

5th Edition | 2024

UMY Magz

Journey of UMY on the International Stage

Exclusive Report

Global Impact of
Advanced University
Manifestation

Profile

Teddy's Dream in the Land
of Matador, Developing
Ant Algorithms

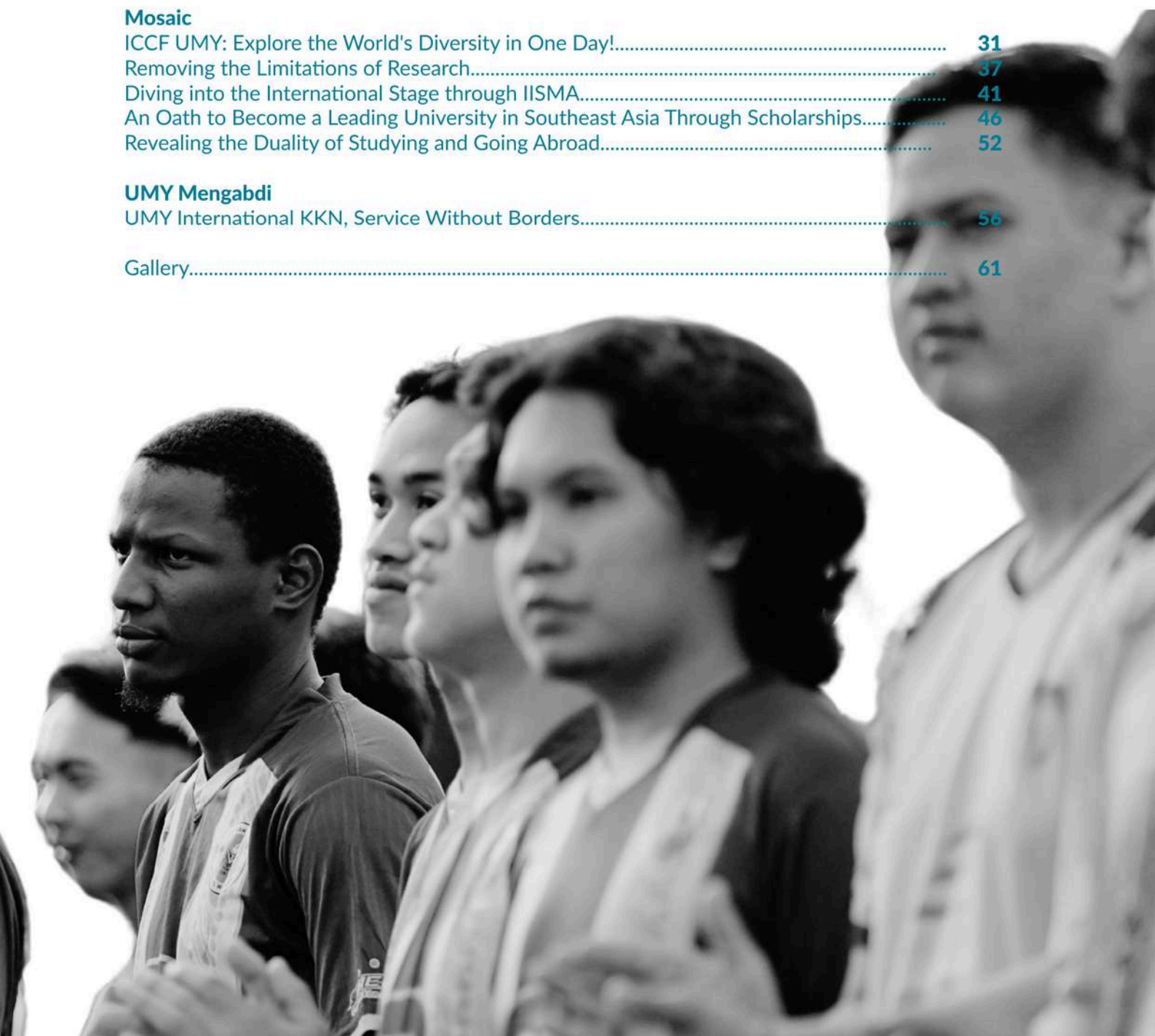
Mosaic

Explore the World's
Diversity in One Day!



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Editorial Greetings

Journey of UMY on the International Stage

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh

Alhamdulillah, praise be to Allah SWT, the Almighty God, as by His will, the Fifth Edition of UMY Magz in 2024 with the theme "Journey of UMY on the International Stage" could be published. It has been 5 years since UMY Magz Magazine was presented as a summary of actual, factual, and in-depth information about the ins and outs of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

The creation of UMY Magz Fifth Edition cannot be separated from the discipline and consistency of the team of writers and editors who always try to be responsible for completing it. The extraordinary welcome from various stakeholders for the previous edition of UMY Magz is a form of appreciation for which we are very grateful. It is our pride and joy that UMY Magz can be well received internally and externally, as evidenced by the Ambassador Gathering event of the Muhammadiyah Central Board of leadership with the Embassies of friendly countries, where the UMY Magz Special Edition presented at the event received appreciation from the Ambassadors of friendly countries who were present.

On this occasion, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the university leadership, who have greatly supported the publication of UMY Magz, and our highest appreciation to the staff, who have been willing to cooperate in producing the fifth edition of UMY Magz until completion.

This time, UMY Magz, which is always published in bilingual editions in Indonesian and English, specifically displays the development process of the internationalization program at UMY, which, according to the International Outlook criteria, has received high ratings from international rankings, both QS WUR and Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

We hope that this edition of UMY Magz can increase stakeholders' insight and interest in seeking information about UMY. We apologize for the various shortcomings in this edition, which have not presented what readers want. We will certainly always look forward to criticism and suggestions for improving the next edition of UMY Magz.

Please enjoy UMY's journey to the international stage.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh

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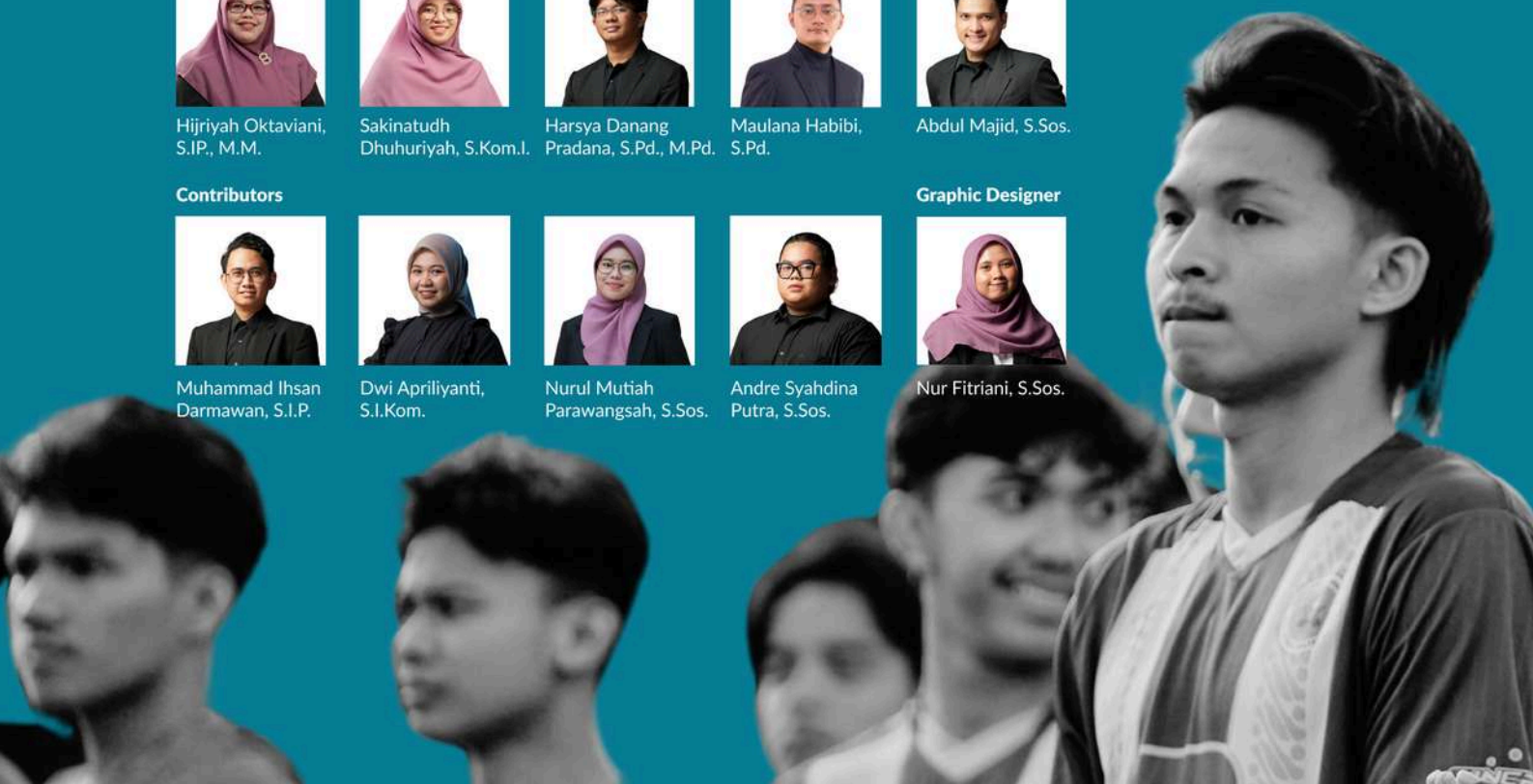


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Foreword from Rector

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh

Bismillahirrahmaanirrahiim

Welcome to the latest edition of UMY Magz. Praise be to God Almighty who has given His grace and guidance. In this special moment, I am very grateful and proud of the publication of this magazine, which reflects the spirit, innovation, and extraordinary work of the academic community of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY).

It has become a tradition for UMY Magz to be launched every end of the year with a different theme for each edition, as a highlight of UMY's milestone achievements. This year, UMY Magz carries the theme "Journey of UMY on the International Stage".

UMY has undergone a significant transformation on its journey. This change began in 2015 when it set a goal of becoming a leading international university, which is stated in the Roadmap for Strategic Development. This roadmap is designed to provide clear guidance to achieve UMY's vision in the next 25 years. UMY's Roadmap is divided into five stages, where the first stage, which took place from 2015 to 2020, was UMY's initial step to take the campus to an international level. UMY introduced various international programs, including summer schools that have been started since 2014. This program is not only a forum for knowledge exchange but also a means of building global relationships.

UMY aims not only to strengthen their students' academic capacity, but also to enrich international exposure, especially through arts and culture. The various non-academic activities that UMY has hosted such as the International Cultural and Culinary Festival (ICCF) which has been routinely held every year since 2012 underlines UMY's commitment to enriching students' experiences with global, cultural, and culinary aspects.

Over time, UMY has strengthened its academic atmosphere through various coordinated international activities and programs. In 2016, UMY expanded this initiative by inviting international lecturers and professors. This step has opened more opportunities for UMY students to be involved in international academic activities. Exactly one year later, the International Conference on Sustainable Innovation (ICoSI) was also held for the first time, which became an important platform for UMY to increase international publications. All of these are part of UMY's initial steps to be better known in the global academic community.

2018 became an important milestone for UMY, as it started an outbound program to send students abroad. This initiative is not only limited to Asian countries but also extends to Europe, including Spain and Turkey. UMY strives to send students to gain broader international experience. The trust of the international community in UMY is also increasing, which is reflected in the number of international applicants which continues to increase sharply from 192 in 2021 to more than 6,000 applicants in 2024.

In 2022, various issues contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become high priority for UMY, along with the dynamics of global problems that are trying to be resolved through research and community service. This has made UMY recognized by Times Higher Education through the Impact Rankings (THE IR) and ranked 601-800 in Asia out of more than 7,000 universities, showing the significant impact of UMY's commitment to global issues.

All UMY's achievements to date are part of its determination to strengthen its position in the international sphere. UMY aims to achieve the target of ASEAN Leading University in the 2021-2025 period through research excellence.

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) has declared UMY as an excellent university and gave it a ranking of **94** in ASEAN, and a ranking of **551-600** in Asia.

UMY has also just inaugurated the Student Dormitory in October 2024, which is the work of its alumni from the UMY Faculty of Engineering. This is also proof that supports UMY's vision to become a university that not only produces graduates but also global entrepreneurs who are ready to face international challenges.

I hope this fifth edition of UMY Magz can provide an in-depth overview of UMY's achievements and explain how UMY continues to strengthen its position in the international arena. UMY is committed to ensuring that students are not only observers, but also active players in the global community. Thank you for your support and participation in UMY's journey to becoming an international standard campus.

Rector of UMY

Prof. Dr. Ir. Gunawan Budiyanto, M.P., IPM., ASEAN Eng

UMY's International Round Global Impact of Advanced University Manifestation

Muhammad Ihsan Darmawan

The role of higher education institutions in providing access to quality education is closely related to fulfilling the competencies needed by education recipients, namely students. This action is a form of responsibility higher education institutions take for the dynamic movement of society. The development of various strategic issues and the expectations of the world community for higher education is the epicenter of research and innovation. Standardizing the education process is also essential, as it guarantees higher education institutions to hold academic activities that meet quality standards. It is realized that a quality assurance system needs to be established. This system can help standardize the education process, ultimately forming a ranking system based on community perception, regional or area, or specific disciplines.

As a university that prioritizes high quality for all its academic activities, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) has been recorded as an institution with good quality and credibility through various rankings on a national and international scale. UMY's entry into the ranking results from an internal quality assurance system audited by an external institution and serves as a form of UMY's accountability to the public. The ranking, especially internationally, results from UMY's efforts to increase its international presence. These rankings result from UMY's consistency every year in the international agenda, whether in education, research, or community service.

The Internationalization of UMY has been included in UMY's development roadmap from 2015 to 2040, and UMY will continue to develop it. The title "Reputable International

UMY international students participate in activities organized by Office of Cooperation and International Affairs



University" is a milestone for UMY's achievement as a university that has established itself at the national level. It is a way to strengthen the ongoing academic process and create graduates who can compete globally. By developing the competencies of all components of the educational community to the level of international excellence and supporting them through local potential and uniqueness, UMY has a mission to become an excellent research university within five years of UMY's roadmap so that it can become a leading university in the ASEAN region.

There are at least four pillars of indicators that support and serve as benchmarks for UMY to meet international standards and be recognized worldwide. The applicable standards can also differ, as seen from several international institutions that accredit and rank universities worldwide. Academic reputation, research, sustainability, community presence, and implementation of an environmentally friendly campus are some standards universities apply and assess. With strengthening the international aspect being one of the

main concerns of the Young and Global campus, it's an interesting thing to observe its efforts in building an international atmosphere while still carrying Islamic values so that it is recognized in the eyes of the world.

A Thoroughly Internationalization

UMY is aware of the importance of a university taking an active role in international activities. An active university's students can be exposed to broad global insights and more meaningful learning experiences. In addition, it promotes societal growth, especially in terms of economic and social affairs. Step by step, UMY continues to develop all its components to create solid international involvement and open up its various potentials and collaborations to improve its academic quality, research, and community service that is not limited to regions.

The Board of Planning and Development (BPP) is a unit at UMY that coordinates all efforts to improve, develop, and maintain the quality standards of higher education, including those in the field of internationalization. BPP UMY encourages the formation of an inclusive and sustainable international network through various cooperation schemes with many international institutions. It was also explicitly emphasized by the Head of BPP UMY, Ir. Slamet Riyadi, M.Sc., Ph.D., stated that all efforts to improve the quality of education and research, accelerate innovation, and expand access to higher education globally are based on humanitarian values for global development.



