

Amol Titus awarded Global Visionary Award

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Amol Titus awarded Global Visionary Award for being “an eminent management expert and bridge builder between India and Indonesia.”



Mr Amol Titus, President Director of IndonesiaWISE or Pak Amol as he is known to his many management associates, friends and students in Indonesia was awarded the prestigious Global Visionary Award by Vision World at a function held at Tagore Hall, Ahmedabad, Gujarat in January 2015. The award recognizes contributions made by eminent Indians in the fields of medicine, business, education, creative arts, education and others. The award citation to Mr Amol Titus highlights his multi faceted personality and achievements in the fields of management, education, writing and contributions to India-Indonesia relations for over a decade and a half. While the other awardees were from USA, Africa and the Middle East, he was the only recipient from Southeast Asia in 2015.

IndoIndians congratulates Mr Amol Titus on his achievement. Poonam Sagar spoke to him about the award and his areas of focus and contribution in future.

PS: Congratulations Amol on your award. Many of us who have seen your dedication and achievements believe that you fully deserve this award and feel proud about it. Can you share your thoughts about this achievement?

AT: Thank you for kind words and to IndoIndians for highlighting the various initiatives undertaken by like minded people from both India and Indonesia towards enhancing the relationship between the two countries.

I was taken by surprise when contacted about the award. Vision World had apparently done research about my work and achievements and they were keen to learn more. Apart from professional accomplishments they want to focus on contributions made to society especially in the areas of education, relationship building between countries and proactive participation in intergovernmental initiatives.

Over the last several years aside from my work in strategic consulting I have consistently taken time out for teaching at Universities, mentoring students and young professionals, writing in a variety of media and journals and support chambers of commerce and government initiatives. I have always approached these activities with a sense of passion because these activities matter to me and have helped me to grow and develop as a human being. That is the true reward. Other awards and citations while sincerely appreciated should be only taken as a helpful pat on the back and one should march on undistracted.

PS: You are widely respected in the field of management with several leading organizations benefitting from your advice. But what I found even more noteworthy is that you have coached and mentored over 3000 Indonesians over the past several years. Can you please elaborate on this?

AT: Yes I believe for a manager one of the most rewarding aspects of the role is coaching and mentoring. It's not about the title, position or fancy planning. What is really important is rolling up your sleeves and taking people along with you. To transfer knowledge and skills openly and see people develop, acquire confidence and progress on their career journeys – that is so satisfying.

I am fortunate to be able to coach and mentor Indonesian students, professionals and just ordinary folk in three ways. First, one of the core consulting pillars of IndonesiaWISE is 'Transformational Management Development.' While we assist our clients on aspects like strategy, vision-values, implementation, risk management, quality improvements, organization structuring etc our focus is always to emphasize the importance of building skills and updating knowledge amongst employees. Without doing this consistently and with motivation how can companies expect their employees to cope with challenges regarding productivity, input cost inflation, competition, innovation, attrition etc.

Second, for several years now I have been teaching at leading Universities and I feel blessed that I can contribute in some way towards the shaping of the new generation of Indonesians who I believe have the potential to be world beaters in the decades to come. Often several of my students are mid career executives and to see them benefit through concepts and case studies and apply them at their workplace is also gratifying. I consider several of them quite capable of replacing expatriates over the medium term.

You know it is often said that Indonesia practices a relationship based culture as opposed to a transaction based one. Once you can create a high level of trust (it might take some time to achieve this) you will find Indonesians giving you wide space to contribute. I can attest to this as a senior visiting professor in leading universities where I have been given freedom to develop local management cases, conduct innovations such as 'management labs' involving industry-academia interface and shape the governance of new institutions. I am truly grateful for these opportunities and trust.

Third, since 2009 IndonesiaWISE has pioneered 'Young Leaders for Eco Cities' which helps socialize challenges and solutions related to urbanization. So in cities like Malang, Yogyakarta and Jakarta we have taught many participants about issues of urbanization and stressed the adoption of principles such as 4R or Refuse-Reduce-Reuse-Recycle. We encourage them to begin with their campuses, then reach out to neighboring communities and become responsible citizens. We also provide mentorship for practical projects involving research, tree planting, conservation, engagement with NGOs, promoting eco tourism, developing eco products and providing constructive feedback to government agencies.

This year we will expand Young Leaders for Eco Cities to Bandung and Purwakarta and I am also keen to launch it in India. There is a nice link to the Swach Bharat or Clean India campaign and I believe youth coaching, mentoring and engagement within the context of urbanization should be a critical part of such initiatives.

