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I was one of a few people in my high school who aspired to continue our studies at an abroad university. Indeed, since my pre-college life, I tend to challenge myself to do something rarely people do. **However, I didn't get the chance to pass the abroad university I aimed for.** It clearly seems life has been also challenging me along my journey. After I got into ITS Surabaya and was supported by my mentor, I insisted to experience a student exchange with no specific program in mind—I almost forgot about this.

It was May 1st, 2021, I found out about the IISMA program for the first time. The circumstance made me prepare all of the requirements in under **15 days with a midterm test in the middle of the preparation period.** I was really close to giving up the opportunity until my friend gave me endless support.

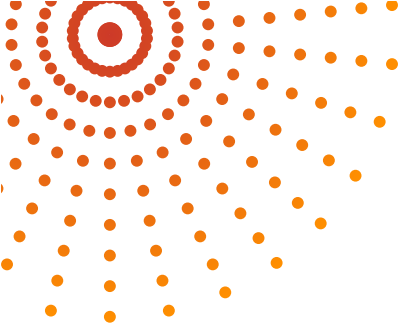
A few days after the last recruitment step, I was shocked I got the chance to be the IISMA awardee. Finally, I got to make the dream of experiencing a student exchange, gaining international exposure, and spreading the lessons I learn back to Indonesia, really going to happen. During the process through the essay and interview, **I also made a vow to lend my hands to those who need help in preparing their IISMA process.**



I was shocked not only because I got IISMA, but also because **I was moved to another university I didn't target for.** Well, when life gives you a lemon, it will always be on you what will you do with the lemon. I decided to maximize anything ahead of me.

I re-researched all of the things related to **Hungary in general, Pécs particularly.** I tried to learn to study the Hungarian language which later I got to know was one of the hardest European languages. Oddly, I also sharpened my cooking skill, especially cooking non-spicy food to introduce the friend I'd make during my study there.

I also never thought packing the necessary stuff to bring during student exchange would be overwhelming. **I brought a lot of Indonesian spices, so I can still make Indonesian cuisine with a fusion of Hungarian spices.** I also brought a lot of warm clothing to prepare myself for the winter weather that well-known as an annoying event for the Hungarians.



One of the most important lessons I learned was the value of cultural exchange. As an Indonesian student studying abroad, **I was able to immerse myself in a completely different culture and learn about their customs, traditions, and way of life.** I made friends with people from all over the world, each with unique perspectives and experiences.

Another important lesson I learned was the significance of **investing in quality human capital.** I observed that people placed a significant emphasis on the quality of their workforce and invested heavily in the education and training of their people. This was essential for achieving sustainable growth and development of a nation.

Despite the differences in culture and approaches to education, I also observed that Indonesians possessed the same qualities, spirit, and passion for learning as their international counterparts. I saw firsthand Indonesians have immense potential, and **we need not feel inferior** to our international peers. Instead, **we should embrace our unique strengths** and showcase them to the world. Indonesians are resilient people who are capable of achieving greatness, and we should not let our insecurities hold us back.

IISMA experience has taught me **many valuable lessons** that have shaped me into the person I am today. It has made me **appreciate the diversity and complexity** of our world and has given me the confidence to pursue my dreams and achieve my goals. I hope that more Indonesians will have the opportunity to study abroad and gain similar experiences.

Not long after my arrival in Indonesia, **I was offered the chance to become an IISMA mentor who was responsible for the development of the IISMA awardee batch 2022.** It was such an experience as I got the chance to expand my networking even more with exceptional individuals both from the IISMA batch 2021 and 2022. I meet people that later become my besties, someone I look up to, and colleagues during my internship.

I still remember the vow I made during my IISMA recruitment process, helping those who were in need of their IISMA preparation. I was entrusted by more than **20 people** to help with their IISMA process. Thank God, I could help **11 of them get into the IISMA program**, and this was making me sitting with full of tears.

The experience I've received during the IISMA program also shaped me into a leader through the organization **I co-founded after my arrival. It was a non-profit consulting organization, named 180Degrees Consulting ITS.** I got the chance to implement the courses, life lessons, and cultures in the daily activities when I led the organization. This led to a strong fundamental initiation team that later regenerate into a more amazing management team.