Because of these efforts, the number of international collaborations in academics, research, and community service at UMY continues to increase and expand yearly. It has also paid off in the form of trust from the international community, which can be seen from the increasing number of international students who register at UMY.

"UMY's commitment as a university has been demonstrated in the creation of positive, measurable, and inclusive changes on a global scale," said Slamet.

Slamet also revealed that BPP has projected that UMY will be a university with an inclusive learning environment for all its students. However, it is also projected to be a destination for international students from various countries who are interested in and willing to be involved in multiple international

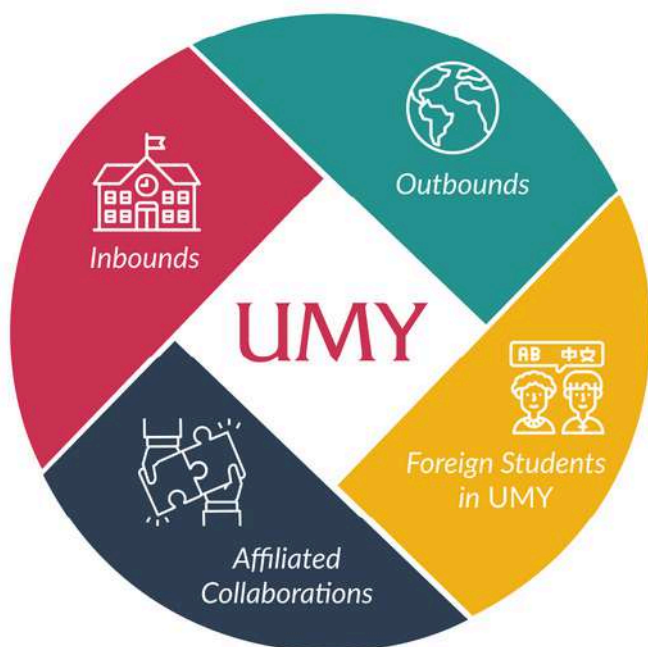
activities at UMY. With a high level of international interaction in all aspects of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, UMY is an ideal place for the entire academic community to enrich their educational experience and broaden their global views.

The Internationalization process of UMY has four pillars that prove that they are continuously optimized at all levels of the academic community to achieve a significant impact and influence on the world stage. When interviewed at the BPP office located in the AR Fachruddin A Building, Slamet enthusiastically explained that these four indicators show that UMY is recorded as an institution that is internationally active in academic activities involving lecturers and students in various activities, including education, research, and community service. Inbounds, Outbounds, Affiliated Collaborations, and Foreign Students in UMY have always experienced progressive development in their application on campus. These four indicators also play a vital role in UMY's recognition at the international level by many world-ranking institutions.

Various Activities, Promote Inclusivity

The university's involvement in the international arena has been improved through various activities supporting education, research, and community service. In 2024, the number of international students studying at UMY reached 416. It included full-time and part-time students who signed up through various student exchange programs. These students came from multiple Asian, African, and even European countries. Inbound students are an indicator of internationalization at UMY that best reflects the atmosphere of diversity on campus and represents UMY as an inclusive campus.

The Office of Cooperation and International Affairs (LKI) is responsible for all



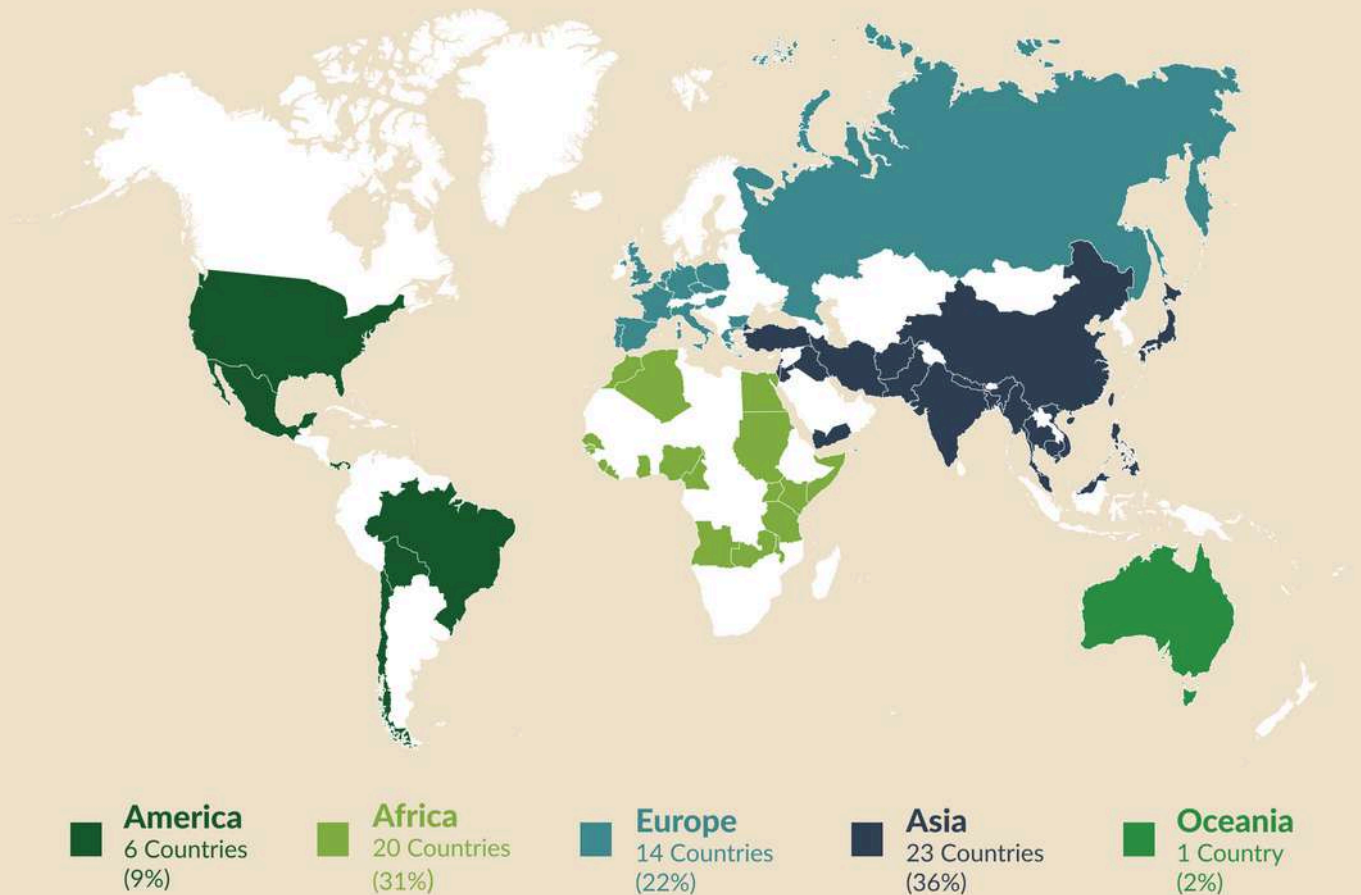
international activities in the UMY environment. Idham Badruzaman, Ph.D., the Head of International Relations Office at LKI UMY, said that international exposure in the UMY environment is closely related to domestic and abroad student mobility, and the campus accommodates this through various schemes and programs.

To expand its reach and influence, UMY has implemented a series of programs to strengthen global collaboration. With many schemes in various fields, UMY strives to increase international involvement, expand its partner network, and significantly contribute to local and global communities. These steps benefit UMY as a higher education institution and positively impact a broader scale.

One of the leading programs currently being promoted by UMY is a program to increase cooperation with other international universities and institutions. In addition to always facilitating its students who want to study abroad and international students who want to study at UMY, this is reflected in the high number of international students at UMY and the high mobility of foreign students in UMY in the 2023/2024 academic year.

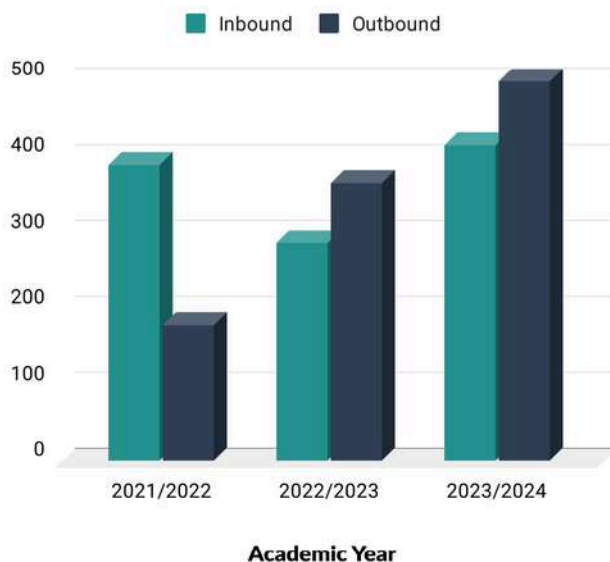
The variety of international students in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs who attend offline or online classes is quite broad. These students come from more than 20 countries yearly, such as France, Italy, Russia, England, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Origin Countries Distribution of UMY's International Students in the Last 3 Academic Year



"We at LKI provide several schemes to support internationalization programs for foreign students who want to study at UMY, such as student exchange programs, Summer School activities, and scholarships to study full-time at UMY," explained Idham

when met amid his busy schedule.



Based on the data taken in the last 3 years, there is a positive trend in the mobility of international students at UMY and UMY students studying abroad. Idham views this as UMY's way of showing its vision of becoming an excellent university and having

a solid position in Southeast Asia. Good relations between universities support it through long-term and sustainable cooperation agreements. According to this International Relations lecturer, this has a positive impact not only on the sustainability of the international atmosphere in the university environment but also on educational, research, and community service activities that are no longer limited by region.

UMY strongly encourages the growth of inclusiveness and diversity amidst the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, both locally and globally. UMY is a place to prepare the young generation as members of the international society by accommodating all ideas and innovations for sustainability and usefulness.

UMY's reputation in the international eye has so far been formed from testimonies and impressions from alumni spread across various countries in other words, through word of mouth. However, there is another way for applicants or prospective students who come from countries where there are no UMY alumni.

"This is a result of UMY information being widely accessible by the public, even abroad. The first thing that international students or applicants want to know about a university is the ranking of the university on a world scale. UMY's entry into various world rankings further increases the trust of international students in UMY's credibility," Idham repeated.



Students from South Korea took part in inbound activities at UMY, international conference organized by the International Relations Department

With education, research, and community service that includes cross-country collaboration, the involvement of lecturers as academics supports the goals of these international activities and programs that can help the learning process at UMY. Throughout 2024, there have been 221 countries that became destinations for UMY lecturers with various interests, both as educators through guest lecturer activities and as experts and researchers through research project activities and seminars.

The internationalization programs carried out by UMY in research and community service are very collaborative, as they involve lecturers and universities from other countries. UMY accommodates academics from many universities worldwide to innovate and find solutions through research that targets strategic issues and concerns of human survival. This scheme is realized through international conferences such as the International Conference on Sustainable Innovation (ICoSI) and the International Conference on Community Services (ICCS), two flagship conferences spearheading solutions to global challenges.

It is also a global-scale commitment from UMY through international cooperation.

Through international mobility by students and lecturers, various joint research programs, and collaboration on many innovative projects, UMY strives to expand its scope of knowledge and improve the quality of education offered. UMY's active participation in various international forums and consortiums seems to emphasize its commitment and influence as a center of relevant knowledge at the global level.

Bonded by Islamic Values

So far, it is clear that UMY pays special attention to its relevancy and sustainability by embracing the international public to be directly involved in efforts to achieve its great goals: to educate the nation and advance science. However, has this strategic step been fully implemented by UMY, a university under the Muhammadiyah flag that upholds universal Islamic values?

The Tri Dharma of Higher Education has always been the foundation for advancing education

under the auspices of Muhammadiyah, the most prominent Islamic organization with a long history in fostering morality and Islamic values, UMY has core values that serve as the basis for planning and implementing all its activities, namely education, research, and community service. Among Muhammadiyah circles, These are often referred to as Al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah (AIK), and for all Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah Universities (PTMA), they are represented in four pillars called Catur Dharma PTMA.

The Rector of UMY, Prof. Dr. Ir. Gunawan Budiyo, M.P., IPM., ASEAN Eng., considers AIK as a fundamental value that integrates the three dharmas of higher education. Gunawan said that this concept is of unique value to UMY. It helps strengthen the campus' position in the international sphere by enabling it to compete at a global level while maintaining the values rooted for more than a century of Muhammadiyah's existence.

When interviewed in his office, Gunawan stated that this concept aligns with the values of modern innovation and has become a standard for universities worldwide. According to Gunawan, this makes UMY recognized by the international public as more and more higher education institutions prioritize advanced sciences and no longer focus only on conservative activities.

So far, advanced sciences in higher education have focused on developing science that positively impacts the earth and society. However, Al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah's primary value is prioritizing inclusivity to benefit the entire community.

"When UMY acts, the values that they forward in terms of sustainability have a meeting point with the role of contemporary universities in maintaining



Not only as Islamic Center, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Mosque is often used for various activities by civitas academica of UMY

the sustainability of the world's ecosystem, which is also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," said Gunawan.

Sustainability in the field of internationalization carried out by UMY is always based on Catur Dharma PTMA as a result of the integration of Islamic Values in the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Gunawan symbolizes Catur Dharma as a bridge for UMY to achieve the university's vision and mission, which mainly includes the development of science, based on strengthening faith, implementing charity in life, and forming character.



UMY students carry out learning activities to read and write the Qur'an as one of the graduation requirements

In the campus environment, AIK is implemented into the other three catur dharma values, making every activity base itself on Islamic values, especially the dissemination of benefits for all humanity. It is included in the aspect of internationalization, which, with the alignment of the AIK concept and advanced sciences, makes UMY recognized and successful in entering the rankings of several well-known institutions and has high credibility in the academic world. Among them are:

 **1201-1400**
Worldwide

Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS WUR),

 **1501+**
Worldwide

Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE WUR),



UI GreenMetric (UIGM)

135
Worldwide

What UMY has achieved can become a reflection of every university in Indonesia, as proof that all efforts to advance education and science must be oriented towards the welfare of the people and the eradication of strategic problems in society. Involvement on the world stage allows universities to expand the impact they want to achieve. UMY has successfully brought the 'world' to the campus environment, allowing every student to feel the benefits of international exposure. The achievements that have been achieved make UMY an Islamic university that is global and has a global impact.

