

Interview by Jemma Purdey and David Lowe with Adi Widodo Mudigdo, Jakarta, 29 April 2014

Architecture, Undergraduate degree, University of Melbourne, 1960s cohort

[00:00:08]	[Talking about Pak Adi's involvement in the university architecture review and seeing the Beatles when they came to Melbourne.]	Studying in Australia; Socialising and leisure
[00:02:41]	Born in Singaraja, northern Bali. His father was a teacher who spoke five languages and conducted the transfer of the school curriculum from Dutch to Indonesian. Pak Adi went to primary school in Bali and then moved to Pati in Central Java. His father got the Colombo Plan application form from the embassy, he wanted Pak Adi to study overseas but didn't actively choose Australia. The Colombo Plan wasn't well known at that time. Pak Adi wanted to be a pilot but the Air Force rejected him because he was a firstborn son. Not much was known about Australia.	Family background; Scholarship application; Childhood
[00:06:23]	The Mudigdo family had a German shepherd dog left by the Australian forces, he came from the next-door-neighbour who was a vet. At the time Pak Adi finished high school, the zeitgeist was to serve the country. A few years later, in 1962, the Colombo scholars were sent to a 'boot camp' in Pasar Minggu for a month to be inculcated with Indonesian culture and philosophy.	Previous connections with Australia; Pre-departure preparations
[00:12:50]	Knowledge of Australia before coming? Some geography, kangaroos, diggers. The Mudigdo family had some contact with Australians when they were in Makassar. Ezrin Arbi and the early scholars paved the way for Colombo scholars that followed.	Previous connections with Australia; Indonesian student community in Australia
[00:15:18]	Didn't know what he would study when applied for the scholarship. His mother wanted him to be a doctor but the scholarship didn't cover that so he chose engineering but ended up in architecture.	Choice of field of study
[00:18:51]	The scholarship was a great opportunity, he didn't think about the cultural change it would involve. In 1961 the scholars met each other once they arrived in Australia, not in Indonesia before they left like the 1962 cohort. There was a bridging course at Sydney Tech from when Pak Adi arrived in December until uni started in March. It was fun, especially learning Australian and Irish songs from Mr Wood, who made the international students feel very welcome. In Australia it seemed things were done properly, unlike in Indonesia where resources were scarce.	Arriving in Australia; In-country language training

[00:22:59]	Pak Adi was billeted with a Lebanese family who ran a grocery shop. They tried to make him feel at home by cooking rice pudding. Kindness was everywhere. He joined the PPIA (Indonesian Students Association of Australia) and the Australian media photographed and interviewed them about the coup in 1965 and when they had a West Irian campaign. They were misquoted.	Living in Australia; Indonesian student community;
[00:27:08]	Was in contact with Herb Feith, Jamie Mackie and the Zainu'ddins. Starting architecture was an eye-opener. One of the lecturers had escaped Nazi Germany and likened Sukarno to Hitler. Ezrin Arbi and his friends were good students and helped him. He helped one of them with their final drawings too.	Indonesia-related community in Melbourne; Studying in Australia; Friendships
[00:30:36]	Married a classmate, Eva, from a left-wing Jewish German family so his horizons were broadened. Pak Adi's father was a free thinker so the religious differences weren't a problem. In Australia Pak Adi observed Ramadan. Being involved in Eva's family helped widen his experience rather than spending too much time with other Indonesians.	Social life; Friendships with Australians; Family
[00:34:49]	Lived at International House for three years, 1962 to 1964, with Sam Dimmock. Then shared a terrace house in Parkville with 20 other students, mostly Australian, it had a big kitchen. [Pak Adi chats about Adbu Pane, he was Pak Adi's tutor.]	Living in Australia; International House; Friendships with Australians
[00:37:57]	Benny Moerdani's younger brother, Yanto, came to Melbourne the year after Pak Adi and was his architectural partner. Pak Benny bought him a car in Melbourne. Spending time in Australia as young people gave many Indonesians the opportunity to know themselves as well as giving them educational opportunities. Got an allowance of £24. Didn't need to work but worked at the brewery (CUB) over Christmas and used the money to go to Tasmania.	Friendships; Indonesian student community in Melbourne; Work experience in Australia; Travel
[00:41:19]	Got the job at the brewery from the union house notice-board. Also worked in a sawmill. Met interesting people at these jobs, Australians and recent migrants.	Work experience in Australia
[00:44:12]	Didn't find the study too hard. Did well for the first two years but got a girlfriend in third year so didn't do as well. Relationships with lecturers were good, previous students had set a good example. [Comments about Hugh O'Neill.] Pak Adi has a son in Melbourne and one in Sydney.	Studying in Australia; Family in Australia
[00:47:42]	After graduating Pak Adi had a summer placement with Kurt Block, who designed the	Work experience in Australia; Professional

