



Celebrating
Alumni Stories

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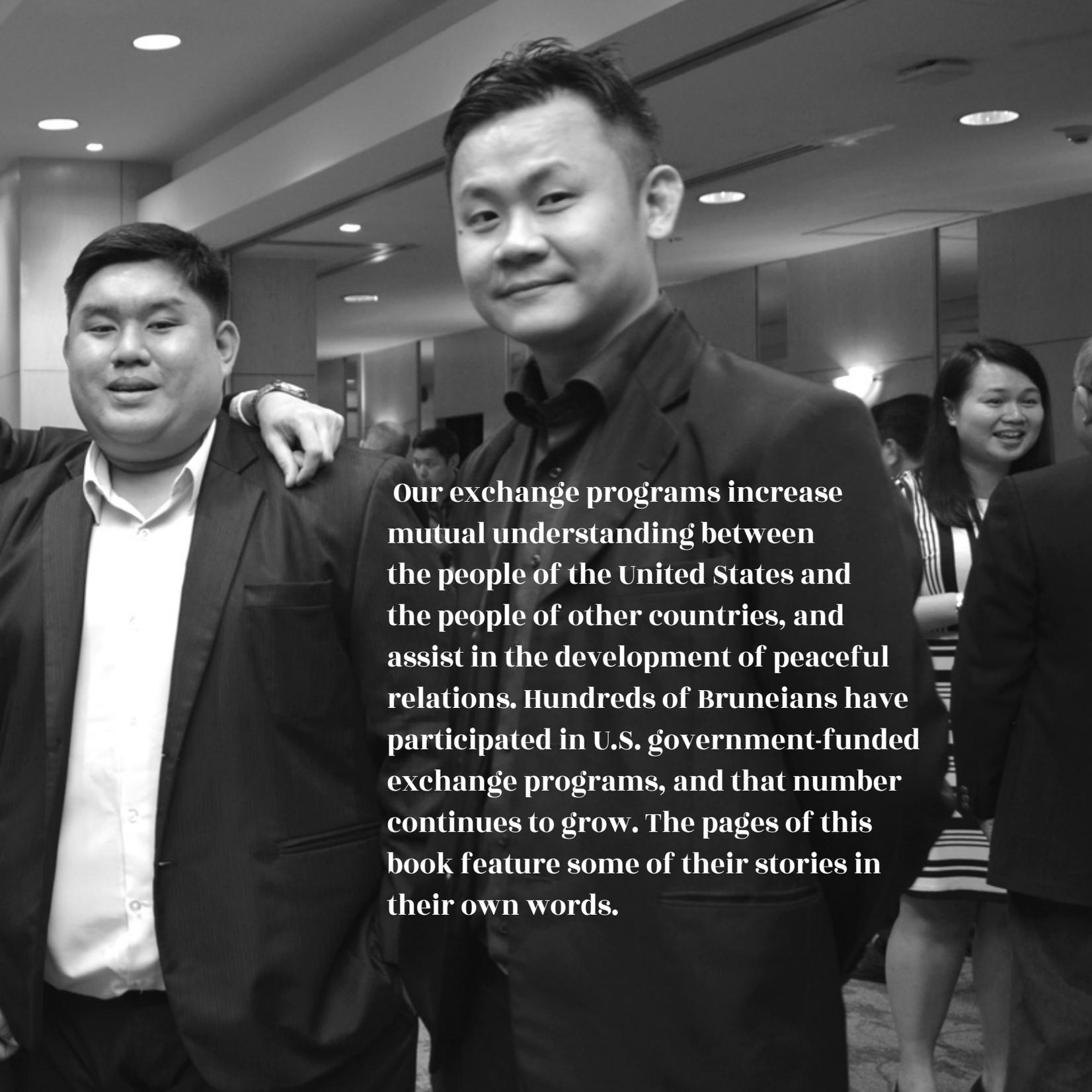




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Our exchange programs increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries, and assist in the development of peaceful relations. Hundreds of Bruneians have participated in U.S. government-funded exchange programs, and that number continues to grow. The pages of this book feature some of their stories in their own words.

Milestones



1845

Visit by USS Constitution to Brunei Darussalam

1940

International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is launched

1984

U.S. Embassy is established in Brunei Darussalam

First Bruneian is invited to participate in the IVLP

1850

United States of America and Brunei Darussalam sign the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, which is still in effect

1946

Fulbright Foreign Student Program is established

1985

Fulbright Program is launched in Brunei with the Fulbright Foreign Student Program

EMB

2009

First Cohort of Bruneian High School Students participate in the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP)

2014

First U.S. Researcher arrives in Brunei on the Fulbright Specialist Program

2013

The Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) is established

First Bruneian Scholar Joins the Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Visiting Scholar Program

2017

First YSEALI Generation Workshop in Brunei, includes participants from all 10 ASEAN member countries

First U.S. Student arrives in Brunei on the Fulbright U.S. Student Program



The background features a dark blue gradient. In the center, several hands of different skin tones are shown holding a globe. To the right, a large, bold, light blue number '1' is positioned vertically. The text is white and serif, centered on the left side of the image.

The International Visitor Leadership Program



A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are sitting on the floor in a room. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, there is a white door with a sign that says "WELCOME". The room has a wooden floor and some decorative items on the wall.

The **INTERNATIONAL VISITOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (IVLP)** is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. The goal of the IVLP is to provide firsthand knowledge about U.S. society, culture, and politics, while cultivating professional relationships. By introducing current and emerging foreign leaders to their professional counterparts in U.S. communities, the IVLP creates opportunities for business, professional, and academic collaboration, and offers direct exposure to American systems and values.

Each year, almost 5,000 International Visitors come to the United States. Since 1940, more than 200,000 International Visitors have engaged with Americans through the IVLP. IVLP exchange alumni include more than 500 current or former chiefs of state or heads of government, 10 Nobel Laureates, and thousands of private and non-profit sector leaders.



My IVLP Experience

Abhar Munawar Pehin Dato Dr. Haji Ahmad

International Visitor Leadership Program
on Law of the Sea and Maritime and Territorial Disputes
in the Asia-Pacific Region
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2016

“I was honored to be selected as a participant and represent Brunei Darussalam for the International Visitor Leadership Program in 2016. During my three and a half weeks in the United States, with other colleagues from across the Asia-Pacific, we had the privilege to meet with various government officials and academics (especially those I had long wanted to meet!) to discuss, among others topics, the U.S.’s policy in Asia.

During the program, we visited Washington D.C., New York, Seattle, and Honolulu, and I was pleasantly surprised by getting to know and experience the tremendous diversity of the U.S.

Overall, it not only allowed me to build professional relationships, but also to learn about the U.S. culture from a local perspective. ”



Beyond My Expectations

Dayang Haktu Mabong

International Visitor Leadership Program
on "Environment in the Pacific Basin"
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2014

“My three-week experience as a participant in the International Visitor Leadership Program was beyond my expectation. The program included a visit to a forested area which is a water catchment area in Hawaii; a desert in California; historical sites in Washington, D.C.; waste management areas in California; Common Ground Relief at a site hit by Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana; and, a short stay with local families.

I was impressed by the commitment of the people in supporting a clean environment. Many of them did it voluntarily. Retired officers volunteered as nature guides, enjoyed transferring their knowledge to others. Businessmen also supported looking after the environment. We saw recycled items combined together to form attractive decorative panels or items in a standard hotel. Similarly, in shopping areas, recycled items were used to decorate walls, as tables to display items, and as items for sale.

I never thought I'd go to the Honey Island Swamp in Louisiana. It was a wonderful experience. I had seen beautiful pictures and a comprehensive documentary on it by National Geographic. Unbelievable, we were there in a close encounter with an alligator feeding on sausage at the tip of a stick. The ride on the Cajun Encounters Boat between handsome trees with the smell of swamp water and the story-telling by the experienced local guide is still fresh in my memory. The trip to the Anza-Borrego Desert State



Park in California was another unexpected experience. After about a four hour bus ride along a snake-like road, we reached a dry area where vegetation looked dead but was alive. The warm welcome by many officers and researchers was meaningful.

The most beautiful experience was to see the commitment of the people in the USA, how they gave priority to our program, including the warm home hospitality in Louisiana and Los Angeles. I not only learned new things in the USA but also developed relationships with the people there and the participants from six other countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to both the Government of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the USA for making my participation in this IVLP program possible and meaningful. ”

The Critical Role of Investigative Journalism

Hakimul Hayat bin Shamsul Hayat

International Visitor Leadership Program on "Investigative Journalism"
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2017

“**D**uring the three-week professional exchange that was designed for journalists from print and broadcast outlets, I was privileged, along with 18 media professionals selected from all over world, to visit several U.S. cities to share investigative journalism best practices with our counterparts in the United States.

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) on "Investigative Journalism" allowed journalists to learn more about the critical role investigative journalism plays in the U.S., while also exploring its underlying values and ethics, and allowed us to examine its impact on U.S. history, as well as on current political and social issues.

I was lucky to be part of a group of journalists that featured a wide array of skills and talents. Some risked their lives in their home countries. Everyone had one focus, though: to report the truth and to report accurately.

I felt that it was a life-changing experience, and served as an affirmation of the important role investigative journalism plays in society, and especially the importance of freedom of information in reporting. Various speakers, editors, reporters, and professors also spoke of the importance of planning out a potential investigative story.



Most aspects of the program offered a first-hand and unbiased perspective of the U.S., presented in a balanced mix that enabled me to gauge different views and opinions of different people from different backgrounds across the U.S.

This trip definitely helped deepen my journalistic skills, particularly from learning about the diverse range of journalism practices in the U.S. The program also allowed me to better understand the U.S. political system, particularly how things played out during the 2016 elections and how the media influenced the people's votes.

Having participated in similar exchange programs in other countries, the IVLP was probably one of the best exchange programs I have ever participated in! ”

Staying Optimistic About the Future

Hiro Tien Kai Ping

International Visitor Leadership Program on
“Entrepreneurship and Business Management”
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2013



“The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in 2013 was my first visit to America and the program certainly did not disappoint. Over three weeks we visited entrepreneurs, small businesses, and government officers. Interactions with American hosts taught me a lot of valuable lessons. Personnel ranging from top executives to shuttle bus drivers exhibited profound passion and energy levels in what they were doing. I learnt a great deal about being grateful for what we have in life and staying optimistic about the future. The interaction with 20 other entrepreneurs from around the world also taught me the value of diversity, as each one of them contributed so much to the lessons we took away from the program.

After coming back to Brunei, I continued to grow my businesses with renewed vision: to eventually run a global company and help Brunei diversify away from the oil and gas sector. After participating in the IVLP, I returned to U.S. a few more times including in 2014 for a Silicon Valley conference, and in 2016 for MIT’s Global Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, and the Global Entrepreneurship Summit. I then applied to Stanford University and was accepted. I’m currently a first year MBA student focusing on entrepreneurship and technology.”

Conserving the Beauty of Natural Landscapes

Mahmud Hj Yussof

International Visitor Leadership Program on
"Heart of Borneo Environmental Management Issues"
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2008

“The objective of the IVLP was to expose participants to a nature protection and conservation agenda from the U.S. perspective. The program covered a variety of themes in diverse settings: federal government agencies and well-established NGO’s in Washington, D.C. spoke to us on their approach to natural resources protection and conservation; local government agencies in Florida covered ecotourism in wetland and marine ecosystems; agencies in Kalispell, Montana focused on issues of transboundary parks and large-scale ecosystem management; and agencies in Tucson, Arizona talked about their approach to conservation with regards to tribal concerns.

The program gave the participants the time to cover these themes, and to network. The program was timely and relevant to the HoB Initiatives at the time, which were in their early stage of development and focused on Three Countries, One Conservation Vision. Therefore, learning other countries’ experiences with conservation efforts was compelling.

I learned that in the U.S., there were key roles played by all relevant stakeholders, including federal, state, and lo-

cal governments, national and international associations, academicians, and the local communities and tribes. These stakeholders had to maintain a political environment that was conducive to effective nature park governance. When it came to transboundary parks, they were united for the sake of one goal: to protect and conserve the beauty of the natural landscape while simultaneously benefitting ecotourism activities and the local people. Surprisingly, although the U.S. has the most advanced economic and technological development in the world, it also has the world’s oldest conservation association for flora and fauna. U.S. government agencies were established as early as the 1900s, and have provided everlasting stewardship on this agenda. The U.S. was one of the earliest nations in the world to be aware of the need to protect and conserve its natural physical landscape. Nature is still valued as one of the country’s most important national assets, and the urbanization process has incorporated conservation efforts into the U.S.’s long term-development plans.

