

USAID SHERA FINAL EVALUATION

A Model for
Sustainable Impact
in Higher Education



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Sustainable Higher Education Research Alliances

The USAID-sponsored Sustainable Higher Education Research Alliances (SHERA) program (2016-2021) successfully enhanced the Science & Technology research profile of over 30 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Indonesia. Through domestic and international collaboration, the program produced immediate, world-class research on high-priority topics that address Indonesia's development challenges, while also building the HEIs' capacity to continue such work into the future. The USAID SHERA program was implemented by the Institute of International Education, with support from Government of Indonesia.

The SHERA Approach

SHERA's approach of giving primary program management responsibilities to Indonesian HEIs was key to its success. SHERA assembled a broad set of Indonesian and U.S. HEIs (as well as various public/private entities) that spanned regions and institutional types and tapped the unused research potential of lesser-known institutions, women scholars, and the country as a whole. This approach enabled SHERA not only to produce remarkable immediate research, but also to build future research capacity on a national scale - creating a feedback loop between training, infrastructural development, and network building on the one hand, and real-time research and publication, on the other.

The Centers for Collaborative Research

SHERA established 5 Centers for Collaborative Research (CCRs) aimed at priority development issues:

- Acute respiratory infections (ARI)
- Animal biotechnology and coral reef fisheries (ANBIOCORE)
- Sustainable regional development (CDSR)
- Addressing urban challenges (SMART CITY)
- Sustainable transportation technology (NCSTT)

Each CCR was overseen by a leading Indonesian HEI, and constructed to include a wide-ranging, collaborative mix of partners. In all, 30+ Indonesian HEIs, 12 U.S. HEIs, and 40+ governmental agencies, private companies, health providers, and local communities participated- spread across 14 provinces.



Significant Research Completed

- 534 research publications, 94% in Scopus-indexed outlets
- 64% of CCR scholars participated in this research (represented across all Indonesian HEI members)
- 250 scholars gave conference presentations

Capacity Enhanced and Expanded Across the Archipelago

- 146 trainings on research protocols, grant and financial management (attended by 600 Indonesian scholars each year)
- Effective continuous monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system developed and promulgated
- 28 Indonesian scholars visited U.S. partners; 43 U.S. scholars traveled to Indonesia
- 81 Indonesian scholars received on-going mentoring from U.S. scholars
- 531 research reports, training modules, guidelines, and other educational materials produced
- Roughly one-quarter of participating HEIs reported improved research policies and management systems
- Percentage of female participation in SHERA at or above their representation in S&T fields in Indonesia.

The Future

SHERA's work will go on in various ways. Some CCRs will continue; some will transition to new formats. In both cases, the research already completed will be put to use, and the capacity and networks that have been built will foster new discoveries. Use of the ARI's COVID-19 application to assess the pandemic in Bandung and West Java; adoption of CDSR's sustainable energy methodology by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, and Southeast Sulawesi; and the Ministry of Internal Affairs' plan to use SMART CITY's instrument to assess regional government readiness give strong indication of what is to come.

“Indonesia’s stellar performance in this year’s Times Higher Education Impact Rankings reflects the burgeoning capability of the archipelago’s top institutions ... Claiming three top 100 spots in any global ranking – and a handful of top 40 entries in key areas – is unheard of for Indonesia ... Japan is the only Asian country to match Indonesia’s efforts in the Impact Rankings.”

John Ross
Times Higher Education
May 18, 2020

(a conclusion based in part on the work done by SHERA)



Learn more about the USAID SHERA program and other USAID programs at IIE by contacting David Simpson at DSimpson@iie.org or visiting our website at iie.org/programs/SHERA.



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