The American influence in Indonesian teacher training, 1956–1964

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines United States–Indonesian cooperation in the training of Indonesian teachers during the early decades of the Cold War. Indonesia badly needed teachers but the government’s efforts to train new teachers were hampered by the tremendous lack of teachers who could train new teachers. The aid provided by the United States enabled the Indonesian government to send its prospective teachers to study in the United States and to have American educationists help develop teachers’ colleges in Indonesia. How far did the decolonisation of teacher training and the making of a new education standard in postcolonial Indonesia reflect the conflicting ideological undertones and the US strategy of the Cold War? This paper argues that the US–Indonesian cooperation in teacher training marked a significant stage in the decolonisation of Indonesia. Yet, it also fostered the US cultural strategy of the Cold War in Southeast Asia.

The islands and people that are today’s Indonesia were a Dutch colony until 1942. The Japanese took over and occupied them during the Second World War in the Pacific. Then, amidst an uncertain transitional shift of power following the defeat of the Japanese by the Allied Forces in August 1945, the Indonesian nationalist leaders declared independence by which the Indonesian nation-state came into being. Because the Netherlands did not want to let go of its colonial possession and attempted to re-establish power by sending troops and institutionalising an administration that caused a prolonged war against the locals, the Indonesian 1945 declaration of independence only gained international recognition four years later, in December 1949. This international recognition made Indonesia a fully sovereign nation-state freed from hundreds of years of European colonisation. The 1950s therefore marked the beginning of Indonesian nation-state formation in the true sense. However, the decade also marked a turbulent period. The effort to make sense of independence – popularly known by Indonesians as ‘mengisi kemerdekaan’ (fulfilling the independence) – turned out to be enormously problematic, which Indonesians themselves now had to deal with.

One of the most crucial issues concerned the education system that independent Indonesia should develop. While there was a wish by nationalists for an educational system
that should be Indonesian in character, for the time being the existing and perhaps the only workable model was the pre-Second World War type of system inherited from the Dutch colonial government. Meanwhile, the lack of teachers, study materials and school buildings remained a serious challenge. Regardless of political independence and the world’s recognition, a confused process of transition ensued for a considerable time.

This paper is an attempt to portray the dynamics of education institutionalisation in Indonesia during the early independence period, from 1956 to 1964. In particular, the focus of this paper is to examine the cooperation between the Indonesian and United State governments in the training of Indonesian teachers and in developing teachers’ colleges in Indonesia. The teachers’ college, called Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (Faculty of Teacher Training and Education), was a higher learning institution for teachers of general high school and vocational high school of teacher training, which produced primary school teachers. The college was thus a strategic institution for teacher preparation. In the larger context of international relations in the 1950s, why was the issue of Indonesian teacher training a concern of Indonesia and the United States alike? Why did both the Indonesian and the US governments at that time agree to cooperate in a relatively unfashionable area of international relations such as teachers’ education?

From the Indonesian perspective, generally speaking, the unsteady process of re-establishing the educational system in the post-Second World War period represented the turbulent nature of the efforts to make sense of independence. Indonesian nationalist leaders had for a long time worked on the national education system that was aimed to nurture among the people the sense of being Indonesian and of being citizens of the world. Independence, as Indonesia’s first president Sukarno put it, became a ‘golden bridge’ to the implementation of such ideals in which education was a pivotal instrument. The philosophy and atmosphere of education in the 1950s gradually revealed a vision of the future profile of the schools and the teachers, whom Indonesia should and would have. However, the lack of educational facilities created emergency circumstances and, thrust up by continuous changes in political regimes during the period, had forced successive ruling governments to initially employ the stratified educational system and personnel of the pre-war past.

As a newly born nation-state, Indonesia could not possibly endure stratification in its education system that discriminated against pupils based on their socio-economic background and ethnic origins. Independent Indonesia needed a new education system so as to realise the ideals envisioned by its Constitution, that is, a just welfare society where the basic rights of the citizens were equally recognised and met by the State. Thus the stratified types of teacher training inherited from the Dutch period were not compatible with the new political atmosphere of the 1950s. But there was also a practical reason as to why Indonesia in the 1950s could not continue to copy the teacher training system of the former mother country, the Netherlands. In the post-Second World War Netherlands, the upgrading of the secondary teacher training school to a college did not occur until 1968. Although the Dutch parliament (De Tweede Kamer) had passed a new teacher-training school bill (Kweekschoolwet) as early as February 1952, budget limitations caused the Netherlands government to postpone the founding of a teachers’ training college until several years later.1

1Mineke van Essen, Kwekeling Tussen Akte en Ideaal: De Opleiding tot Onderwijzer(es) vanaf 1800 (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij SUN, 2006), 290–1.
The teacher-training reform in Indonesia thus took place more than a decade before reform in the Netherlands. Indonesia could not wait to look for a new model from another country. American assistance in developing the teacher training college in 1956, followed by the closure of several teacher training schools of the pre-war style in 1958, marked a new direction in the institutional establishment of Indonesian teacher training, which renounced the old colonial system. For Indonesia, taking the United States as its example served as a milestone in the transition from the continental European to the American system of teacher training. The decolonisation of teacher training on the one hand and the making of a new standardisation of training on the other hand reflected the conflicting ideological undertones of the changing regimes and the emerging nation-state. It also reflected the US strategy of the Cold War in Southeast Asia. The removal of nearly all Dutch teachers from public schools, the influx of American and English-speaking advisers, the replacement of Dutch by English in the curriculum and the substitution of Dutch-language by English-language books in the late 1950s all certainly reflected the spirit of decolonisation and reform that the government of independent Indonesia aimed to work on. However, the remarkable influence of American professors, curricula and textbooks also raised issues of what Phillip G. Altbach and Gail P. Kelly call neo-colonialism in education. At this point, the Indonesian experience in reforming its teacher training in the 1950s echoed the global discourse of postcolonial education problems.

It goes without saying that the field of education and teacher training is a strategic arena of ideological struggle. In the post-Second World War context, governments of the newly emerging states ‘used education as a principal means to forge national unity and a common citizenship.’ Meanwhile, Cold War rivalries pushed the Soviet Union and the United States and their allies to spread their ideologies ‘for the allegiance of, and for influence over, the so-called Third World.’ To this end, the United States was leading in developing strategies of global diplomacy. The US government spread the American way of life to foreign countries by integrating international cooperation programmes into aid programmes. So, during the Cold War US foreign policy included soft diplomacy that submerged the promotion of American culture under both aid and cooperation agendas. The reform of Indonesian education and teacher training in the 1950s best suited the scheme and interest of US soft diplomacy of the Cold War.

