

Best of Fulbright ETA September-December 2023

SPECIAL EDITION OF THE FULBRIGHT ETA MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS
COMPILING THE BEST ARTICLES FROM AUGUST – DECEMBER

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SIXTH SPECIAL EDITION

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Table of Content

04	Foreword
05	About the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program and ETA in Indonesia
05	About the Fulbright ETA Monthly Highlights
06	Orientation

01

School Activities

10	An Exciting First Week of Teaching
10	English Club: Highlighting American Cultural Diversity in the Dark
11	Last Minute Test Preparation!
12	A Love for the English Language with Elementary Schoolers
13	No One Likes Online Classes (Not Even Students)
13	Orange You Glad We're Learning English
14	Exploring the Classroom
15	The Language of Livestock: A Hands-on Approach to English

02

Community Engagement Projects

18	Teaching the Teachers English
18	WORDS Competition Training
19	Grateful and Proud of My Students
20	10th Grade Students Clean up Batakan Baru Beach
21	Cultivating Ecological Minds: The SMKN3 Pekanbaru Ecology Club Blooms
22	New Year, New Dreams
23	Exploring and Preserving Our Home

03

Cultural Exchange

26	<i>Sasirangan</i> Saturdays
27	<i>Bedhol Projo</i> Parade
28	<i>Lok Baintan</i> , a traditional floating market!
28	Milestone Moments: Celebrating Two Decades at SMKN 1 Cangkringan
29	Students Celebrate the Spirit of Halloween and <i>Sumpah Pemuda</i> Day
30	A Cultural Celebration
31	Manado Cultural Festival
32	Mid-Year Enrichment Conference

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This is a special edition of the *Fulbright ETA Monthly Highlights* from Indonesia, where we have compiled the best stories from 2023.

This year marks the first year that AMINEF has resumed its English Teaching Assistant grants after a three-year hiatus from the global pandemic. Eleven ETAs have finished their first semester at their sites in Indonesia, and we want to celebrate their contributions to their host communities.

This edition can be broken down into three categories: **School Activities, Community Engagement Projects, and Cultural Exchanges.**

Read on to see how the **ETAs spend their time between September and December 2023.**

About the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program and ETA in Indonesia

The Fulbright ETA program places US citizens holding bachelor's or master's degrees who receive Fulbright grants from the US Department of State to help English teachers around the globe, including Indonesia. ETAs help teach the English language while serving as cultural ambassadors for the US. The ETA program began in Indonesia in 2004, initially starting with five schools. It has since grown in scope, with 20-35 schools hosting ETAs yearly. AMINEF collaborates closely with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to select the schools that welcome ETAs.

In 2022, the Fulbright ETA program, along with other Fulbright programs in Indonesia, was part of a renewed arrangement signed by Secretary General of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Suharti and US Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Lee Satterfield formalizing the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Education signed in December 2021 by Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Nadiem Makarim and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

About the *Fulbright ETA Monthly Highlights*

The Highlights are informal stories submitted by the ETAs that recount their experiences with co-teachers, students, and community members where they are placed. We hope they are informative and capture the special value of this program. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to sign up for *The Highlights* e-newsletter, delivered straight to your inbox. For both feedback and sign-up, please email us at communications@aminef.or.id.

If you wish to catch up on our previous editions, they are available at

www.aminef.or.id



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[Fulbright ETA Monthly Highlights Newsletter.](#)

Orientation: ETAs began their journey this year with a **three-week orientation course in Yogyakarta.**

The new ETAs of the 2023-24 cohort were welcomed into Indonesia late at night on August 20, arriving with great anticipation. In Jakarta, they had a few meetings with US Foreign Service Officers the subsequent morning, giving them a security briefing and providing Citizen Services resources. They had the privilege of dining with US Ambassador Sung Kim at his residence for lunch. He offered some wisdom as he asked reflective questions for the ETAs, prompting a robust lunch conversation enriching the ETA's understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

ETAs visited the AMINEF office the next day, meeting all the dedicated individuals overseeing this Fulbright Commission in Indonesia. This meeting allowed ETAs to establish connections and gain insights into the administrative aspects of the Fulbright program. There, they also met with select government officials from Indonesia who entertained a question-and-answer panel session from the ETAs.

