

Education of Global Medical and Health Science Leaders in the Coming Generation in Cooperation and Collaboration with ASEAN countries

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I was sent to Institute of tropical disease (ITD), Airlangga University, by student exchange program. In ITD, I had been engaged in Influenza research under the supervision of Prof. Kazufumi Shimizu. Through this program, I was impressed by the ambition and high English ability of Indonesian researchers. Their upward mobility encouraged my motivation.

My advice for the student who will take this program is, don't hesitate to study abroad, although you are worried about the ability of language. The most important thing is an attitude to do everything actively with curiosity. Of course I was worried about my English skill, and full of anxious about the living in Indonesia for three month. However, I was able to spend meaningful three month thanks to my friends and teacher, with the mind that tries to do everything. I had many difficulties in living abroad, because of the different culture. However, it brought a lot of things to learn. In addition, it also brought an opportunity to reconsider my future. I strongly suggest joining this project if you are interested in studying abroad.



Influenza group

I arrived at Surabaya, which is the second biggest city in Indonesia, in order to study here for three month, by the project “Education of Global Medical and Health Science Leaders in the Coming Generation in Cooperation and Collaboration with ASEAN countries”. I thought that this project was really good opportunity for me since I had been thinking that I wanted to live and study in abroad, and see a developing country. Therefore, it did not take long time before I applied this project. During this three month program, I expected that I could experience a lot of things, including different culture communication, life in developing country and so on, which would be helpful to my life.

However, my expectation turned into anxiety quickly when I arrived at a dormitory, where I was going to live for three month. Narrow room, the shower which frequently stopped and serves only tap water, non-flush toilet, etc. Living in here is totally different from that of Japan. Of course there was no appliance, like air conditioner or refrigerator. Private kitchen neither. My resolution, “live in developing country for three month”, got to be broken at the first day of my stay in Indonesia. I was wondering if I would be really able to live in here for three month.

Next day, I went to the Institute of Tropical disease (ITD), Airlangga university. ITD was designated as a Center of Excelllence, by Indonesian government, and one of the leading institute in the field of medicine and biology in Indonesia. Three Japanese researchers have been stationed in ITD, and engaged in the research of infectious diseases by the project of “Japan initiative for global research network on infectious diseases”. I started Influenza research under the supervision of Prof Kazufumi Shimizu, who is one of the Japanese researchers.



Institute of tropical disease (ITD),
Airlangga University



The student dormitory

I had been engaged in bacteria research before coming to Indonesia. Therefore, research on virus was really new and interesting to me. I mainly performed virus isolation, genetic analysis and the survey of avian influenza. Avian influenza, especially H5N1, has a great impact on the society, so I felt a big responsibility. I joined not only a lab work but also a field work. For example, monitoring migrant birds as a carrier of highly pathogenic avian influenza, and sample collection from a wet market where human H5N1 infection occurred before.

Those works cannot be performed and seen in Japan. I realized that hygienic environment of those area was really terrible. One of my purposes in this study was to see by my eye that people in Indonesia were at risk of exposure to avian influenza infection. I strengthened my resolution to utilize my knowledge and experience to the improvement of hygiene and the problem of infectious disease in many developing countries.

There were three Indonesian researchers who belonged to Influenza group. I mainly spent a time with them. What I was the most impressed by them was their English skill. Most of the researchers in ITD were twenties, and newly graduated university or graduate school. They were as young as me. However, all of them speak English fluently, and discuss research in English. Doing research and spending time with them really inspired my motivation. At the same time, it made me realized that the English skill among Japanese students were really low.



The habitat of Migratory birds (Pelican)



Farm of birds

I was surprised at not only their ability of English, but also their high ambitious spirit. I met so many people who would like to study abroad. Especially, my best friend always said she wanted to study in Japan in the future, and therefore after her work she took Japanese class. She thought studying in Japan would help in the development of Indonesia than studying in Europe or the United States, because Japan was a leader in Asia. I had never met the person who thought like this and took action in Japan. I felt the energy in developing country. In addition, her ambition roused me to activity.

I used to play in many places along with Indonesian friends on holiday. Instead of going to the so-called tourist spot, I often visited the ordinary local spots liked Indonesian young people. We talked late into the night in a warung (a greasy spoon), and also I participated in an Indonesian friend's wedding in Jogjakarta.

I noticed that they always accept the aliens while in contact with the many Indonesian. They spoke to me actively using the Japanese or English they knew by their hilarious national identity, and also accepted my poor English and Indonesian. In addition, it was also very surprised that they were interested in Japanese culture beyond my expectation, and sometimes had deep knowledge of Japanese culture then Japanese young people. What strikes me was that my friend said to me why I little knew about the traditional culture of Japan even though I was Japanese. In Indonesia, they gave consideration to their traditional culture and dance, so my friends always taught me various things. By talking about the culture of both countries, I was keenly aware of lack of knowledge of Japanese culture and convention. On the other hand, it was very interested to think about the Japanese culture in Indonesian glance. I want to learn about Japanese culture in the future.



The Wedding in Jogjakarta



Warung

Until now, I have only mentioned the weak point of Japan. However, I have found good points of Japan either. And then, as a matter of course, the good points of Indonesia that I mentioned in this paper are not applicable to all Indonesian. I heard that Indonesian are generally not as diligent and punctual as Japanese. Sometimes I agree with that. In addition, ITD was one of the most prestigious institutes in Indonesia, however at the other places sometimes its experimental environment was not as high as that of Japan. I rediscover Japanese virtue and the advantage that I can go Japanese university.

When I look back on this program, I feel that time flies so quickly. Three month program was too short. Anxiety at the first day disappeared before I knew it. Come to think of it, the most important factor to enjoy this program is, I think friends. I realized that the difference of culture, or way of thinking did not matter to be a friend. Conversely, those differences make people more attractive. Three month is somewhat short for me. If I could stay longer, I would be able to get along with them more and more!

Through this project, what I learn the best is the importance of relationship between human to human.



Tea factory



ITD symposium

Currently, it was said that Japanese students did not try to study abroad and go out of Japan. That is why this project was adopted. However, I think that this problem is derived from Japanese highly advanced society. Japanese people can get high education without using English, and conduct high level research in domestic.

This program let me rediscover the difference between Japan and abroad countries, as well as the advantages or disadvantages to study in Japan. I would like to make use of these findings and experiences to the rest of my life, and contribute to the development of emerging countries.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who helped me to have such a wonderful experience.



With Prof. Shimizu, Dr. Utsumi, Mr. Kotaki, Ms. Ueda, and Ms. Yamazaki at ITD