Interview by Ahmad Suaedy with Muhammed Zuhdi, Jakarta, 12 January 2015

MA, Education, UNSW, 1999

[00:00:10]	Born in Jakarta on 4 July 1972, part of a native Jakartan family. Went to madrasa and pesantren for his schooling and finished high school in 1991. His father wanted him to study in Egypt but was advised that postgraduate studies overseas would be better than undergraduate so Muhammad went to Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN), Jakarta, and studied Islamic education. He graduated in 1996.	Childhood; Family background; Early education; Undergraduate education
[00:03:37]	He was good at maths and wanted to go to a state high school but he was also good at Arabic so his father wanted him to go to Islamic school and become an Islamic teacher. So he went to a pesantren that had SMR [senior high school curriculum.] His father didn't finish school. His grandfather was a well-respected kyai and taught Muhammad's father to read Arabic.	Education; Family background
[00:08:41]	Muhammad is the third of eight, seven boys and one girl. [Description of life at the pesantren and the difficulties he had being far from home and starting in the middle of the term.]	Family background; Early education
[00:12:15]	At the pesantren his Arabic developed well and he had a very good English teacher, so that was developed, but not the maths. He did extra-curricular English while at junior high school. After finishing school IAIN felt like his only option. His eldest and youngest brothers also went to IAIN, his second brother got a job straight after finishing school, his younger brother went to [ABA?], his sister did computer science, the next brother went to Muhammadiyah University of Prof. Dr. Hamka (UHAMKA) and the next to Lampung University. His eldest brother is an interpreter, his youngest works in the inspector general's office.	Early education; Family background
[00:16:18]	When he finished his bachelor he joined a training program for young lecturers of IAIN,	Early career; Scholarship

	designed to equip them to study overseas (in the west or Middle East). There were 40 students from all over Indonesia and they were put into English or Arabic classes. He was put in the Arabic class. The program went for nine months and he enjoyed being with colleagues from all over Indonesia. Each class had four hours a week of the other language so he learned English and about TOEFL.	opportunity; Leadership
[00:20:30]	After he finished there were scholarships available from Al-Azhar University in Cairo but applicants had to be graduates of religious faculties and he graduated from the Faculty of Education so he wasn't eligible. He still wanted to study overseas, met someone from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) at an expo and applied to go there. He got a letter of conditional acceptance.	Scholarship opportunity; Motive to study overseas; Connection with Australia
[00:25:53]	He had also applied for an AusAID scholarship and showed them the UNSW letter of acceptance to do a master's. He wanted to go to Australia after talking with Pak Mastul who had studied there. He did three months pre-departure language training in 1998.	Application process; Alumni network; Pre-departure training
[00:29:43]	He did Educational Studies with Professor Michael Matthews, an expert in philosophy and science education. [Discussion about the courses he did – philosophy, learning and instruction, educational management, curriculum development.] The professors were great – Michael Matthews, John Sweller and Fenton Sharpe.	Studying in Australia; Supervisor-student relationship
[00:34:05]	He was there for a year – it was too short. He went home in January 2000. He wrote a project paper with Prof. Matthews about science in Islamic education. He used English sources from the library and on the internet.	Studying in Australia
[00:36:24]	He was single when he went to Australia and met his wife at UNSW where she was doing economics. They got married a year after he got back from Australia.	Living in Australia; Family
[00:38:02]	Going to Australia was his first time away from Indonesia and the ADS pre-departure training was helpful. He was very surprised about the way people spoke, it was very different to the English he was used to. [Story about 'A' sounding like 'I' when people said it and the train announcement at the station sounding very familiar.] The class had many international students and the lecturers spoke carefully and checked that the students understood. Also, the people at the learning centre would help him edit his writing before he handed it in.	Arriving in Australia; Scholarship experience

[00:43:59]	There was an international students' orientation program when he started and the next year he acted as a guide for new international students. The international office were helpful too with information and facilities, help with housing and friends. There were a lot of Indonesian students too and the Indonesian students association. The extensive Indonesian community was good – [story about going to the supermarket and hearing staff speaking Javanese] - but it also made it hard to get to know Australians. He had a good friend, Greg Anderson, from the class and they stayed in touch until Muhammad lost his phone. Greg took him around Sydney and to Wollongong. Muhammad also visited Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide and other places.	Arriving in Australia; Scholarship experience; Indonesian community in Sydney; Friendships; Travel in Australia
[00:48:01]	Most of his professors have retired now but he saw Michael Matthews when he was at McGill. After getting back from Australia Muhammad became a lecturer and Prof. Malik Fajar's assistant. At the end of 2000, a partnership between the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had CIDA providing scholarships for candidates with master's from an English-speaking country to study education McGill. From September 2001 to August 2006 he did a PhD in curriculum and instruction at McGill.	Connections with Australia; Returning to Indonesia; Post-scholarship career; Scholarship opportunity; Living overseas
[00:54:33]	Came back in August 2006, wanting to teach. He had got civil servant status before he went to Australia. Before he finished his dissertation he got a job, through a Pakistani friend at McGill, to develop *Sesame Street* for Indonesia. [Comments about the assessment process for PhDs in Canada compared to Australia.]	Returning to Indonesia; Post-scholarship career; Professional network
[00:58:38]	[Story about starting with *Sesame Street* (*Jalan Sesame*) three days after returning home and description of what the work involved, including liaison with the Ministry of Education.] In December 2006, much to his surprise, he was appointed as head of the IAIN library as well as being director of education and research for Sesame Street Indonesia.	Post-scholarship career; Leadership; Professional networks
[01:03:09]	[Discussion about how he managed to do both, spending mornings at the campus and afternoons with *Sesame Street* designing the curriculum etc.] He worked with *Sesame Street* until 2012 and is still in touch with them. He was head of the library until 2010 and in 2012 was appointed head of the language centre, where he is now.	Professional networks; Career; Leadership
[01:06:11]	A friend nominated him for an Australian Award. He doesn't have regular contact with	Alumni network

	anyone from AusAID or the embassy. He gets news. The last time he went to the embassy was to lead the prayer at a commemoration of the embassy bombing. He hasn't been back to Australia yet.	
[01:08:52]	END	