

Interview by David Lowe with Dana Santoso, Jakarta, 28 April 2014
MA, Engineering, 1989-1993; PhD, Mechanical engineering, University of Queensland, 1999-2003



[00:00:08]	Born in Jakarta, went to school and then to University of Indonesia (UI) to do a Bachelor of Engineering. After that applied for an AusAID scholarship to do a master's. Went in 1989, finished early in 1993 and went back to his job at Mercu Buana University. Six years later, in 1999, he applied to do a PhD, also with an AusAID scholarship and went back to the mechanical engineering department at the University of Queensland. Finished at the end of 2003, then came back to Mercu Buana.	Childhood; Family background; Undergraduate education; Scholarships opportunities
[00:02:33]	Father worked in the Ministry of Justice and lectured at Trisakti University. He didn't ever study overseas and wanted Dana to have that opportunity. He only started his university studies after he had five children. Dana is the sixth and youngest child, seven years younger than his sister. The older five children are close in age, there were no children born while Dana's father was at university studying economics.	Family background; Education
[00:05:50]	Dana's father was in charge of human development resources in the Department of Justice. He was involved in developing formal education for people working in corrective services and travelled overseas to learn about this in other countries. He saw the value of overseas education through these trips. Dana wanted to study in an English-speaking country to improve his English and the information about the Australian scholarship was easier to get. He couldn't get much information about the	Family background; Motive to study overseas; Scholarship application process; Family

	US and British scholarships. Living expenses were also a consideration because he had a wife and child. After doing his master's, waited six years to do his PhD because he wanted his children to go to school in Australia to learn English.	
[00:09:26]	All his siblings went to university in Indonesia. His father wanted all his sons to apply for scholarships to study overseas but Dana is the only one that did. Dana applied in 1988 to study in 1989 and one of the requirements was a minimum GPA (grade point average) of 2.5 from the undergraduate degree and a TOEFL (test of English as a foreign language) score of 450. His were 2.47 and just above 400 but he applied anyway and was invited for an interview. He was sent to do an English course, in Jakarta, for nine months.	Family background; Scholarships application process; Pre-departure training
[00:14:08]	When he applied to do his PhD he was rejected twice, even though his English was good and he had a letter of recommendation from his master's supervisor. [Discussion about possible reasons.] His wife and daughter, who was two or three, joined him in Brisbane after six months. He did second semester of fourth year of the bachelor degree before starting his master's because that was a prerequisite.	Scholarships application process; Living in Brisbane; Family
[00:17:07]	The scholarship money was enough for the three of them to live on. When he did the PhD he had three children and had to use some savings. His first trip to Australia was to get married because his parents-in-law were working at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. [Story about his wedding.] When he did his master's his daughter went to childcare. There was a small community of Indonesian AusAID scholars in Brisbane and AusAID in Canberra usually contacted them to welcome new students arriving in Brisbane, so one of them met him at the airport and took him to the university college where he stayed in a house with three other Indonesian students. There was no AusAID office in Brisbane but there was a liaison officer there.	Scholarships experience; Previous connections with Australia; Family in Australia; Indonesian community in Australia; Arriving in Australia
[00:22:11]	His brother and father advised him to mingle with local people and avoid Indonesian culture to avoid getting homesick. It wasn't easy because of different customs but it was OK. He was surprised by how individual Australians are and accepting of difference in others.	Living in Australia

[00:25:59]	When he did his master's the university didn't have facilities specifically for overseas students but when he went back in 2000 to do his PhD there was an international office and liaison officers for students from different regions and information about resources they might need e.g. halal food. He wasn't strict about eating halal food in 1989, focused on staying healthy so ate the food that was available to stay strong. He didn't eat with other Indonesians much in 1989 but in 2000 there were more Indonesians and they collaborated to organise supplies of halal food.	Studying in Australia; Scholarships experience; Indonesian community in Australia
[00:29:35]	The lecturers treated the overseas students the same as local students. They were nice and friendly but didn't give him special treatment.	Studying in Australia
[00:32:35]	[Discussion about Australia–Indonesia relations during the times Dana was in Australia, the prevalence of misinformation and importance of resisting negative attitudes.] Australians tend to speak their minds more than Indonesians do, ask direct questions and Dana tried to respond openly, without taking offence.	Living in Australia; Australia-Indonesia bilateral relationship
[00:37:09]	Dana's wife grew up in a diplomatic family, she was born in Yugoslavia and finished primary school in America, so she's good at adapting. When his wife and daughter came, he moved from International House and the family lived in an apartment near the university. His wife became friends with the neighbours, next door there was a boy the same age as Dana's daughter. His daughters became teenagers while he was doing his PhD and when they came back to Indonesia they had trouble settling into Indonesian schools. His elder daughter, who has finished her medical degree, says high school in Indonesia was the worst time in her life.	Family; International mobility; International House; Friendships; Returning to Indonesia; Challenges
[00:41:26]	After doing his master's he was appointed as the dean of the faculty at Mercu Buana. After doing his PhD he was appointed as head of the graduate school. Now he is vice rector [for academic and student affairs]. Studying overseas helped him get these positions. He also developed critical thinking and logic while studying overseas, which was very helpful, and he tries to incorporate that into the curriculum. Access to the internet and journals means the teaching and learning environment is different for students now.	Returning to Indonesia; Leadership; Studying in Australia; Post-scholarship career
[00:44:00]	He still has contact with his supervisor in	Ongoing connections with

	Brisbane, who is about to retire now. They stayed in touch between Dana's master's and PhD. His thesis was about quality control in mechanical engineering. There were other people doing similar research with the same supervisor, one other Indonesian, one was from Bangladesh or Pakistan, one from China and another three Australians. There were more Asian students when he did his PhD and he learnt from them about their cultures.	Australia; Supervisor-student relationship; Alumni network; Professional network; International mobility
[00:47:18]	His wife was happy to go again, in fact she encouraged him to apply. She had a job in Indonesia but stayed at home in Australia. The children haven't been back to Australia but his elder daughter wants to apply to do master's in radiology there. The two daughters keep in touch with their Australian friends through Facebook. Dana doesn't keep in touch with other students any more.	Returning to Australia; Family; Ongoing connections with Australia
[00:49:52]	While doing his master's Dana went to Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney. When he did his PhD he went to New Zealand. When he did his PhD AusAID had a different set up, the university had an international office so AusAID communicated with the scholarship students through that office rather than directly. Dana played tennis and soccer with friends. His children watched television e.g. <i>High Five</i> and Steve Irwin's programs. His wife had a good social life with local people and the Indonesian community. They moved house a couple of times to be closer to Kenmore High, where his elder daughter went. His younger daughter went to Indooroopilly Primary School. They had a car but only used it on weekends, to go to the beach and the park. They miss the parks. They had barbecues with friends in the park every week or fortnight.	Travel in Australia; International mobility; Scholarships experience; Leisure in Australia; Socialising; Indonesian community in Australia
[00:56:00]	There were no specific AusAID formalities before he left Australia. He's heard about the Indonesia–Australia Alumni Association (IQAMA). In the last three or four years, the embassy has contacted him asking him to join the mailing list and he gets emails from them. He likes to keep in touch and sometimes goes to events e.g. a discussion about the Indonesian economic outlook and when a vice chancellor from Sydney came to the ambassador's house. Thinks alumni groups can be beneficial, for networking and supporting each other and, for younger alumni, job opportunities. He also used	Alumni network; Professional network

	the network to recruit part-time lecturers.	
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