The following day, the ETAs traveled to Yogyakarta, recognized as the cultural heart of Java. There, they immersed themselves in a multifaceted educational experience encompassing Indonesian language instruction, teaching pedagogy, and an exploration of Indonesian culture. Topics spanned from lesson planning, cross-cultural understandings, Indonesian history, physical and mental health, team teaching, and the educational system in Indonesia. Distinguished guest speakers such as Dr. Itje Chodidjah, the executive chair of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Achmad Munjid from Gadjah Mada University, Dr. Izak Lattu from Satya Wacana Christian University, Sakdiyah Ma'ruf, and Dr. Baskara T. Wardaya from Sanata Dharma University enriched the orientation with their expertise, offering perspectives on religion and history in Indonesia.

This year's comprehensive orientation program also featured three distinctive educational excursions. First, the ETAs ventured to a rural village outside of Yogyakarta, immersing themselves in the daily lives of rural Indonesians. They actively participate in traditional agricultural practices such as field plowing and planting rice. The cultural engagement continued as they enjoyed playing *gamelan*, a traditional Javanese ensemble of musical instruments, and making crafts out of coconut leaves.

Later, during orientation, ETAs visited another village to learn the art and history of *batik*, a cherished element of Indonesian culture. They also had the chance to make their *batik* designs, deepening their appreciation for this revered art form. Their last trip was an Interfaith tour, where ETAs visited places of worship from the many religious denominations practiced in Java.

During the final week of orientation, the ETAs were introduced to their co-teachers in Yogyakarta, marking a pivotal phase of their preparation. This last week consisted of joint sessions where ETAs and their co-teachers collaborated to establish clear expectations, discover potential extracurricular projects, and practice team teaching. The orientation concluded with a mock teaching activity, allowing teaching pairs to meticulously plan and present a lesson together in a monitored environment, allowing them to develop their co-teaching relationship and address challenges. After orientation, ETAs and their co-teacher reported a sense of excitement and preparedness for the grant year ahead.



First appeared in the
September 2023 edition

School Activities

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An ETA's primary responsibility during their grant in Indonesia is to **assist their co-teachers with planning and executing lessons in the classrooms at their site.** These lessons are encouraged to incorporate interactive activities to foster engagement and active student participation. These innovative learning strategies can be seen here.

Read on to see how **Parker, Lily, Allison, Molly, Luke, Owais, Avery, and Natalie** impacted their classrooms.

An Exciting First Week of Teaching

SMKN 3 Pekanbaru, Riau.

Upon arriving at her site three weeks ago, **ETA Molly Gleason** has been busy getting to know her students and co-teachers at SMKN 3 Pekanbaru. During the first week of teaching, grade 10 students were introduced to new adjectives to describe objects. Molly and her co-teachers devised a fun way to accomplish this lesson. After learning the new vocabulary words, students tested their skills through an interactive game called “What’s in the Box?”

Students were asked to come to the front of the classroom and reach into a box where they would feel an object. Upon touching the object, students used new vocabulary words to describe the object, such as bumpy, pointy, soft, and hard. The rest of the class, seeing exactly what the student was touching, shouted out “Yay” or “Nay,” depending on whether the chosen vocabulary word fit the object or not. This proved to be a fun activity for students and teachers to check for comprehension. Pictured here is a one-tenth grader holding a plastic egg. She described the object as smooth and round, to which the class agreed!

(First appeared in the February 2024 edition)



English Club: Highlighting American Cultural Diversity in the Dark

SMKN 4 Surakarta, Central Java.

On Friday, September 29, **ETA Avery Erickson** hosted her first English club meeting with students across different vocational programs at her school. Wanting to facilitate new bonds between students while introducing the diversity of American culture, Avery created an “American Regions Personality Quiz” for each student to complete. The questions ranged from preferences of food (“Would you rather eat tacos from California, a Philly cheese steak, or Soul Food?”), to preferences of national parks, animals, cities, and music. Each answer corresponded to a general American region (A corresponded with the West, B’s with the Northeast, C’s with the South).

