

ASSESSING LONG-TERM IMPACT: USAID/INDONESIA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

IIE undertook an independent study to assess the long-term impact of USAID-funded scholarship programs on scholars professional and personal lives upon their return to their home country. As part of this effort, IIE reached out to scholars who participated in the Indonesia HICD Program (2006-2011) and its follow-on, the PRESTASI program (2011 – 2020).

- 150+ survey respondents
- 15 long-form interviews



PRESTASI-3 Scholar at IIE's Leadership Workshop

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Further information and survey results available upon request.

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Through the USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) program and the Program to Extend Scholarships and Training to Achieve Sustainable Impacts (PRESTASI), USAID/Indonesia provided scholarships to 357 Indonesians from 2006 through 2020. An additional 1,280 Indonesians participated in short-term training programs with USAID PRESTASI support. Scholarship recipients pursued U.S. graduate degrees in the fields of Economics, Education, Environment, Democracy and Human Rights, and Health, and received supplemental training in areas such as English language proficiency and leadership development. In these ways, the HICD and PRESTASI programs expanded scholarships into programs that contributed to the holistic education of each scholar and equipped scholars with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to contribute to the continuing development of Indonesia.

Personal Enrichment

- 82% of respondents noted that the scholarship and U.S. educational experience had a very positive impact on their personal lives, and the remaining 18% responded that it had a positive impact.

Professional Development

Personal skills gained or strengthened as a result of USAID scholarship:

- Improved English language skills (88%)
- Critical thinking (87%)
- Research skills and techniques (77%)
- Communication and adaptability skills (77%)
- Leadership (71%)

Professional/life skills attributed to USAID scholarship program:

- Strengthened skills and knowledge (93%)
- Greater confidence in the workplace (80%)
- Improved job performance (77%)

Close Ties to the U.S.

- Remain in close contact with U.S. colleagues and counterparts (91%)
- Share American culture (food, language, etc.) in Indonesia (47%)

Giving Back to Others

Contributions made to community as a result of USAID scholarship:

- Tutoring, sharing, and/or teaching skills learned (74%)
- Community service/volunteering (56%)
- Bringing awareness to issues in the community (50%)
- Participating in community organizations (47%)

Life-Changing Experience Personally, Professionally, and Socially

Upon their return to Indonesia, alumni remarked that their job performance increased, and they received more opportunities. The technical and soft skills they learned in the U.S. are utilized daily in their professions. Many also received promotions, new and/or higher roles at their institution, and felt more confident in the workplace.

“The program helped me to do my work better. I got both technical skills and knowledge, and also soft skills as well - like confidence and better organization. When I studied the first time in the U.S., I knew how difficult it was in grad school, so I had more information about available time and resources. I knew how to manage myself better.”

– Dinar Kharisma

Alumni More Inclined to Participate in Their Communities

USAID scholarship alumni share resources, help others seek similar scholarship opportunities, and mentor students in Indonesia. They participate more in community service, particularly in rural and underserved areas in Indonesia. Alumni also collaborate across sectors to support humanitarian, economic, and social assistance programs through their government ministries or non-governmental organizations.

“I was a cofounder of a foundation that helped the elderly. We managed to get support from the government; like home visits to take care of them. I helped them with management systems, HR, to coach the staff and volunteers. Again, these skills are not there suddenly, it’s from experience from America and the learning process from my organization really helped me to transfer the professionalism aspect of my life.” – Frans Samosir



PRESTASI-III Pre-Departure Orientation

Alumni More Open and Accepting of Diversity, Including in Indonesia

Alumni strengthened their critical thinking skills and broadened their way of thinking, at work and in life. Due to their time in the U.S., they began to appreciate more cultures and different backgrounds.

“The way America teaches people to be open minded without changing their own principle is the most precious lesson. The way that we can be different, be friends and work together, with different principles” – Dwi Martina



PRESTASI-III scholar presenting on gender equity and inclusion

Experience Made Alumni Better Ambassadors of Their Country

Alumni built strong networks with their U.S. universities, made professional international connections, and developed lifelong friendships. As a result, they now act as ambassadors of Indonesia in both their personal and professional networks.

“It’s amazing how being in the community of people in University of Arkansas and in the U.S. somehow did not interfere me of being an Indonesian but strengthened me. These things really complete me as a student and an ambassador of Indonesia. We were really honored to meet the governor and he gave us a large certificate that we are the “Arkansas Traveler,” which means we are an ambassador of Arkansas as well as Indonesia. The experience really fulfilled me and completed me as a human and really humbled me and showed me that I am not just part of central java or Indonesian citizen, but that I am part of the world citizen and that I am part of the world”

– Petra Mulyani