In conclusion, the program delivered on its core message of effective transboundary efforts, reflecting the unity of the American people with regards to their common conservation goal. U.S. conservation societies were unified, cast by strong political leadership. Nature formed a platform of unity that brought peoples’ hearts together. ”





A New Beginning: Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation

Norizmah Ahmad Morshidi

International Visitor Leadership Program on “A New Beginning: Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation (Post- Cairo Initiative)”
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2010

“**F**irst, I am grateful that I was chosen as one of the delegates from Brunei Darussalam to go to the USA for the IVLP program in 2010, offered by the U.S. Embassy. I felt scared and also happy to know that I was going to see a different world compared to Brunei Darussalam. It was my first time to go to the USA, but I had fun and enjoyed the whole time I was there.

I went to four cities which included Washington, D.C., Phoenix, San Francisco, and New York. We touched on four different topics including Business Strategies and Strategic Thinking, Sales and Marketing, People, and Financing.

In Washington, D.C., we toured around the city with the other 27 delegates all from around the world. We went to the State Department, and later heard from two entrepreneurs who were also speakers, business coaches, and facilitators. In Phoenix, Arizona, we visited Arizona State University to focus on growing a small business. On our third day in Arizona, we were brought to the Grand Canyon. We were amazed with the natural environment and the hills or mountains around us. In San Francisco, we were off to UC Berkeley where we focused more on promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial finance. Finally, we arrived in New York, our last destination. We visited ‘GROUND ZERO’ and the Memorial Church where most of the 9/11 incidents were kept for remembrance. At Pace University we talked about money matters, and at CNN we had a behind-the-scenes look at the actual CNN news on camera.

Thank you to the U.S. Embassy for giving me this chance to join the program. It was a wonderful and beautiful experience for me. And, it was a good experience to go to the USA alone and meet new people, and new friends from all over the world. We still keep in touch every now and then. Hoping that a good new beginning in life occurs all the time for me. ”

Learning the U.S. Education System

Norjeme bin Jenek

International Visitor Leadership Program on “The Changing Face of Education in the U.S.: Training a Skilled Workforce”
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2013

“I felt pleased, excited, and fortunate to be chosen as a representative from Brunei Darussalam to join the International Visitor Leadership Program for a three-week visit to educational institutions in Washington, D.C., Ohio, Florida, and Colorado.

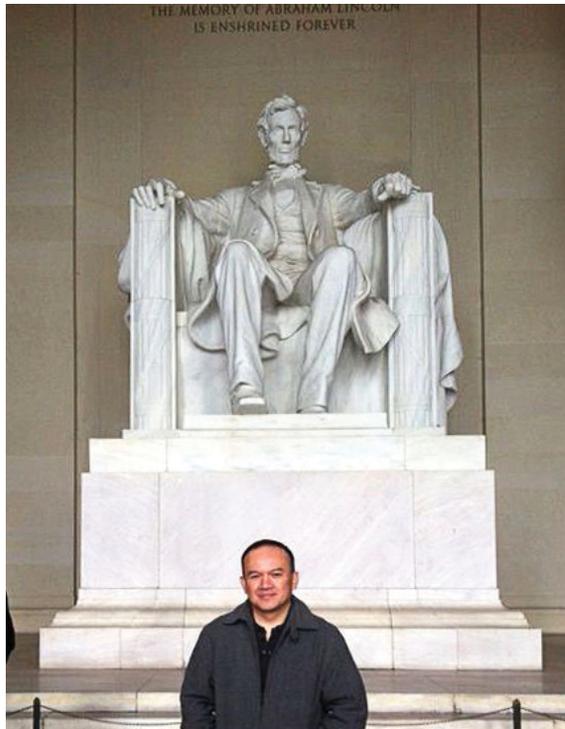
The theme of the program was “The Changing Face of Education in the U.S.: Training a Skilled Workforce,” and our task was, through many face-to-face panel discus-

sions and round table sessions with our respective hosts from the four states, to understand the various levels of educational opportunities to promote and develop a skilled workforce.

In Washington, D.C., we were introduced to U.S. Federalism, and an overview of the education system in the U.S. We were also informed of the federal role in the U.S. education system, including the broader goal of providing career and technical education. In Dayton, Ohio, the Community College model was introduced. We were informed in Jacksonville, Florida, about business-driven initiatives to develop a skilled workforce, including alternatives to traditional education models, continuing education programs, and insights into partnerships with businesses to identify education needs. In our final destination in Denver, Colorado, innovative solutions to decrease educational budgets and controlling costs of higher education were discussed. These various dimensions demonstrated the wide array of issues we had to cover to understand the broader challenges faced by the U.S. education system. Inevitably, the substance of those themes in each state added to the intensity and aura of our visit.

During the program, we also had the opportunity to sight-see in Washington, DC. Our visit to monuments reminded us of the great men and women who underwent immense struggles in order for the great nation of the U.S. to reign in the race to be a global superpower. Statues of Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King gave stark reminders of the resolve such esteemed statesmen demonstrated to unshackle social ills at certain points in U.S. history.

This journey afforded me an opportunity to network with colleagues and to explore whether joint collaborative exchange opportunities, thereby fostering global exchange of scholarship. We are deeply grateful to the U.S. State Department who funded this program. ”





A "Behind the Scenes" Look at the U.S. Film Industry

Rachael Malai Ali

International Visitor Leadership Program on "Film in the U.S."
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2014

“I was brought up in the film world of America. From an early age, I would sit watching the old black and white films, the musicals, the glamour and the glitz that this mysterious place somewhere over the ocean had to offer. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that one day I would get to see the Studios, to meet the film makers, writers, and producers, and to actually stand on the famous Hollywood Walk of Fame, feeling like the luckiest person on this planet. But, thanks to the United States Embassy here in Brunei, that’s exactly what I did.

My visit to the United States in January 2014 as part of the IVLP, "Film in the U.S.," was glorious, insightful, interesting, and very well planned. Along with writers and directors from around the world, the visit gave us a "behind the scenes" look at the film industry in the United States. There were discussions, meetings, tours, exchanging of many, many ideas, and lots of networking. I came to understand how the Film Industry in the United States plays such an important role in the economy and, how "Showbiz" really is a lucrative business. This was something that I brought back with me to Brunei as I know that we have the capability to produce good films. What we need is for us to look at film-making as an "Industry" and not just entertainment or a hobby.

We had the chance to meet with representatives from U.S. film societies, producers, writers, and directors to garner and exchange information. We visited the Museum of Modern Art, Universal Studios, saw Broadway in all its glory, UCLA, and even had the honour of meeting two U.S. senators. We also had a chance to screen our films at the Motion Picture Association of America, which was indeed a proud moment for many of us. Our Journey took us from Washington, D.C., to New York, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Utah, and Sundance City where we met with the organizers of the Sundance Film Festival.

I will be forever grateful to the United States Embassy in Brunei as well as the U.S. State Department and World Learning for arranging these excellent programmes. I brought back great memories, I made many, many new friends, and it has made me more determined than ever to introduce Brunei’s artisan heritage to the world. ”

A Journey of New Beginnings

Rushdi Dato Ibrahim

International Visitor Leadership Program on
"A New Beginning: Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation"
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2011

“As I arrived in Washington, there were various programs waiting for me as part of my International Visitor Leadership Program. In Washington we had professional appointments, where we engaged with entrepreneurs, government officials, and other business development stakeholders. In a Strategy Seminar at Georgetown University, we learned that in becoming a strategic entrepreneur, we learn how to value our company through different cultures. We also visited the White House, U.S. Capitol Building, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

Next, we flew to Arizona. Arizona was beautiful, and the culture and people were very friendly. At Arizona State University (ASU), we gained knowledge on selling your product, especially when you pitch ideas to Venture Capitalists or Angel Investors. We watched and evaluated students at ASU pitch their own ideas to angel investors; one student won US\$100,000 to start up their innovative plan. We also had the opportunity to visit the Grand Canyon, which took almost 10 hours of driving but was totally worth it. The magnificent views of the Grand Canyon just made me speechless.

The next destination was San Francisco, a city I've loved for its innovation, its motivation vibe, and its friendly people. The San Francisco stop was all about the people

– how we learn to evaluate people and how to either train them or hire them.

Our final destination was New York City. At the State University of New York, we heard from a successful entrepreneur who shared his wisdom, ideas, and how to break the barrier of being bankrupt to becoming a successful entrepreneur. We had tours to the Statue of Liberty, the 9/11 memorial, Times Square, and we even watched a Broadway show.

We learned a lot and brought back some ideas; the forum in each state was interesting, and most of all, the delegates from all around the world showed their support even though we had different cultures, different religions, and different beliefs. I was delighted when I was selected by the U.S. Embassy in Brunei Darussalam to participate in the International Visitor Leadership Program. It was a great experience that I cherish.





Using Journalism as a Force for Good

Shareen Han

International Visitor Leadership Program - Edward R. Murrow Journalism Program
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2009

“I first set foot in the U.S. to participate in the Edward R. Murrow Program in 2009. The program had promised to enrich participants' learning experience on American news media, but I left the U.S. with so much more than just observing the country's journalistic practices. The three-week program gave me the opportunity to engage with some of the world's top journalists, including Bob Woodward, who uncovered the Watergate scandal that brought down former President Richard Nixon.

Visits to four cities further allowed me to gain first-hand experience of the U.S.'s rich cultural diversity that can help bring about positive change. The program also reinforced my belief that journalism can be a force for good and is necessary for all societies to function. Before I joined the program, I knew that not everything I learned in the U.S. could be applied in Brunei given the different political, social, and economic systems. But it dawned on me during the program that whatever system we're in, journalists need to continue telling stories because they matter. Stories that are perceived as small could change the life of another person in a big way.”



The Impact of Social Entrepreneurship

Shinny @ Chia Jia Shin

International Visitor Leadership Program on "Change Makers: The Impact of Social Entrepreneurs in the U.S."
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2017

“I went on the IVLP program for Social Entrepreneurship called “Change Makers: The Impact of Social Entrepreneurship in the U.S.,” and was one of 23 participating countries for my program. The IVLP program was surprisingly life-changing. Any misconceptions and fears I had about going to America were really quickly dissipated. People were so warm, and welcoming, and I felt such a great sense of community and giving back among people in the U.S.

Everyone in our IVLP group felt so well taken care of. Many times you’d hear someone say, “I can’t believe I get to experience America like this; I feel so lucky!”

It was really valuable to have access to people within the same industry, who had best practices that could be implemented in an international context, and most importantly were willing to keep in touch and create bilateral opportunities.

Our IVLP group has since gone on to form a 23 country-wide global alliance called Global Changemakers Alliance that seeks to create positive social change in alignment with the global Sustainable Development Goals. The whole experience has enriched my life not only professionally but also personally, and I couldn’t be more grateful to have been nominated. ”

The American Dream

Tiger @ Lim Han Hu

International Visitor Leadership Program on
"ASEAN: Connecting Sustainable Communities through New Media"
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2013

If you were to ask me what I think about the USA, I'd definitely tell you that it is not what you think from what you see in Hollywood movies! I'd tell you to take a once-in-a-lifetime chance to go there and take a look for yourself – then, you'd know the meaning of the American Dream!

By my third day in the U.S., I totally had the chance to view America. When I walked into McDonald's to order my food, I felt like I wasn't a visitor anymore! I felt like I was an American; the people were so nice and friendly. They don't care if you are Chinese, Indian, Malay, White, or Black!! You can feel that everyone is equal.

During the IVLP, I learned and saw a lot of thing in the USA which I can never see in my home town. Every state had unique colors, people, and stories. We went to Washington, D.C., Florida, Nebraska, Washington, and California; from the East Coast to the West, to different states with different people and different lifestyles. And from people wearing very formal attire in Dupont Circle to short pants at the end of Route 66 in Santa Monica.