At the end of the activity, students were divided into their preferred regions and were asked to discuss their responses. The activity was originally designed to project a PowerPoint presentation on the wall so students could see each question and its corresponding images, but the lights and electricity shut off minutes after the club began. The ETA improvised by walking around the room, with only her iPhone flashlight to illuminate her path, to show each student the PowerPoint questions and images from her laptop. This created a personable and rather spooky atmosphere that the students found hilarious. Everyone spoke only in whispers. By the end of the session, everyone felt giddy with excitement for the next English Club.

(First appeared in the September 2023 edition)



Last Minute Test Preparation!

SMAS Nurul Ilmi Padang Sidempuan, North Sumatra.



The first two weeks of October are widely dreaded by SMAS Nurul Ilmi Padang Sidempuan students as the period of mid-year exams. Understandably, many students were feeling nervous about the upcoming English test. Taking place on the night of September 30, 2023, **ETA Luke Losie** organized a last-minute English study session at many students’ request. While Luke does not endorse cramming right before a test, sometimes desperate times call for desperate measures.

In attendance were many 12th-grade students whose English exam would occur first. The topics the students would be tested on were making requests, writing letters, conditional tenses, and the difference between the passive and active voice. Luke was greatly impressed by the energy and attitude of the students, who all asked insightful questions and were ready to participate. Ultimately, Luke hopes this study session will reflect on the students’ test scores. Luke also hopes to facilitate more preparatory sessions of this kind for other upcoming exams as needed.

(First appeared in the September 2023 edition)

A Love for the English Language with Elementary Schoolers

SMAN 1 Sedayu, Yogyakarta.



ETA Allison Gross, an advocate for English literacy in young learners, embarked on a “library tour” campaign to foster reading and storytelling at SDN Panggang, the local elementary school. Joined by four seniors from SMAN 1 Sedayu, Allison and the senior students set out to kindle a love for English literature and conversation among 3rd and 4th graders. The seniors, exemplifying their commitment to education, polished their English-speaking skills while actively engaging with the children alongside Allison.

The morning unfolded with animated readings from captivating, colorful picture books, solo student reading time, and spirited classroom singing of English songs like “If You’re Happy and You Know It” and “The Wheels on the Bus.” It was not long before the entire elementary school buzzed with excitement and an infectious atmosphere of joyous learning. This collaborative morning not only enriched the language skills of the young students but also provided the seniors with invaluable teaching and English-speaking experience.

As Allison and the seniors concluded their visit, they felt energized by their time with the young students and their appreciation for reading and speaking in English. Plans were enthusiastically made for a return visit to nurture the eager elementary schoolers’ love for learning in the near future.

(First appeared in the October 2023 edition)



No One Likes Online Classes (Not Even Students)

SMAN 4 Jambi, Jambi.

The month of October brought its own set of challenges to **ETA Owais Mahmood**. Haze and smog spread to Jambi City, making it difficult for students to attend class in person, forcing instruction online with reduced time. Classes were live online for two weeks, bringing memories of what things were like during the pandemic. One of the biggest challenges was engaging the students. Owais and his co-teachers tried many things to get their students’ attention. They had students popcorn reading, play Simon Says, and even stretch with cameras on at various points throughout class time. It was very apparent that these strategies worked and led to more engagement rather than teaching during the whole class period.

Thankfully, this was temporary, and students could begin attending school in person again later in the month. This experience gave Owais and his co-teachers perspective and ideas on engaging students behind the computer screen. Everyone, including teachers, prefers having in-person classes rather than online.

(First appeared in the October 2023 edition)



Orange You Glad We’re Learning English

SMKN 3 Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

On November 20, 2023, **ETA Natalie Suh** met with her tenth-grade hotel students and co-taught a lesson on descriptive text. The lesson introduced the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Students also learned the names of the body parts used with each sense.

