

Interview by Jemma Purdey and Ahmad Suaedy with M. Tahir Kasmani, UNHAS, Makassar, 24 October 2014

Phd, Social demography, Flinders University, (UNFPA scholarship), 1987-1990.

[00:00:00]	Studied a PhD in social demography, in 1990, at Flinders University, School of Social Sciences sponsored by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). Was in the first group of Indonesians at Flinders, there was about three or four PhD students and about twenty master's students.	Studying in Australia
[00:01:25]	Born in a rural village, in the Sidenreng Rappang (SidRap) district of South Sulawesi, in a Bugis family. His parents were small traders, going back and forth from Kalimantan with timber. His grandfather was an imam, his uncle was a school master. His parents were cousins. He has four brothers and one sister. His parents had a traditional religious education. His father was an officer in the Japanese army before he became a trader.	Childhood; Family background
[00:06:07]	Pak Tahir was born in 1949. His parents wanted their children to be educated, not work in the family business. Pak Tahir went to both public school and religious school. Started primary school in Kalimantan then moved to Sulawesi to finish the rest of his schooling. His brother went to university after working at the post office for a while; Pak Tahir went straight to university after finishing school. In senior high school he went to state school in the morning, religious school in the afternoon and English classes in the evening. He wanted to learn English after meeting foreigners when he lived in Pare Pare, near the harbour.	Childhood; Family background; Early education
[00:10:33]	He did two courses at university: Arabic literature at Islamic State University (UIN) and social anthropology at Hasanuddin University (Unhas). He graduated in 1978 then was appointed as a junior lecturer in the Faculty of Sociology at Unhas. He was secretary of the student council from 1973 to 1975 and active in improving student conditions at Unhas. Had meetings with faculty management, and at UIN. In 1983 he got a scholarship to do a master's in population studies at Gajah Mada University (UGM).	Undergraduate education; Early career; Leadership; Community service; Scholarship opportunity
[00:14:52]	In 1979 he went to Sweden for a month on a university community service scheme. Unhas had many joint activities with overseas universities then. As well as lecturing he was the secretary of management of the student service scheme so he went overseas to learn how community service was done. He went with	International mobility; Community service; Professional network

	people from UGM, North Sumatra University and University of Indonesia. People from Uppsala University came to Indonesia as well. He travelled three or four times a year for this until he went to UGM to do his master's.	
[00:17:50]	At UGM he worked closely with Prof. Dr. Masri Singarimbun, who had been to the Australian National University (ANU), and he recommended Pak Tahir continue with a PhD in Australia. He went straight to Flinders from UGM. Professor Hassan was his supervisor, and Graeme (unclear) was his mentor, also Kevin Jones and Chris Manning. He didn't take his family then, went alone. The scholarship was easy to get, Prof. Singarimbun and the Minister for Environment and Population supported his application.	Post-graduate education; Motive to study in Australia; Studying in Australia; Scholarship application process
[00:21:16]	Chose Flinders because he met Prof. Hassan and Graham when they were visiting UGM. Worked at UGM for a year while he waited for a scholarship and arrived at Flinders, with the other Indonesian students, in 1987. University staff met them at the airport, took them to University Hall and helped them find somewhere to live. The master's students were mostly from the Indonesian Bureau of Statistics and some from universities. It was very organised.	Motive to study in Australia; Arriving in Australia; Scholarship experience
[00:24:19]	He lived in a flat with other Indonesians, kampung Melayu. They could find food and cook. Adelaide is like Jogja, quiet and cheap to live. His PhD topic was about rural women and development in Indonesia, the effect of selective development programs on improvement in rural areas. He was interested in women and the gap between women and men in terms of education, occupation and public activities.	Living in Adelaide; Studying in Australia; Professional network
[00:27:49]	He chose two districts in South Sulawesi with selective development programs in education and observed how the programs affected women's aspirations and activities. He came back for three or four months to do field work. He found there are still many factors affecting the lack of improvement. South Sulawesi has maybe the most stratified society in Indonesia, especially in terms of gender, which is the symbol of family pride. He knew many officials in the countryside so had no trouble getting access and he wasn't using his research for political issues.	Fieldwork in Indonesia; Professional network
[00:30:53]	Finished in 1990 and since then has been busy. He was advisor to many national agencies and is a member of the National Forum of Statistics that meets monthly in Jakarta to evaluate the	Post-scholarship career; Leadership; Professional network