Do I love the USA?? Yes, I do, and as Arnold Schwarzenegger said....
I'll Be Back!!! ”



Fostering Civic Participation

Dayang Khairunnisa Binti Awang Haji Ash'ari

International Visitor Leadership Program on
"ASEAN Youth and Volunteerism"
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2015

“The IVLP program went beyond exposure to the work of various nonprofit organizations; it was also about understanding the service-learning culture that is ingrained from a very young age. While Brunei does have a volunteering culture, the level of commitment and passion for giving service that I observed in the U.S. was very different, and this is one of the important lessons that I took home with me. I learned about the various roles that the public, private, and people sectors play in promoting social justice, and had dialogues with a number of inspiring individuals who are committed to making this world a better place. I am looking forward to collaborating with my fellow IVLP participants as we share our resources and knowledge, and figuring out how to apply what I have learned to my own organizations.



Themed 'ASEAN Youth and Volunteerism', the program ran in four cities across the United States, which were Washington, D.C.; Pensacola, Florida; Iowa City, Iowa; and, Seattle, Washington. The participants included youth and young professionals from various backgrounds including social work, education, entrepreneurship, and volunteerism. The objectives of the program were to explore traditional and creative efforts and programs designed to foster civic participation and engagement in communities, particularly for underserved communities (women and youth), as well as to expose the participants to NGO management including organization, fundraising, managing volunteers, and public outreach.

In Washington, D.C., we worked with City Year in a beautification project at Eastern High School, which was also part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, celebrated all over the U.S. In Pensacola, we participated in a joint volunteer activity with residents of Escambia Boys Base by helping to prepare the materials needed for house construction for low-income families under Habitat for Humanity. In Iowa City, we helped to repackage food for a food bank run by the Crisis Center of Johnson County, and, finally, in Seattle, we helped to prepare and serve food for homeless youth at the Orion Center, which is a multi-service facility managed by YouthCare. ”





How My American Experience Helped Shape My Career

Quratul-Ain Bandial

International Visitor Leadership Program - Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists 2012
YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy 2017

“**T**railing the 2012 election campaign during the Edward R. Murrow Program is one of the best experiences I've had in my career. We were able to gain valuable insight into the American political culture — and the media's relationship to it — by meeting with voters, local politicians, and visiting a wide variety of media institutions, from giants such as The Washington Post to smaller local newspapers and radio stations. The experience I gained through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) would serve me well when I returned to Washington, D.C. three months later to cover bilateral talks between Brunei's Sultan and Former President Obama.

Over the years, my interests have evolved from foreign affairs reporting to include writing on women's empowerment and gender-based issues. The Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Women's Leadership Academy helped refine and shape my plan of action as I enter the next phase of my career, building and running my own media company, Scoop Media, which is wholly owned and operated by women. ”



Seeing the True America

James Kon

International Visitors Leadership Program - Edward R. Murrow Program
Multiple Locations, United States of America, 2010

“The land known for its freedom of speech is one of the most sought after journeys for many journalists around the globe and I was given the privilege to learn more about America and understand its federal government system in 2010.

The program allowed international journalists to stay in the United States for more than three weeks. We first stopped by Washington, D.C., then moved on to the Midwestern United States, in Minnesota, proceeded to the sunny beaches of Florida, and then to the Big Apple of New York City.

Although eight years have passed, I still have vivid memories of the trip which changed my perception of America and its people. There are 50 states in the USA and each state has its own written constitution, state government, and laws. Therefore, there are frequently differences in laws and procedures between each state. Furthermore, the pictures of crime-filled streets in the USA that are always portrayed in Hollywood films were erased as we were not victimized and didn't witness any crimes committed in front of our eyes. Many Americans do not travel outside of their country, or read about international news; therefore, their knowledge of foreign policies or global news was limited.

Besides increasing the understanding of America, it was the friendships that were built and bonded between attending reporters from the Asia-Pacific that continue to live on until today. I would like to convey my gratitude to the U.S State Department and the U.S. Embassy for the opportunity to see the true America. ”



The background is a solid dark red color. In the center, there is a large, stylized number '2' in a lighter shade of red. Behind the '2', there are several silhouettes of hands raised in the air, some holding up a smartphone. The overall composition is centered and uses a monochromatic color palette.

The Fulbright Program

FULBRIGHT





THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM provides participants — chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential — with the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns. These programs are open to people regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

The Fulbright Foreign Student Program brings graduate students, young professionals, and artists from abroad to conduct research and study in the United States.

The Fulbright U.S.–ASEAN Visiting Scholar Program was launched in 2012 to deepen people-to-people engagement and strengthen our educational ties around issues important to the ASEAN region. Scholars from all 10 ASEAN Member States have been awarded scholarships to carry out research at U.S. universities on a wide range of subjects including maritime security, climate change, health, finance, political security, wildlife trafficking, and teaching English as a second language.

The Fulbright Specialist Program sends U.S. academics and professionals to host institutions abroad for two to six weeks to share expertise and establish partnerships benefiting institutions and communities both in the United States and overseas.

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program gives fellowships for U.S. graduating college seniors, graduate students, young professionals, and artists to study abroad for one academic year.

A Family Adventure

Dr. Ang Swee Hui

Fulbright Foreign Student Program (MA Public Health)
Harvard University, 2012 – 2013

“Are you sure it is going to work out?” asked my wife as we discussed bringing our family along for my Fulbright year at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston. She was concerned about how our two young children, J.R and Rui Yi, would cope with living in the United States and worried about the cost of living, weather, our family safety, and my ability to focus in an intense academic program.

“I don’t know but let’s take it as a family adventure,” I replied, as I tried my best to put a positive spin on the uncertainties that lay ahead. The year-long family adventure has since transformed our lives.



My wife was right about the weather. The winter in Boston was the coldest we had ever encountered. However, that also meant that we had the best snow fights of our lives. J.R. and Rui Yi enrolled in a nearby school. We were grateful to their kind teachers and principal who not only helped them settle in, but also drew out their inquisitiveness and curiosity and accelerated their learning.

Our experiences in Boston included encounters with Hurricane Sandy, Winter Storm Nemo, and the Boston Marathon Bombing. We were deeply affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting in neighboring Connecticut. My wife and I saw how the American people rallied together during those dark times. We were inspired by the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, former First Lady of the United States, who said, “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along’.”

As the year drew on, I found myself immersed in my studies, and truly understood the expression, “drinking from a fire hose.” The work was challenging, but exhilarating. I was privileged to study at one of the best schools in public health as well as attach at Boston Children’s Hospital, ranked as the best children’s hospital in the United States. I continue to draw on the lessons learnt from both world-class institutions as I strive for excellence in my current position.

During the commencement ceremony marking our successful completion of the Masters of Public Health program, my friends and I rejoiced in achieving what had earlier been viewed as a distant dream. Receiving the diploma was testament to mine and my family’s shared sacrifices, support, and care during this amazing Fulbright adventure. ”

An Invaluable Professional Experience

Assoc. Professor Koay Teng Leong

Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Visiting Scholar
(Research topic: Inclusive Education in ASEAN Countries: Concepts, Legal and Policy Frameworks, Initiatives and Provisions, Best Practices, Challenges and Future Directions)
University of California, Santa Barbara, 2016

“Although my Fulbright grant period lasted for only two months, I gained a lot of invaluable professional experience within this short time by interacting with Professors, fellow Visiting Scholars, and graduate students in my host university, the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). I presented a guest lecture to graduate students and other visiting scholars and audited advanced research methods courses taught by eminent professors. I had the privilege to visit the world-renowned Koegel Autism Centre and the Hosford Counseling and Psychological Services Clinic at UCSB. I also benefited greatly from the fantastic e-resources available at the UCSB library, which I was able to download and share with my UBD colleagues and graduate students.

In terms of my own area of expertise, Special Education, I benefited hugely from my visits to three schools in the Goleta district for children who have mild/moderate disabilities, and children with moderate/severe emotional disturbance, speech language impairments, learning disabilities, and autism. At those, I discussed with teachers, speech therapists, and parents various evidence-based practices for effective inclusion. I also visited the Special Education Office in Goleta Union School District where I shared my own experience in using learning support services in Brunei Darussalam.

UCSB is such a beautiful and vibrant campus. In my spare time I immensely enjoyed attending various cultural events including open-air musical performances, public lectures, and movie screenings at the Pollock Theater. I also had fun watching a UCSB water polo match against UCLA – I, of course, supported UCSB! I will always remember fondly my time in the U.S., especially in the beautiful city of Santa Barbara.

Upon returning to Brunei, I have slightly adapted my module content and approaches to teaching existing modules offered to PhD/MEd students in UBD based on information gleaned from my course audits in UCSB. I have also encouraged my doctoral student to use the Multiple Baseline Design for her PhD research and to foster links with PhD students at UCSB via Skype. I am also keeping in touch with professors from UCSB.

As I have benefited so much from my Fulbright program, I fully encourage my UBD colleagues to apply for Fulbright grants in the U.S. so they, too, can enjoy the rewards of such an enriching experience.”





A Life-Changing Experience

Dr. Lim Tiong Hoo

Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Visiting Scholar Program (Research Topic: Dependable Analysis of Wireless Sensor Networks for Intelligent Traffic Systems)
University of Virginia, 2015

“The opportunity to live and work in the USA for four months was a life-changing experience. I managed to explore the culture and history of the United States, interact with the society through voluntary work, and become the guest of an American family. I worked with well-known professors from other universities through visits. My work with Professor Jack Stankovic generated a model to predict the effect of the disruption, in order to mitigate congestion and reduce travel time and carbon emission. I learned different approaches to manage research students and teaching pedagogy, where it was more about group work, and the freedom and oversight of curricula to generate more engaging experiences. I have adapted the techniques back in my institution.

Through this exchange of knowledge and experience, the effect was significant as it was about more than simply investing in one’s own personal development in research and teaching. Just as Thomas Jefferson, the Architect of UVA said, “Putting up, and pulling down, is one of my favourite amusements.” I believe it is the same in our life, research, and our responsibility to society. We need to continue to build and rebuild with what we have until we are satisfied with the outcome. ”

Looking Through Different Lenses

Najibah Eradah Abdullah

Fulbright Foreign Student Program
(MPA - Master of Public Affairs)
Cornell University, 2011



“I chose to do a Master’s in Public Administration (MPA) with an International Development Concentration at Cornell University. The Fulbright Program interested me because I grew up in New Jersey, USA, while my mom was posted to the Permanent Mission of Brunei Darussalam, New York. It felt great to be back and revisit places I saw in my youth.

The MPA at Cornell University exceeded my expectations, and was exactly what I missed about the education system in the USA. It allowed me to tailor-make my MPA according to what I was interested in, which I found was more inclined towards Social and Labor Policy. The duration of the Master’s program was the right length—two years allowed me to plan for the right mix of modules and, I believe, compared to a one-year program, allowed me to gain more knowledge than I otherwise would have. The diversity of the campus, as well as acceptance of other cultures, made me feel welcome. Finding Halal food was also not a problem once we found out that there was a company that could deliver it with dry ice!

All in all, the program taught me to look through a variety of different lenses, and this has served me well in both my work and family life. ”



A Dream of Visiting Borneo

Lytton John Musselman

Fulbright Specialist
Brunei Darussalam, 2014-2015

“I was honored to receive a Fulbright Specialist Award for 2014-2015 at the Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Research (IBER) and Faculty of Science at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. What a great experience! I was especially helped and encouraged by Professor Dato Mohamed Abdul Majid, Dean of the Faculty of Science, and by Dr. Kushan U Tennakoon, head of the IBER. Both did everything possible to make my stay productive, pleasant, and very busy!

Botanists dream of visiting Borneo because of the almost inconceivable variety of plants, a treasure of biodiversity the Government of Brunei is protecting. While it was the plants that first drew me to Brunei, it is the people that make coming back a pleasure.

It was particularly enjoyable working with students at the university. I am impressed with their enthusiasm and the quality of their research. A thesis I read as an External Examiner was excellent, very well written, and a most valuable treatise on the ethnobotany of Brunei.

One aspect of ethnobotanical research in Brunei is the Qur’anic plants section at the new botanical garden being built next to the IBER building. Several of the plants mentioned in the Qur’an are from Southeast Asia, so the garden at UBD has a unique opportunity to grow them for display and education. With my considerable botanical work in the Middle East, I was asked to consult with the designers of the garden.

In recent years, the Faculty of Science has established a reputation for its research on parasitic plants, a group of plants I have studied for half a century. Brunei has a rich diversity of these plants and I helped several students with field and laboratory work. I am eager to return to see the outcome of some long-term experiments. I learned much about these plants from them.

Ultimately, the Fulbright experience is about people. And the Bruneians I worked with at every level—administrators, faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, staff were all friendly, professional and helpful. As a result of my time in Brunei I hope that other faculty and students visit from the United States and also that UBD students come to my university.”