Connecting Two Worlds through Art: Edgar Xavier's Journey in Indonesia

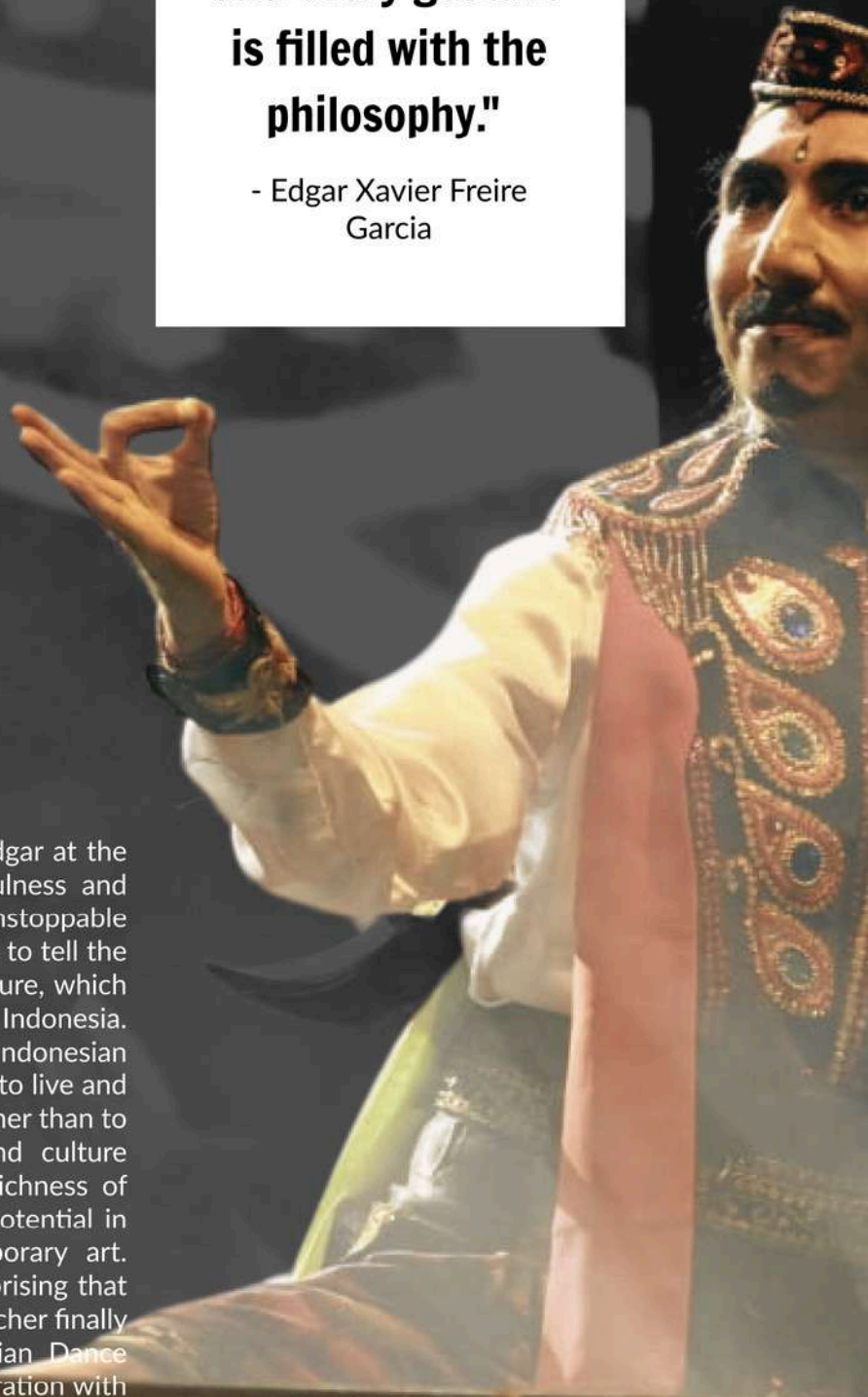
Dwi Apriliyanti

In a corner of the world, far away from his hometown of Ecuador, Edgar Xavier Freire Garcia (45) found his second home in Indonesia. Edgar, an arts and culture promoter and a senior student of the English Language Education Program (PBI) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), tirelessly promotes the richness of Nusantara culture. In every movement and smile that radiates from his face, there is a story and deep dedication to arts and culture.

When the Public Relations Team met Edgar at the UMY Postgraduate Library, his cheerfulness and boundless enthusiasm radiated an unstoppable spirit. With a smile on his face, he began to tell the story of his early interest in art and culture, which had led him on a wonderful journey in Indonesia. The strong and captivating aspects of Indonesian art and culture convinced him to decide to live and settle in Indonesia. His goal was none other than to be able to explore Indonesian art and culture further. He persistently explored the richness of Indonesian culture and developed his potential in the fields of traditional and contemporary art. Thanks to this persistence, it is not surprising that this Indonesian dance and culture researcher finally succeeded in establishing the Indonesian Dance and Gamelan Club in Ecuador in collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) – Quito.

"Dancing is more than movement, and every gesture is filled with the philosophy."

- Edgar Xavier Freire Garcia



Edgar wearing Jombangan style Remo clothing in the opening event of an exhibition called The Secret Archipelago at Resto Nine, Surabaya



It turns out that Edgar's love for the regional arts awakened when he was still in Ecuador. He has been studying dance since he was 20 years old. Like Indonesia, Ecuador is rich in folk art traditions, such as the Quito region, which is famous as a center for colonial wood carvings and paintings. In addition, this country is also rich in folk music, including Yumbo and Sanjuanito, two genres of distinctive rhythmic music that are often associated with dance festivals. Edgar's calling to explore art took him to a new frontier, Indonesia, where cultural riches awaited to be explored.

Following the Tracks of Culture in Java

Indonesia, with all its charm, has long been an attraction for many people from all over the world. In addition to its stunning natural beauty, its cultural diversity is very rich and deep. Edgar, a passionate man from South America, was captivated by this beauty.

In 2017, Edgar had the opportunity through the Darmasiswa scholarship to study at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) Yogyakarta. That year became the starting point of his long journey to explore the richness of Indonesian culture. Although the Darmasiswa program only lasted one year, Edgar could not ignore the charm that had captivated his heart. That one year was not enough for Edgar to satisfy his curiosity about Indonesia and its millions of regional arts riches. Edgar chose to continue his studies in Java and Yogyakarta and wanted to stay in Indonesia for the long haul.

Lady luck smiled at Edgar once more when a golden opportunity arose through UMY's 2020 international scholarship program, which brought him back to Indonesia to continue his exploration. Age is not a barrier for Edgar to continue learning and performing. His advanced age of 45 does not make him insecure and embarrassed to mingle with his classmates in UMY's English Education Department, the majority of whom are still 18 to 20 years old. In fact, he is grateful for this because being friends with young people makes him look youthful and enthusiastic. Without realizing it, he has now entered his final semester, where he is busy writing a thesis as a requirement for graduation. For this man, however, learning has nothing to do with age, and it is not an obstacle that stops him from performing.

"An academic degree is not my only goal. Cultural factors determine my next destination for my studies," said Edgar.

Edgar's curiosity about Indonesian art and culture never waned. Every day, he tried to broaden his knowledge and study various Indonesian arts. He dabbled in Wayang puppets and Pencak Silat martial arts and even tried Jemparingan traditional archery and Batik art, but what captivated his heart the most was dance. Although traditional Javanese dance movements are not easy to learn, Edgar's enthusiasm never faded. He believed that every dance movement has a deep philosophical meaning, reflecting a harmonious and peaceful social life complemented by rich religious aspects.

"What I admire about traditional Indonesian dance is not just its movement but also its full philosophical meaning. This is what makes me really like Indonesian art and culture. I can't find it in Europe or other parts of the world, only in Indonesia or other Asian countries like Thailand or India," he said, exposing his thought proudly.

Watching a dance performance at the Yogyakarta Palace was an unforgettable moment for him. Through the performance, Edgar saw how art is very close to the hearts of the Indonesian people. Young people are still interested in learning and preserving their regional arts, something that Edgar said was difficult to find in his home country.

Edgar realized that to study traditional dance truly, he needed professional guidance. He then joined the Siswa Among Beksa Troupe, located on Jl. Kadipaten Kidul, Keraton Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY). As a member of the troupe, Edgar not



Edgar after undergoing Wiraga Tunggal Alus dance practice at the studio called Siswa Among Beksa

only learned dance movements but also gained a deep understanding of Javanese culture. Through perseverance and constant practice, Edgar received the opportunity to perform in the Ramayana and Mahabharata performances in Yogyakarta. Through the performances, he found himself caught up in the flow of unforgettable epic stories. With every dance movement, he felt the power and beauty of the culture that flowed so strongly in the land of Java. Although he does not think he's a good dancer, Edgar was proud to have learned several dance movements at the Siswa Among Beksa.

Combining Two Worlds through Dance

In the world of art and culture, nothing is more captivating than the fusion of traditions that reflect the richness of cross-cultural cultures. Edgar Freire, an Ecuadorian-born man who has dedicated himself to being a director, choreographer, and researcher of Indonesian dance and culture, is an artist who has succeeded in bringing these two worlds together. Through his work, Edgar not only introduced traditional Indonesian dance to a global audience but also combined elements of Ecuadorian and Indonesian culture in stunning choreography.

The final form of Edgar's dedication was reflected in June 2019, when he and his partner held a dance performance at the Variedades Theater with the theme "Topeng". Edgar, who acted as both a dancer and choreographer, succeeded in combining two mask dance arts from two countries, namely Indonesia and Ecuador, on one stage. From Indonesia, Edgar brought up the story of one of the characters in the Reog Ponorogo series, namely Bujang Ganong from East Java. Bujang Ganong is known as an energetic, funny, and attractive character. Meanwhile,

from Ecuador, he introduced the figure of the Spirit of the Andes Mountains named Cuniya, who is said to be the guardian of the Andes Mountains.

Edgar played the character of Cuniya using a mask that was specially ordered in Magelang, Central Java. The design of this mask is taken from the depiction of Cuniya stories, creating a unique blend of two different cultures. As a choreographer, Edgar managed to combine these two characters into a story that is based on the geographical layout and mythology of Indonesia and Ecuador.

"On the night of the show, we received positive reviews from approximately 150 audience members who attended the Variedades theatre room. They gave us a standing ovation," he said with a satisfied smile.



With Mr. Gandung, Edgar practiced a lot of Jemparingan traditional dance

He was very happy when he succeeded in introducing Indonesian art and culture to the people of Ecuador. This success was inspired by

the various experiences he had while in Yogyakarta, especially in terms of cultural harmony.

Living Amongst Cultural Harmony in Java

Amidst the hustle and bustle of his life as an international student, The Ecuadorian decided to step into a new world that is rich in culture and tradition. This decision led him to Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), a campus renowned for its high-quality education and strong and diverse cultural atmosphere. Edgar came with high hopes of deepening his knowledge of English, but he got more than that. He found an experience that changed his life, teaching him about tolerance, friendliness, and the beauty of living in a Javanese society that is predominantly Muslim.

Through his life amid a Javanese yet predominantly Muslim society, Edgar felt that religious tolerance is highly respected in Indonesia. At UMY, he not only learned about the English Language but also a beautiful intercultural harmony. From the assistance he received as a student to the warmth of smiles and greetings that welcomed him on every journey, Edgar felt appreciated and accepted by the Indonesian people.

As a newcomer, the language barrier made it difficult for Edgar to communicate with the people in his surrounding community, not to mention the differences in Indonesian culture, which is very different from and opposite to Western culture. He told us about the times when he sat cross-legged on the floor or ate without utensils. In addition, the friendliness of Indonesian people, who always cultivate smiles, greetings, and salutations when meeting other individuals, surprised Edgar a little.

Edgar recalled his first steps in Indonesia when he encountered many cultural differences that forced him to adapt quickly. One thing that surprised him was the habit of smiling. In some countries, a smile can be considered a form of friendliness, but in his home country, Ecuador, an inappropriate smile can even be regarded as sexual harassment.

"I was very interested in living side by side with the community here so that I can learn directly from the Indonesian people regarding the existing customs and culture," said Edgar who is also an English education student.

This friendliness was a new experience for Edgar, who came from a culture where individualism was more dominant. In Indonesia, he found a strong spirit of gotong royong, where people work together to achieve a common goal. Edgar noted that this close social interaction and mutual assistance were among the aspects of Indonesian culture that he valued most.

This man also told a detailed story about when his motorbike broke down in the middle of his journey to Magelang, Yogyakarta. When he called one of his friends to ask about the nearest repair shop, to his surprise, his friend told him to wait around there. Sometime later, his friend came to pick him up from Yogyakarta, which was about 30 minutes from the location of the incident. His friend's actions were very touching for Edgar. Indonesia has become a second home for him, a place to meet and learn extraordinary and fun things.

"Things like this are almost impossible in my country. It is nice to know that in other parts of the world, there are still kind and helpful people, and that's what I found in Indonesia," with a look of amazement, Edgar told the story of his journey.

In addition to social life, his academic life at UMY is more than just about learning a language. Being a Catholic in a Muslim-majority environment is not an obstacle for him. Edgar also admitted that none of his college friends discriminated against him. In fact, he found the beauty of living in tolerance on this Islamic campus. This experience enriched his outlook on life and added to his attraction to learn more about diversity and tolerance in Indonesia.

Edgar hopes that his story can inspire more international students to come to Indonesia. He wants them to experience for themselves the beauty of Indonesian culture and the friendliness of the Indonesian people that he experiences every day.

" I wish I can show how beautiful Indonesia is, not only in terms of culture but also in terms of tolerance between religious communities," he hoped.

During his several years of study in Indonesia, Edgar realized that the quality of education in Indonesia is not much different from that of Ecuador. Both countries implement an education system centered on lecturers or teachers. However, several aspects differentiate the two, especially in the packaging of the learning system in the classroom.

Edgar found that the teaching method in Indonesia involved more discussion. In Indonesia, lecturers explain the material to students with lots of discussion, making the classroom atmosphere more comfortable, relaxed, and active. This is different from Ecuador, where students are accustomed to writing essays and academic writing from an early age, so it is not surprising that students in Ecuador are better at writing.

"Don't be afraid to try new things. Indonesia is a beautiful place with many life lessons. Come and experience the learning experience here," said the Ecuadorian native.

Through his story, the dance researcher learned not only science and language but also the importance of understanding and appreciating differences. This journey made him a wiser and more tolerant person. He hopes that his experience can inspire others to explore the world with an open mind and a curious heart. Indonesia, with all its beauty, has given Edgar more than just an education; it has given him invaluable life lessons.



Edgar wearing Ecuadorian traditional clothes

Women in Engineering

Noor Mahmudah

Caring for Traffic Safety in Indonesia Through Erasmus+¹ Asiasafe Project

Andre Syahdina Putra

Traffic safety and road conditions in Indonesia are still quite concerning. These issues include traffic jams in big cities, the disparity of public transportation between cities and underdeveloped areas, uneven infrastructure in remote areas of the country, and the relatively high traffic accident rate that tends to increase every year.

Academics and government agencies have widely studied and researched these problems. The government has even issued a National General Plan for Safety (RUNK) as Government Regulation No. 37 of 2017, which has been planned since 2013. This regulation was updated by the latest regulation in 2022 through Presidential Regulation No. 1 of 2022. However, Indonesia's traffic and road problems seem to have no solution.

Researchers and transportation experts from academic institutions, government, and private research institutions have also worked together to provide solutions to traffic and



UMY's Staff & Mobility at University of Porto, Portugal (May 2023)



road problems in Indonesia. One of the transportation and road experts who contributed her research to improve the condition and safety of road traffic in Indonesia is Dr. Ir. Noor Mahmudah, S.T., M.Eng. IPM., ASEAN. Eng.

Noor Mahmudah is a lecturer in the Postgraduate Program of the Master of Civil Engineering Study Program (MTS), the Professional Engineer Study Program (PSPPI), and the Civil Engineering Study Program of Faculty of Engineering of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY). Before devoting herself as a lecturer and researcher in transportation and roads, Noor studied Civil Engineering with a major in transportation across the world, even reaching the European continent.