	statistical performance of government in development. UNHAS awarded Prince Hassan bin Al-Talal an honorary doctorate in Intercultural Communication and Humanities, and Pak Tahir travelled to Jordan to interview him.	
[00:33:38]	He finished his PhD in four years, more than half that time was in Indonesia. He's still in touch with Chris Manning and Prof. Hassan. He hasn't been back to Adelaide but has been to Brisbane, Canberra and Sydney for seminars and research. He has ongoing sponsorship from UNFPA. Students from UNHAS have gone overseas to study, mostly to Malaysia.	Studying in Australia; Ongoing connections with Australia; Supervisor-student relationship; Returning to Australia; Professional network
[00:37:23]	[Comments about Australian studies fostering initiative and independence compared to Indonesia, the US and Japan, it was difficult at first e.g. lack of direction when developing his proposal.] The resources and facilities were good at Flinders, and the people were helpful. Indonesia still lacks facilities and resources.	Studying in Australia
[00:42:04]	[Anecdote about his supervisor assuming he had a girlfriend.] He socialised with his supervisor, he was also from overseas and they had Islam in common. He went to the Sunday market for secondhand goods, lots of Indonesian students went there, it was quite a meeting place. The Indonesian Students Association and the Indonesian and Malay Students Association had religious gatherings. Sometimes he gave speeches there. He was invited to do a reading to bless Chris Manning's second child, Karina.	Supervisor-student relationship; Living in Adelaide; Indonesian community in Adelaide; Leadership; Friendships
[00:45:55]	There were places to pray and have religious gatherings but sometimes prayer times clashed with classes. There was only one mosque, in the centre of Adelaide, it was a Middle Eastern mosque but the Imam was from Indonesia. Now there's another mosque near the Sunday market.	Living in Adelaide; Religious practice in Australia
[00:48:23]	[Discussion about Anton Lucas, the pendopo that was built and other Flinders alumni.] He was married with three children when he left for Adelaide but they didn't go with him. [Story about catching the bus from Adelaide to Darwin then flying to Kupang on his way home, Coober Pedy and impressions of the desert.]	Family; Travel in Australia
[00:53:43]	When he came back he was appointed to manage the graduate program and was director of the Population Studies Centre, he also taught. In 1998 he was dean. The doctorate program in social sciences started in 1999. He was director until 2012. The rector is one of his former students. There are about 40 UNHAS PhD graduates in Makassar and others elsewhere.	Post-scholarship career; Leadership
[00:57:08]	He uses his PhD thesis as the basis for	Family

	<p>presentations. He has six children now. The youngest, born in 1991, is studying accounting in Jogjakarta. The oldest, a daughter, works in the Department of Agriculture in Jakarta, the second is a lecturer in the public university in Makassar. His second daughter is studying to be a dermalogist, his third is a dentist. His second son is finishing a Master of Communication in IT. The youngest, studying in Jogja, also has a cafe there.</p>	
[01:02:17]	<p>Now he is chair of the professors council in the faculty. There are about 30 professors, many of them are Australian alumni, mostly from agriculture. Many Malaysian students come to study in Makassar and other parts of Indonesia.</p>	<p>Career; Leadership; Ongoing connections with Australia; Alumni network</p>
[01:06:29]	<p>Last trip to Australia was in 2006 to speak at a seminar on Eastern Indonesian development issues at University of Queensland. Last year he went to Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, to present a paper on the Indonesian Islamic movement. Is a member of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI). They have an annual meeting and discussions about issues relating to Islamic communities and speak to local government. Isn't involved in political parties.</p>	<p>Ongoing connections with Australia; Research collaboration with Australians; International mobility; Professional networks; Community service</p>
[01:10:27]	<p>END</p>	