Conducting Research in the Rainforest of Brunei

Georgia Schmitt

Fulbright U.S. Student Program
Universiti Brunei Darussalam, 2017-2018

“**D**uring my year in Brunei, I am conducting a mammal diversity survey in the rainforest of Ulu Temburong National Park, the only national park in Brunei. There has been almost no mammal research conducted in this area (with the exception of bats), so this project has been full of excitement, uncertainties, and challenges. I have loved working with my collaborator from the Universiti Brunei Darussalam and connecting over our mutual enthusiasm for the project. From trekking together in the rainforest collecting data, to devising solutions to problems, to planning future directions for the project, it has been empowering for us to drive this project forward together. We’ve had several opportunities to share our work with students from the university and school groups visiting the rainforest from other parts of the world—we have even brought some of them along to assist us with field work! Equally as rewarding as conducting the research has been sharing the project with others and seeing their enthusiasm and curiosity develop. As the rest of the year unfolds and I return to the U.S., I look forward to continuing to share our findings, the importance of this work, and my experiences developing this project.”





Pursuing Post Graduate Study in the United States

**Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Utama Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Yahya bin Begawan
Mudim Dato Paduka Haji Bakar**

Fulbright Foreign Student Program (M.A. in International Relations / Foreign Policy)
Tufts University, 1986

“In the early years of my service at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, I opted to pursue my post graduate study at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. It was an appropriate choice because Fletcher gave me a broad study of international and regional issues without compromising on the depth of study. At Fletcher, we studied Middle Eastern history, American foreign policy, International monetary and economic history, and international law and organization. These courses were conducted by staff members who, in most cases, were practitioners with wide experience in their respective fields. One such professor was one of the original members to draft the League of Nations, the precursor of the United Nations.

Understanding American foreign policy as well as the underlying rationale was both exciting and challenging. For example, my time at Fletcher coincided with a time of American and Russian competition for intercontinental ballistic weaponry and, therefore, we were asked to analyze how late President Kennedy handled the Cuban missile crisis — the so-called “eleventh hour” of the crisis in 1962.

At the end of my course, I was fortunate to be supervised by a law professor from Harvard Law School on my thesis on the legal aspects of the formation of a common market, with special reference to ASEAN and the European Union.

On the whole, the academic experience of studying in the United States was different from what I experienced in Brunei Darussalam and the United Kingdom. The informality of interactions with professors was widely evident in the States which helped me to gain insight into my academic subjects. Additionally, studying in Boston, Massachusetts was like going to the heart of American history due to its location near the Boston Tea Party Museums and the old houses of the early American settlers. I must say how fortunate I was to have the opportunity to study in the United States and, in particular, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. ”



A Journey of Self-Discovery

Siti Rahmah Haji Abdul Rahman

Fulbright Foreign Student Program (MA in Environmental Studies)
Ohio University, 2015

“My time as an international student in the United States was an incredible experience as it led to a journey of self-discovery, interpersonal skills, and personal growth. Having the privilege to learn and acclimate to the American culture, customs, and language was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Some specific highlights of my trip included cooking Beef Rendang for over 200 students and faculty during an International Student Week where I represented Brunei Darussalam, meeting former President of the United States Bill Clinton, helping the local community by researching and developing a low-cost Brine Spill Sensor geared towards monitoring the drinking water in Athens, Ohio for my thesis, and planting trees at a community college during a Fulbright Enrichment Seminar in Austin, Texas. In addition, I experienced my first winter and built my first snowman, appreciated the sweet-smelling flowers that grew during spring, enjoyed the warm summer and quick growth of the plants and trees, and savored Pumpkin Spice Lattes during autumn.

The friendships that I established during my visit were absolutely unforgettable, and I am sure they will last a lifetime. I can proudly state that nowhere in the world will you find a better group of friendly people that were willing to accept me for who I am. Finally, I am happy to say that I do not have any regrets with my decision to participate in the Fulbright program, and will cherish and treasure all the amazing experiences I had. Thank you, Fulbright! ”



A Memorable Experience

Siti Salwah Hj Saim

Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Visiting Scholar (Research topic: Challenges of the Impacts of Climate Change: The Case of Brunei)
University of California, Berkeley, 2013-2014

“I was very honored to be chosen as one of the first recipients of the Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Visiting Scholar award. My research was on “Climate Change: Challenges and impacts: What can we do?”

On my first day, I was feeling very excited as it was like being back at school, getting the feeling of the good old university days. The only difference was, I was alone. But I wasn't alone for long; by the end of the day, I had been introduced to so many other fellow researchers that I had difficulty remembering the names! I had prepared myself with self-made name cards and I gave them away during my first week! For the first week, they even assigned a University research officer to accompany me throughout the whole week til I settled down.

The most amazing thing and surprise was the office that they had kindly set up for me with the research officer in his room. It was a nice big office and they even had my name labeled at the door, a laptop for my use there, and name cards printed for my use! Never had I expected this kind of welcoming hospitality!

For the next few months, I went around and made full use of the facilities. It was certainly a very challenging few months but filled with so much knowledge and surprises.



As a research fellow at the University of California, I was given access to other important research areas and up-to-date research findings. Information on any topic was endless and very valuable. Over there, everyone respects each other's religion and culture, and lets you think for yourself and out of the box. I was treated as one of their family. Months flew by and it was time to go home to beautiful Brunei, my home sweet home.

It was, indeed, a memorable and wonderful experience. I would, if given the opportunity, go and do more research and interact with other educational institutes, as it will definitely benefit my fellow Bruneians. What I learnt, my experience and knowledge, I happily share among us Bruneians. Seeing is believing... but experiencing first-hand is the best knowledge, and whatever I learnt there is priceless and is embedded in me for a lifetime. ”

Simply Unforgettable

Vivi Jafiana Dato Paduka Haji Ja'afar

Fulbright Student Program (MA Computer Engineering)
Purdue University, 2006

“**M**y Fulbright experience in Fall 2006 began with an orientation week in Nebraska, where I first met my fellow Fulbrighters from around the world, most of whom I’m still in contact with. The week-long program was laden with useful on-boarding information and fun-filled activities, including a trip to a rodeo, which helped us to start adapting to life as graduate students in America.



Founded in 1869, Purdue University, the site of my Fulbright program, sits on a huge, beautiful campus on the Wabash River. The transition from being a working professional to becoming a student again was not easy. The American education system was fairly new to me at the time, and what I loved most about it was the flexibility to add or drop courses in the graduate plan of study, subject to supervisor approval. Throughout my two years at Purdue, I had the privilege of working with a diverse team of experienced professors.

The Fulbright program also gave me the opportunity to meet fellow Fulbright engineering graduate students from across the U.S. through a Science and Technology seminar in San Jose, California. The seminar included visits to Silicon Valley giants like Google and Yahoo, as well as NASA Ames. My Fulbright adventure didn't stop there. Prior to entering my final graduate year, I was selected to share my Fulbright experience with new Fulbrighters for their own orientation week.

Academics aside, I enjoy traveling and visited other places over term breaks and holidays. Notable excursions included riding mopeds in Martha's Vineyard, taking a boat ride underneath the Golden Gate Bridge to visit Alcatraz, playtime at Universal Studios and Disney World in Orlando, driving to the Grand Canyon in Arizona from Las Vegas, and a road trip all over the state of Texas.

Overall, my Fulbright experience was exciting, enriching, and simply unforgettable. My scope of learning went beyond academics. I am thankful and proud to have had the chance to meet with reputable people in the field and to make friends with people from all over the world. If asked if I would do it all over again, my answer to that would be – absolutely, yes, when can I go? ”

Witnessing History in the Making

Mohd Yusra Mohd Salleh

Fulbright Foreign Student Program
Arizona State University, 2005

“**T**he enduring relationship between Brunei Darussalam and the United States of America has a long history and can be traced back to the 19th century when the U.S.S. Constitution visited Brunei Darussalam. Since then, this relationship has grown from strength to strength encompassing political, security, economic, trade, social, cultural, and educational spheres. It is an honor to associate myself with this relationship and furthermore, to have the privilege of joining this commemorative initiative.

When the Fulbright Scholarship Program for Brunei Darussalam was reintroduced in 2003 after a long pause, I was the second recipient of this prestigious award. Looking back on my days as a scholar at Arizona State University (ASU), I have no doubt that experience has immensely helped to propel me where I am now.

I also have plenty of good memories from my two years study in the U.S. One of the highpoints, definitely, was when then-presidential-nominee, Senator Barack Obama, gave his presidential campaign speech at the ASU Tempe campus on October 19, 2007. I was really impressed by his



persuasive, non-scripted speech he delivered for almost an hour, covering wide-ranging issues concerning America. At that time, I remember telling my fellow Fulbrighter who sat next to me that we might have witnessed history in the making, and we did. As everyone knows, the Senator from Illinois eventually became the first African-American President of the United States.

For myself, study in the U.S. was a lifetime opportunity that I gratefully went through. That experience has broadened my horizon of knowledge and deepened my understanding beyond expectation. So, to my prospective fellow Bruneians, “go experience the U.S. yourself!”

And to America, “Kudos! ””

The background features a dark blue gradient with a faint image of several hands holding a globe. A large, semi-transparent blue number '3' is overlaid on the right side of the image. The text is centered on the left side.

**Young
Southeast
Asian Leaders
Initiative**



**YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN
LEADERS INITIATIVE**



The **YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS INITIATIVE (YSEALI)** is the U.S. government's signature program to strengthen partnerships with emerging leaders in Southeast Asia; to expand their skills as effective civic, economic and non-governmental leaders in the region; and to encourage them to work together across borders to solve regional challenges.

YSEALI includes all ASEAN member countries (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and is open to young people ages 18-35. YSEALI opportunities include professional and academic exchanges to the United States, regional workshops for networking and skills development, social media engagement, and a grant competition to support emerging leaders' efforts to address regional issues.

The **YSEALI Academic Fellows Program** brings undergraduates or recently graduated students between the ages of 18 and 25 to the United States for a five-week institute held on the campus of a U.S. college or university. The program includes an on-campus academic residency, leadership development, interaction with American peers, an educational study tour, and community service activities. Programs conclude with a visit to Washington, D.C. to meet U.S. leaders, policymakers, and think tank experts.

The **YSEALI Professional Fellows Program** gives participants ages 25-35 the opportunity to spend five weeks in the United States, including four weeks working directly with American counterparts in individually tailored work placements with non-profit organizations, state and local government, and private-sector offices across the country. During these placements, Fellows build their practical expertise, leadership skills, and professional networks. Fellows' areas of work include environmental protection, transparency in governance, social entrepreneurship, non-profit management, disability rights, wildlife protection, and empowerment of women and girls. American hosts also travel to Southeast Asia on reciprocal exchanges under this program.

YSEALI Generation Regional Workshops bring together youth from all ASEAN countries to develop practical skills, learn about regional problems, and collaborate on solving common challenges. These emerging leaders have benefited from professional workshops focused on entrepreneurship skills, workforce development, environmental studies, education, women's leadership, and other leadership skills necessary to make a positive impact in their communities.



The Heart Never Forgets

Abdul Khaliq Bin Haji Lokman

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Environmental Issues
Dallas, Texas, 2017

“It seems like it was yesterday that I was standing outside the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. taking a selfie. It seems like it was yesterday that I saw the Texas Rangers make the game-winning homerun in Dallas, Texas. It seems like it was yesterday that I became a part of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Professional Fellows.

During my Program, I learned a lot about the United States. I discovered that in the U.S., a country with 50 states, there are over 89,000 government entities—definitely different from Brunei Darussalam, which runs through only one government. I was astonished that no one knew where Brunei Darussalam was, and had to tell everyone that, “I came from Southeast Asia, a country which is just below the Philippines, next to Malaysia, and above Indonesia, with a size larger than Rhode Island and smaller than Delaware.”

During my Orientation and Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., I was exceptionally grateful to meet professional fellows like me from all over the world. Meeting them came as a blessing and a big surprise when I heard that most of them were also first-time visitors to the United States.

During my fellowship program hosted by the City of Cedar Hill, Texas, I was amazed by how beautiful the city was and how strong their passion was for environmental sustainability and especially green spaces and green initiatives. I felt privileged to be part of the city’s environmental sustainability programs, and above all, I was blessed to gain new friends and family in Cedar Hill. Time passes, memories fade, feelings change, and people leave, but the heart never forgets. I will never forget their hospitality, their love, and their support during my fellowship program, and I will definitely come back in the future to see them again.”