From Yogyakarta to Delft

Noor Mahmudah began her interest in transportation and highways in Indonesia while still in college. It all started when she was still studying for her bachelor's degree (S1) at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), where she chose to enrol in the Civil Engineering Study Program, Faculty of Engineering. She underwent Her S1 study journey at UGM in 1989 and finished in 1994. Her S1 studies took 5 years because the Civil Engineering Study Program is known to be one of the study programs that is quite challenging for its students to be able to graduate on time.

After completing her undergraduate studies, Noor was directly involved in civil engineering, specifically in the construction planning project for the Novotel Hotel, located in Bogor, in 1995. This construction project was also Noor's first project in civil engineering. Her involvement continued to the industrial area planning stage in Kunming, China, namely the Yunnan Kunlun Industrial Estate project of PT Indo Swisatama in 1995-1997 (Salim Group). Noor was also involved in the Gema Sembawang Brown consortium as Assistant Manager on the Peciko Onshore Facilities project, owned by a French multinational energy and oil company with a subsidiary in Indonesia, namely Total E&P Indonesia, in collaboration with PT. Pertamina in the Mahakam Block in 1997-1999 (Women in Engineering).



After completing the Peciko project, Noor chose to continue her studies. This time, she decided to continue her studies in a country far from her homeland. The Master Program in Transportation and Road Engineering IHE-TU Delft, Netherlands, was her choice to obtain her Strata 2 (S2) degree in 1999-2000 with a Netherlands Fellowship Program (NFP) scholarship and under PT. Meinhardt is headquartered in Canberra, Australia. That is when Noor began to focus on her studies and conduct further research on transportation and highways. In 1999, Noor joined the Indonesian Construction Experts Association (HAKI) in Jakarta until 2007.

Hungry for more knowledge, the woman who was born in Kuala Kapuas in 1970 returned to campus to pursue a doctoral degree. Noor returned to UGM in 2007 and took a Doctoral Study Program in Civil Engineering (Transportation) at the postgraduate Faculty of Engineering. To perfect her research, Noor also took a Ph.D. Sandwich Program at ITC University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands, from 2009 to 2012 to complete her doctoral degree (S3). Finally, in February 2014, Noor officially received the Doctor of Civil Engineering title.

Thanks to her perseverance in exploring knowledge in the field of transportation and highways, Noor,

who is a Civil Servant (PNS) Lecturer Employed (DPK) assigned to a Private University (PTS) since 2005, was also entrusted to become a Lecturer in the Field of Roads and Bridges at the Center for Employee Education and Training of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Pusdiklat) Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing Region VII Kalimantan, Banjarmasin. In fact, Noor carried out her mandate while she was completing her doctoral program from 2011 to 2018.

Noor's academic journey and national and international projects in transportation and highways did not stop there. From 2018 to 2019, Noor was the expert staff member for planning the grand design for the development of Indonesian transportation in the Kalimantan Region and the Planning Bureau of the Secretariat General of the Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition, Noor is also a non-permanent lecturer in the Master's Program in Civil Engineering (Transportation), Postgraduate Program at Universitas Atmajaya Yogyakarta, and a non-permanent lecturer in the Postgraduate Program at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Planning, Universitas Islam Indonesia. She is also the Project Manager for Erasmus+ CBHE "ASIASAFE" European Commission, European Union for the 2021-2024.

Caring for Public Safety

Noor Mahmudah's experience in the world of Civil Engineering in the field of transportation and highways requires her to be aware of current developments in the field of transportation.

"We never realize that the existence of high technology and improved road infrastructure has resulted in an increase in the number of uncontrollable vehicles," said Noor in a slightly excited tone.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 80% of vehicles in Indonesia are motorcycles, which are considered unsafe. If checked on police records, traffic accidents that occur in Indonesia are counted per 100 thousand, with a fatality rate reaching approximately 26 thousand cases. It indicates that every year, 25 to 26 thousand Indonesians lose their lives in a traffic accident.

These facts made Noor sad and concerned about traffic and road safety in Indonesia. Noor also felt that the government must have difficulties controlling the growth rate of motorized vehicles, especially motorcycle users because motorcycle users are often the victims of traffic accidents. Based on this background, Noor joined a transportation and road safety consortium in ASEAN and Europe.

"These traffic accident cases are a big homework for our country. We have difficulty controlling the

growth rate of motorized vehicles because they are relatively unsafe, that is our first trigger warning," Noor explained again.

According to Noor, being part of the Transportation Organization in ASEAN and Europe allows her to contribute to reducing road accident victims, mostly of productive age. She can help reduce road victim accidents in several ways, one of which is by educating and motivating public awareness. Noor also gave an example of how many students still in junior high school (SMP) can ride motorbikes but do not yet have a driver's license (SIM).

"At this point, we ask ourselves, where does the education come from? Where is the awareness? Junior high school students shouldn't be driving, but in reality, their parents let them ride their motorcycles anyway. No wonder 3 to 4 people die every hour due to traffic accidents in Indonesia. Some of them are children who don't have a driver's license. This is all the impact of a lack of education and awareness," Noor said seriously.

Noor also realized that policy and education towards the community are also responsibilities that the government must take over. Meanwhile, academics and other private institutions are tasked with producing ideas and solution programs for the government. One example is the involvement of academics in the Erasmus + Asiasafe program, which Noor also participated in.

In the Erasmus+ Asiasafe program, Noor and other academics can encourage the government to handle traffic and road problems more optimistically. Suppose the government's program in poverty

alleviation efforts already exists. In that case, the next task of the Ministry of Transportation as the person responsible for traffic and road safety is to find ways to reduce traffic accident victims immediately. The government must improve the physical conditions of the road and regulate where vehicles can turn, go up and down or turn around. According to Noor, accidents often occur not on damaged roads but on good roads.

"Truthfully, accidents often occur on roads with good structure, because these roads encourage users to ride on full speed. If the road is damaged, people automatically slow down and are more careful, so the risk of accidents is lower," Noor argued seriously.

Noor explained that this happens because of road geometry, such as sharp bends, close intersections, and people taking U-turns in places where they should not.

The government, as the authorized party, has also paid attention to the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 1 of 2022 concerning the National General Plan for Traffic Safety and Road Transportation.

"This is indeed one form of government responsibility in paying attention to traffic and road safety. However, the action plan must also be prepared at each level of government, starting from the district, city, provincial, to central levels so that the Presidential Regulation can be implemented properly," said Noor regarding the government.

European Union Consortium's Erasmus+ Asiasafe Project

Traffic and road safety issues are considered urgent problems in Indonesia and almost all countries. To realize traffic and road safety, a European-based



Consortium Workshop The Eight Erasmus+ ASIAsAFE t University of Porto, Portugal

consortium has formed a new program, the Erasmus + Asiasafe Project.

Erasmus+ is a program implemented by the European Commission (EC). It was initiated and funded by the European Union and consisted of 27 countries. The purpose of the Erasmus+ program is to support education, professional, and individual development in the fields of education, training, and sports, especially in the European region and its surroundings, through lifelong learning.

What is unique about the Erasmus+ Asiasafe program is that it was proposed by Noor Mahmudah and her fellow alums from UGM who studied in Europe. In 2018, after Noor completed her doctoral studies, she and her friends agreed to communicate via email to submit a cooperation proposal related to traffic and road safety. Traffic and road safety was decided because of important problems in Asian countries. This case is related to the strategic issue of road safety in Indonesia, which is stated in Presidential Regulation No.1/2022 concerning the General Plan for Traffic and Road Transportation Safety (RUNK LLAJ).

Noor brought the proposal to the Erasmus+ consortium, and she became the only lecturer from a Private University (PTS) in Indonesia to stand side by side with countries and campuses from the European Union and Asia. At that time, Noor had become a permanent lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY). The consortium that Noor joined was held to realize traffic and road safety in the Asian region, and the program that resulted from that discussion was later called the Erasmus+ Asiasafe Project. The countries and campuses that are members of this consortium include UMY and UGM for Indonesia, Linkoping University (LIU) Sweden as the Grand Project and Project Coordinator, University of Rome Tor Vergata (UNITOV) Italy, University of Porto (UPORTO) Portugal, University of Malaya (UM) Malaysia, Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST), University of Transport and Communication (UTC) Vietnam and Nguyen Tat Thanh University (NTTU) Vietnam.

Noor is determined to develop the Erasmus+ Asiasafe Project. This consortium was agreed upon by three countries from Europe and six countries from Asia, which have brainstormed topics of discussion regarding traffic and road safety that will be raised in this program.

The lecturer of the Engineering Professional Program (PSPPI) felt that UMY deserves to be accepted as part of this consortium. One obstacle that hampered Noor's process when running and fighting for this program was the lack of one important file in fulfilling the consortium's requirement to submit a proposal for the Erasmus+ Program Capacity Building in the Field of Fighter Education (CBHE).



Launching of ASIASAFE Road Safety Handbook at University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Co-Funded by the Erasmus Programme of the European Union (April 2024)



UMY's ERASMUS+ ASIAsAFE Team with University of Rome Tor-Vergata at the event of Modernisation, Development and Capacity Building Master Curriculum in Traffic Safety in Asian Universities (October 2023)

In her room in the Civil Engineering Building G of the UMY Central Campus, Noor enthusiastically said that in 2018, the recommendation letter that proves that they had support from the Indonesian Ministry of Transportation in the selection of this consortium file had not been obtained that year, so the consortium decided to postpone it until 2019. Then, in March 2019, Noor and the consortium team submitted a proposal for the Erasmus+ Asiasafe Program. Then, in August 2019, it was announced that the Erasmus+ Asiasafe Team had passed and that UMY had joined the consortium with Linköping University, Sweden, as coordinator.

This recommendation letter is an important file because the Erasmus+ CBHE program is prestigious and exclusive in the European Union, with a maximum grant of one million Euros. This means that this program is not easy to join, as its requirements also require commitment from all countries and support from their governments.

Noor struggled to join this international

consortium. Out of the nine members of the Erasmus+ Asiasafe consortium, UMY received a grant of 82,435 Euros, or around 1.35 billion Rupiah, for three and a half years, from January 2021 to July 2024.

The grant funds are used for staff and lecturer mobility and students' two-week education or training in European Union countries. The funds can also be used for other purposes, such as the provision of educational facilities because one of the targets of this collaboration is research and the preparation of a curriculum implemented in the Civil Engineering Master's program, which UMY did not have at that time.

Establishing UMY's Civil Engineering Masters Program

Noor's involvement in the European Union community organization also has target provisions that must be achieved. The main activities of this program's output are to cooperate and research traffic and road safety.

Next, they must cooperate in compiling the curriculum in master's or strata two education. It includes funding the procurement of tools, software, and books for the S2 program on Traffic and Road Safety.

The International Summer School and Professional Course were also outputs of the Erasmus+ Asiasafe Project, which was implemented at UMY in 2023. In 2024, Noor also conducted an International Seminar on Road Traffic Safety at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

Not only that, the establishment of the UMY Civil Engineering Masters Study Program (MTS) is also one of the outputs of the Erasmus+ Asiasafe program consortium that Noor participated in. The UMY Civil Engineering Masters Study Program was established in 2022 with the hope that its graduates will become stakeholders who can provide solutions and policies in the general traffic and road safety plan in Indonesia.

So far, UMY is the first private university in Indonesia to have a Civil Engineering Master's Program with a Specialization in Traffic and Road Safety. Through the Erasmus+ program, the MTS Study Program was established at UMY. Together with UGM, Noor developed the curriculum and established the MTS study program at UMY. It indicates that only two campuses focus on traffic and road safety.

The consortium program's final output is compiling the Asia road safety handbook. This Road Safety Handbook can be accessed digitally by anyone from all walks of life and countries on the Erasmus+ Asiasafe website. This book is intended for relevant stakeholders because traffic and road safety has become a government program like other government programs initiated through the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS). This book is expected to be a reference at the city and provincial levels because it provides an overview of

success in Europe that we can adapt to Indonesia, with its various varieties and types.

Noor's struggle after successfully contributing to establishing the MTS Study Program did not end there. In fact, before pursuing a career as an academic or lecturer, Noor had been active in the Asian region in 2001-2002 as the Regional Manager of the University Network for Asia and Pacific, International Labor Organization (ILO)/ASIST-AP Bangkok. When fighting for the MTS study program, Noor was assisted by an Erasmus+ team, including the Head of the MTS Study Program (Kaprod) Ir. Nursetiawan, Ph.D, Dian Setiawan, Ph.D and Ir. Anita Rahmawati, M.Sc..

One challenge in establishing this MTS UMY study program is preparing the curriculum and lecture materials focusing on traffic and road safety. In addition, capacity building for prospective MTS UMY lecturers must also be given great attention because this is a new study program with a new concentration in traffic and road safety.



MAGISTER TEKNIK SIPIL

"There are many Civil Engineering lecturers, but only a few who have expertise in the field of traffic and road safety. So, this is what we must prepare," said Noor ambitiously.

Noor, also the Secretary of the Indonesian Civil Servant Corps (KORPRI) of the Higher Education Service Institution (LLDIKTI) Region V Yogyakarta, also aims to increase the number of MTS UMY study program students. She and the Erasmus+ UMY team will also follow every existing national and international accreditation.

All the obstacles and challenges that Noor faced have borne fruit. It was proven by the Best Researcher Award 2023, which Noor has achieved for the past three years. This proud Female Engineer of UMY also received the Satyalancana Karya Satya X award in 2018 from the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

"Road safety experts are needed to realize traffic safety. Well, these experts are what we are currently preparing in the UMY MTS master study program specializing in Traffic and Road Safety. I also hope that the Erasmus+ program at UMY will be more numerous and develop further," Noor concluded.

Noor Mahmudah with Dian Setiawan, Ph.D, Ir. Anita Rahmawati, M.Sc and Head of MTS Ir. Nursetiawan, Ph.D. as members of Erasmus+ Asiasafe UMY team



Teddy's Dream in the Land of Matadors

From Engines to Developing Ant Algorithms

Mutiah Parawangsah

Teddy Nurcahyadi's (45) interest in the automotive world started when he was young. When he first laid eyes on a motorbike, little Teddy tried to ride it and pretended to start it, making engine noises like a child. As a teenager, he was surrounded by friends who liked to modify motorbikes, which made him even more interested in how a motorbike engine works.

Several machine tools are lined up neatly in the Mechanical Engineering Laboratory of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY). The machines, from test machines to simulation devices, are specifically designed to support practical learning processes and innovation. The laboratory space has even met the international accreditation standards of ASIIN (Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, der Informatik, der Naturwissenschaften und der Mathematik), an international accreditation institution from Germany recognized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemdikbudristek RI).

That morning, Teddy, a lecturer, devoted himself to UMY's Mechanical Engineering for 20 years. He waited for his turn to teach a class and invited us to look at the laboratory where he usually does practicum sessions. Teddy is one of the nation's best sons. He is a lecturer who managed to study in another country. Not only that, but he also managed to achieve brilliant achievements by becoming the fastest graduate at the Institut d'Investigació en Intel·ligència Artificial - Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas IIIA-CSIC Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Spain, with the predicate "Sobresaliente" (Excellent) and "Cum Laude", which he achieved in less than three years.

Studying abroad is a dream coveted by many people. This opportunity may only come once in a lifetime to broaden one's horizons. However, the path to this dream is only sometimes smooth; it can be winding and full of challenges. That is also what was felt by Teddy, a man who came from a small village on the outskirts of Klaten district, Central Java. Teddy always looked at the sky with high hopes, dreaming of setting foot on foreign soil and gaining knowledge from the best experts in the world.