Whereas the Indonesian government of the 1950s attempted to create and to unite the sense of being Indonesian among the people by cutting off the Dutch colonial legacy in education, its embrace of the American teacher training system and financial aid indicated a new dependency that tended to reproduce a colonial relationship. The notion of neo-colonialism in the relationship was self-evident, as Subedi and Daza say, in the ‘salutary reminder of colonial relations within the new world order.’ Symbols and representations of colonialism were abhorred by nationalist discourse of the Indonesian leaders but the pattern
of domination and dependency remained persistent. Hence, complexity and ambiguity characterised US–Indonesian cooperation in the training of Indonesian teachers in the 1950s. As postcolonial theorists Childs and Williams put it, ‘continuity of preoccupation’ lingered on throughout the processes of the relationship.8

From a pedagogical perspective, meanwhile, the desire of Indonesia to have prospective teachers prepared not at a secondary but at a tertiary institution was growing in parallel with what was happening in the United States. As education historian James W. Fraser says, in the 1950s American high schools required every teacher to have a college degree for which ‘the restructuring of the institutions which offered these degrees’ was a prerequisite. In the 1950s, the century-old American practice of two-, three- and four-year normal schools, which had gradually been upgraded since 1928, had been completely transformed into colleges for teacher training. By 1960, the United States had already reached the stage at which only university colleges had the authority to train high-school teachers. ‘American teachers’, Fraser says, ‘were prepared in – and only in – education departments and schools of large, multipurpose colleges and universities’.9 The American educational aid to Indonesia and the standardisation in the United States itself of the institutional preparation of American high-school teachers coincided with the need in Indonesia for assistance and with its desire to have its secondary-school teachers trained at a higher learning institution. There was thus a parallel episode in the history of teacher training between the two countries.

All those points of significance notwithstanding, the historiography of US–Indonesian relations of the 1950s and 1960s has until today largely focused on American involvement in the critical episode that led to the Indonesian Communists’ attempted coup of 30 September 1965, particularly the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).10 In these extensive historical studies, the US is said to have played a double strategy in pre-empting the spread of Communism and in securing long-vested economic interests in Southeast Asia. Other aspects of US–Indonesian relations during the period have been generally overlooked. Although much has been said about American educational initiatives in the training of Indonesian engineers, agriculturalists, and the economists who later gained some notoriety as the ‘Berkeley Mafia’,11 those promoting the training of secondary-school teachers have hardly received any scholarly attention either in comparative education studies12 or in the historiography of education in Indonesia and Southeast Asia in general.13

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is a historiographical void on this particular topic that this paper aims to fill. Although the American aid programmes were not the only ones of their type in Indonesia during the period, their long-term impact was probably the most remarkable. Likewise, whereas Indonesia was not the only country in Southeast Asia in which the United States was actively engaged in educational aid, it was perhaps the only one which became the main effort of US non-military foreign policies in the region at the time.14

Colonial legacy

In the early 1950s, the new ruling government of the Republic of Indonesia had to deal with a tremendous shortage of teachers and school buildings. This shortage created an emergency situation where the people's desire for education grew rapidly after the full recognition of Indonesian independence and could not wait to be met. As a result, the government attempted to find a solution to the problems in an emergency manner, for example by organising a short teacher training course. This dynamic situation in the 1950s, in which the government – albeit limited in budget and capacity – attempted to catch up with the people's enthusiasm for education; this is what I refer to as 'a turbulent period of mengisi kemerdekaan'. In this section I shall briefly discuss the issue of a teacher shortage so as to provide a background to the Indonesian benchmarking to the United States, which would settle the turbulent situation by the end of the 1950s.

M. Hutasoit, the Secretary General of the Indonesian Education Ministry, said in Indonesia in 1950 there were only 84,413 teachers available for 5,040,800 primary school pupils. On the basis of a class of 50 pupils (!), the number of teachers should have been 100,816. In brief, the number of the teachers in 1950 was 16,403 short.15

Perhaps Bengkalis Regency on the East Coast of Sumatra best exemplified the case of a teacher shortage at a local level. In the five districts of Bengkalis in the 1951/1952 school year, there were in total 11,835 pupils in 85 primary schools in which 229 teachers worked. This implies that a school of about 140 pupils was run by only two or three teachers. Abdoellah Sani, head of the Bengkalis School Inspectorate, said that, with the population numbering 220,000 people in March 1952, Bengkalis should have had 220 primary schools and 1320 teachers (six per school). The real situation – 85 schools with 229 teachers – was therefore 135 schools and 1091 teachers short.16 All over Indonesia, the ‘production capacity’ of the existing secondary schools of teacher training, where prospective teachers of primary schools were prepared, was far below the actual need. In 1953 there were only 195 four-year teacher schools with 36,681 students and 57 six-year teacher schools with 8949 students.17 Even if all students at these teacher schools up to 1953 had graduated, the shortfall of teachers could not have been made up.

It is quite appropriate to say that the problem of teacher shortage in the early 1950s was like the chicken-or-egg conundrum. Indonesia needed teachers. But they were not available

17 Hutasoit, Compulsory Education, 83; Daftar Angka-Angka tentang Djumlah Sekolah dan Banjarka Muriindja, AKP 1131 (ANRI).
because there were hardly any staff who could train aspirant teachers to work to attain educational improvement and carry out an expansion programme, which in turn could produce more teachers. Many graduates of the pre-war Dutch-language teacher school – the cream of the educated Indonesians who could have served to educate aspirant teachers after the War – had gone into different professional careers, mostly the military. Those remaining in the educational sector assumed duties in the ministry and at inspectors’ offices.18

During his visit to Aceh in 1951, President Soekarno was handed seven petitions from different educational organisations in northern Sumatra, all requesting teachers for secondary schools.19 A.K. Pringgodigdo, director of the presidential cabinet, said that the demand for teachers in Aceh was a shared concern of the public ‘from the left and the right, the young and old, government officials and self-employed parents’.20 Central Java also wanted more teachers. In 1953 the local People’s Representatives urged the central government in Jakarta to allow them to appoint teachers regardless of qualification. This could even include Junior High School leavers who did not have any training in teaching.21

In this desperate situation, anyone with some education could serve as a teacher. From the data Hutasoit presented, it is known that about 18% of the 84,413 primary teachers in the 1950/1951 school year had four years’ training after primary school; 42.8% had two years; training and the rest, 39.2%, had fewer than two years of training.22

The government’s solution to the emergency was to launch in 1954 a teacher college, the Higher Institution of Teacher Training (HITT), simultaneously in three different towns: Malang, East Java; Bandung, West Java; and Batungsangkar, West Sumatra.23 In 1955, another HITT was launched in Tondano, North Sulawesi24 and in 1956 yet another was established in Medan, North Sumatra.25

Unfortunately, the Indonesian government in the 1950s was not able to adequately fund HITT. Its financial capacity was seriously limited with the educational budget displaying a wide gap between revenue and spending, for example, in the 1952/1953 fiscal year.27 In short, the government required a great deal of effort and a huge amount of resources before it could develop the HITT to achieve advanced training at tertiary level.