Gaining Greater Insights

Adrian Koh Yong Wei

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Economic Empowerment
Corporate Insight Strategy, Little Rock, Arkansas, 2017

“I was given two great opportunities that probably don’t come by every day: meeting people from around the world and experiencing their cultures. I had the chance to meet professionals from around the world working towards our respective purposes, and forged friendships that can be of mutual help, either professionally or personally. I learned about my American host family’s lifestyle, helping them out in chores and forging a bond over our mutual interests. We in Brunei have been some of the luckiest and most privileged people in the world, and knowing others’ perspectives gave me greater insights to contemplate. In the future, my new friends and colleagues and I hope to venture into more partnerships that will collectively improve our lives.”



Gaining Different Perspectives

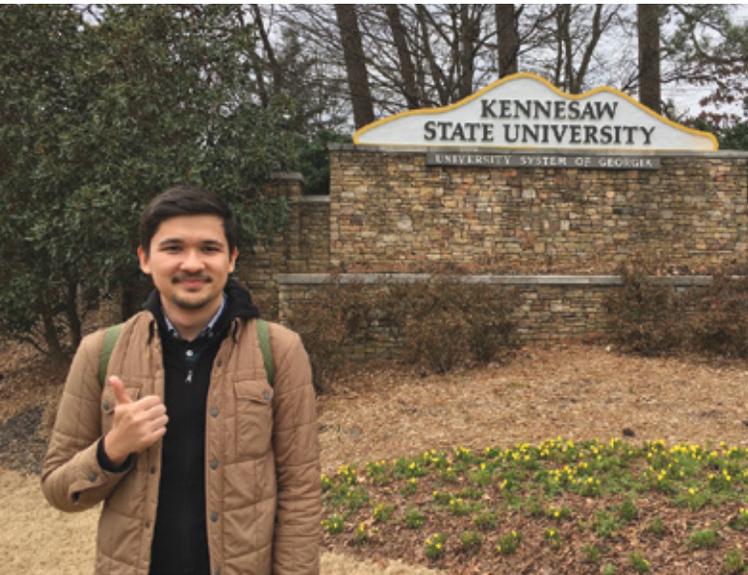
Nur Amalina Munyati binti Ismail

“YSEALI Generation: ECOMMUNITY!” Workshop
Vietnam, 2017

“I chose to join the YSEALI Generation: ECommunity Workshop in Hanoi because I was interested in understanding more about economic development in the ASEAN region. Additionally, I wanted to be exposed to U.S.-ASEAN relations and gain different perspectives from other participants with regards to their knowledge of the community in their own countries.

I could see the unity in diversity as I, along with the other 79 young leaders, were from different countries, had different beliefs, religions, and cultures and yet, we could still unite and respect everyone's ideas and views.”





Collaborating Across Borders for a Better World

Adrian Lee Rahman Suhaili

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
Kennesaw State University, 2017

“The Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Academic Fellowship provided me with an American experience that I would not have been able to experience otherwise. The highlight for me was being able to participate in different forms of community service, such as volunteering at food banks and other organizations that provide assistance to foster families and those living in poverty. This was an eye-opener for me, and made me more aware about the issues around me.

The institute brought fellows from all over ASEAN, and the friendships I made during my time in the United States are ones that I will cherish forever. The expertise of the academics at the institute was excellent and I learnt a lot from them in terms of human rights, peace, conflict resolution, ethics, and leadership which has broadened my knowledge in those fields. The institute was not just about sitting in lectures and site visits, but was also about opening up discussions among the participants from the different ASEAN countries and from the United States. From these discussions we also got to know better about each other's countries and the situations we are facing. We discovered that we cannot work alone and should collaborate across borders because we all have a similar goal: a better world.”



Harnessing the Strength of ASEAN Female Unity

Aiminorhiza Ramlee

YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy
Jakarta, Indonesia, 2017

“Being part of the 2017 Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Women’s Leadership Academy in Jakarta was an empowering experience for me. We often hear about the ASEAN Economic Community and the potential benefits of ASEAN integration, however, we seldom hear about the strong networks of ASEAN women in discussions about the region’s future. Meeting the group of powerful, accomplished, and driven young women at the WLA reinforced my belief that ASEAN’s prosperity will depend on harnessing the untapped strengths of its women.

At the WLA, I was challenged to identify what I thought my strengths and weaknesses were and how well I was conveying them through my personal brand. The program also brought a wide range of expert mentors to give us one-on-one guidance on our projects and goals, sharing their experiences and valuable connections. More importantly, the Academy emphasized how we could harness our combined strengths to tackle regional issues and promote economic and societal development for ASEAN women by taking a leading role. I left the WLA inspired to not only play a more active role in regional development, but to help increase the visibility of ASEAN female unity and its strengths.”

YSEALI: An Eye-opening Exchange Program

Ak Mohd Izwan Shafuan Pg Mohd Daud

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
Kennesaw State University, 2016

“I was given an opportunity to study leadership at Kennesaw State University (KSU) under the theme of Civic Engagement, including International Civil and Human Rights. As I learnt the potent mix of race politics and economics, it dawned on me that policy-making faces certain limitations in striking the right balance. Despite being involved in university-based leadership activities in my country, I found it difficult to relate to the challenges that my country, alongside other Southeast Asian nations, faces. My perception seemed raw and idealistic, which I came to realize in discussions with experienced peers from other Southeast Asian countries.

Having heard about YSEALI, I applied for the program with the intention of understanding civic engagement better. Having completed my studies in 2016, these 5 weeks were a bonus that nurtured me to be a better leader and person in general.

As part of my studies, I was taught by 5 world-renowned mentors with in-class discussions – a brilliant, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Our off-campus experiences at various non-governmental organizations inspired me to start my own NGO back home in Brunei. As an added bonus, I was given the opportunity to attend American classes which enabled me to learn and communicate with American students. I found that the way of teaching was



very different from what we have back home in Southeast Asia. At KSU, there was a great deal of interaction, discussion, and problem-solving.

I am honored that my YSEALI fellowship culminated in my being able to more fully care for the well-being of the Bruneian people. In less than a year after completing my program, I am proud to have organized two projects that are close to my heart, and have a passion to contribute to the community of children with disabilities. ”



Making Communication Work

Amal Kasibah Bahari @ Pei Pei

YSEALI Ideas into Action; YSEALI Summit
Manila, Philippines, 2017

“In November of 2017, I attended the 2017 YSEALI Summit in the Philippines as a mentor/facilitator. The Summit brought together a pool of 250 of the most talented youth from across ASEAN.

What impacted me the most were the people at the Summit - the pool was so diverse that sometimes ideas or opinions would clash since each delegate was a youth who was already established in his/her own community, and with their own projects and goals in mind. As a facilitator, I had to learn to channel their varying opinions so that these differences could be used to address the current issue at hand and learn how to solve problems that may arise.

Negotiation skill exploration was a particularly useful aspect of the Summit, especially as a communications student and the co-founder of an NGO. I've learned to recognize that there will always be more than one party involved in decision-making; everyone wants to reach a single, conclusive decision, which sometimes results in a conflict of interest - and this is where negotiation skills come in handy. I believe I will face many challenges that involve differences in perspectives, ideas, and objectives; these consciously learnt skills will help me set the right long-term priorities and at the same time, consider and include the needs of others above mine.”



Unity in Adversity

Nur Amalia binti Hj Salamat

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois, 2017

“Coming into the program, my knowledge and expectations were based on what past alumni had told me. What they didn’t prepare me for was the emotional attachment I would have with the other YSEALI fellows—not only did I realize they had been facing similar struggles, but also that we all had one goal: to make our home countries a better place to live. During our first week, we all attended the “ASEAN @ 50 Conference” at Northern Illinois University. Amidst the intensity of the dialogues and discussions, I realized how much stronger ASEAN could be if we as a people embraced our differences and helped each other more. I believe that’s how we should live our lives: moving forward while embracing each other’s differences and still supporting each other towards good futures. The pressure was immense as the only Bruneian in the university, but I pushed myself to step outside of my comfort zone throughout the program. I couldn’t have made it through without the support of the people around me.

I also won’t forget the kind and inspiring people I met during the program who have constantly reminded me that no matter how much negativity is thrown at us, we should always keep trying to see the good in any situation. Kindness knows no boundaries and progress starts within you. Thank you, YSEALI, for an experience like no other.”



My YSEALI Experience

Haji Abdul Azim bin Haji Mohd Said

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Social Entrepreneurship
and Economic Development
Arizona State University, 2016

“While I was looking through the photos from my YSEALI Academic Fellowship Program in the U.S. the other day, I just can’t help but feel happy and sad at the same time. A sense of nostalgia washed over as I browsed through the memories I made. I was placed at Arizona State University under the Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development program, where I met many like-minded individuals from all over ASEAN who eventually became my friends and family. As I sat down on the stairs on the first day of class, I was clueless about what was happening, with no expectation of the days ahead. I knew right then that it was going to be amazing.

The trip consisted of many interesting visits. Going around Phoenix and Tempe. The site visits to places like the Grand Canyon, Antelope Canyon, the Navajo community, etc. We also had the chance to visit other amazing cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., and so much more than I can remember. I am forever grateful for this experience to go to the U.S., meet new people, learn about the culture and traditions, eat a lot of different food, and lastly, for the ability to bring those aspects to my life. Now, my social enterprise “Lokal Roots BN” aims to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to grow and eat more easily to households.”



An Experience Like No Other

Aziz Johar

YSEALI Generation Startup Weekend and YSEALI Summit
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2014 & 2015

“**W**hen I reflect on my few years being a part of YSEALI, I conclude that the experience has not only made me a better speaker, but has also given me a vast networking platform opportunity to connect with other youths with the same passion from across ASEAN and beyond. Through various programs (Startup Weekend ASEAN and YSEALI Summit 2014) with incredibly supportive alumni members, facilitators, and YSEALI committees who were nothing short of champions, I was challenged to discover a voice I didn't know I had. That voice has played a central role in my everyday work, as speaking is vital to thinking, to planning, and to engagement.

Having been shaped in part by the creative and yet rigorous environment of the YSEALI community, and through various collaborations with some local NGO's, I have evolved in terms of my interests. My field of interests has profoundly evolved from a highly-focused point of view on entrepreneurship to a more community-driven kind of field. I believe with the positive cohesion among the YSEALI alumni members, we can help inspire one another to create more platforms on community engagement towards the betterment of Brunei's society.”





Making the Impossible Possible

Goh Chai Li

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Economic Empowerment
University of California San Diego (UCSD), 2017

“San Diego is a beautiful city. I enjoyed the ocean, host family experience, and entrepreneurship culture. This spring, I was blessed to be selected for the YSEALI Professional Fellowship Program to undertake a fellowship placement at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) under the guidance of Briana Weisinger, who is a startup advocate. Her extensive network enabled me to explore the startup ecosystem within the university and also in San Diego as a whole.

During my time in the U.S., I witnessed UCSD receiving the designation of Ashoka Changemaker Campus. I volunteered at Kitchen for Good which aims to bridge the gap between wasted food and hunger. I always tagged along with my host mom to local fundraising events, and one was Hope for San Diego, which supports projects with social impact. These experiences ignited my passion for social entrepreneurship.

After the program, I organized an outbound project: INITIATE Week - The Rising of Social Entrepreneurs in August. I participated in the YSEALI Summit in October and launched MapMe YSEALI under the YSEALI YOUNIFIED Day of Service in December. Thanks to YSEALI, my 2017 was full of adventures, friends, and great projects! YSEALI makes impossible possible, and I'm looking forward to collaborating with young leaders to make positive changes in ASEAN! ”

Experiencing the Americana Life

Diana Hj Ramli

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Economic Empowerment
San Diego, California, 2016

“**M**y work placement through the YSEALI Professional Fellows Program (PFP) was in San Diego. San Diego is a lovely city with such perfect weather. It is racially diverse and the people there were all very warm. Throughout my PFP in San Diego, I had the chance to have a first-hand experience of living like an American through a homestay; I got to experience the Americana life – going to open houses, garage sales (I didn’t know people sell and buy ferns, too!), having drinks during Cinco De Mayo, watching baseball games, and much more.