Teddy's hope to be able to study abroad started a long time ago. He has made various efforts, including registering for different scholarship programs. One is the Overseas Postgraduate Education Scholarship (BPPLN) of the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, which took him to the Matador country.

"At that time, I was still constrained by supporting documents, namely the IELTS certificate. Thankfully, HR Division of UMY provided the right solution - an IELTS training and certification program for Lecturers who wanted to continue their studies abroad. Alhamdulillah, after participating in the training, I got an overall IELTS score of 7.5, and my document requirements were complete," said Teddy.

With a scholarship, Teddy turned his attention to finding a doctoral supervisor. After extensive online research, he found Professor Christian Blum, a renowned researcher at the Institute for Artificial Intelligence Research (Institut d'Investigació en Intelligència Artificial, IIIA) under the auspices of the Spanish National Research Council (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, CSIC) at UAB. After a few email exchanges, Teddy managed to secure Blum's guidance for his PhD program, and in 2019, Teddy left for Spain.

In that laboratory, Teddy reminisced about his life in the Land of Matadors, precisely in Barcelona. With its stunning architectural beauty and vibrant city atmosphere, turns out Barcelona could not become a "home" for Teddy. His first year in Barcelona was the most challenging year for him. Differences in culture, weather, and lifestyle were difficult for him to avoid. However, as the saying goes, "Where the earth is stepped on, there is the sky to upheld." Teddy tried to adapt to his environment. He knew that adapting to a new environment was a process that he could not avoid.

Developing Ant Colony Optimization Algorithm with Negative Learning

Teddy's problems and complications in living in a new country did not stop there. Although being an expert in mechanical engineering, Teddy was initially interested in programming, his hobby. His dissertation for his PhD program discussed optimization and C++ programming, which was a steep learning path for him.

"Although I teach Mechanical Engineering, I have been interested in programming for a long time. Therefore, my dissertation in this PhD program was related to programming to translate ideas into code and witness the results directly," said Teddy.

Teddy successfully defended his dissertation titled "An Algorithmic Framework for Making Use of Negative Learning in Ant Colony Optimization" before the dissertation committee, with examiners consisting of Professor Gabriela Ochoa (University of Stirling, UK), Professor Luca Di Gaspero (University of Udine, Italy),



Teddy shows to UMY's Public Relations one of the machinery in Faculty of Engineering

and Professor Juan Antonio Rodriguez-Aguilar (IIIA-CSIC UAB, Spain). The dissertation focused on developing an ant colony optimization algorithm with a negative learning approach.

"I study algorithms, essentially a series of instructions to solve a particular problem. These algorithms are then translated or applied in a program. We need to get the best out of a configuration. From the behavior of ants, we can create an algorithm," said Teddy.

Although the ant colony optimization algorithm was introduced in the 1990s, and there have been attempts to apply negative learning, according to Teddy, the results still need to be more satisfactory and consistent. **"Then, I further developed it with my supervisor. To get the best results, we eliminate the worst of the best,"** he added.

According to him, the optimization problem is a priority and significant in education and the industrial world. "Optimization is crucial in various fields, especially in the academic field. Research and practical application in the industrial field are also equally important," he explained further.

A Unique Academic Culture

During his time at UAB, Teddy was impressed with its unique academic culture. Their classrooms had enjoyable weekly presentation routines and were very lively and full of enthusiasm and praise. He also noticed other unique things. For example, the lunch break is more than just a time to eat. He observed that lecturers, researchers, and students sat down to enjoy lunch together in the campus cafeteria, which showed no hierarchy. Interactions took place in a friendly and open manner. According to him, this culture can encourage collaboration and openness.

Teddy also said that Christian, his supervisor, played an essential role in helping him complete his studies. Christian created an open communication environment and treated his students like colleagues. He consistently appreciated each student's progress under his guidance, including Teddy.

"When I was unsure about my English fluency during my first international conference presentation, Christian kept encouraging me and appreciating my efforts. I even won the Best Paper Award at the conference," he recalled.

Teddy was very impressed by Christian's kindness. Christian often asked about Teddy's well-being and progress in his doctoral studies.

"During lunch, he routinely asked about my updates and progress. I am grateful every time I remember Professor Christian's kindness while at UAB," he said.



Teddy's last lunch in Barcelona with Supervisor (black shirt with glasses) and colleagues of his research team

Returning to Homeland and a Great Ambition for UMY

Teddy could finally sigh relief after successfully defending his dissertation with Cumlaude's predicate without revision. He had been waiting for this moment for a long time, ever since he first set foot in Catalunya, Barcelona. Christian welcomed the excellent news happily.

"He (Teddy) came here with a strong desire to get a doctorate. Initially, he was not familiar with optimization and C++ programming. Today, he stands before us as an expert!" Teddy said, repeating Christian's words.

In addition to being the fastest graduate, Teddy made various achievements during his doctoral education in Spain. He received the Best Paper Award at the ANTS 2020 Twelfth International Conference on Swarm Intelligence held from October 26 to 28, 2020, in Barcelona. Teddy also published six journal articles, 1 Q1 journal article, 1 Q2 journal article, and four journal articles in the International Seminar Proceedings. He also participated in a program to teach high school students in Barcelona, where he introduced Artificial Intelligence.

Before returning home, he spent his remaining time in Spain, taking his family around Barcelona and enjoying the dynamic city atmosphere for the last time. Barcelona had been their home for two years, and Teddy will return to Indonesia with his family, carrying the title of "Doctor (Dr)," the highest academic title awarded to students who have completed their doctoral education.



Teddy in the front of Arc de Triomf, one of the iconic landmark of Barcelona. Capturing the vacation of his last week in Barcelona

"Apart from my family, the support from BPPLN and UMY was also significant during my time in Barcelona," said Teddy.

Teddy has returned to where he devoted himself, namely to the UMY Mechanical Engineering Study Program. Outside of teaching duties, he also holds several responsibilities. He became the chairman of an international conference, a team member to establish a new Master of Mechanical Engineering program at UMY, a member of the Quality Control Unit of the Faculty of Engineering, and even the Director of Mechanical Engineering Consultant Services.

"I have quite a lot of work right now, but I am sure I will finish it. My dream does not stop here. Please pray for my every step," he added.

After completing his doctoral education, Teddy admitted he had two big dreams and wanted to contribute to UMY, where he worked. First, he tried to apply the knowledge he had gained during his doctoral studies in Spain in Tri Dharma activities at UMY. Second, he also dreamed of expanding his research and publication network in the field of AI with other parties at home and abroad so that he could help improve UMY's reputation at the international level.

"One of the keys to technological innovation in mechanical engineering is AI or artificial intelligence. Therefore, in the future, I want to apply my knowledge in AI to solve problems in mechanical engineering," concluded Teddy.

ICCF UMY:

Explore the World's Diversity in One Day!

Dwi Apriliyanti

On a sunny morning on Thursday, April 25, 2024, the atmosphere at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) was especially lively and festive. Groups of foreign and local students walked side by side from the main gate to the Sportorium building, accompanied by an enthusiastic score from the UMY Drum Corps procession. Cheers of joy echoed in the air, bringing warmth and happiness to the moment that everyone has been waiting for all year.

Dressed in stunning costumes, the participants of the 9th International Culture and Culinary Festival (ICCF) parade walked confidently, proudly displaying the identity and pride of their respective countries. The event, which was part of the 43rd UMY Milad celebration, successfully united hundreds of participants and thousands of visitors in one magnificent, colourful celebration.

UMY students, both local and international, as well as members of the public, took part in the event that combined culinary adventure and global culture. With 340 participants from 31 countries, this event became a place to explore cultural and culinary diversity from various parts of the world.

Visitors can experience Mahzit from Sudan, traditional dances from India and Yemen, traditional musical instruments from Kazakhstan and the Philippines, and direct interaction with students from various parts



Various events during ICCF, one of them is performance of Kazakhstan's culture

of the world in just one day. Each country's booth displays various typical foods, complete with details and lore behind the deliciousness of the dishes, from simple drinks to exquisite foods. Not only that, but some countries exhibited regional crafts or accessories of their country, like the ones displayed in the Philippines booth.

Visitors who registered through the Google Form provided by the committee could enjoy all cultural and culinary feasts at the 9th ICCF. Visitors also received coupons that could be exchanged for free dishes at the booth of their chosen country. In addition, visitors could choose which culinary dishes from which country are their favourites. This created healthy competition between these international culinary booths.

In addition to the exotic culinary dishes, the event stage was also decorated magnificently with flag ornaments from various countries in the world. All participants wore traditional clothing from their respective countries. They took the visitors on an adventure to explore the world in one place in a short time. The excitement, warmth, and wonder of culture came together to create an unforgettable experience for all visitors who attend.



The 2024 ICCF event presented 35 booths from various countries, including Thailand, Sudan, Netherlands, Nigeria, India, Ghana, Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Egypt, Uganda, Mali, Colombia, Congo, Brunei Darussalam, Yemen, Philippines, Kazakhstan, Laos, Afghanistan, Peru, Malaysia, Zambia, Somalia, China, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Myanmar, and Indonesia. In addition, 5 other booths are allocated for units at the university, namely UMY Admissions, Taiwan Education Center, Muhammadiyah Corner, American Corner, Warung Prancis, and UMY's flagship conference, the International Conference on Sustainable Innovation (ICOSI) and UMY Grace.

Exploring Culture and Culinary

In the midst of the excitement of the 9th ICCF, the culinary booth from Kyrgyzstan seemed very crowded with visitors. They took turns trying and tasting Kyrgyzstan's culinary specialities. Saniya (26) and her colleagues enthusiastically served the visitors who came to their country's stand with a smile. They made sure to explain every food item they served. The booth served six traditional Kyrgyz cuisines, namely Boorsak, Somso, Chalap, Tushpara, Naryn, and Kuurut.

"This was a prestigious event for us to get to know various international cultures and cuisines. We also presented some very famous traditional cuisines that are the mainstays of Kyrgyzstan," said Saniya.

Colourful flag decorations can be seen in every booth, representing the identity of their countries. The visitors are taken on a journey to set foot directly in the country. Each country booth stand serves at least two traditional food or drink menus.

The 9th ICCF provided a golden opportunity for international students to learn about various cultures and cuisines, both from Indonesia and

other participating countries. Interestingly, participants from various countries not only presented their regional specialities but also showcased their respective arts and cultures. This event functions as a promotional event to attract tourists to their countries.

Based on data from Google Form registration, the event attracted as many as 2.045 visitors. Mohammed Mousa, a student from Sudan, could not hide his joy at being able to introduce Sudanese culture and cuisine to the Indonesian people and his friends from various other countries.

"This is amazing. Indonesian people are really friendly and hospitable," he said while serving Mahzit and Rozela drinks at the Sudan booth.

As the Chief Executive of the 9th ICCF in 2024, Mauluddin Azhari, who is often called Azhari, told the public relations team that this international cultural festival was held thanks to the hard work of all parties. Although it

was initiated by the UMY Office of Cooperation and International Affairs (LKI), the university leadership gave the event their full support. Collaboration was also established between the committee and participants of the 9th ICCF, which consisted of UMY students and international students from all campuses in Indonesia, especially campuses in the Yogyakarta area. In the 9th ICCF, UMY students succeeded in inviting their friends in the global community who study at several universities to enliven the event. The students came from various universities, including Universitas Ahmad Dahlan (UAD), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), and Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta (UNISA).

Collaboration between local and international students was a key element in the success of this event. Local students who acted as Liaison Officers (LO) carefully accompanied international participants, helped prepare food, and ensured every detail of the event ran smoothly. This collaboration demonstrated the



ICCF is also become a place to showcase a variety of culinary, one of them is 'Karkede', a typical drink from Egypt

importance of mutual understanding and collaboration in building an inclusive and harmonious community.

From a cultural perspective, this event has an important value. This was reflected in the collaboration between foreign and local students and the enthusiasm of international students who want to learn about new cultures in Indonesia. When they return to their respective countries, they will bring not only academic knowledge but also valuable experience about the diversity of world cultures that they encounter at the UMY cultural festival. This experience can certainly be a memorable memory.

It is no wonder that this event also managed to attract the curiosity of the local community. Those who initially did not know became aware and interested in the event. In the future, these people may even visit one of these countries to continue their studies or just for a vacation. The variety of events in the program, including street kitchens, street parades, cultural performances, traditional performance competitions, and the Indonesian Speech Competition, made this event interesting, dynamic and far from monotonous. The visitors looked so enthusiastic when exploring the uniqueness of a country, and some were even willing to queue to be able to talk further with the international students they met.

The performances of the participants further enriched the event. Some performed traditional dances, like the students from Peru, several students from India performed regional songs, and the students from the Philippines played conventional regional music. Visitors also felt an exciting culinary and cultural adventure when entering the UMY Sportorium building.

Exciting Competitions to Promote Intercultural Collaboration

In addition to culinary adventures, the 9th ICCF also presented various exciting competitions that strengthen the bonds between students from multiple countries. This collaboration not only enriched individual experiences but also built a strong international network among students.

One of the uniqueness of the 9th batch that differentiates it from previous years is the Indonesian Speech Competition, which was participated by international students at UMY. This competition not only showcases their Indonesian language skills but also shows how deeply they appreciate and understand Indonesian culture. What is unique is that each participant not only showed their language skills but also related the speech material to Islamic teachings, such as quoting verses from the Qur'an and Hadith. This event is proof to all attendees, including the foreign student participants from other campuses who are present, that UMY is an Excellent Islamic campus.

Shabit Hossain from Bangladesh is one of the participants who inserted a verse from the Quran from Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13. Through this verse, he explained that in our daily lives, we certainly cannot escape diversity. The existence of diversity will certainly support the presence of innovation both economically and educationally. He implored all participants who were present to start appreciating diversity from the smallest things, such as maintaining language on social media, being careful in making comments not to offend an ethnicity and respecting the customs and culture of a country.

Meanwhile, Hussein Gibreel Musa Salih, a Sudanese participant, took a different approach. He stepped onto the stage with the topic "Harmonization of Diversity". With his fluent Indonesian, which amazed the audience, he made a speech about his discoveries while in Indonesia, exploring the beauty of diversity and living in tolerance. Hussein also used that moment to invite the entire audience to learn about the harmony and harmony that exists in Indonesia. He

also hopes that after graduating from Indonesia, especially UMY, international students can return to their respective countries and become ambassadors of diversity and peace. Hussein also gave an example of how Indonesia, with 17 thousand islands spread across the archipelago, 300 ethnic groups, approximately 715 languages and more than 6 religions, can maintain their differences and make them a source of strength.

"Indonesia's motto, Bhineka Tunggal Ika, means that despite their differences, we are still one. Let us bring this principle and the culture of cooperation to our country so that we can feel the beauty of living harmoniously in diversity," explained Hussein.

Of the six participants who performed, Hussein Gibreel Musa Salih won first place, followed by Osama Alzebar Ali Alzebar, Shabit Hossain, and Mamadou Pouye. Each speech was filled with passion and dedication, making this competition more than just a competition but also a moment to share stories and experiences.

During the Indonesian Speech Competition, art and cultural performances through dance, music and other performances were also presented to visitors. The colourful international atmosphere and spirit of togetherness could be felt strongly in every corner of the UMY Sportorium. From the mouth-watering aroma of food to the enchanting sounds of traditional musical instruments, this event was a captivating and awe-inspiring celebration of cultural diversity. Not only did it connect students from various parts of the world, but this event also enriched their insights and strengthened cross-cultural friendships, creating an unforgettable experience for all involved.