After students were done taking their notes, she instructed students to close their eyes. She explained that the teachers would place a mystery object in front of the students. They would have to use their sense of touch to try and figure out what the object was. So, Natalie and her co-teacher placed mystery objects in front of all the students with their eyes closed. Some students were nervous to feel what was before them, while others were more excited. The students guessed correctly quite quickly and concluded that it was an orange!

The lesson continued by going over each of the five senses to write sentences describing the orange. Students were very happy to be able to eat their oranges afterward for their hard work.

(First appeared in the November 2023 edition)



Exploring the Classroom
SMAN 4 Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan.

Celebrating her third month of teaching English, **ETA Lillian (Lily) Rhinehart** has found her stride in the classroom. Throughout November, Lily helped create a series of lessons, with one standout for Lily being a deep dive into figurative language with the 10th-grade class. This week, the classes dissected the motivational songs “Roar” by Katy Perry and “Girl on Fire” by Alicia Keys to explore the nuances of similes and metaphors. The classroom resonated with the empowering tunes, and by the end of the lesson, every student was passionately singing along, chorusing their own powerful “Roars!”

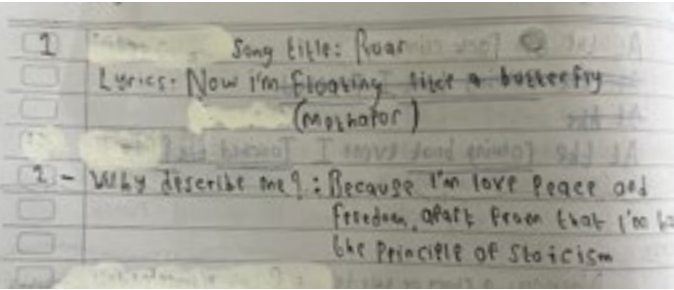
Post-lesson, each student chose a metaphor or simile from the songs that resonated with them. Although all her students’ quotes were valuable, she was particularly moved by three standout quotes from her students:

“Roar,” Katy Perry. Simile: “Like Thunder Gonna Shake the Ground.” Student Quote: “When I felt shaken [in life] like thunder shaking the ground, but I’m [still] sure I can shake the world.”

“Girl on Fire,” Alicia Keys. Metaphor: “Feeling the catastrophe, but she knows she can fly away.” Student Quote: “Because I am strong and fearless. I will leave behind a tragic life, and I think I will fight for [my] dreams to come true, and nothing will stop it”.

From this exercise, Lily learned much about her students’ personalities, hopes, obstacles, and unique achievements. She has enjoyed getting to know her students more personally every week, building a true community in her school, and finding more inspiration from her bright students every day.

(First appeared in the November 2023 edition)



The Language of Livestock:
A Hands-on Approach to English
SMKN 1 Cangkringan, Yogyakarta.



Students at SMKN 1 Cangkringan took to the farm this month to gain valuable hands-on experience while integrating English into their agricultural curriculum. SMKN 1 Cangkringan is a vocational school. This means students opt to study one vocational skill area during high school. Given its vocational status, the school is equipped with a working farm where students care for cows, goats, chickens, and more.

This month, **ETA Parker Raybourne** worked with students from agricultural livestock classes to emphasize how English can be applied “on the farm.” Students spent valuable time in English class learning how to write procedural texts. These lessons culminated in a visit to the school farm. On-site, an Indonesian instructor taught students how to make traditional goat food. Students were then tasked with translating the process into English and writing a procedural text that Parker could follow to recreate the food.

Parker notes that this lesson was among his students’ favorites for the semester. Parker was thrilled to see how excited his students were to show off their animals and the work they do on the farm; this excitement was certainly palpable during English lessons.

School instructors note that individuals with English skills are highly competitive among those who work in agriculture. Parker hopes to continue incorporating English into other vocational tracts in the future. This “hands-on” experience achieves the goals of the Fulbright program by building real-life communication skills and encouraging functional use of English.