My most rewarding experience was spending my volunteer service at Connections Housing. I volunteered for the first time by feeding the homeless with Urban Angels. I had always watched people volunteer to help the homeless on TV, but had no idea what it was really like. The experience made me feel a little ashamed of how much I take for granted. Some of the people did not have a home, a bed, or even a family. I knew this experience would be one that I would use forever as a reminder when I felt the need to complain. It opened my eyes and has allowed me to reach out, and show some love and compassion to those who are experiencing hardship. It has made me more open to living without judgment, to seek hope, and to enjoy the rewards of kindness.

At the City of San Diego’s Economic Development Department (EDD), I saw many similarities in our organizations, but also differences in how the EDD runs its programs. I worked



on startup initiatives in San Diego which aimed to provide an ecosystem for startups. I was glad that I worked on a project which was very close to my heart, and I could see that some of the proposed programs had the potential to be replicated in Brunei. The EDD’s efforts in San Diego were truly amazing, and I could see that Brunei is going in the right direction in terms of nurturing our local MSMEs.

Put simply, this program gave me the opportunity to experience professional, ethical, and social diversity; to be put out of my comfort zone more times that I can remember; to challenge myself to do better for those around me; to see the world of special needs in a new light; and, most importantly, I was provided the opportunity to invest and repay America for opening its doors to me for six weeks. Thank you! ”



Acting as a Socially Conscious Advocate

Dk Amalina Pg Kasmirhan

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Social Entrepreneurship
& Economic Development
University of Connecticut, 2017

“The YSEALI Academic Fellowship, especially under the social entrepreneurship and economic development theme, has helped me to act as a socially conscious advocate for causes I feel strongly about. I also chose to join this program to further groom me to be a leader in my community.

I’d always wanted to experience how the education system works in the U.S. after having spent almost 13 years in Brunei’s formal education system. Furthermore, the project I had in mind before going to the U.S. was inspired by a social project started at Georgetown University.

My fellowship taught me to make business plans, especially after attending sharing sessions with actual entrepreneurs. The U.S. is also big on volunteering and community work. Every Wednesday, I participated in community service and volunteered for FoodShare, where we packed food to give out to less privileged communities.

Overall, my main takeaway was that despite our differences in beliefs, the people I met at UCONN, as well as my friends from Southeast Asia, share the same interest in travel and learning about other cultures.”





Charting the Next 40 Years of U.S.-ASEAN Relations

Muhammad Fadli bin Haji Awang Zaini

YSEALI U.S.-ASEAN Relations Conference: Charting the Next 40 Years
Manila, Philippines, 2017



“**Y**oung people play an important role in bridging relations between the U.S. and ASEAN. Organised by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), with the support of the U.S. Department of State, the conference in Manila exemplified that role in bringing policy makers and young people together as valued stakeholders to promote peace and economic development in Southeast Asia. Foreseeing the decades ahead, 40 YSEALI members (myself included) were tasked amongst these foreign policy drivers to envision what a U.S.-ASEAN relationship might look like – including regional security, AEC and trade agreements, investment and connectivity, transnational challenges including environmental issues and counterterrorism, and even the likes of social entrepreneurship, media, and innovation.

With think tank discussions like these, the need for policy makers and grassroots leaders to work together is more important than ever to create long-term and meaningful impact on both parties. In brief, this is where, I hope, U.S.-ASEAN relations can move forward by leveraging each other’s economic and geo-political strengths, albeit in different countries, together. ”

Enacting Change in My Own Community

Nur Faralisa Nabilah binti Zulfikri

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Social Entrepreneurship
and Economic Development
University of Connecticut, 2017

“I am very thankful for the opportunity I was given to participate in a YSEALI Academic Fellowship in Fall 2017. I studied Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development at the University of Connecticut and it was an amazing experience. I wanted to participate in this program because I wanted to experience the USA as a university student, having international friends, and expanding my network. I wanted to understand American culture, food, and lifestyle, and compare it to Brunei. No one in my circle had ever been to the USA and it was an honor for me to be the first one to reach it and share the experience. I love the fact that everyone in the program empowered one another. We were on different levels as entrepreneurs, so those who had been in the industry for 2-3 years helped those of us who were just starting out in the business. The program not only focused on entrepreneurship but also on leadership and American culture and history. The program inspired me to be a social entrepreneur and to enact change in my own community. It also provided me with a good understanding of leadership and improved my own leadership skills.”



Making Sure Everyone's Voice is Heard

Muhammad Firdaus bin Haji Ismail

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Environmental Issues
East-West Center, Hawaii, 2017

“**M**y name is Firdaus Ismail, and I am an alumnus of the YSEALI Academic Fellowship in Spring 2017, which was based in Honolulu, Hawai’i.

My first field trip brought me to Kalaeokauna’oa, or Kahu-ku Point, on the North Shore of Oahu, where we learned about leadership case studies in relation to Natural Resources Management. The North Shore is 800 hectares of undeveloped land, most of which is used for agriculture. There were numerous issues found which were mainly due to human development. Landowners wanted money, but the local community was not keen on development. Everyone had different needs, values, and principles, but our class facilitator tried to identify the alignment of values to fulfill everyone’s demands.

So what did I learn from this? They emphasized the importance of negotiation; pushing the agenda, but meeting halfway between the interests of different parties, and compromising to do what is right for different parties. By acting as the bridge, it’s important for everyone’s voice is heard. Second, when you want to think of a solution, you need to think about long term goals. And third, when it comes to decision making, there is no easy answer. Sometimes it’s about helping to educate people, and shift what they think.”





Beyond Expectations

Genevieve Yee

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Education & Civic Engagement
Iowa City, Iowa, 2015

“**T**he YSEALI Professional Fellows program went beyond my expectations in so many positive and life-changing ways. The initial goal going into this was to try and challenge myself to do something more impactful and meaningful than what I felt I was doing at the time – as well as to learn something new in the hopes of meeting that challenge head on. I also wanted to seek resources, information, education, and experience in raising awareness of certain issues that I feel passionately about such as raising mental health awareness, and having a hand in guiding and mentoring young people in Brunei to be the catalyst for change in their own country. The program not only pushed me to step out of my comfort zone, but also elevated my sense of community pride and involvement, wanting to commit to something bigger than me and my personal goals. Participating in a town hall with Former President Obama at the White House was the biggest highlight of the program. I will forever be grateful for having been given the opportunity to represent my country abroad, as well as having made some very inspirational friends along the way.”



An Advocate of the Earth

Mohammad Hizaamuddin Bin Haji Abdul Haris

YSEALI SEA Camp Coron 2017 & YSEALI Summit 2017
Philippines, 2017

“**I**n March 2017, I had the opportunity to travel to the beautiful island of Coron, Palawan in the Philippines to attend the YSEALI SEA Camp alongside 30 brilliant youths from Southeast Asia. The SEA Camp’s main objective was to empower youth who have the potential to be leaders and change-makers in the field of conservation.

I spent a week with like-minded youths to develop our leadership skills, and work on public speaking, budget management, and proposal writing. We also interacted with leaders from various fields of conservation, ranging from environmental education and conservation tourism to integrated coastal management. Snorkeling in Siete Pecados and Barracuda Lake was an added benefit!

After the program, I had the chance to implement project Save Kampong Ayer, a waste management education workshop with a fellow SEA Camp alum, Shaima Misli. Our team also launched project RECOVER, which engaged youth and the local community in a river cleanup. I find that I am always looking for more ways to be more active in my advocacy.

My experience at the SEA Camp was invaluable. It was an important stepping stone in my development as a leader in conservation, and as an advocate of the earth. Perhaps the most valuable takeaway was the connections made with youth and professionals in the YSEALI network. ”

An Eye-Opening Experience

Insyirah Adi

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
Northern Illinois University, Illinois, 2016

“My five-week placement on Civic Engagement in the United States was a truly eye-opening experience altogether, in which I gained new perspectives and learnt valuable lessons that I will carry with me for a lifetime. A few of my most memorable experiences were visiting the White House, presenting my action plan at the U.S. Department of State, volunteering at non-profit organisations, and going to an American college football game.

During our educational tour around different states, I enjoyed visiting the museums that were centred around the study of Civil Rights, and was particularly impressed with how rich and realistic the features were; at times you would get lost in the stories of influential figures like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, who played significant roles in shaping American history.

One of many the areas we looked into during the program was Disability Rights, which I developed a strong interest in, especially after experiencing a disability first-hand throughout the program. Upon returning home from the United States, I continued volunteering and looking into causes and projects that focus on physical and intellectual disabilities.”



Excited, Nervous, Intrigued

Iswandy bin Ahmad

YSEALI Generation: Power of Human Capital & YSEALI Summit
Singapore & Philippines, 2014 & 2017

“Those were the three words that played in my head when I was about to make my way to the “YSEALI Generation: Power of Human Capital” program in 2014.

I have attended a number of youth programs, but what makes the YSEALI programs different is the bonding (brotherhoods, or also, sisterhoods) between the youth of ASEAN with one another; the implementation of capacity-building on an international level with ASEAN, the United States, and the world; and, the understanding of different cultures, sharing of ideas, and gaining opportunities to develop oneself and the surrounding environment in which we live.

Three years later, I was back as a participant in the YSEALI Summit 2017, and I can proudly say that we have come a long way as a region in ASEAN, and we are strong with our unity in diversity.

I left the YSEALI Summit with three new words in my head:

Inspired, Hope, Friendship. ”



Part of Something Bigger

Shaima Misli

YSEALI Sea and Earth Advocates (SEA) Camp Coron
Philippines, 2017

“I had the opportunity to snorkel for the first time during the SEA Camp. It was very humbling because I felt so small and yet I was a part of something bigger, and more important. That is something YSEALI has incorporated into many of their programs as they emphasize collaboration among youth. SEA Camp taught me to be persistent with my dreams and my vision. A ‘no’ is just a ‘yes’ that hasn’t happened yet. ”



Creating Legacies

Nur Khalish Hafizhah Ideris

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Environmental Issues
East-West Center, Hawaii, 2016

“I am surrounded by positive energy; people who are as inspiring as I want to be, honing my leadership skills that would hopefully help me contribute to a positive way forward for Brunei one day,” I wrote in my journal on a chilly October day in 2016, from a valley in front of the great Half Dome, Yosemite National Park, as part of our YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Environmental Issues, along with 19 other young leaders from all over ASEAN. The journey started at Pearl Harbor, Hawai‘i, when we were asked an important question that would be the baseline for the weeks to come: “What legacy do you want to leave behind?” The next five weeks were as intensive as they were gratifying -- we learned to understand our own leadership styles through experiential learning, negotiation, public speaking, and diplomatic skills, and with the assistance of two amazing facilitators who helped us achieve our potential and pave the way to creating the legacy that we each want to leave behind. It was, indeed, one of the most life-changing programs that I have ever participated in, and the best part is, I found family in the friends I made from all over ASEAN.”





The Importance of Social Enterprise

Muhammad Mahyuddin Hj Othman

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development
Connecticut, Fall 2015

“Growing up, I loved watching American TV shows. “One day I’m going to go to America,” I’d say to myself as I binge watched yet another episode of FRIENDS. I’ve always dreamed of living in big cities like NYC or Washington, D.C. but that was it. I woke up from that daydream and started focusing on other goals and ambitions. I traveled, joined NGOs, and conducted several charity projects to benefit the underprivileged families in Brunei and around the region.

I was content with my achievements up until I received an email about a five week exchange program in the U.S. With a background in charity work and community development, naturally, I applied for the Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement.

Instead, I was accepted to do my fellowship in Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development at the University of Connecticut. I’m glad with the outcome; from this program I learned about best industry practices, the importance of social enterprise in today’s day and age, and the challenges that come with it. From this program, I overcame things I never thought imaginable. From this program, I made life-long friends. From this program, I was able to grow as a person.

“Students today, Huskies Forever. ”



Empowerment, Encouragement, and Enthusiasm for Gender Equality

**Sharifah Adila Surya Binti Malai Haji Abdullah
@ Malai Adila Surya**

YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy
Jakarta, Indonesia, 2017

“**D**uring my time at the YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy in Jakarta in 2017, I learnt more than I expected. There were so many enriching moments throughout this program that carefully addressed issues that are not only present on a national level, but are common issues around the region. I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of shared raw passion, drive, and motivation among other women who are well-accomplished in their respective fields towards empowering each other, encouraging each other, and sharing their enthusiasm for the common purpose of coming together to push for other women to become leaders in whatever field they choose. I'm extremely grateful to the U.S. Embassy in Brunei Darussalam, to the U.S. Mission to ASEAN, WEDU, and YSEALI for giving me the opportunity to network, learn, and, most of all, be surrounded by other women leaders who are just, if not more, passionate about working together to create a strong women's leadership community.”