US–Indonesian cooperation in the training of schoolteachers hence began at the moment when Indonesia was in dire need of schoolteachers and of reform in the teacher training school system. While primary and secondary school teachers were both urgently needed, the existing teacher-training school was mostly for the training of primary-school teachers. The first form of teachers’ college, the HITT, was meant to prepare secondary school teachers. Yet it did not run well because of the government’s limited capacity.

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19‘Resolusi-resolusi (7) mengenai soal kekurangan guru di Atjeh’, AKP 1085 (ANRI).
20‘7 (Tudjuh) keperluan guru di Atjeh’, AKP 1085 (ANRI).
21‘Salinan surat keputusan Dewan Perwakilan Rakjat Daerah Propinsi Djawa Tengah, 30 September 1953’, AKP 1086 (ANRI).
22Hutasoit, Compulsory Education, 45.
23See speeches of Education Minister, Muhammad Yamin, during the opening ceremonies in the towns of Malang, East Java and Batusangkar, West Sumatra, 1954.
24‘Teacher Training Colleges (PtPG) in Indonesia’, dossier Study Tour by Deans of Indonesian Teacher Training Colleges, Ford Foundation Grant No. 05600326, reel No. 0843, p. 2. The order of reference hereafter: document title, dossier title, Grant no., page(s) referenced.
26‘Minta bantuan begrooting dari Pemerintah untuk penyudahan SMP Tarusan dengan segera’, AKP 1199 (ANRI); ‘Pembangunan Sekolah Guru Bengkalis’, AKP 1221 (ANRI).
27‘Undang-Undang No. 50 Tahun 1954 tentang Penetapan Anggaran’, Cabinet Secretary Archive 143 (ANRI).
US educational aid to Indonesia 1950s–1960s

American aid for the training of Indonesian teachers during the 1950s for Indonesia came just in time. For the United States, it was the manifestation of a policy to improve relations between the American and Indonesian nations. 28 This aid was, however, only one of the different types of aid that the US bestowed. Under the so-called ‘Marshall Plan’, the US government provided financial assistance in various strategic fields. From 1950 to 1961, US aid to Indonesia reached a total of 544.9 million US dollars, consisting of loans (37.69%), grants (25.25%) and sales (35.43%) and equipment (1.63%). 29 The US aid enabled Indonesia to purchase vital consumer goods, sell surplus agricultural commodities, and purchase technical assistance for both educational and non-education purposes. The United States also provided training for Indonesian doctors, economists, engineers, agriculturists, technical teachers and the teachers of general secondary school (Table 1). Books, equipment, teaching assistance, consultants and capital assistance were also supplied. The US aid programmes were coordinated by the International Co-operations Administration (ICA). 30

According to Donald Hindley, up to 1961, a total of 2500 Indonesians had been sent to the United States and other western countries, paid for by the American government. Meanwhile, by 1961 there were approximately 200 American specialists in Indonesia, the largest groups being in education (40 people), transportation (39), public health and sanitation (32), agriculture and fisheries (30) and public administration (29). 31

Seen from the US perspective, the educational aid to Indonesia in the 1950s was part of the bigger narrative of Cold War policy, namely in preventing Indonesia from falling under Communist control. Although this holds true, Robert Pringle argues that the Cold War was only one of the issues. 32 The United States had been actively developing its economic interests in Indonesia since the 1920s when American consular offices focusing on a trade

### Table 1. United States–Indonesia cooperation in higher education 1955–c.1969.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields</th>
<th>US institution organiser</th>
<th>Indonesian institution organiser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Economics</td>
<td>University of California at Berkeley</td>
<td>University of Indonesia Jakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of California</td>
<td>University of Indonesia Jakarta</td>
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<td></td>
<td>University of Kentucky</td>
<td>Gadjah Mada University Yogyakarta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>University of Kentucky</td>
<td>Technical Institute Agribusiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical teacher training</td>
<td>Tuskegee Institute</td>
<td>Technical Training Center in Medan (North Sumatra) and Sema-rang (Central Java)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public secondary-school teacher training</td>
<td>State University of New York</td>
<td>Teacher Colleges of Bandung (West Java), Malang (East Java), Tondano (North Sulawesi)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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30Lev, Some Descriptive Notes, 6–11.


mission were opened in the cities of Batavia (today’s Jakarta), Surabaya and Medan. By the late 1930s, according to Tribuana Said, the United States had gained a share concession in the oil wells near the South Sumatra sub-districts of Pendopo and Talang Akar. After the Second World War, the US policy pursued was to ‘secure open access to the area as a source of strategic raw materials and as an export market to the US and its allies’. US Foreign Relations documents indicate that, in the early 1950s, American diplomats in Jakarta were very alert to the potential threat to American investments in Indonesia of the Indonesian Communists seizing power. This implies that the US interest in Indonesia had a long-vested economic motivation at its core.

Seen from the Indonesian perspective, on the other hand, the reason for Indonesia to model the US education and teacher training system was quite practical. Until 1956, it was only the United States that offered Indonesia substantial assistance to improve public education, including in the training of schoolteachers. Robert Murray Thomas, one of the American educationists sent by the US government to Indonesia in 1958, said, ‘In the late 1950s and into the 1960s, there were some New Zealanders who taught in the city of Bandung. But the number was very modest.’ Although the United States did not stand entirely alone, as Thomas said, it certainly exhibited leadership in training Indonesian teachers during that time.