(First appeared in the December 2023 edition)

Community Engagement Projects

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ETAs are also encouraged to engage with their school community in extracurricular activities. **ETAs pursue their own interests to join or create clubs and events at their school to further bridge the connection and impact they have at their host schools.**



Continue reading to see how **Molly, Luke, Owais, Avery, Tineer, Harrison, and Katrien** engaged with their school communities outside of the standard classroom.

Teaching the Teachers English

SMAS Nurul Ilmi Padang Sidempuan, North Sumatra.

Since the arrival of **ETA Luke Losie** at SMAS Nurul Ilmi in Padangsidempuan, many of the teachers have sought to improve their English in addition to the students. At the request of the school headmaster and many teachers, Luke has started to run a Teachers' English Course. In addition to his regularly scheduled English classes with the senior high schoolers, Luke has been teaching a class after school hours on Thursdays and Fridays for teachers who are enthusiastic about learning English. The course started the last week of September and has continued throughout October.

Luke enjoys the energy and excitement of the teachers who choose to attend this extra class. Most of the teachers who come are eager to find ways to use English in their classes. For example, during the second week, on October 5, teachers learned to inquire about a late or absent student's whereabouts in English. The week prior, the teachers discussed greeting their classes in English and taking attendance. Of course, many of the teachers attending the course have not studied English since they were in high school themselves. The varying English skill levels of the teachers make this class exciting for Luke, as many teachers are eager to help their classmates. Because of the overwhelming support of the other teachers and their passion for learning English, Luke intend to continue this course throughout his grant period.

(First appeared in the October 2023 edition)



WORDS Competition Training

SMKN 3 Manado, North Sulawesi.

This month, while most students at SMKN 3 Manado were focused on studying for final exams and practicals, **ETA Harrison Crawford** was busy preparing his own project. In preparation for AMINEF's upcoming WORDS competition, Harrison began hosting story workshop sessions for students interested in entering. Out of the 53 student signups, only 20 will make it through the screening round to be able to compete in the local, school-wide competition, and only one will be chosen to move forward to the final national competition in Jakarta.

Harrison began the preliminary workshop series with a brief explanation of the basic story structure and a review of winning stories from previous years and what made them good. Students were then challenged to come up with 2-3 solid basic premises and then practice writing a basic story structure for their favorite. This flexible writing style helped students avoid getting stuck halfway through the process, as many students nearly completed their stories before realizing they had another idea they liked more. Harrison will meet with every student in the upcoming weeks to discuss their last-minute concerns before the local competition set for January 12. While Harrison is putting in a lot of effort to make the competition fun and cooperative for all participants, the students are positively buzzing with excitement about potentially winning and moving on to compete in Jakarta.

(First appeared in the December 2023 edition)



Grateful and Proud of My Students

SMAN 4 Jambi, Jambi.

The end of the semester marks a time of relief for students and teachers. The teachers taught, and the students took advantage of the opportunity to learn anything they could. In the week before exams on November 27, the students organized a massive celebration appreciating teachers: Teachers' Day, a day that Indonesian students celebrate teachers for their work and assistance at their respective schools. At SMAN 4 Jambi, students showed appreciation by dancing, singing, performing theatre, and other talents they have been practicing for ages.



This was one of the few times **ETA Owais Mahmood** had seen the students in a completely different setting, away from the classroom, their desks, their books, and their homework. It gave him perspective on how hard these students work outside of the class, juggling their various tasks and responsibilities. Though this day is dedicated to teachers around Indonesia, it is also a day for students to celebrate themselves for completing a semester with persistence and hard work.

(First appeared in the November 2023 edition)

10th Grade Students Clean up Batakan Baru Beach SMAN 3 Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan.

All ten classes from 10th grade were looking forward to a field trip to Batakan Baru Beach. As **ETA Tineer Ahmed** has been teaching them lessons only isolated in class or the English club, she found this a great opportunity to connect with her students in a different setting.

