



Outstanding Contribution to Indonesian Higher Education

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Amol Titus in conversation with Poonam Sagar

An interview with Amol Titus: *Indonesia has well documented challenges regarding higher education. Although the economy has grown, largely based on resource based exports and domestic consumption, it's long term sustainability requires skilled manpower. This has been found to be lacking with several industries complaining about shortage of talent despite large numbers of youth. The government is serious about addressing this issue and the corporate sector is also*

adopting a bigger role to support. But while many companies are still talking about it Indorama has already made remarkable progress with the forthcoming launch of Politeknik Enjinering Indorama or PEI. Poonam Sagar of IndoIndians talks to Amol Titus, well known professional, writer, lecturer and a key driver behind this path breaking project.

PS : Welcome. Could you share details with our readers about PEI?

AT: Thank you and I begin by congratulating Indo Indians on the excellent work you are doing in creating awareness about developments in Indonesia and India and bringing communities together. Politeknik Enjinering Indorama or PEI in short is a result of a grand vision of Mr SP Lohia, Chairman Indorama who is keen to support the development of quality institutes of higher learning in selected developing countries. The process began 2 years ago with close collaboration with Mr Amit Lohia and a core group of senior executives. It has been a period of intense effort and coordination and now we are ready for launch in September 2013.

PS: That's great. Tell me why did you choose Indonesia to start.

AT: In many ways Indonesia was the obvious first choice. Indorama began its operations here in 1974 and has grown to become a global success story from this country. It's biggest factory is located close to Jatiluhur in Purwakarta. Ironically, while Purwakarta has many leading factories it's higher education system is still underdeveloped. Graduates from Jakarta and Bandung are not keen to settle in Purwakarta and there is a scarcity of engineers. So this project that has been developed under the company's CSR program is a win-win all around. It helps Purwakarta communities, benefits industry and

most importantly provides graduates with affordable world class education that has excellent job prospects.



PS: That is what Indonesia exactly needs. Could you share some more details about the unique aspects of PEI?

AT: Sure. Our focus is on vocational training in disciplines where there is a talent shortage. So we chose engineering and specifically mechanical, electrical and mechatronics engineering which are all disciplines of interest to industry. We selected the Polytechnic model because it provides a compact 3 year diploma after school at the end of which graduates are ready to join good quality jobs. Unlike other

Polytechnics we will have the latest technology, updated curriculum that is linked to skills required by industry and practical training.

PS: I understand the institute is on a large campus. Please tell us more about the facilities.

AT: That is true we have developed the institute on a 6 hectare site close to the Indorama factory in Purwakarta. Students will get a campus feel with well laid out class rooms, labs, work sheds, canteen and other facilities. There is also a mini factory within the campus that will help students do on the job vocational training. We want our students to be problem solvers and apply theoretical learning in innovation, design, maintenance and continuous improvement. There is a dedicated computer lab with latest engineering hardware and software as well as a program to develop English proficiency. We have signed MOUs with Atma Jaya University and Politeknik Negeri Jakarta to strengthen academic collaborations. International collaborations are also under progress. Our total project outlay is USD 6 million so this is a comprehensive project with strong foundations.

PS: Apart from being one of the main drivers of this project what will be your role after launch?

AT: When I committed to Mr Lohia on developing these educational projects we agreed that I would be involved in long term institution building. As Head of Supervisory Board of PEI, I will remain closely involved and continue to supervise institution building. But we have a competent faculty and administration team comprising 100 pct Indonesian nationals and we are confident of their ability to make PEI one of the leading polytechnics in Indonesia.

PS: That's great. Tell me about your strong interest in education. I would like to recall for our readers that Amol has won a rare honor of winning the Best Lecturer award at the prestigious School of Business at IT Bandung.

AT: It's in my blood. My mother was a distinguished career educationist and it is a profession that I admire greatly. You can be dedicated, selfless and really help shape the future of students. Apart from my professional career and commitments I have always found time to teach students at institutes and universities. I enjoy that a lot and in Indonesia it is especially fulfilling because you can contribute

towards nation building at this critical time. The award from IT Bandung was a real shot in the arm and I am proud to be the first Indian to win the honor.

In India we are also fortunate to study in institutes of higher learning that have been developed by visionaries over many decades. I studied at St Stephen's Delhi and XLRI Jamshedpur. Like our IITs, IIMs and other leading colleges we have great inspirations that we can bring to such projects. So education and teaching has always excited me and I am also lucky to be married to a teacher.

PS : What's next after PEI?

AT : We are seriously considering a higher education project in India. It could possibly be in Nursing since that is a profession where Indian women have aptitude but require better quality institutions with international standard facilities and training in areas like post operative care, hygiene and technology. Plans are still being discussed but we are excited. After launch of PEI I will probably take a few days rest and then hit the education trail again. These projects take 2 years from conception to execution but if you have the passion time flies. I am very grateful to Mr Lohia and his son Amit for their trust and also very proud that PEI is a concrete testimony to the close links and relationship between Indonesia and India.

(Amol Titus is President Director of IndonesiaWISE. He is a multi-faceted personality – a leading management professional, writer, columnist, lecturer and active supporter of Indonesia-India relations. He can be contacted at amoltitus@indonesiawise.com)



H.E Mr Mohammad Nuh, Minister of Education with Mr SP Lohia, Mr Amol Titus and senior officials.



Politeknik Enjinering Indorama has assembled a high quality team from leading universities, polytechnics and industry. The team is ready to create a world class institute.



Heads and senior staff of major schools in and around Purwakarta have been engaged during the development of Politeknik Enjinering Indorama.



PEI has been developed on a 6 ha campus in Purwakarta. It will focus on electrical, mechanical and mechatronics engineering in Phase 1.



The institute features large industrial sheds that will be fully equipped to provide practical training to students.



A unique feature of PEI is the mini factory that will provide on the job training to students.



PEI has obtained DIKTI approvals. In this photo DIKTI team is seen with the core team implementing PEI.



A great partnership – Mr SP Lohia has a grand vision to develop institutes of higher education in selected developing countries with Mr Amol Titus leading teams in implementing this vision.