Indonesia was certainly not the only targeted recipient of US educational aid. Up to 30 April 1956, the US ICA had financed or was financing some 52 US universities in conducting 80 cooperation projects with universities in 36 countries across Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe. On the other hand, for Indonesia, regardless of the leading position of the United States in providing support and aid, Soviet Bloc countries, Western European countries and Japan also became other sources of development aid. The Soviet Bloc countries’ financial assistance to Indonesia from 1955 to 1961 totalled 1.026 billion US dollars, all in the form of loans. As of July 1961, at least 300 technicians from Soviet Bloc countries were working in Indonesia and about 300 Indonesian students were studying in these countries. In total, up to July 1961, approximately 4410 Indonesians had received or were receiving specialised training abroad financed by foreign aid from any one of the Western and Eastern Bloc sponsors. Last but not least, Indonesia was also granted assistance by United Nations organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Technical Assistance Board (UNTAB), which provided aeronautical engineering and high-school science teaching.

Naturally, the various forms of foreign aid to Indonesia were not without strings attached to the economic and ideological interests of the donor countries. As Guy J. Pauker and Donald Hindley have suggested, the influx into Indonesia of a large amount of aid from

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35Ibid., 5.
37Email communication with Robert Murray Thomas, November 18, 2010.
38‘ICA-Financed University Contracts in Operation as of April 30, 1956 Unclassified’, Study Tour, Grant 05600326, 2.
40Ibid., 111–12.
41Lev, Some Descriptive Notes, 16–19.
ideologically different countries during the 1950s and 1960s is impossible to understand outside the framework of Cold War competition, which viewed Indonesia as a strategic battlefield. American aid for the training of Indonesian teachers and for developing teacher training colleges was also related to the Cold War.

**American training of Indonesian teachers**

The background to the US–Indonesian cooperation programme was a series of rather unprecedented events. In August 1954, A.G. Pringgodigdo, an education official, represented the Indonesian Ministry of Education at the 200th anniversary of Columbia University in New York City. Observing the local situation during his visit, Pringgodigdo suggested that, if Indonesia were to open a teachers’ college, it should be part of a university like the Teachers’ College of Columbia University. About two years later, in 1956, Soegarda, director of Instruction of the Indonesian Education Ministry, during a business dinner also in New York, was approached by an executive of the Ford Foundation who asked whether the Indonesian Education Ministry would submit a proposal for the training of staff members and for the improvement of the existing teacher colleges, the HITT. As a follow-up, in December 1956, the deans of the HITT of Bandung, Malang and Tondano visited several US teacher training colleges under the sponsorship of the Ford Foundation. Their purpose was to study the organisation of curricula and the management of college-level teacher training. All these events became a crucial turning point for the development of the Indonesian teacher college in the next few years.

In the reports archived at the Ford Foundation Archives Department in New York City, the Indonesian teacher college project that the Foundation funded was described as having been ‘devised at the request of the Ministry of Education, the government of the Republic of Indonesia.’ The Programme Activity proposal of 23 August 1956 states that the Indonesian Ministry of Education had sought assistance in ‘enabling the advanced training of persons who, with such training, would qualify fully as faculty members and at the same time make a significant contribution to the development of concepts, curriculum, and methods of teacher training in Indonesia.’ The specific objectives of Indonesian training abroad including the following:

- to train a nucleus of permanent faculty members of the Higher Institution of Teacher Training;
- to contribute to Indonesia’s knowledge of pedagogy and educational policy;
- to contribute to the gradual evolution as well as well-organized, well-equipped institutions with a capacity to meet Indonesia’s requirements for well-trained secondary school teachers;
- to meet immediate needs for additional teachers in selected subjects;
- to improve the quality of instruction in secondary schools.

The project was coordinated by the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Teachers’ Training at New Paltz on behalf of the US government. The Institute of International Education in New York City worked on technical details of the programmes and represented

44 Interview with Robert Murray Thomas, Los Osos, California, October 16–17, 2010.
45 ‘Program Activity Proposal, August 23, 1956’, *Training Abroad for Faculty of Indonesian Teacher Training Colleges (FKIPs)*, Grant 05600336 reel No. 843, 2.
46 ibid.
the Indonesian government in dealing with educational institutions in the United States. The project was worth US$600,000 over three years. The funds made it possible for 12 prospective Indonesian teacher-college staff to be sent to study in the United States each year, and 10 American educationists to be sent to Indonesia to help reorganise and transform the HITT into a college.  

**Indonesian teachers in the United States**

Soon after an agreement was signed by both sides, US–Indonesian cooperation in teacher training began by sending Indonesian teachers to the United States. As a start, the aforementioned Hutasoit selected five candidates, namely David Henki de Queljoe, Constantijn Adelbert Pakasi, Mas Achmad Gazali Surianatasudjana, Slamet Rahardjo, and Nji Raden Hatidjah Wiriaatmadja. In a letter to the Ford Foundation representative in Jakarta, Michael Harris, Hutasoit said that the five selected candidates should commence their study in the United States in the Fall Semester of September 1956. Hutasoit added that the second group of the 1956 batch quota – consisting of seven people – would leave for the United States before the second semester of 1956/1957 began.

Serious stumbling blocks immediately surfaced in the implementation of the programme. One of them was Indonesian policy-makers’ lack of a frame of reference to the extent to which the new teacher college in Indonesia would be developed by the sending abroad of its prospective teachers. As Harris said, the Indonesian Ministry of Education had not tried ‘to establish any relationship between its anticipated requirements for teacher training college instructors and the subjects in which the fellows [sent to the US] will specialise’. According to Harris, no Indonesian officials had mentioned anything but the ordinary content of a secondary school curriculum, languages, sciences, and mathematics as what they expected the Indonesian scholarship grantees to study in the US colleges. ‘I’m wondering if we can really fundamentally affect teacher education in Indonesia unless there is concentrated attention on study of teacher training, curriculum, educational methods’, he wrote in a report.

After intense discussions between Harris and Hutasoit, the Indonesian Ministry was able to draw up the expected academic profile of the teacher-college instructors. The majority of the candidates should specialise in educational science. ‘Even those few who may major in the natural sciences should have a strong dose of education,’ Harris noted. It was hoped selected grantees would qualify for either a Bachelor or Master’s degree with a balanced curriculum between pedagogy and subject-matter. They were expected ‘to become competent as teacher trainers in planning curriculum, to improve their teaching methods, and to know better how to administer their responsibilities’.

