

COMPLETION REPORT

The Evaluation of Japanese Public Diplomacy in Indonesia: Case of Academic Exchange Programs between Japan and Indonesia

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The objective of this study is to evaluate the implementation of Japanese public diplomacy in Indonesia. In order to reach the goal, this study raises two research questions: (1) What are the problems and challenges faced by Japan in implementing academic exchange programs in Indonesia? (2) To what extent academic exchange programs could improve the Japan-Indonesia bilateral relations? Focusing on academic exchange programs between Japan and Indonesia as a case study, this study links the connection of two variables: (1) the Japanese public diplomacy as independent variable, and (2) the Japan-Indonesia relations as dependent variable. Therefore, the Japan-Indonesia relations will be explained through the implementation of academic exchange programs and its impacts on both countries relations.

Some problems in academic exchange programs are as follows. First, the number of Japanese and Indonesian people participating the programs is unbalance. Fewer Japanese visiting Indonesia than Indonesian visiting Japan causes Japanese values are not fully promoted in Indonesia. Moreover, Indonesian students living in Japan do not have a will to introduce Japan to Indonesian society after they are coming back to their home country. Second, even though Japanese government or Japanese foundations has awarded scholarships to Indonesian students and scholars, but some of them perceive that there is Japan's interest to invest its soft power in Indonesia. This perception is common in the mind of those who have arts and humanities rather than sciences academic background. Consequently, they study in Japan just for getting degree, ignoring the goal of academic exchange to deepen Japan-Indonesia relations.

Hence, Japanese government faces following challenges. First, involving more Japanese people in academic exchange programs. Japan needs not only to invite Indonesian people to participate academic programs in the country, but also should send its citizens to Indonesia. Second, giving understanding to all scholarship awardees about the strategic role of academic exchanges as a bridge for enhancing people-to-people interaction as well as Japan-Indonesia relations. Japan needs to maintain its connection with scholarship awardees while they are studying in Japan and after graduating from their degree.

The failure to solve above problems and to tackle above challenges affects steady development on Japan-Indonesia relations. Indeed, academic exchange programs cause both countries relations is improving, but it is not significant, mainly on state level. On grass root level, common understanding is felt by participants of the academic exchanges only, not spread to the others who have never experienced living in both countries. Therefore, the development of Japan-Indonesia relations, particularly in academic exchange programs, is understood just by limited people. It does not have any link with economic and trade relations, aspect that is mostly concerned by both sides.

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