My Many Firsts with YSEALI

Pg Mas Dino bte Pg Hj Radin Hanafi

YSEALI Generation EARTH Workshop
Siem Reap, Cambodia, 2015

“**M**y first YSEALI experience at “Generation EARTH” was also my first time as a mentor. While I was no stranger to being a participant in leadership programs, the new role allowed me to put everything I had learned to the test, from creating valuable content for the workshop to managing an international team effectively. YSEALI also stood out from other programs I had joined because there was a significant emphasis on and encouragement to bring ideas into action. In fact, the first internationally-funded project I initiated was through YSEALI. My ‘Farm Up Your Life!’ project was such a significant personal achievement that it helped switch the trajectory of my career. More importantly, an experience with YSEALI never ends with just the workshop or fellowship because the alumni continue to benefit from having access to an incredible network of people in ASEAN and the United States, as well as further opportunities for funding and future collaboration. YSEALI has truly shaped me as a young leader in ASEAN, allowing me to build meaningful connections and promote empowerment in the region.”



Community Resilience Living in the City

Masridah Hj Mahmud

YSEALI Professional Fellowship on Environmental Sustainability
Washington, D.C., 2017

“As soon as I stepped into Washington D.C., the place was filled with vibrancy. The famous historical monuments were simply amazing, and supported by well-connected plans. Indeed, the capital city of the United States offers convenience to the public – a walkable city concept that has worked for more than a century. The grids of non-uniform blocks made me wonder how the urban planning was integrated, not only by the government, but also by a huge contribution of the public and private sectors.

My constant engagement which was largely assisted by my host institution, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, along with other stakeholders, has helped form the startup catalyst to my City Master Plan. I felt my networking opportunities were about more than just getting information—they were the connection that reeled transparent relationships between the stakeholders and me, by contributing things even in smaller ways. I have also learnt that community in Washington, D.C., plays a powerful role in solving the missing pieces in order to make the city a sustainable environment. This dynamic process can be, therefore, spearheaded into my own community, which is gradually becoming more urban.”





Be the Change

Muhammad Nabil Arifin Haji Johani

YSEALI Generation: E-Community Workshop
Vietnam, 2017

“The “YSEALI Generation: ECommunity” Workshop was one of many Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) events hosted by the U.S. Embassy. With the theme of ‘Economic Engagement in ASEAN,’ this program provided me the opportunity to learn and explore the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and its policy development process. During the workshop, we were given an inside and interactive view of the intra-AEC and U.S.-ASEAN trade relationships. ASEAN has huge potential in economic development, and learning how ASEAN is benefited by AEC and U.S.-ASEAN trade has provided me a better understanding for the future, especially coming from an engineering background.

The USA is known for its excellent global education, massive opportunities for research and training, and advancements in technology and science. By participating in events with YSEALI, we are given the opportunity to attend regional workshops which will help us gain new skills, address issues facing the ASEAN region, and gain useful networks with other inspiring young leaders.

The workshop gave me a better understanding of the AEC and U.S.-ASEAN trade. During the workshop, we were introduced to the art of negotiation and advocacy. We learnt how to present our propositions effectively and efficiently to different types of audiences, especially to higher authorities like government officials or ministers.

I truly believe that the youth need to be proactive towards ASEAN goals, engage in addressing issues that directly affect their communities, exchange ideas, and develop innovative ways to make the ASEAN region a better place. Be the change, and it’s never too young to lead! ”

Making a Difference in My Community

Siti Nabilah binti Ali

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
University of Nebraska-Omaha, 2017

“**T**he five-week intensive program was an eye-opening experience which has given me numerous opportunities to discover new knowledge and potential as a leader. It has given me a better understanding of civic engagement itself, both in the U.S. as well as in other ASEAN countries. Through this program, I have been exposed to several NGOs in states that tackle different issues such as refugees, social delinquency, and homelessness. Aside from that, this program also enabled the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and views between fellows from ASEAN and the U.S., taught us different approaches to problem-solving and conflict resolution, and helped me to realize my personal strength as a leader. This valuable experience definitely equipped me to take action in making a difference in my community through civic engagement.”



A Responsible Leader

Rasyidah Samah

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
Washington, D.C., 2015

“**M**y two-month placement at Autism Speaks in Washington, D.C. brought me into the world of advocacy, and taught me ways we can influence key decision makers.

I was placed under the theme of Economic Empowerment, and introduced to the world of social entrepreneurship. Being a social entrepreneur has taught me to be a responsible leader – which is needed in today’s society.

After the fellowship, I continued to work within my network of YSEALI alumni under the strong support from the U.S. Embassy in Brunei. My most memorable moment was meeting President Obama during a town hall session in Kuala Lumpur! ”



Taking Chances and Taking Action

Norhayatunajibah Hj Kifli

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Economic Empowerment
Seattle, Washington, 2016

“I arrived in the USA at the height of the presidential election period, a time when narratives upon narratives of what the USA was all about were clouding whatever perspectives we may already have had of the country. A country so far away from my abode of peace, Brunei.

Equipped with preconceived ideas of how the USA would be, I made my journey. Upon reaching immigration, I cast my worry and doubt of whether I would be subjected to thorough security checks because of my religious identity, forgetting that my sixteen-characters-long name was more unique than my religious background. Instead of extra security questions, I got a friendly chat from the immigration officer on how to pronounce my name. As the program progressed, my name continued to be a nice ice-breaker. Never had I imagined that the unfamiliar country would be the reason behind why I love my name. I felt my preconceived ideas and expectations begin to dwindle.

It is easy to say that it was an amazing experience. In truth, there are many things that need to be said about the experience, and no one word could sum it up perfectly. I learned a lot, and that's for sure—a lot about working and living in the States, about the amazing people from all sorts of countries in the program, about taking chances,



es, taking action, and working on it, and greatest of all, I learned a lot about myself.

One of the most memorable experiences was when I, together with the other participants, was able to do some voluntary work with Northwest Harvest, which serves the biggest food bank in Seattle. Coming with an open mind, the experience was truly heartwarming and also humbling. I saw the customers come and go, each with stories to tell but only present in the gait of their walk or the twinkle in their eyes. During the fellowship, we experienced American life from various perspectives, and working at the food bank presented us with another perspective of living in America. It not only presented a hard life, but also shed light on the warm heart of Americans in their pursuit of ending hunger, and of helping one another regardless of status, race, color, religion, or any dividing labels. ”



Teaching the Next Generation How to Help the Community

Amal Nazirah Hj Abd Mulok

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Economic Empowerment
Seattle, Washington, 2016

“I chose to join the YSEALI program because I thought it would be an interesting learning experience for me since I had no business background. Coming from a totally different academic background, the chance to gain knowledge regarding how entrepreneurship plays a big role in helping the community gave me a better understanding of how to help the community in the long-run.

The chance to get involved with one of the most developed countries in the world, such as the U.S., was a privilege. I think it is important to be able to maintain a healthy and fruitful relationship between ASEAN countries and the USA. I learned that no matter what nationality you are, if everyone from every nation has the same passion and understanding regarding reaching their goals, reaching a consensus is possible.

My number one takeaway from my program was the ability to teach the newer generations how to help the community, and to have a better living. ”



A Whole New Perspective

Noorussa'adah Hassem @ Haji Zulazmi

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Environmental Issues
East-West Center, Hawaii, 2014

“**A**merica is a place for opportunities and development, and looking back on my journey with YSEALI has brought up a lot of personal growth and unforgettable experiences. I was initially very dubious about my ability as a leader. I was at a crossroads, deciding whether I was capable of leading my team or not. I met a few advisors and student leaders during reflection sessions in Hawaii, and they gave me advice to help me see pros and cons that I was not aware of. Slowly, through them, I began to open up with my ideas and thoughts. I developed self-esteem, positivity, confidence, idealism, and creativity. I saw myself in a whole new perspective, as the YSEALI program offered me a platform for idea-sharing and making friends across the globe. Through diverse cultural exchanges, I began networking with young leaders around ASEAN who shared the same interests and ideas for developing a better community. Thank you, America, for the experience and allowing me to continue growing to be better!”



Sharing the Same Interests

Nur Nadiah Binti Kifli

YSEALI E-Community Regional Workshop
Vietnam, 2017

“**Y**SEALI has connected me with young leaders from across ASEAN. The program taught me that youth can be leaders in representing their countries, and that even though we come from different backgrounds, we share the same interests.”

Be the Change You Wish to See

Nur Fifi Hazwani Binti Hasman

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
University of Nebraska-Omaha, 2017

“It is exciting that YSEALI has a wide array of opportunities to offer its alumni. I was always looking for an opportunity to develop my skills and become a well-rounded and holistic advocate for the causes which are close to my heart: women’s empowerment and youth education.

Throughout the five-week program at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, I gained knowledge on project management and how to sustain meaningful initiatives while bringing home the lessons learned from the U.S.’s history of civic engagement. Although Brunei and the U.S. are different politically, economically, socially, and even historically, there were, indeed, many lessons from the U.S. that can be applied to Brunei’s political and social development, such as empowering women in leadership.

The local issues from one state to another were varied, and the most inspiring part of this experience was seeing the local community take the initiative to solve issues and problems without waiting for the federal or local government to step in. Meanwhile, in some countries in ASEAN, people who wish to resolve some of the issues affecting their country are usually at risk for government retaliation, which further perpetuates the culture – officially known as the policy – of non-intervention.

My major takeaway from the program was the relationship that I fostered with everyone I met for three main reasons: 1) through relationships, I have a lifetime access to networking and collaboration opportunities beyond the program, 2) through relationships, I’ve learned inspirational stories of the people that I met as well as the history and prevalent issues in the USA and ASEAN, and 3) through relationships, I’ve been taught what it truly means to be an effective change maker. ”



Instilling the Value of Green Space

Siti Nor Nazatul Saifa Fitra Fathrine Hj Md Rosellan

YSEALI Urban Planning and Smart Growth
Singapore, 2017

“I was one of two Bruneians who participated in the YSEALI Urban Planning and Smart Growth workshop. It was a knowledge-filled program, particularly on Urban Planning. Singapore’s development was very different from Brunei’s. Singapore’s plans were initiated by the World Bank in 1927, while Brunei’s plans were developed purely in a local context. His Majesty’s late father, Al Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien, known as the first modern architect of Brunei,

initiated development in Bandar Brunei in the 1970s. The first Negara Brunei Darussalam National Master Plan was produced in 1972.

I learnt that the Singaporean people know what is being planned because they are provided with 3D models at the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) Gallery. Public participation is very active in Singapore, as the government makes sure that everyone understands what is going to be designed, built, and developed. The public can go and view the plans and provide comments. Those public comments are then evaluated at a higher level, and the ideas are tested. The Minister makes the final decision during that evaluation. This is one reason for the success of the Singapore Local Plan.

I also saw that Singaporeans value their green space so much that the amount of vegetation in Singapore grew from 35.7% to almost 50%, even with the growth of their population. This should be encompassed into the heart of every Bruneian so that the green space we have today remains intact or, even better, grows even more. One way to do this is by instilling the ‘value of green space’ in the youth, or even better, by giving the younger generations seedlings to plant in school and take care of them throughout their academic lives, until the trees grow.”



From Southeast Asia to Midwest America

Syafiq Dato Metassan

YSEALI Professional Fellows Program on Legislative Process and Governance
Kansas City, Missouri, 2017

“**D**uring my Professional Fellowship in Kansas City, Missouri, I was attached to the City Office, responsible for providing exceptional services to the people of Kansas City and listening to their feedback. I learnt a lot about leading with passion to deliver outcomes; working with a sense of purpose; and the importance of being proud of your community. The YSEALI program enabled me to connect with my Southeast Asian counterparts with various interests and expertise, ranging from anti-corruption practices; women’s empowerment; rights of refugees; environmental sustainability; accessibility to health and other basic services; and performance management, and truly embedded a regional and global network of lifelong friends.”



The Power to Make a Change

Nurehsan Abd Zabar

YSEALI E-Community Workshop
Vietnam, 2017

“**I** wanted to learn more about the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and to engage with other ASEAN youths. I learned how the majority of the ASEAN population are youth and that we have the power to make a change in each of our countries and affect ASEAN as a whole. I learned the importance of effective communications skills such as negotiation, lobbying, and advocacy. Not only that, but being able to interact with talented and bright youths from all over ASEAN, as well as learning about their countries’ economies, was eye-opening. My main takeaway from my program was that even though ASEAN has a diverse set of cultures and values, we are one big family.”