The candidates’ varying educational backgrounds hindered the smooth implementation of the programme. Many applicants held diplomas from different types and levels of high schools of the Dutch and Japanese times. Consequently, they could not commence university

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49. Ibid.
51. Ibid., postscript, 5–6.
53. Letter from Harris to Overseas Programme Director, Kenneth R. Iverson, August 10, 1956, *Training Abroad*, Grant 05600336, 4.
education in the United States in the same phase. It was also reported that seven out of the
13 fellowship applicants, whose files were processed for selection on 19 July 1957, failed
to reach the required score in the English proficiency tests.\textsuperscript{54} To deal with the problems,
the Ministry of Education and the Ford Foundation Jakarta Office, in cooperation with
the University of Kentucky team and the UNESCO Science Teacher Centre, arranged a
seven-month preparatory course in Bandung, starting in the 1958 academic year.\textsuperscript{55}

In all, up to 1964, approximately 80 Indonesians had received or were receiving advanced
teacher training in the United States, mostly leading to a Master’s degree.\textsuperscript{56} However, Francis
Eugene Mooney, Jr, from 1959 to 1961 an Education Programme Officer of the US Agency
for International Development in Jakarta, said that over 200 Indonesians were sent to the
United States between July 1958 and March 1961 alone.\textsuperscript{57} Mooney might have been referring
to the training programmes both for secondary school teachers and for technical teachers
of agriculture and lower-level engineers.

Those Indonesians who were sent to the United States under the teachers’ college project
received full scholarships.\textsuperscript{58} They studied at the State University of New York in Albany,
New York Teachers College in New Paltz, the University of California at Santa Barbara,
Columbia Teachers College in New York, George Peabody Teachers College in Nashville,
the University of Texas, Miami University of Oxford in Ohio, the University of Michigan,
State University of Chicago in Illinois, and Harvard University School of Education. Their
subjects of study ranged from chemistry, physics, biology, audio-visual aids, economics,
educational science, history, mathematics and physical education, to psychology.\textsuperscript{59}

These prospective college teachers also received a substantial measure of training in edu-
cational science and didactics in addition to the subject in which they were specialising,
including curriculum design, school management and leadership. As consultant to this project,
Kenneth R. Williams said the staffing needs of a teacher-training college would cover the entire
teacher-training spectrum, namely: the general education areas of social studies, humanities,
mathematics and the biological and physical sciences; the cultural and developmental areas of
arts and crafts, homemaking and physical education; and the professional areas of educational
sociology, educational psychology, the materials and methods of instruction.\textsuperscript{60}

**American educationists in Indonesia**

Back in Indonesia there was an immediate need to improve the educational quality of the
existing colleges, the HITT. Unfortunately, although the aid programme sponsored by the
Ford Foundation also included the sending of American education experts, their expected
role in Indonesia was not yet clear. As was the case in the sending of Indonesians to the
United States, the Foundation officers in Jakarta and New York hardly knew anything about
precisely what it was the Indonesian government wanted from the sending of American
educationists.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{54}Letter from Harris to Program Director, F. F. Hill, July 19, 1957, *Training Abroad*, Grant 05600336, 1–2.
\textsuperscript{55}Program Activity Proposal, July 8, 1958, *Training Abroad*, Grant 05600336, 1.
\textsuperscript{56}I have based my calculation on the correspondence archives of the Ford Foundation.
\textsuperscript{57}Francis Eugene Mooney, Jr, ‘Some Highlights of the Development of Secondary and Teacher Education in Indonesia, 1950–
\textsuperscript{58}Letter from Acting Director, George H. Bennett, to Slamet Rahardjo, November 15, 1956, *Training Abroad*, Grant 05600336.
\textsuperscript{59}Letters from Harris to Hill, July 5 and 19, 1957, *Training Abroad for Faculty*.
\textsuperscript{60}Letter from Williams to Harris, August 8, 1956, 2, *Training Abroad for Faculty*.
\textsuperscript{61}Letter of January 16, 1957 to Harris, *Study Tour*, Grant 05600326, 3.
**Table 2.** List of American educationists of the Teacher College Project in Indonesia, 1958.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Field of specialisation</th>
<th>Position held at time of appointment</th>
<th>Specialisation requested by Indonesian teacher colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roger Williams Bancroft</td>
<td>EdD in Psychology, Syracuse University, 1952</td>
<td>Director of Education, State University Teachers' College, Cortland</td>
<td>Bandung college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Education, with qualifications in evaluation, tests, measures-</td>
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<td>•ments, and research techniques</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Science, preferably in physics and the teaching of Science</td>
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<td>• Science, preferably in physics</td>
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<td>• Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold M. Elsbree</td>
<td>EdD in Research and Administration, Syracuse University</td>
<td>Professor of Education; Director of Placement, State University Teachers' College, New Paltz</td>
<td>Malang college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June E. Lewis</td>
<td>EdD in Science and Mathematics, Harvard University</td>
<td>Associate professor of Science and Mathematics, Plattsburgh State Teachers College</td>
<td>• Education – generalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold E. Richardson</td>
<td>EdD in Junior High School Education, New York University, 1949</td>
<td>Professor of Science, Oswego Teachers College, NY</td>
<td>• Science, preferably zoology and the teaching of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James J. Sampson</td>
<td>EdD in Education, Columbia Teachers' College, 1950</td>
<td>Professor of Education, Oneonta Teachers College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Murray Thomas</td>
<td>PhD in Education, Stanford University, 1950</td>
<td>Professor of Education and Psychology, Teachers College at Brockport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert S. Bailey</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
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Source: 'Biographical Data on SUNY Team Members', *Improvement*, Grant 05800209.
To settle the issue, consultant Williams suggested a sisterhood relationship between a US teachers’ college and an Indonesian counterpart, for which the sending of American educationists would most suitably make sense. Then, from August to September 1957, John Jacobson, the dean of the SUNY College of Teachers’ Training in New Paltz, visited Indonesia to reach explicit agreement with the Indonesian government concerning ‘the nature of the relationship between the Indonesian teacher college and SUNY on the assignment of visiting faculty, and on needs for instructional equipment, materials and supplies’.

Meanwhile, on 1 September 1957 in Indonesia, the HITI, which so far had stood as an independent institution, was changed to the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences, and nominally became a part of a university. The Bandung HITI became the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences of Padjajaran University in Bandung; the Malang HITI became part of Airlangga University in Surabaya; and the Tondano HITI joined Hasanuddin University in Makassar. Hence, in the agreement between SUNY and the Indonesian Ministry of Education, it was stated that SUNY would send to the three colleges American personnel qualified to assist the teaching programmes in the field of education (pedagogy), science and the teaching of science, physical education, and other fields directly related to the preparation of teachers for Indonesian secondary schools.