Building an International Bridge through Culture

The 9th ICCF is not just a cultural and culinary festival but also an important moment in strengthening UMY's steps towards the international world. In addition to UMY Rector Prof. Dr. Ir. Gunawan Budiyanto, M.P., IPM., ASEAN Eng., this event was also attended by important figures who showed their full support for UMY's initiative in expanding its international network. They are Nurhadi Ph.D., member of the Diktilitbang Council of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, KOMBES POL Emi Sumijati, S.H., Head of the DIY Regional Police Human Resources Bureau, and H.E. Mr. Md Tarikul Islam, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Jakarta.



The theme of “Taste the World, Embrace Diversity” carried by the 9th ICCF teaches the importance of tolerance and acceptance of differences. The Culinary and Cultural Adventure at the UMY Sportorium building is expected to continue to be an annual agenda that inspires, strengthens international relations, and expands UMY’s global presence as a university. An important message from this event is that diversity is a strength that must be celebrated, not shunned. ICCF proves that by getting to know and understand each other, we can create a more harmonious and colourful world.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the 9th ICCF, Nadia Amirah from Malaysia, a student at the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (UIN) Yogyakarta and Mukhtar, a student from the Surakarta State University (UNS), were seen having a lively conversation. They admitted that they had just met and were exchanging ideas about their respective cultures. For these two

students, the international culinary and cultural event at UMY was the first they had attended while living in Indonesia.

"I am very fortunate to have been invited to this grand event. Almost all the representatives of the countries here can be seen; UMY is truly extraordinary," said Mukhtar.

The 9th ICCF is a golden opportunity for students to explore further study opportunities and broaden their international horizons, as shown by the high enthusiasm shown by the visitors and the participants. Local and international students received the chance to get to know each other, share experiences, and deepen their understanding of different cultures.

Mauludin Azhari, chairman of the 9th ICCF committee, added that this program’s international atmosphere allows every individual to learn and grow in an inclusive and supportive environment.

"When people are faced with the same event or program, a cultural exchange occurs; those who previously did not know become knowledgeable. That is what makes this program one of UMY's advantages as a Young and Global campus," concluded Azhari.

The 9th ICCF at UMY successfully celebrated diversity and created closer relationships between nations. ICCF is expected to continue to be an event that is awaited by many people, bringing messages of peace and unity through culture and cuisine.

Note: Surah, Al- Hujurat Ayat 13
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾
Translation: O mankind, indeed, We have created you from a male and a female. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you would know each other. Indeed, the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Knowing.

Removing the Limitations of Research

Muhammad Ihsan Darmawan



Dato Prof. Dr. Abu bin Abdullah addressed the agenda of ICoSI UMY as international conference, conveying the urgency of the establishment of sustainable urban planning

At the end of June 2024, a visit to a university in Salatiga became a part of the journey taken by Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) to various scientific forums and exhibitions of research and innovation results. By bringing ideas and a vision to share the achievements of its scientific fields, UMY's participation has a crucial role in disseminating the findings of its academics, lecturers, and students. Of course, there are other ways, considering that UMY responds to academic challenges in the development of science through various media, including international conferences.

Moral and intellectual responsibility are the main reasons UMY contributes to improving the quality of research in the international arena. It is natural for a university to act as the epicentre of science, which means the UMY Research and Innovation Institute (LRI) oversees all scientific research activities from upstream to downstream. The increasingly complex global challenges are enough of a reason for the growth of collaboration aspects that have become an obligation for researchers and academics. This is the basis for LRI UMY to hold the International Conference on Sustainable Innovation (ICoSI). ICoSI is a forum for scientists to bring the spirit of renewal of science and technology to drive sustainability and resilience goals through innovation and collaboration.

Currently, ICoSI has been held eight times for the last eight years. During that time, it has produced more than 5,000 scientific articles. They all target various aspects of research, such as renewable energy, all scientific fields, and a sustainable environment. ICoSI has also been recorded as having been attended by more than 5,500 researchers, academics, and issue observers from all over the world. They discuss insights effectively applied to planning strategies,

including policy recommendations and community engagement tactics. Its vital role in the field of research is also directly proportional to the field of internationalization, which is mutually continuous and inseparable to achieve optimal results for the contribution of higher education to the world.

Collaborating for Humanity

Prof. Dr. Dyah Mutiarin, M.Si., brought up the principle of "Science for Humanity" in commanding LRI UMY to produce the best research as a solution to humanitarian problems. As the First Female Professor of UMY, the woman familiarly called Arin, felt that UMY, as a higher education institution, has values that are the basis for every research carried out, as it befits a center for the development of science.

"For me, the best degree of science is when it can be useful for humanity. This is the benchmark for every research developed, and a sense of humanity becomes the spirit of efforts to solve problems in all aspects, such as poverty, health, and government services. With the dynamics of global problems that are increasingly complex, there needs to be scientific development that is also a response from universities through scientific forums

and international conferences," Arin said when met at the Dasron Hamid Research and Innovation Center, UMY's research and innovation center building.

According to Arin, the development of this science is a process that UMY and ICoSI must undergo to form a collaborative international research climate. The role of universities on a global scale needs to be felt by the wider public, so it requires a driving wheel as an extension of the university to the community. Arin calls this higher education leadership.

This vision allows UMY to produce results in the form of outputs that must be proven to the public based on the values brought by UMY. Apart from its obligations to the community, all collaborative research activities, especially ICoSI, have measurements that must be met to ensure high-quality research outputs. According to Arin, three values are used as references.

"One of these values is international competitiveness, as ICoSI must be able to ensure that the quality of research produced by UMY academics has novelty and impact that is at least equal to, or exceeds, universities at the international level," explained Arin.



The atmosphere of the plenary session during 8th ICoSI, Prof. Ir. Sri Atmaja, Ph.D. delivering a keynote speech

Knowledge sharing is another value emphasized, especially when a university forms partnerships in various countries. According to Arin, the main thing about this value is that it is packaged with an international perspective, making knowledge different in development in multiple countries with differentiating factors. The last is research excellence in the academic field, a benchmark for UMY's excellence in measuring how far science can be developed in universities in a certain period.

Let's examine the function of international conferences and their values. Arin's statement that UMY wants to encourage its researchers to contribute solutions to society's problems makes sense.

From Hope to Action

UMY's journey in building and collecting ideas at the world level cannot be separated from the awareness that science is a tool for improving the welfare of society. ICoSI was first implemented in 2017 under the instruction of the Rector of UMY to improve UMY's connectivity with the international academic network. Arin said that at that time, Prof. Gunawan Budiyanto, as the Rector of UMY, wanted to hold an index of scientific development in the campus environment through an international conference. The existence of a medium for disseminating the results of ideas and concepts in research was also considered the right step to bring the potential of UMY academics to a world level.

Of course, organizing a scientific conference recognized by the international public takes work. Still, it is not a reason not to try. Arin saw the difficulty of gathering researchers from all over the world as a challenge in the early days of the ICoSI event. She felt that the results were a measure of recognizing the credibility of the agenda. It is in the form of outputs from scientific conferences that were published globally.

“These challenges can be overcome with good-quality output from scientific articles. However, this is certainly a challenge, so we have a Scientific Advisor to curate all the scientific articles we receive. There is a separate quota for the total number of scientific articles required to attend the conference, and we must consider the distribution of countries of origin. Because as an international conference, there is a minimum limit for that,” she explained.

For example, in August 2024, ICoSI was held for the eighth time and received 1,480 scientific articles to be curated into 1,014 published articles. This number also shows the enthusiasm and dedication of researchers and academics, all of whom came from 32 different countries. Participation from UMY academics and researchers is an important indicator in implementing ICoSI. According to Arin, this can increase opportunities for cooperation between individuals, so collaboration does not only occur on an institutional scale.

UMY's commitment to the development of science was met with a positive response from a wide perspective, and the Young and Global campus decided to open access to the increasingly inclusive levels of education and discussion issues. UMY is aware that its main scientific conferences are still targeting doctors and professors, thus providing less opportunity for students or graduates from undergraduate or master's levels. A special conference called the UMY Graduate Conference (UMY Grace) was formed on this basis. It remains under the coordination of LRI UMY, and it's now entering its fifth year.

As an academic also involved in research, Arin feels the need for a data comparison process among researchers, which is usually obtained through collaborative activities in the international scope, such as ICoSI and UMY Grace. Both impact researchers' achievement



of scientific goals while deepening the insights of all parties involved, which, of course, can be disseminated through publications or products in the form of innovation tools. Records owned by LRI UMY state that, to date, there have been around 276 patents for research results.

"Both ICoSI and UMY Grace have become academic icons for UMY that can continue to enliven the research atmosphere in the campus environment. It has become a trademark among university partners for the quality of respected research conducted by UMY academics. I think ICoSI and UMY Grace will continue in the years to come," said Arin optimistically.

Becoming a Stimulus for Knowledge Distribution

UMY's habit of prioritizing international collaboration in every scientific research activity encourages the continuation of higher education's progress. According to Arin, collaboration is key if the vision of higher education is to impact solving global problems that continue to grow.

Research at UMY is 50% of the total academic activities of the campus. These

research projects must be collaborative-international and limited to international university partners in the world's top 200 ranking range based on the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) institution. This limitation is used as a reference to improve the quality of research for UMY academics and researchers. This is the message that UMY wants to convey because, despite all that has been attempted so far, building capacity in several universities still needs attention.

This is especially true for Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah Universities (PTMA), and Arin wants the research scheme at UMY to be adopted for more equitable advancement of knowledge.

"We at LRI UMY always refer to the university's design and roadmap in carrying out all research activities to achieve the vision of Research Excellent University. The network of researchers from various institutions in the world is an important asset for every academic, especially for areas of expertise following the faculties owned by the university," concluded Arin.

Seeing the need for solution-based research results while also basing themselves on sustainable global community development, international conferences such as ICoSI and UMY Grace will continue to support collaborative research's sustainability based on internationalization at UMY.

Diving into the International Stage through IISMA

Andre Syahdina Putra

A student exchange program is necessary for every university and higher education institution. The temptation to enjoy the cultures and atmosphere of a whole new country is irresistible. In addition, no one can say no to the experience of making new friends and networking in another country.

It's no surprise that many students strive for international scholarships to study abroad. One of those students was Nabilah Nurjihan Hanifah, an International Relations student at UMY's Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. She was selected for a student exchange program through IISMA.

Bibil, as her friends call her, received her Indonesian International for Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) scholarship last year. This program, established by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and

Technology (Kemendikbudristek), allowed Bibil to study in New Zealand.

For a one-semester or six-month exchange programme, Bibil used this opportunity as best as possible to improve her academic portfolio and knowledge of international culture and forge a better future. However, she also has motives to undergo this student exchange with enthusiasm: She has dreamt of being an international student since she was in grade school.

"Since I was in elementary school, I haven't been a very smart student. This continued until high school. Some of my friends and even my teachers thought I would fail. However, I believed that with a strong enough motivation, I could achieve success and study abroad," Bibil reminisced.



First time in New Zealand. Bibil with other IISMA friends from various countries who study at the University of Otago (July 2023)

She began her studies at UMY at the International Program of International Relations (IPIREL), where her dreams of studying abroad became even stronger. As such, she set a personal target to be able to study overseas through the student exchange program. Ever since she stepped onto the floor of the IPIREL building in 2021, she began to prepare everything she needed to study abroad.

In her first and second years as a student of HI UMY, Bibil focused on organisational work at the various student activity units (UKM), such as the UMY Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI) chapter and the UMY Basketball unit, where she was able to channel her passion for sports. In addition, she began undertaking tests such as the notorious International English Language Test (IELTS), which was one of the special requirements for the IISMA selection program.

Bibil's target is to participate in a student exchange program in her third year as a student, specifically in the fifth semester. To make this target more achievable, she had already prepared all the necessary files and documents for the selection. Thanks to her motivated attitude, preparation, and faith, Bibil successfully passed the selection and became an IISMA awardee in 2023, which her doubters could never have imagined.

“No need to care about what other people say about your dreams. Don’t listen to them because your dreams may come true in the future”, Bibil enthusiastically said.

Meanwhile, Bibil's journey to the IISMA scholarship could have been smoother. She faced many obstacles and failures in her initial steps to study abroad, including failing the initial selection process, her family's impoverished financial state, and bad luck from poor timing.

However, these obstacles and failures did not discourage her from pursuing the dream she had nurtured since childhood. She had to spend quite a long time and energy, but finally, her family and friends gave her full support to achieve her dream.

“If you only dream and not take action, you will not achieve your dream. So go and grab your dreams with your own hands,” Bibil said enthusiastically.

Her First Experience at the University of Otago

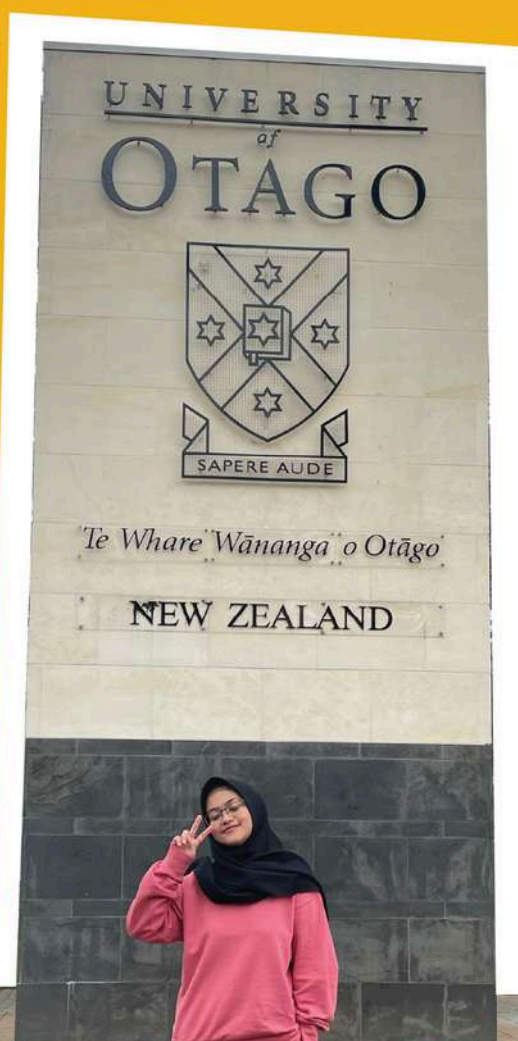
New Zealand witnessed Bibil's first steps as an international student. Bibil found many new and different things in New Zealand, which is considered a developed country. The first thing she experienced as a student at the University of Otago was a distinct and open learning environment. Not only that, but she also felt that the learning facilities at Otago really supported her in carrying out all learning activities.

Bibil also felt that the academic community of the University of Otago, including the teaching staff and the lecturers, had very different personalities. The open attitude and character shown by the teaching staff made students feel like they were peers. In addition, the lecturers also always gave opportunities for further inquiries and supported their students in discussions, even outside of class hours.



Bibil also felt that the lecturers who taught her are very concerned about the students, especially introverted ones like herself. One example, Bibil mentioned, she was given the opportunity to ask more questions about things she did not understand outside of class.

“I never had a student exchange program before, so I wanted to compare how education in a developed country is different than my own,” said the petite woman.



Bibil's first foot step at the University of Otago (July 2023)

Bibil was also encouraged to get to know many students from various backgrounds. She took advantage of every opportunity to meet and mingle with other students from multiple countries and introduce Indonesian culture and traditions. In addition, as an IISMA awardee at the University of Otago, Bibil also took advantage of this opportunity to network with fellow awardees from various countries. Bibil also established a relationship with lecturers and staff at the University of Otago.