	Canberra Museum. Then went to Sydney and worked with Mr Grant who was a Grand Master of the Freemasons. The Opera House was being built then. [Discussion about Asian architecture.]	development; Post-scholarship career
[00:51:16]	Could stay in Australia because he was married to Eva. They separated in 1972. Lived in Surfer's Paradise for a year with his second wife, Leila, also a Colombo Plan scholar. Then they moved to New Zealand when he joined the design team of Stephenson and Turner. In Surfer's Paradise worked on many big buildings. Enjoyed his work. Also lived in Colombo and Kuala Lumpur. Was known as an Australian. Didn't move back to Indonesia until 1986.	Settling in Australia; Career; International mobility
[00:55:33]	[Discussion about the role of the embassy in keeping Australian alumni in contact with each other, and the independence of Australian alumni (more than graduates from elsewhere) and their contributions to Indonesia.]	Alumni network
[01:00:06]	[Comments about the number of Indonesian students in Australia who are of Chinese descent and the lack of political lobbying by Australian alumni in Indonesia.]	Alumni network
[01:03:15]	Pak Adi was the chief architect of the Indonesian pavilion at Expo '88 in Brisbane. In Germany in '95 he erected a big display of Indonesian industry. Also worked with ADB in Aceh after the tsunami. The pavilion in Brisbane got a medal, it was one of the highlights of his career.	Career, professional network; Connections with Australia; collaborations
[01:07:25]	Didn't have their own house during the years they lived in different places. He designed the house they live in now, originally for a family of five but now one child lives in Singapore and the other two in Australia. They wanted the children to go to university in Australia and, with the help of Leila's Colombo plan host family, that's what happened. The children grew up bilingual. [Discussion about reasons for not becoming permanent residents of Australia.]	Family; International networks; Ongoing connections with Australia
[01:11:56]	Pak Adi didn't have to return to Indonesia to work after graduating because it was 1966–67 and there was so much disruption. It happened informally if not formally. It was hard to find jobs then in Indonesia, you had to sell things to survive.	Returning to Indonesia
[01:13:56]	Remembers Brian Henderson and Johnny O'Keefe from his early years in Australia and, later, the Mavis Bramston Show. They used to go to the movies, knew all the bands – Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs. Also remembers the controversy	Australian popular culture; Leisure in Australia