In the United States, the recruitment of American personnel took place soon after Roger Bancroft was appointed the field chairman of the project in January 1958. Bancroft was Director of Education at the State University Teachers’ College at Cortland. He had learned from the recommendations drafted respectively by Jacobson and Williams on the characteristics required of the American individuals who would be sent to Indonesia for this purpose. The Americans to be sent to Indonesia, Jacobson stated, should be ‘of recognised competence in their respective fields’ and ‘able to act as advisers on curriculum and other organisational problems in the college’. According to Williams, the Indonesian deans who visited the United States were very insistent in saying that any individual sent from the United States should be someone ‘who will accept us [Indonesians] as we are and who will work with us where we are’. Williams recommended that the Americans sent be contracted to work in Indonesia for 18 to 24 months.

Bancroft began his job by touring various teachers’ colleges throughout the United States and interviewing prospective candidates. He finally selected six educationists: Harold M. Elsbree, June E. Lewis, Harold E. Richardson, James J. Sampson, Robert Murray Thomas, and Herbert S. Bailey (Table 2).

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62 Request for program action, Consultation with Ministry of Education, Indonesian Teacher Training Colleges (PTPGs), Grant 05790317 reel 0846.
64 Letter from Jacobson to Williams, November 26, 1957, Improvement of Instruction and Curriculum at Indonesian Teacher Training Colleges (FKIPs), Grant 05800209 reel No. 0849, 2–3.
65 A Proposal for Assistance, Grant 05800209, 3.
66 Letter from Jacobson to Carlson, November 26, 1957, Grant 05800209, 4.
67 Letter from Williams to Programme Associate, Carl Burness, March 4, 1957, Study Tour, Grant 05600326, 2.
68 Ibid., 4.
69 Biographical Data on SUNY Team Members, Grant 05800209.
Altogether the seven personnel, accompanied by their respective spouses and children, took pre-departure courses at Cornell University from 15 June to 1 September 1958. These courses on Indonesian language, culture, society, history and politics were coordinated by Indonesian linguist John M. Echols. Upon finishing the Cornell courses, the American team and their accompanying family members left for Indonesia between 8 and 13 September 1958.

Robert Murray Thomas, who was 37 years old at the time and the youngest among the educationists, said during an interview that he was very enthusiastic about going to Indonesia as he ‘had never known about the country and its people and was wondering about what he might see and experience there.’ Thomas, Lewis and the project field leader Bancroft and secretary Beryl Dwight were assigned to Bandung, West Java, with Sampson and Bailey assigned to Malang, East Java. Elsbree and Richardson were initially planned for assignment in Tondano, North Sulawesi. The outbreak of the Permesta rebellion in the Sulawesi region in 1958 forced SUNY to cancel the placement of any staff in Tondano so that the Tondano teacher college, like its Batusangkar counterpart, never did receive any assistance from the SUNY/Ford Foundation project. According to Thomas, Richardson was then assigned to the teachers’ college in Malang and Elsbree to Bandung.

The arrival of the American professors ushered in a new episode in teaching methods, curriculum design, textbooks and the internal organisation of the Indonesian teachers’ training colleges, but it took them some time before they could actually work out the planned reforms. They first had to come to terms with the frustrations and surprises caused by logistical problems, which were ‘not necessarily professional in nature but closely related and, at times, grimly controlling the professional work.’ Housing in particular was one of the serious logistical problems that those educationists and their families had to deal with during the first three months. In the contractual agreement signed in April 1958 by SUNY and the Indonesian Ministry of Education, it was stated that the latter would provide the former with ‘a house of suitable size for each family together with suitable furnishings (except refrigerators, stoves, and other furnishings from abroad which require expenditure in foreign exchange).’ As early as June 1958, SUNY had arranged with the Indonesian government to have the housing issue settled, but in reality it was to be November. With these logistical problems solved, the American personnel would face more challenges in their professional work.

**Reform areas of concern**

The initial work of the American personnel might be best addressed by examining some areas of reforms they had to deal with, such as teaching methods and the management of the teachers’ college.

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71′Revised Budget of 24 January 1958; Orientation Program at Cornell University for Foundation-Financed Personnel Going to Indonesia, Grant 05800160 reel No. 0848.
72Letter from Bancroft to Harris, August 10, 1958, Grant 05800283, *Improvement of Instruction and Curriculum*.
73Interview with Thomas.
75Interview with Thomas.
76Letter from Bancroft to Slocum, November 30, 1958, 1, Grant 05800283, *Improvement of Instruction and Curriculum*.
78FKIP Housing-Bandung, *Improvement*, Grant 05800283.

Teaching methods

In the first six-month report of 30 November 1958, which he wrote to the SUNY vice-president, John Slocum, Roger Bancroft highlighted three educational issues. First, nearly all – 99% Bancroft wrote – of education in Indonesia at high school and college level consisted of 'lecture, pure lecture'. All examinations were based on the lectures and the assigned reading. Degrees were determined by a series of oral examinations based on a certain number of lectures. 'The student does not have to attend the lectures', Bancroft wrote. 'If he can get copies, he can memorise these and get a degree or pass the course.'

This method of learning, Bancroft said, was typified by the story told by one of the University Presidents who went to Holland in the early 1920s to study law. 'Living was cheaper in Paris than in Leiden, so the students lived in Paris and, once a year, went to the University [in Leiden] to take their examinations, having, in the meantime, borrowed notes, read lectures and by devious other means prepared for the examinations.'

He further wrote:

Indonesia has rejected the Dutch way of life. They have taken over the industries, government, [and] economy and have truly 'Indonesianised' their country in most aspects. However, in their education, they have adhered rather totally to the Dutch-European system of heavy-handed, impractical, lecture method, with drill and memorisation of irrelevant material the dominant theme. This is true on all levels of education. There is no relationship between these educational processes and the social needs of Indonesia.

In short, the teaching and learning methods were one of the most critical concerns with which Bancroft and colleagues had to deal. Beyond the issue of pedagogical practices, however, Bancroft's statement highlighted the mentality of the Indonesians, which reflected a problem of postcolonial society. There a gap between the goal of independence and the social realities of the people remained unbridged. Although the nationalist leaders had formulated the ideal concept of citizenship in the Constitution, the people's daily life showed strong adherence to colonial and pre-colonial norms in which a lord–subject mode of social relations was self-evident. The case of teaching method Bancroft highlighted reflected a fundamental challenge that any education reform initiative in Indonesia would be confronted with in the 1950s.