Bibil admitted that the relationships she built would also have many positive impacts on her personally, such as making it easier for her to get a letter of recommendation if she ever needed it in the future. In addition, the relationships she has built now will also be useful in the future, especially in terms of her career.

As a recipient of the IISMA (Indonesia International Student Mobility Award), Bibil's achievement is not only personal but also a reflection of her commitment and effort in exploring various fields of study. In her opportunity as an IISMA 2023 awardee, Bibil studied and explored five fields of study: International Relations, New Zealand Politics, Maori Studies, Global Tourism, and Global and Local Culture.

Bibil explored the five fields of study for a reason. Take, for example, the reason she chose the Maori Studies field of study. Bibil chose the Maori Studies program because she felt a striking cultural difference between herself as an Indonesian and the Indigenous New Zealand tribe. She decided to explore New Zealand's culture through Maori Studies, which studies the Indigenous people and the history of New Zealand.

“I think that Maori studies was one of the courses that I could not study outside New Zealand. So, I chose that course to study further,” Bibil said with confidence and a smile.

Becoming a Humanitarian Volunteer and the Title of Best Heroes Challenge

In addition to actively attending every lecture and additional course in 5 fields of study, Bibil also took the time to become a humanitarian volunteer for the New Zealand Red Cross Refugee Support, where she devoted herself as a humanitarian volunteer, especially for refugee-related issues.

For many years, many refugees have sought refuge in New Zealand, which has caught the eye of the global community. But behind every refugee's story, many more refugees need more attention, support, hope, and courage to nurture the human spirit.

From this stage, she takes action; Bibil plays a role in maintaining the spirit of humanity. She told the BHP team of her experience of playing an important role in helping refugees in New Zealand. She helped to provide assistance and solutions to the problems faced by refugees. She also became a figure who represents the spirit of solidarity and commitment in assisting refugees in recovering their displaced lives.

According to Bibil, refugees who seek asylum in other countries are recognised as refugees under international law. However, these refugees often face various challenges, including uncertainty, loss of family, and difficulty adjusting to a new environment. Organisations such as New Zealand Red Cross Refugee Support aims to provide support, assistance, and integration for refugees seeking protection in New Zealand.

"Refugees here are displaced people who are looking for a safe place because they usually come from troubled areas such as Syria, Afghanistan, and other areas of conflict," said Bibil with full empathy.

In addition to being active in the volunteer organisation, Bibil also maximises interaction with other awardees from various countries to exchange international exposure and culture with each other. As an IISMA awardee, Bibil aims to promote Indonesia and its culture as a representative of her home country. She had two angles that she used to introduce Indonesia, one of which is the authenticity of the motifs owned by Indonesia, namely "Batik".

Because of her efforts, Bibil successfully won the Best Heroes Challenge predicate as a representative of the IISMA awardee in promoting the awardee's country of origin, which is included in seven regions. In those regions, Bibil was selected as one of the best.

"I learned a lot of new things in IISMA that I can highlight. One of them is not to underestimate anything or anyone," said Bibil confidently.

As an IISMA awardee, Bibil has successfully implemented many new things in her life. One thing she underlined is that when we want something, we must fight for it seriously. Dedicating your time, energy, and abilities to achieve the desired thing.

In addition, Bibil also emphasised that the opportunity to study abroad that she underwent was not as smooth and beautiful as many people imagined. Bibil faced many trials during her study abroad in New Zealand. Still, Bibil always went through them sincerely because this was part of her efforts to build a career and experience in the academic field.



Bibil with some of her friends who also Awardee of IISMA 2023 in New Zealand (July 2023)

“Turns out studying abroad is not as easy or beautiful as it looks. There will be many obstacles, but the good thing is, we learn something new every day,” Bibil concluded.

Photo of Bibil during road trip to the South Island of New Zealand while spending the mid-semester break

An Oath to Become a Leading University in Southeast Asia Through Scholarships

Mutiah Parawangsah

Universities play a crucial role in training excellent graduates who can help Indonesia become a developed country. Therefore, the quality of higher education institutions needs to be improved so that they can become global-standard universities and produce graduates who can compete at the international level.

Universities also have a vital role in building cross-country connections, not only as a place to gain knowledge but also as a bridge connecting cultures, thoughts, and innovations from various parts of the world.

In its 43rd year, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) strives to realize its ideals to become one of the leading universities in the ASEAN (Southeast Asia) region and strengthen its network with other countries in ASEAN. Various efforts have been made, starting from opening international classes, collaborating with multiple world universities in the form of joint research, visiting professors, hosting summer schools, student exchanges, international conferences, and double degree programs, and providing scholarships for international students.

Not only that but to achieve its vision of becoming a leading university in ASEAN, UMY also continues to strive to gain recognition from the community, in addition to recognition from the Indonesian community, which is marked by the acquisition of accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT). It must also gain recognition from the global community through UMY's participation in international rankings.



Adi Hidayat shakes hand with Dr. Zuhair Al-Shun, Y.M., - ambassador of Palestine to Indonesia in handing over Palestine scholarship

One of the critical indicators for gaining recognition at the international level is the number of international students in the university. Therefore, UMY must ensure that its number of international students continues to increase. Currently, UMY continues to gradually strive to increase the number of international students, starting from one percent, then three percent, to five percent.

One of the steps that UMY has taken to increase the number of international students is providing a scholarship program. This step is a big commitment considering the number of scholarship quotas offered by UMY alone, which is 60 quotas for all levels, starting from Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral. This number is fantastic, as it does not include those provided by other UMY partners. This number also makes UMY a private university with Indonesia's largest quota of international student scholarships.

Collaborating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lazismu, and PT Adaro Indonesia

In addition to providing scholarships through a program called UMY Scholarship, which has been running since 2014, UMY collaborates with several parties. Considering that

realizing achieving an international student percentage of at least 1 per cent is not easy, UMY collaborates with the Zakat, Infaq, and Shadaqah Amil Institution (Lazismu) of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu) of the Republic of Indonesia, and PT Adaro Indonesia.

The first full scholarships for international students were given to students from Palestine in 2022. This scholarship comes from Lazismu PP Muhammadiyah, which originally came from funds from Quantum Akhyar, owned by Ustadz Adi Hidayat. It was intended for Palestinian students, which is why this scholarship is called the Palestine Scholarship.

"At first, Quantum Akhyar gave the funds to the Republic of Indonesia's National Zakat Agency (Baznas). Baznas was confused about where to distribute it because Ustadz Adi Hidayat intended it for Palestinian students. Then Baznas gave it to Lazismu PP, and the authority to manage higher education is the Higher Education, Research and Development Council (Diktilitbang) of PP Muhammadiyah. Hence, the operator is from the Diktilitbang Council," said Idham Badruzzaman Ph.D, Head of the UMY International Relations Office.

Prof. Faris Al-Fadhat wearing UMY's alma mater jacket to Afghan scholarship recipient students





International Students of UMY took pictures after joining action statement for Palestine

Idham revealed that the funds for this scholarship program reached billions of rupiah. However, the biggest challenge they face is the difficulty of attracting students from Palestine due to the ongoing conflict situation in the region. To overcome this challenge, UMY collaborated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Turkey active in advocacy and humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people. This collaboration aims to create a safer and more accessible path for Palestinian students to get an education in Indonesia. In addition, UMY also collaborates with the Palestinian Embassy in Jakarta, which is vital in facilitating communication and arrangements for prospective students.

Through this collaboration, UMY, Quantum Akhyar, Lazismu, and Baznas hope to provide better support to Palestinian students and ensure adequate access to quality education despite the difficult conditions in their country. Thus, this program is committed to providing scholarships and strives to create a safe and supportive environment for international students, especially from Palestine, to pursue their academic dreams.

In 2023, UMY began partnering with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu) of the Republic of Indonesia. Kemlu provides a scholarship quota for women's education in Afghanistan through this

collaboration. The main objective of this program is to ensure that students from Afghanistan, especially women, get access to quality education in Indonesia.

To increase the effectiveness of this scholarship program, UMY is collaborating with the Aga Khan Development Network, an NGO that has experience supporting education in Afghanistan. This collaboration is essential because Kabul's Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) cannot manage the scholarship independently. So, with the help of the Aga Khan Development Network, UMY and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hope to provide more comprehensive support, which includes the selection process, mentoring, and adaptation for Afghan female students. This collaboration is expected to increase access to education for female students in Afghanistan and strengthen diplomatic and educational relations between Indonesia and Afghanistan.

In addition, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UMY has also succeeded in collaborating with PT Adaro Indonesia. This leading mining company is committed to providing educational support through scholarship programs for international students. Suppose the scholarship provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is specifically intended for women from Afghanistan. In that case, the scholarship from PT Adaro is open to all international students who register at UMY without restrictions on gender or citizenship.

From the scholarship program offered, UMY covers five financing items, which are referred to as five essential costs: tuition fees, living allowance, accommodation, Indonesian language courses, and minor health treatment. Meanwhile, three items not covered by the UMY scholarship are plane tickets,



Photos of Afghan scholarship recipient students

health insurance, and visas or residence permits. However, unlike UMY, the scholarship provided by Lazismu, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and PT Adaro Indonesia covers all the cost of these items, even for female students from Afghanistan who need mahram assistance.

Results of Giving Scholarships to International Students

The fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Quantum Akhyar/Lazismu, and PT Adaro Indonesia decided to entrust the management of their scholarships to UMY shows that UMY has received recognition from external parties for its long-term internationalization efforts. It is a blessing that UMY deserves to enjoy.

This recognition positively impacts UMY and is undoubtedly also felt by alumni when they return to their home countries. For example, when alums return, they must complete diploma equivalency, which is highly dependent on university accreditation. With UMY having entered the international ranking, the diploma equivalency process becomes easier for them.

"Imagine if they don't find UMY in the international ranking list; they will need a lot of documents, which will certainly be difficult," said Idham, a Lecturer in International Relations at UMY.

The impact of internationalization through scholarship programs for international students inevitably also enlivens the internationalization process in the UMY environment itself, such as adjustments in various study programs (Prodi). In addition, it can also provide opportunities for study programs to continue to improve their capacity and quality to meet international standards.

"International students at UMY are spread across several study programs, so some adjustments are required. For example, our staff must be able to communicate with international students. This indirectly allows study programs to increase their capacity to meet international standards," Idham emphasized again.

However, UMY does not provide scholarships to international students without assisting and monitoring their academic performance. It is a common practice in all scholarship programs at any university. For example, undergraduate students are required to maintain a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3. If their GPA is below standard, their scholarship funds can be reduced or revoked if their performance declines. This step is taken to ensure high academic quality among international scholarship recipients.

In addition, as part of UMY's support, international students, from the beginning of their acceptance at UMY, immediately get an orientation period to help them understand their rights as students. Furthermore, UMY also provides accommodation facilities in student dormitories (UNIRES) and Student Dormitories during the first year of study. However, students must find accommodation outside the campus in the second year. UMY still provides a monthly housing cost subsidy of 750 thousand rupiah to help students.

International students are also involved in various cultural activities, such as the 17th August competition on Indonesian Independence Day to introduce the multiple cultures in Indonesia. They are also involved in the International Cultural and Culinary Festival (ICCF), an annual event by UMY that international students from various countries attend. It allows them to interact with students from other countries.

However, LKI UMY's journey in managing and organizing these international scholarship recipients is not without obstacles. Idham admitted that students from different countries and cultures sometimes suffer from culture shock, not only between students themselves but also between students and LKI UMY. Small frictions often arise due to these cultural differences.

"For example, they don't want to share a room with anyone because they don't match culturally. So, as much as possible, UMY looks for roommates who are close in culture, for example, African with African. This is important because the matter of the room is very personal, so it is challenging for us. Another thing is when speaking, Africans tend to be louder because of their culture but are often perceived differently by other friends," explained Idham.

Another challenge that the LKI UMY faces is related to health insurance. Although UMY has set rules related to this, not all international students comply with them, so socialization efforts continue to be encouraged so that international students can also get health insurance.

However, although LKI is facing these challenges, Idham admitted that these challenges can still be handled. UMY also feels helped by the existence of an international student association because the communication and coordination process becomes relatively more effective. When international students have complaints, they can convey them to the association's chairperson, who will then convey them to UMY.

Strengthening Networks in ASEAN

UMY ambitions to expand its scholarship program to other countries in the Asian region. Every year, UMY is committed to strengthening its education network by establishing closer



Next year, UMY plans to visit Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Japan, and several other Asian countries. This visit will include an education exhibition and the introduction of UMY scholarships directly to prospective international students.

One of the main objectives of the scholarship program that has been rolled out is to increase the number of students studying at UMY with their funds, known as self-funded students. Idham said the number of students who come with their funds is still relatively small. So UMY hopes this effort will significantly increase the number of international students who choose to go to UMY with their funds.

UMY hopes that in the future, there will be results from the efforts that they have shown, both by providing scholarships and through various other efforts. However, it is essential to note that the primary goal of all these efforts is to increase UMY's institutional income through self-funding and gain wider recognition from the international community. UMY wants to be recognized as the main choice for international students so that they come to UMY at their own expense because of the value and quality of education offered. UMY hopes to create a more inclusive and diverse educational ecosystem through these efforts and strengthen its position as a recognized higher education institution in the ASEAN region and beyond.



Retno Marsudi taking pictures with international students of UMY

Cultural parade and festival by hundreds of international students in UMY's International Cultural and Culinary Festival

Revealing the Antinomy of Studying and Going Abroad

Muhammad Ihsan Darmawan

"Go abroad, for knowledgeable and civilized people do not stay in their hometown" - Imam Syafi'i

The adage from one of the world's renowned Muslim scholars seems relevant for the young generation who want to explore their potential as far as possible. Studying and going abroad seem to be concepts that often become a bugbear for those who are aware of their opportunity to develop but are reluctant to leave their comfort zones. These two are antinomies of each other, contradictory but simultaneously inseparable. However, one young man from the Philippines who had traveled to Indonesia felt different.

If he wanted comfort, continuing his studies abroad would not be an option for Netzer Quimno, an international student at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY). Netzer, who has just entered his first year of college, feels that going abroad and becoming an international student in a

different country provides many opportunities, which would have been difficult to get had he stayed in his home country. By going to Indonesia, Netzer leaves his comfort zone and looks optimistically at real self-development.



Netzer Quimno attend the event of Silaturahmi Orang Tua for UMY's freshmen year



“For me, convenient doesn’t always mean ‘comfort.’ You won’t realize how big the world is if you stay in your comfort zone without curiosity about yourself and others,” Netzer said.

Netzer wanted to leave that ‘confinement’ to see how wide the world is. Interacting with communities from various backgrounds while getting an education feels like an art in processing life.

Netzer's decision to continue his studies at UMY was well received, considering UMY's commitment to providing quality higher education services, even at an international level. Of course, it has become a commitment for this excellent university to prioritize academic excellence and be oriented towards high global interaction. The significance of the increase in the number of UMY applicants from various countries seems to answer this commitment, as in the 2024/2025 academic year, there are more than 6,400 prospective student applicants from abroad.

Universities' support for providing an inclusive educational environment is embedded in the growth of a supporting ecosystem, which begins with accepting international students. Given their strategic role, the quality of universities can be the X factor that can bridge the antinomy of studying and going abroad.

