses of their own."

Many students who participated in the program have continued to offer free maintenance services, working in their free time after classes and building relationships that could ultimately result in employment.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Networking Academy, please visit www.cisco.com/go/netacad.

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