Management

Meanwhile, the Bandung and Malang teachers' colleges were only four years old when the American personnel arrived. Bancroft recalled that they were both 'struggling desperately to come out from under the educational fog inherited from colonial rulers'. Bancroft said the framework of departmental structure and the general administrative organisation of the Malang College were both more casual than those in Bandung. In Malang, it was impossible to obtain a faculty roster for 1958–1959. 'Class schedules were announced on a bulletin board under the main building archway entrance', he said. A boy kept the schedule by sitting inside the front door. The dean's secretary neither typed nor took shorthand. Neither in Bandung nor in Malang were there any campus mailboxes, so each lecturer could be contacted only by a mimeographed form personally delivered to his/her home. In Bandung, 'the main office did not know where two of the heads of departments were living.'

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80 Letter from Bancroft to Slocum, November 30, 1958, 4.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 4–5.
83 Letter from Bancroft to Slocum, November 30, 1958, 8–9.
The science programme of the two colleges was ‘in a fantastic mess’, Bancroft complained. ‘Seldom do students get any chance for participation and real laboratory experience.’ The rooms and the laboratories in the Science building of the Bandung College were wonderful. But ‘it is difficult to find small dissecting tools and easy to find large “post-doctoral” research machines,’ Bancroft wrote. From Malang, Herbert Bailey and Harold Richardson told Bancroft that some 200 crates of science equipment, which arrived in 1954, had remained untouched in a warehouse. Bailey and Richardson ‘unearthed’ the equipment and said they were caught up in ‘at once completely fascinating and utterly incredible’ surprises. ‘Box after box of microscopes, micrometres, ammeters, voltmeters and the like, have come to light’, they told Bancroft. There was also ‘glassware (of all sizes and shapes) enough for undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral science classes for years’. All the equipment was estimated at a value of US$100,000. ‘Yet, the Biology Department, headed by a Dutchman, for four years has never had other than a lecture system with nothing approximating a demonstration or laboratory.’

At the Malang and Bandung Teacher Colleges, books were scattered. The Malang College had US$15,000 worth of books scattered on the ‘many shelves of a farcical library’. For unknown reasons, Bancroft was told, the Bandung College had boxes of the books deposited in the warehouse of the Education Ministry in Jakarta.

All these incidents made Bancroft and his colleagues believe that there was a key factor in the behaviour of the Indonesians that they had to tackle first. In the eyes of these Americans, the bottleneck in Indonesian educational improvement lay not so much in the lack of facilities as in the absence of operational guidance towards actual vigour or dynamism, which could set in motion the progress and improvement of education. By addressing cases of education practices, again Bancroft presented the problem of postcolonial Indonesian society that he identified as rooted in the people’s way of thinking. He believed changing people’s way of thinking, improving their work ethos and discipline, and providing them with guidance at the practical level of daily issues would be a key to the success of the reform plans, which the US aid aimed to achieve. However, by touching those aspects of mentality, Bancroft was manufacturing the Indonesians’ consent of behaviour to be favourable to US interests. Bancroft and his colleagues thought it was crucial to ‘get the staff and students alike to go through this exercise of stating objectives in terms of desired behavioural patterns.’ Bancroft said, ‘There seems to be only one way to success: [for American personnel] to be there in person, to supervise closely each minute operation.’ At this point, Altbach and Kelly were right in that a new type of colonialism characterised the educational assistance that the newly independent states in the 1950s received from western countries. What Bancroft said reflected a ‘continuity of preoccupation’ of the postcolonial context. His attempts to deconstruct colonial representations in Indonesian education symbolised the creation of a new pattern of the country’s dependency within the new world order.

It was obvious that Bancroft and his team were working not on the reform of Indonesian teacher education *per se*, but on the reconstruction of the behaviour and the mindset of...
Indonesians by using the teacher education programme as a case in point. ‘There is the tendency for people to do things without knowing why, for much disjointed effort’, Elsbree and Thomas told Bancroft.\footnote{Letter from Bancroft to Slocum, November 30, 1958, 10–12.} For example, people in the Institute of Educational Research in the Bandung Teacher College had asked Elsbree and Thomas to buy them tests, as Bancroft quoted in the following:

‘What tests do you want?’
‘What tests would be best?’
‘What do you want the tests to test?’
‘We want the tests to determine how good our students are.’
‘What do you want your students to be like?’

… Only then did the Institute’s people begin to think why they had actually wanted to have the tests.\footnote{ibid.}

**Outcomes**

The work of the American personnel began in complex situations that needed arranging and organising. Bancroft himself kept in close contact and consultation with both Sadarjoen, Dean of the Bandung College and Adam Bachtiar, of Malang. Harold Elsbree taught three classes on Methods of Research and conducted seminars with various sub-department groups. Robert Murray Thomas taught six two-hour classes in Education, Statistical Methods and General Classroom Methods. June Lewis tried to connect her classes on Mathematics and Science with the Science Teaching Center and a high school in Bandung. In Malang, Herbert Bailey, Jim Sampson and Harold Richardson also initially worked on the arrangement and organisation of the courses already available, a library and a laboratory, which took them ‘a longer time to see the daylight’.\footnote{ibid., 6–7, 9.}

Meanwhile, some of the Indonesians who had received fellowships to study in the United States had returned home. In 1958, Slamet Rahardjo and C.A. Pakasi returned from the Peabody Teachers College with a master’s degree in educational science. Rahardjo got a placement at Bandung College and Pakasi in Malang. Nji Raden Hatidjah Wiriaatmadja, returning from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, sometime in December 1958, was assigned to assist June Lewis in Bandung. Tahalilli assisted Sampson and Patti helped Richardson in Malang. Winarno Surachmad, who had studied educational psychology from 1957 to 1959, worked closely with Thomas in Bandung and both collaborated in writing Indonesian-language textbooks on the methods of teaching, tests and measurements. Santoso, who earned his bachelor in audio-visual equipment in 1959, worked with Elsbree in constructing a model for audio-visual aided learning interactions.\footnote{Interview with Thomas; letter from Bancroft to Slocum, November 30, 1958, 7.} Many more staff members returned later in the 1960s: Mochtar Buchori, Raka Djoni, Tarwotjo, Soedijarto, H.A.R. Tilaar and others.\footnote{Interviews with these people in Jakarta and Malang, August 2007.}