Mission to become ASEAN Leading University

Roadmap for Strategic Development is a system used by UMY to measure the strategic progress of higher education, marked by achievement points every five years. They are interconnected and cover international coverage in every dharma of higher education. For the 2021-2025 period, UMY hopes to become an ASEAN Leading University further strengthened by UMY's recognition by world rankings, increasing partnership opportunities, and expanding UMY's increasingly well-known name.

The better a university's reputation, the greater the interest and attraction of the international community, including prospective students. Head of the UMY International Relations Office, from Office of Cooperation and International Affairs (LKI), Idham Badruzaman, Ph.D., stated that reputation can be formed directly or indirectly. However, reputation will be difficult to create with the increasing scope, especially internationally. So, UMY has gradually chosen to increase its reputation. One of the reasons behind the growing number of prospective students registering from abroad, according to Idham, is because of the internationalization program, especially for the ASEAN region. In the last year, UMY has been actively visiting and expanding its cooperation network with various schools and universities there.

To complete its mission and compete at the ASEAN level, UMY's visits to countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Brunei Darussalam are not simply to attract prospective international students. According to Idham, having good cooperation with ASEAN will significantly impact UMY in organizing education through its catur

dharma. Activities related to international mobility, such as student exchanges, double degrees, community service, and inviting guest lecturers, are efforts to improve reputation on a global scale. Of course, the significance of the increasing enthusiasm of the international community who want to pursue higher education at UMY can be felt by the Young and Global University.

"By visiting different Southeast Asian countries, we are also opening up greater opportunities for students to get higher education in an international environment at UMY. This commitment is realized, among others, through a full scholarship program provided specifically for international applicants, more specifically for those from Southeast Asian countries," said Idham.

The extraordinary attention supported by a full scholarship quota of 60 students has gained UMY the trust of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has also provided scholarships for international students at UMY since 2023. But the efforts do not stop there. Idham did not rule out the possibility that UMY will continue to expand the reach of scholarship-recipient countries and more potential partner candidates.

To Globalize and Create a Diverse Environment

A globally oriented academic excellence is undoubtedly a unique attraction for UMY, which international rankings have recognized. In the last three academic years, not only has the number of international applicants increased significantly, but the distribution of the applicants' countries of origin has also spread to almost 100 countries. For example, around 6,437 prospective students registered in 2024 and were divided into two waves, and most applicants came from Asia and Africa. In the second wave, there were 895 applicants from 39 countries in Africa and 728 applicants from 25 countries in Asia.

This was confirmed directly by UMY's Vice-Rector for Student, Alumni, and Al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah Affairs, Prof. Faris Al-Fadhat, M.A., Ph.D., who said many applicants came from countries far from Indonesia. In addition to Asia and Africa, there were also countries from the American continent, such as Argentina, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Ecuador, which rarely heard the names of universities far away in Southeast Asia. Some applicants came from the European continent, with applicants from Belgium, Russia, and France.



A group of students from Gambia, Africa parade using traditional clothes and their country's flag in UMY's International Cultural and Culinary Festival

In addition to being the result of a good reputation in the international arena, the massive numbers are also supported by two aspects, namely increased awareness and an optimal registration system. Faris explained that awareness of the global community needs to be supported by various programs that align with UMY's main objectives, namely the commitment to providing excellent academics wrapped in an international atmosphere. Visits to ASEAN countries are among the programs packaged in educational and scholarship expo activities.

"One of the countries we visited is Philippines because its interest in good higher education and aligns with UMY's mission to expand its international reach. The number of potential and talented students become the main driving force for UMY during the agenda that includes other ASEAN countries to provide opportunities to access quality higher education at UMY," added Faris.

Renewing the registration portal system is one concrete step in making it easier for prospective applicants to start and complete the registration process. All these supporting factors play an important role in increasing the number of international enthusiasts while also emphasizing UMY's position in creating a multicultural academic environment and providing valuable experiences for students with various cultural backgrounds.

Gaining access to an environment with high international exposure may not be a dream for some students. However, the opportunity and benefits to reach the world and capture a broader horizon of insight have become an obsession for others. Netzer's story appears to be a reminder of how humans can develop and shape their character and mindset by opening themselves to differences. The sensation he felt when pushing his limits further, continuing his education, and living in a foreign place still fuels his enthusiasm. It wasn't easy, but his sacrifice paid off when he chose the right environment.

"I had a lot of doubts when I wanted to go abroad. I considered what I would leave behind in my country, Philippines, because I felt I could still develop there with different opportunities. However, my curiosity about the atmosphere in the international environment continued to linger, doubled with the high quality offered at UMY, the campus I chose. The guarantee of that quality also convinced me to risk what I had in Philippines to get this opportunity," Netzer said with a twinkle in his eye.

Netzer understands that UMY's internationalization program, including full scholarships, could facilitate those who aspire and dream big. Considering that he is still beginning his new journey, he expects many opportunities to await him. For him, being an international student means that every day is something new and full of surprises.



UMY International KKN, Service Without Borders

Mutiah Parawangsan

Every time we open our eyes, we witness increasingly complex global dynamics that seem difficult to overcome. Lack of access to quality education, minimal health facilities, poverty, environmental problems, and other interrelated social problems can affect a community's quality of life. The presence of the government and educational institutions is essential in solving all these community problems.

Social problems in the community can often be helped by the presence of Community Service (KKN) students in the environment. KKN is part of the Tri Dharma of higher education, crucial in

building a bridge between the academic world and society. The KKN program not only provides an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge they have learned in college, but it also allows students to solve social problems that occur in various communities on their own.

As an institution that is also very concerned about the problems that occur in the community, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) is always ready to positively impact the community through its KKN programs, which are designed to address various problems. These programs include the Regular KKN program, Independent KKN 3T (Disadvantaged, Frontier, and Outermost), KKN Putera Daerah, KKN Muballigh Hijrah, IT-based Regular KKN, KKN Kampus sehat, KKN Muhammadiyah Aisyiah, and the International KKN program.

The seven KKN programs implemented domestically have 1,500 service partners and are executed in over 2,000 service locations throughout Indonesia. Meanwhile, in 2024, the International KKN program was attended by 155 students in five countries: Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Saudi Arabia.

UMY's international community service students in Saudi Arabia when performing umrah together





Taking pictures together with UMY's international community service students in Davao, Philippines

The International KKN program at UMY began in 2015 as part of UMY's milestone to become one of the leading universities in ASEAN by 2025. It was also in line with the mandate of the 47th Muhammadiyah Congress in Makassar, which emphasized the internationalization of Muhammadiyah. With the increasingly thin borders between countries and the rapid development of technology, internationalization has become a necessity for UMY. Therefore, UMY focused on developing international programs to compete globally and collaborate with parties worldwide, including through the International KKN program.

"Internationalization activities are a must. We compete not only domestically but also on the international stage. With the massive and unstoppable development of technology, we have no choice but to collaborate with other parties abroad," said Dr. Aris Slamet Widodo, S.P., M.Sc, Head of the Student Service Division, Office of Community Service (LPM) UMY.

Every KKN program, including domestic and overseas programs, has different characteristics. Domestic KKN usually

focuses on solving social and economic problems in local communities by with the government and local communities. Meanwhile, KKN programs abroad offer a more challenging experience with global dynamics and challenges that are certainly greater and more diverse, such as differences in culture, language, and social systems.

In addition, international KKN provides many valuable benefits for students. It provides a valuable experience that allows students to be directly involved in social and development projects in various countries. That broadens their global perspective and helps them understand the challenges and solutions relevant to the international context. In addition, students can hone their interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, which are very important in today's era of globalization. International KKN also opens opportunities for students to build international networks that can be useful in their future professional careers.

"Sometimes students are not aware of the importance of networking. Networking is very valuable and can become a way to develop oneself in the future, as it has a huge influence," explained Aris.

Introducing Indonesian Culture to Singapore and Saudi Arabia

Singapore became the first country to witness the creation of the International KKN program at UMY. In 2012, the KKN program in Singapore was known as Community Service, and the design thinking method was applied to solve community problems. From there, the UMY International KKN program expanded to Malaysia in 2019, focusing on studios for children of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Although this program had been stopped, the International KKN in Malaysia was continued by collaborating with International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and Universitas Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM).

In 2023, UMY spread its wings and launched the International KKN programs in the Philippines and Saudi Arabia. When it was first launched, the Saudi Arabian International KKN also caused a stir in the media world because UMY not only sent students for KKN but also gave two Umrah bonuses to its students. The KKN program in Saudi Arabia itself was implemented in five locations, namely the Indonesian School in Jeddah, the Indonesian School in Mecca, the Indonesian School in Riyadh, the Hajj and Umrah Office, and the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI) Jeddah.

"So currently, UMY's International KKN program has reached Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia," Aris declared.

Before students depart for their designated country, LPM UMY and the International KKN student team have to prepare and design the program that will be run. The International KKN program must have a significant impact, especially on Indonesian citizens in the destination country of this International KKN.

One such program is the International KKN program, created by the Saudi Arabian KKN team. Saudi Arabia is one of the countries with the most significant number of Indonesian migrant workers. Also, the migrants' family members still do not know much about their own country's culture. Many of these children were born in Saudi Arabia but have difficulty accessing information about Indonesia. In addition, there are not many Indonesian teachers in Saudi Arabia, so many of these children do not understand Indonesia as a country. They cannot even speak Indonesian, let alone their regional language.

Seeing these children's problems, the UMY Saudi Arabian International KKN team decided to focus its program on introducing Indonesian culture. They became teachers in Indonesian schools and helped migrant children with difficulties accessing education and information about Indonesia.

"They (PMI children) do not know about their Indonesian heritage, such as national symbols. We must teach them about Indonesia, so we introduced Indonesian culture through games, regional clothes, regional songs, photos, videos, and many other things about Indonesia and its cultural diversity," Aris explained.

In addition, at the Indonesian Consulate General in Jeddah, KKN students assisted with PMI services and held life skills training, such as digital marketing and make-up artists. The training was chosen with the hope that it could serve as additional skills for migrant workers in Saudi Arabia and after they return to Indonesia. Meanwhile, at the Hajj and Umrah Affairs office, students from the medical study program focused on accompanying Indonesian Hajj pilgrims who had not been able to return home due to

illness. They provided emotional support and comfort because many nurses in Saudi Arabia could not speak Indonesian.

The International KKN student team in the Philippines also did a similar program. The KKN program, run by the KKN team in the country nicknamed "The Land of the Rice Barn", focused on mentoring PMI and strengthening national values among the Indonesian community there. Students taught regional songs, nationality, and information about the Indonesian government. Despite facing challenges in less developed areas and having tight security, they taught at madrasahs and churches and were well-received by the local community.

Besides, the KKN program in Malaysia emphasizes cultural exchange, such as introducing Indonesian cuisine, dance, songs, and culture.

"We also did an International KKN program with Singapore Polytechnic. Here, we focus more on practicing the concept of design thinking to solve a problem. Students from UMY and Singapore work together in groups to address community issues in Indonesia," said Aris.

Ensuring Programs are Impactful and Sustainable

To ensure that the International KKN programs run by students have a significant impact in the country where the KKN is implemented, LPM UMY adopts several vital strategies. First, the programs that have been planned must obtain approval and active involvement from the local community to ensure that the activities carried out are by their needs and can provide sustainable benefits.

Next, building and training local cadres who will continue the program after the KKN students finish their tenure in those countries is essential. **"If no one will continue the program, the KKN students are responsible for finding people to do so and preparing them from the start of the deployment,"** Aris explained again.

Furthermore, LPM will send a team to the exact location at least three times or for three consecutive years to monitor and evaluate the program's progress and make necessary adjustments. With this approach, LPM seeks to ensure that the International KKN program provides temporary benefits and has a positive long-term impact on the local community.



UMY's international community service students taking pictures in front of Petronas Tower



Batch 4 of UMY's international community students taking pictures together with Indonesia's Consul General for Jeddah, Yusron B. Ambary and his wife

Aris admitted that students must follow strict briefings before departing for their destinations. These briefings cover various aspects, including understanding the programs that will be run, such as education or culture, and inviting speakers from within and outside the institution to provide relevant training.

"For example, for the waste-based teaching aids program, we invited an NGO in Jogja that focuses on children. They taught the students how to make toys and teaching aids from waste materials such as paper. In addition, we also equip students with soft skills important for socializing and working with the local community," explained Aris.

Expansion Plans to Egypt, Yemen and Taiwan

LPM UMY's breakthrough is more comprehensive than just the international KKN program. It is also developing a virtual magazine to overcome the need for more information about Indonesia in Indonesian schools abroad. With around 14 to 15 Indonesian schools spread across countries such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Australia, and Japan, many students in these schools need help understanding the culture and developments in Indonesia.

To bridge this information gap, LPM UMY launched a virtual magazine website. This website will later display various information, articles, and news about Indonesian and Indonesian schools abroad. International KKN students will also be involved in creating and managing content. This virtual magazine will be the primary source of information for students abroad and strengthen relations between Indonesian schools at home and overseas.

LPM UMY plans to expand the International KKN scheme by launching a three-country KKN program involving Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Through cooperation between UMY, Universitas Islam Malaysia (UIM), and Yala Rajabhat University, Thailand, this program aims to enhance cross-country cooperation and provide a broader international experience for students.

Moreover, in 2025, in addition to continuing the KKN program with existing countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia, UMY plans to expand to Egypt, Yemen, and Taiwan. This step is expected to strengthen international networks and positively impact the global community.

"InsyaAllah, we are targeting to be able to conduct International KKN to Egypt, Yemen, and Taiwan by 2025. We want to expand to these countries because Taiwan has many PMIs. Meanwhile, Egypt and Yemen are the global centers of Islamic knowledge and civilization, so we wanted to expand this KKN program to include these three countries," concluded Aris.

Team Work – Two UMY students worked together to arrange a bridge frame in 'Kompetisi Jembatan Indonesia' at UMY, and won second place in the steel frame category



Discussing Issues – Plenary Session on the agenda of the 8th International Conference on Sustainable Innovation, two keynote speakers dialogue guided by the moderator



Collaboration in Harmony – UMY Student Activity Units collaborates to perform musical drama in the magnificent MY Harmony Concert, which become the closing of UMY's 43rd anniversary



Preach – Ust. Adi Hidayat visited and gave a preach after Fajr prayer in front of hundreds of UMY students, on the agenda of the Fajr prayer movement and Tabligh Akbar at K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Mosque



Strapping in Splendor – Rector of UMY, Prof. Dr. Ir. Gunawan Budiyanto, M.P., IPM., ASEAN Eng. giving a welcome speech at Sportorium UMY, which hosted the 111th anniversary of Muhammadiyah

Radiant Smile - Two middle-aged women smiled after receiving basic food assistance from UMY, which was given during the Social Service agenda in the celebration of UMY's 43rd anniversary



Stand for Palestine - A freshman year is seen holding up a poster of support for Palestine amidst thousands of students who joined action statement, as well as raising donations for the occupation that occurred in Palestine



Free Iftar during Ramadan - UMY students received an iftar menu from rector, Prof. Dr. Ir. Gunawan Budiyanto, M.P., IPM., ASEAN Eng., where every year UMY routinely gives 5000 portions of iftar to break fast



Dialogue with Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Retno Marsudi had a dialogue with international students during her visit to UMY, having previously given a full scholarship



Signing the Inscription - KGPAA Paku Alam X signed the inauguration inscription of UMY Student Dormitory, witnessed by the chairman of central board of Muhammadiyah Haedar Nashir and the board of UMY



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