Coaching and mentoring is a two way street and I am sure genuine coaches and mentors will agree with me that they benefit equally through engagements. The process of listening, understanding and sharing experiences is mutually enriching.

PS: The Global Visionary Award you have received recognizes you as a "bridge builder between India and Indonesia". Please share your vision regarding India and Indonesia relations and future.

AT: It's a real honor to be called a "bridge builder" and it motivates me to do more. We all know the strong cultural and historical bonds between India and Indonesia. But what I believe is really important is not to live in the past or be content with releasing more declarations, communiqués or framework documents. Bridge building literally requires concrete, visible and long lasting actions. Plus you don't stop with just building one bridge. You construct, evaluate, celebrate and move on to the next.

In my forthcoming book 'Dance of Dynamic Democracies' due to be released in April 2015 I

highlight the importance of the India-Indonesia relationship incorporating a series of tangible projects. For example, joint projects between state owned enterprises (not just paper MOUs but actual investment on ground), facilitation of investments by Indonesian blue chips in India, creation of educational institutions (I have shown this is possible by collaboratively executing an engineering polytechnic), developing Indonesian IT sector & BPOs with the assistance of Indian IT majors such as has happened in nearby Philippines, jointly developing low cost bulk drugs for ailments like dengue fever, joint infrastructure development such as metros & toll roads, shared strengthening of democratic institutions and urgent diversification of bilateral trade which has been lopsided for several years now and remains overly dependent on commodities.

In my book I cite the example of South Korea. It has much less cultural commonality with Indonesia than India and yet through consistent investment and growing business penetration, today Korea is quite a critical partner for Indonesia. Culture, historical connections, lifestyle similarities provide the right motivations but we also need the practical and tangible 'concrete' mentioned above to build bridges. In my own way I intend to continue to be engaged in practical bridge building especially in strategic advisory, education, IT and bilateral trade facilitation.

PS: Please also share with our readers your impressions of Ahmedabad, Gujarat and the mood in the high profile conferences that you attended.

AT: Ahmedabad and Gujarat in general have definitely improved for the better under the leadership of respected PM Narendra Modi who was the former chief minister of the state for over a decade. I can give you the specific example of the Sabarmati waterfront where some conference related cultural evenings were held. The waters are clear, flowing and devoid of plastic or foul smells. Quite different from the garbage infested rivers of Jakarta that are creating havoc annually including at present. So this is another example of possible future partnership. Not only should other rivers of India emulate the example of the Sabarmati cleanup but we should also share knowhow with close friends like Indonesia. However, when doing so India should insist on a framework of projects that includes greater participation of Indian companies and experts.

The mood in India is quite optimistic and there is high expectation of change, reform and growth. I would counsel two important lessons that I have learnt from Indonesia – patience and collaboration. At times these are seen to be lacking in India. But achievement is not possible without both these qualities and I sincerely hope we can emulate these. Equally, Indonesia can emulate two good qualities from India – resilience and ability to generate homegrown solutions. Too often some people give up quickly here and projects are discarded midway. Support for local innovations, projects and domestic SMEs remains weak. Only with greater resilience and encouragement of homegrown solutions can Indonesia's growth become truly sustainable.

Finally, no journey to Ahmedabad can be complete without being moved by the enduring inspirations of Mahatma Gandhi who has always been a role model for me. His teachings on simplicity, cleanliness, harmonious intercultural and interpersonal relations, self reliance, common man centric economic development and personal integrity are even more relevant today. They also offer us solutions to several of the seeming intractable problems confronting us. For example, when I teach my course on services management I emphasize the value of the Gandhian approach to service epitomized by selflessness and caring for others. If these can be imbibed in a service culture of organizations they will truly stand out in the minds of consumers.

I am grateful to Vision World for presenting me a “Gandhi Chakra” as part of the awards – it will be an enduring source of inspiration.

A very nice new museum called Gandhi Kutir has been built near the Mahatma Mandir conference complex in Gandhinagar with excellent audio visual displays capturing the life and teachings of Gandhiji. I would encourage Embassy of India to socialize this more in Indonesia as developing Gujarat bound tourism will also be helpful in enhancing our people-to-people contacts. The ongoing Festival of India 2015, appropriately titled ‘Sahabat India’, which is a commendable effort of Embassy of India can perhaps incorporate this suggestion.

PS: Thank you Amol please keep up your laudable efforts and continue to inspire us.





Mr Amol Titus receiving the Global Visionary Award and addressing delegates



Mr Amol Titus at the historical Sabarmati waterfront in Ahmedabad now renewed and sparkling