As the American-trained Indonesian and the American personnel worked side by side, the outcomes of their cooperation gradually bore fruit in several aspects of the teachers’
college. I rely on my interview with Robert Murray Thomas, who served in the Bandung college from 1958 to 1964 and then became a consultant to the Indonesian Ministry of Education until the 1980s. Thomas said that the American professors employed the student-based learning approach as their method of teaching, instead of giving lectures. They also set out academic activities in a way that allowed students to study real-life cases. Thomas said he had believed most teachers taught by modelling the teaching style of those who had taught them rather than by following theoretical instructions from books. Therefore, when trying to modify the teaching method at the Bandung college, Thomas taught by making the students do what they had to learn. In this way, Thomas argued, they had much more freedom to learn.95

Another point was the introduction of the knowledge of social structure in sociology classes. Thomas assigned students to conduct simple surveys by asking schoolchildren to rank a number of objects in their daily lives: the type of houses, the type of professions, the type of popular games, the type of food and so on.96 The aim was to understand the characteristics and the social backgrounds of the children. ‘Understanding the social background of children will help us understand what and how to teach them,’ Thomas argued.97

Edward R. Fagan classified the teaching methods that Thomas used as ‘discussion and laboratory’. In 1963, Fagan was one of the American consultants to the Indonesian government. Fagan asserted that in America the discussion and laboratory methods had helped prospective teachers broaden their outlook and improve their teaching methods.98

Fagan compared the structures of the curricula of the Indonesian and American teachers’ colleges and concluded they were much alike (Table 3). He argued that some measures needed to be taken by the Indonesian teachers’ colleges to deal with the flexibility and integration principles which had underlined the development of the American curriculum.99 Writing again in 1984, Fagan pointed out the changes in the curriculum of the Indonesian teachers’ college, which, he claimed, were reflecting the recommendation of the American team back in the early 1960s. Courses were constructed individually, he said. But inter-college committees – consisting of staff members from general, professional and specialised clusters – conducted regular evaluations to test the relevance and the connectivity of courses in the different clusters.100

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Subject clusters</th>
<th>Indonesian Teachers’ College</th>
<th>American Teachers’ College</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Credit hours</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Education</td>
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<td>Special Education</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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95Interview with Thomas.
97Interview with Thomas.
The outcomes of the Indonesian–American cooperation in developing the teachers’ colleges were also apparent in other ways. Indonesian teachers gradually became familiar with the use of English. Bruce Lannes Smith says that, by 1960, English had gradually replaced Dutch as the Indonesians’ ‘principal medium of access to the bulk of the world’s educational, scientific and technological writings’. The use of English was bolstered by both the American professors and the American-trained Indonesian staff. It was also promoted by English-language books, which came to fill the teachers’ college libraries. As the Ford Foundation reported, the procurement of books, study materials and laboratory equipment was carried out on a large scale during the execution of the teacher training project. All in all, as Mooney recalled in 1963, the US educational initiatives in Indonesia had ‘helped train the Indonesians to run their own institutions of higher education’. They also ‘assisted them [the Indonesians] in revising university curricula.’

**Conclusion**

American involvement in developing the Indonesian teacher-training colleges provided the training of secondary-school teachers in Indonesia with a quality reference (or benchmark) in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, organisational management and school books. From 1956 to approximately 1964, the United States – through governmental and private organisations – shared Indonesian efforts to set up the blueprint, the courses, the training contents and the staff of the teachers’ colleges. The American involvement disrupted the traditional orientation in Indonesia towards the European/Dutch style of teacher training. The Indonesian switch from the Dutch teacher-training style could be regarded as de-colonisation, namely moving away from the shadow of a colonial entity.

De-colonisation was not a clear-cut concept, however. The close cooperation between the United States and Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s raised questions about the extent of educational independence, from which viewpoint the training of teachers would be understood in Indonesian history. It holds true that the Indonesian teacher colleges benefited from improvements in the curriculum and teaching methods made possible by American aid. However, the direction in which teacher training in Indonesia then developed also revealed much of the idea of ‘Americanisation’. As Gerald A. Dorfman says, a question arises as to whether the benchmarking of Southeast Asian newly emerging states to the American educational system in the 1950s was simultaneously an Americanisation that hindered the decolonisation process of the time. This notwithstanding, Indonesia and the United States shared the same process – albeit at different times – in preparing their high school teachers, as education historian James W. Fraser puts it.

Another point is obvious: education and teacher training in Indonesia during the 1950s and the early 1960s, naturally a domestic issue, became an international interest faceted by

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101 Bruce Lannes Smith, _Indonesian–American Cooperation in Higher Education_ (Michigan: Michigan State University, 1960), xi.
102 Improvement, Grant 05800209.
ideological undertones of the Cold War. In this case, US strategy towards Indonesia seemed to be more outreaching than its Soviet counterpart. The training of Indonesian technicians, economists, agriculturalists, doctors and engineers in and by the Western and Eastern Bloc countries was of course crucial to developing a favourable Indonesian political attitude to the respective bloc countries. However, training school teachers was a truly strategic decision. By training Indonesian school teachers, hence making them learn from the Americans how to develop an educational system, curricula, school books and how to teach English, the US government actually secured the dissemination of the American way of thinking to the future generations of Indonesia. These American-trained or America-inspired Indonesian teachers would bear in mind the experience, knowledge and values of American society. In this sense, the US policy went beyond the teacher training per se. It was aimed at reaching a larger group of Indonesians in the future through education.

The particular US mission in training Indonesian teachers was soft diplomacy that gave a different dimension to the otherwise military- and politics-heavy historiography of the Cold War. In this context the US ‘soft diplomacy’, to borrow Schneider’s words, meant that ‘[t]he US government, through the State Department and other agencies … orchestrated an unprecedented dissemination of American thought and creative expression throughout the world.’106 Whereas existing historiography also tends to regard the American educational initiatives in Southeast Asia during the 1950s as part of the domestic project of nation-building,107 this paper has argued that those in Indonesia were a manifestation of a cultural strategy that melted the ideological and pragmatic interests of both the United States and Indonesia. This paper has asserted that Indonesian educational reform of the 1950s, a precondition for Indonesia to fulfil its independence, was for the United States a multipurpose instrument of bilateral relations, although this was not without tension and rupture at a later stage during the 1960s, especially due to the 1965 tragedy in Indonesia.

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**Notes on contributor**