Thank you, Nebraska

Siti Nurhidaayah Binti Barahan

YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Civic Engagement
University of Nebraska-Omaha, 2016

“Upon my arrival, I was greeted by chilly wind, but a warm welcome from Omaha, Nebraska. I was honored to be selected as one of the representatives from Brunei Darussalam for the YSEALI Academic Fellowship Program at the University of Nebraska-Omaha for Civic Engagement in Fall 2016. For five weeks, I spent my time with 20 young and bright leaders from ASEAN who came together to experience academic and community activities that would improve our understanding of civic engagement, leadership development, U.S diversity, and democracy. We were immersed in Omaha’s civil society and local government. I personally learned beyond the classroom setting, from interactions with the professors from various disciplines, fellow young leaders, student mentors, my host family, and many more. The warm welcome and hospitality of people in Nebraska had an impact on my learning throughout the program; as one of my fellow friends said, “As the weather grew colder, the people we met became warmer.” Unlike any other program, YSEALI Academic Fellowships reflect the reality that America and ASEAN countries face, and recognizing this problem led to finding the solutions that we, as a group of young leaders, have achieved together. With this program, I was able to find my strength as a leader and work on focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses. Surrounded by a group of young leaders who are committed to change and are making huge impacts in their countries at such a young age was truly an inspirational and motivating environment. The YSEALI program has given me a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience that I never thought I would learn in only five weeks! It changed the way I think as a leader, establish networks, and create impact in our community in our own country.”

The Power of Intention

Vanessa Teo

YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy
Jakarta, Indonesia, 2016

“It was an honor to have been selected to represent Brunei at the YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy in 2016. The Academy was composed of a group ladies who were creating positive impact within their own industries and communities, including government, private sectors, NGOs, and charity organizations. I participated with an intention to evolve my skills as a woman entrepreneur and to find collaboration between other ASEAN entrepreneurs. I am grateful for the Academy as it taught me about the “Power of Intention” which has strengthened my vision of helping the farmers in ASEAN and ensuring food security for future generations. Also, I am grateful to have been able to meet so many inspiring ladies from across ASEAN, in particular Dayu Dara Permata, the VP of Go-JEK Indonesia who has become a great friend and mentor throughout my own startup journey. Overall, I'm grateful for the community that the Academy has created as I have now many dear friends to connect with when I travel around ASEAN. I would like to say “thank you, YSEALI” for giving me the chance to grow as a woman leader in my industry, and for harnessing a supportive community that focuses on developing the next generation of dreamers and creators within ASEAN.”



The background features a dark red color with a faint, semi-transparent image of hands holding a stack of coins. A large, solid red arrow points upwards from the bottom right towards the center of the image.

Study of the U.S. Institutes



STUDY OF THE U.S. INSTITUTES (SUSIs) for Scholars and Secondary Educators are post-graduate level academic programs for mid-career foreign scholars, faculty, practitioners, and secondary educators designed to strengthen curricula and to improve the teaching about the United States in academic institutions abroad. SUSIs for Scholars are six weeks long; SUSIs for Secondary Educators last five weeks. These Institutes are comprised of a four- to five-week academic residency and one to two weeks of educational travel to a different region of the United States. During the Institutes, scholars engage in rigorous academic coursework and panel discussions, interact and establish networks with American scholars, meet with experts in respective disciplines, visit civic institutions, and in some cases, participate in research symposia and conferences.



A Textured Understanding of the U.S.A.

Dr. Rommel A. Curaming

*Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI) on U.S. Foreign Policy
University of Florida, Gainesville, 2012*

“I was fortunate to be given a chance to participate in the Study of the U.S. Institute on Foreign Policy from June to July, 2012, at the University of Florida, Gainesville. It was a great opportunity to engage with well-known scholars of American politics and foreign policy at the University of Florida and other universities, as well as with political practitioners at the local, state-wide, and federal levels. The lectures were well-prepared and thought-provoking and the field trips in St. Augustine, Tallahassee, Tampa, Boston, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. complemented well the theoretical discussions in class. Of greater importance were the lasting friendships we developed with the local organizers and fellow participants from various parts of the world. Being my first visit to the U.S., it proved to be eye-opening for me seeing the other side of life in U.S.—subdued, laid-back, peaceful, and quiet. It was far from the images often propagated via the Hollywood and the media. I did not get to complete the program due to a family emergency, but the four weeks I spent in the U.S. were enough for me to develop a much more textured understanding of the society that is often misunderstood in much of the rest of the world.”

The background features a dark blue gradient. In the center, there is a faint, semi-transparent image of several hands of different skin tones reaching up to hold a globe. To the right of the text, there is a large, stylized number '5' in a medium blue color. The text is white and reads:

**The
Southeast
Asia Youth
Leadership
Program**



**Youth Leadership
Program**

A group of diverse young people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are standing in front of a building. The building has large, light-colored letters spelling out 'WISDA' on its facade. The people are dressed in a mix of traditional and modern attire. The overall scene is bright and positive, suggesting a community or educational setting.

The **SOUTHEAST ASIA YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (SEAYLP)** supports the foreign policy goals of strengthening people-to-people ties between the United States and Southeast Asia, engaging young leaders, and cultivating a more cohesive community identity in the region. The program provides approximately 60 high school students and educators from the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and approximately 15 American youth leaders with the opportunity to explore leadership development, civic education, respect for diversity, and community engagement through a three-week exchange in the United States. Upon returning home, alumni implement projects to serve the needs of their communities.

A Truly Incredible Experience

Li Mian Yeo

Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP)
Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois, 2014

“The time I spent in the South East Asian Youth Leadership Program is one of my fondest and most treasured memories, as I learnt and experienced many new things that I never thought possible.

During the program, I was placed in the environmental sustainability thematic group. There, I worked together with the other delegates from the other ASEAN countries, finding creative solutions to combat current environmental issues that our countries face, and ways to make our countries more environmentally sustainable. Working together improved my communication skills and was an eye-opener on how our opinions differed greatly from each other's, which taught me that an issue can be approached in a multitude of ways. Back in Brunei, my team and I taught students in a primary school the importance of “reduce, reuse, and recycle,” which is a small but sure step to improving the environmental sustainability of Brunei.

With this program I learnt about American culture and the different cultures that are present in other ASEAN countries. This program immersed me in such a way that I could learn about a variety of different cultures just by being in one place, and that in itself was a truly incredible experience.”



Changing Perspectives

Muhd Luqmanul Hakim Bin Hj Mohd Aidil Sufian

Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP)
Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois, 2015

“The Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program literally changed how I see myself.”

Memorable Moments

Amar Syahirah Haji Abd Murad

Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP)
Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois, 2010

“E ven though my trip to America was 7 years ago, I can still recall the experience as though it happened only recently. The 4-week experience brought many memorable moments, from my first Halloween to my first trip to the Smithsonian Museum. Even tasting the food there was a worthwhile experience. My favorite memory was the time I spent with my host family. The things I learned -- American history, culture, projects, and meeting different people – are experiences I still cling to, hoping to go back to America one day. It was a very educational trip, and at the same time, it molded me into the person I am today.”



Building Networks

Nur Nadzrie Bin Haji Masri

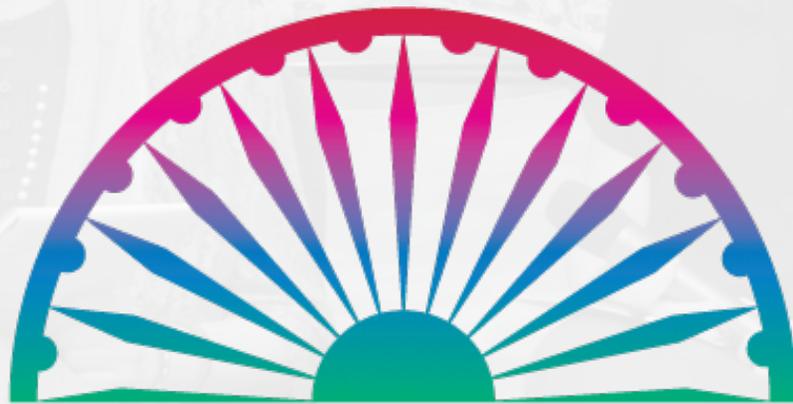
Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP)
Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois, 2017

“I n April 2017, I was lucky enough to represent Brunei Darussalam, along with 5 other youth leaders, in the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP). The purpose of the program was to help us improve our leadership skills so that we could make a change in our community. The most valuable experience was having the opportunity to build our networks within Southeast Asia and America. I challenge my young fellow Bruneians to step out of your comfort zones and go out there to participate in this life-changing experience.”



The logo for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit is a large, stylized number '6' in a dark red color. The top of the '6' is a solid circle, and the bottom is a larger, rounded shape that tapers to a point on the right side. The background of the entire image is a dark red color with a faint, semi-transparent image of several hands raised in the air, suggesting a crowd or a summit.

Global Entrepreneurship Summit



GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT
INDIA 2017



The **GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT** aims to showcase inspiring entrepreneurs and investors from around the world creating new opportunities for investment, partnership, and collaboration; connect American entrepreneurs and investors with international counterparts to form lasting relationships; and highlight entrepreneurship as means to address some of the most intractable global challenges. The summit typically includes a wide range of workshops, panels, ignite talks, pitch competitions, mentoring, and networking sessions aimed to give participants tailored opportunities to gain skill and relationships that will help their ventures grow. There are also demonstration areas and experiential learning exhibitions to create opportunities for participants to connect with industry experts.



The Road to Growth

Dk Kemariah Pg Hj Duraman

Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES)
Hyderabad, India, 2017

“I always believe that everyone, especially women, have the right to present themselves in their own individual ways. It was a great honor to be nominated to attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2017 in Hyderabad, India.

With the theme Women First, Prosperity for All, the Summit gave us a unique experience to be surrounded by global entrepreneurs, supporters, investors, and networkers, and gave us a way forward as entrepreneurs.

Empowering women creates economic opportunities, equal representation, and the road to growth by giving people the right skills. The plate of an entrepreneur is always full with sharing opportunities.

It was only appropriate to collaborate with the USA for the opportunities, solutions, and excellent programs for all ages that they provide as they lead the way to excellence. ”

Flying the Bruneian Flag at GES 2017

Noorhafizah Hj Rashid

Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES)
Hyderabad, India, 2017

“Being nominated to attend this year’s Global Entrepreneurship Summit in India was a truly inspiring and humbling experience. Being involved with 1,600 different entrepreneurs from around the globe, all speaking the same language of entrepreneurship and sharing their experiences, was amazing! As an entrepreneur myself who is focused on the development of local youth and entrepreneurs, this year’s theme of Women First, Prosperity for All, was really educational. It taught me to Educate, Empower, and Encourage the women from our community to develop their skills and talents, especially in becoming entrepreneurs in order to be self-sustainable for their own futures.

The three days spent attending the workshops, seminars, talks and networking sessions, in particular, were really fruitful for my business and my personal development. I made a lot of connections and managed to build a network of many who are involved in encouraging entrepreneurship in communities. One day they can possibly help to take Bruneian entrepreneurs to an international market. Being a delegate at GES has inspired me and taught me so many valuable lessons – which I will be proud to share with my fellow entrepreneurs. ”

Breaking the Glass Ceiling

Supna Rania Karwanamurthi

Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES)
Hyderabad, India, 2017

“**D**uring GES 2017 in Hyderabad, India, I met entrepreneurs and policy makers, and learnt the different systems and policies that countries and businesses around the world put in place to support the business ecosystem in their respective countries, and how governments empower and provide the necessary infrastructure for the business community to flourish.

During the Summit, we also learned how different women entrepreneurs genuinely help and support one other through different platforms. While at GES, I was able to learn about the new technologies out there from industry experts and entrepreneurs in different fields that can be adapted to improve our systems in Brunei.

As one of the very few female entrepreneurs in the oil and gas industry in Brunei, my main takeaway from the Summit would be that women need to have a strong mentality in any field that we pursue, and continue to support one another. Only through that we will be able to have gender equality in the workplace and industry while doing our part to contribute to the community and economy aligned with His Majesty’s Brunei Wawasan 2035.”





**Could the next U.S.
exchange program
participant be you?**