	around the Opera House being built, went to demonstrations. Was aware of the rise of new nationalism in Australia, protested when the Bee Gees were referred to as English.	
[01:17:40]	Didn't keep in touch with things in Indonesia much. Wrote letters occasionally but things were strained with his mother until she came to Australia, met Eva and got on well with her. Heard about what was happening in Indonesia at meetings of Indonesia interest groups and from visiting Indonesians. When Suharto made a secret visit to Melbourne in 1972 Leila was asked to cook for him.	Family; Staying in contact with home
[01:21:38]	[Comments about the ups and downs of Australia–Indonesia relations and the cultural significance of so many Indonesians educated in Australia.] There are many reunions of Australian alumni and women who have married Australians e.g. Isla Winarto. Leila goes often.	Alumni network
[01:26:12]	Would like to teach but doesn't have a MA degree. Mentors younger architects by answering colleague's questions.	Mentoring; professional networks
[01:29:53]	Saw the new architecture building at Melbourne University. When Pak Adi started there they were in a tin shed at the back and nobody complained.	Connections with Australia; alumni network
[01:32:15]	International house was fairly new when he stayed there; he stayed in an annexe. He liked living there, having meals provided. Not being able to have girlfriends wasn't so good. It's very different now. A senior student acted as liaison officer and made sure they were getting on all right.	International House
[01:35:44]	Did many cultural activities with Eva's family, like gallery openings. It was after the Cold War, witnessed the end of Menzies, the death of Harold Holt. Gorton's wife was an academic in Indonesian studies so they felt an affinity. [Comments about 'Mr Budgie-smuggler', Bob Hawke, Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard and being invited to events at the embassy.]	Living in Australia in the 1960s; Alumni network; Connections with Australia
[01:39:55]	Considered himself an observer while in Australia and also in Indonesia. Reads the Sydney Morning Herald nearly every day and The Australian. Watches the ABC. Like many Indonesian families, they are not openly western in their lifestyles but they see the value of their children learning English through television, reading and travel. Many Colombo scholars have been influenced by and adopted the Australian way of	Cross-cultural understanding; Australian current affairs and popular culture

	thinking, because they were young and not yet set in their ways. Older scholars may have more of an up-skilling experience and less of a formative one.	
[01:43:43]	Indonesian-ness of Pak Adi's children? They need different things to what he did and he lets them choose. He's not worried about them maintaining their Indonesian identity. He worries about transparency. [Discussion about Australian graduates and the corruption commission, age of scholars when they go to Australia and corruption in Australia.]	Family; Alumni network
[01:47:50]	[Discussion about Boediono as a Colombo representative. He was a contemporary of Leila.] Any very wealthy Columbo scholars? Jonathan Parapat, did engineering in Hobart, is a high-flyer, married an Australian, Ann. Krisman is very successful and generous.	Alumni network
[01:54:36]	Current projects include a big mosque in Kalimantan, a hotel in Ubud, a 235-apartment block in Permata Hijau, Jakarta. Pak Adi has Australian ideas in the back of his mind when he's doing his work.	Career and work; Connections with Australia
[01:58:04]	Technical expertise in Indonesia? Everything is hand-done, labour is cheap. To get good work, architects have to appeal to the labourers without disturbing the dignity of being in command, the labourers have to believe the architect's not against them. Standards aren't the same as in Australia. Would like to teach but not keen to do a master's. Gets invited to schools to speak because has designed so many hotels.	Career and work; Comparisons between Australia and Indonesia
[02:02:35]	At first, going to Australia made sense economically because his father didn't have to pay for his education. Once in Australia he wanted to do well as a representative of Indonesia. After graduating he thought about how he could modify what he'd learnt to be used in the Indonesian situation. Feels the Colombo Plan was a wonderful opportunity and enabled him to develop positive qualities. Believes the Australian way of training, formally and informally, has a place in the Indonesian professional circle.	Reflections on Colombo Plan scholarship experience
[02:06:48]	[Further comments about Parapat, he created the Indonesian satellite corporation, and how his wife helped his career. Pak Adi collaborated with him on the IndoSat building.]	Alumni network
[02:10:44]	[Discussion about cultural diplomacy in Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar with the rise	

	of China's commercialism.]	
[02:13:51]	Hopes for the election? Pak Adi doesn't believe there's going to be much change. In Indonesia, if you got rid of Jokowi everything would be back to the same. Everyone yearns for a moral leader and Jokowi seems to have acquired some of those qualities, but he's just a figurehead. Corruption in permits is still the same. Pak Adi gets things done with as little compromise as possible. A platform of transparency and trust hasn't been built yet.	Indonesian contemporary politics; Working in Indonesia
[02:16:48]	Thirty years of government that condoned the 'unprofessional ways' and now these people are still overlapping. Pak Adi voted for Jokowi as a moral leader and hopes for the best.	Indonesian contemporary politics
[02:19:07]	END	