The beach was filled with about 350 students wearing exercise uniforms and holding bags to collect the scattered debris. A week prior, students in each class designed a bin and signs emphasizing environmental awareness to preserve the beach. *Ibu Yuli* (SMAN 3 Banjarbaru Bahasa Indonesia teacher) guided students to focus on finding the smallest pieces of trash, like a candy wrapper. Some students accomplished the beach clean-up in pairs, while others did it independently. With a better appreciation for taking responsibility for their waste, the students efficiently threw away trash left from their lunch break and started frolicking towards the beach. The students and their teachers took turns riding the Banana Boat or ATVs on the sand. The city of Banjarbaru can continue to retain its natural beauty and be a place of enjoyment with the efforts of SMAN 3 Banjarbaru students.

(First appeared in the November 2023 edition)



Cultivating Ecological Minds: The SMKN3 Pekanbaru Ecology Club Blooms SMKN 3 Pekanbaru, Riau.



December marked the end of English class for the semester at SMKN 3 Pekanbaru and the start of a 3-week *Pancasila Lima* Project. The *Pancasila Lima* Project, or P5 Project, is a cross-disciplinary learning opportunity for students to observe and think about solutions to problems in the surrounding environment. **ETA Molly Gleason** took the P5 Project as an opportunity to share her background and passions with her students, forming an Ecology Club. This initiative transcended traditional environmental education, cultivating not just ecological knowledge but also critical thinking and creative expression in accordance with the P5 aims.

The club's pedagogy embraced hands-on learning. Pekanbaru's natural areas became immersive classrooms, where students swapped textbooks for experiential learning. They delved into the intricate ecosystems, learning about birds, trees, flowers, insects, moss, lichen, and more. This firsthand immersion fostered a deep respect and appreciation for the natural world.

Molly further enriched the learning experience by using nature journals and learning about the natural world through drawing and writing. Students received different prompts and material each club session and recorded their findings in their journals.

Students evolved from observers to active stewards, passionate about protecting their natural heritage. Molly and the club members are in the process of creating an exciting field guide for Pekanbaru based on their observations. Though the P5 project has culminated, Molly is hopeful to continue Ecology Club in the coming months.

(First appeared in the December 2023 edition)



New Year, New Dreams

SMKN 4 Surakarta, Central Java.



The month of December for **ETA Avery Erickson** was full of excitement and preparation for the upcoming WORDS competition at her school. Over the course of the first semester, Avery hosted several workshops with students to brainstorm ideas for their short stories related to this year's WORDS theme, "Dreams of the Future." The stories students have submitted range from topics of equitable solutions to climate change to defying societal expectations of women in the workplace. ETA Avery is endlessly inspired by her students' creativity, wit, and thoughtfulness.

Avery and her fellow ETAs began planning for the national WORDS competition at the Fulbright mid-year conference in Jakarta. At the conference, she also had the opportunity to brainstorm ways to make her local WORDS competition more engaging. She was introduced to scholarship opportunities to share with her students in Surakarta.

Avery is entering the new year feeling very lucky to be working with such wonderful students alongside such dedicated and passionate ETAs.

(First appeared in the December 2023 edition)



Exploring and Preserving Our Home

SMAN 1 Matauli Pandan, North Sumatra.

Nestled between lush mountains and serene oceans, the North Sumatran town of Pandan showcases an incomparable landscape. At SMAN 1 Matauli Pandan, several students actively participate in the school's Nature Lovers club to explore and appreciate the local environment further. The club provides numerous opportunities for students to discover the area's beauty through hikes and environment-centered activities.



One week's itinerary included a trek through nearby farms and a leisurely walk along Pandan Beach. **ETA Katrien Weemaes** suggested students bring trash bags to integrate conservation with their scenic adventure. Katrien aimed to shift the focus from mere admiration of the beautiful landscape to active learning and the preservation of the environment. While it is a common practice among locals to discard trash wherever convenient, Katrien stressed the importance of responsible waste disposal.

While strolling along the beach, students diligently collected abundant litter and learned about the harm caused by single-use plastic. Finding trash cans along the beach proved challenging despite filling their bags, prompting a discussion about local littering habits. One student suggested that the lack of trash cans causes people to toss their litter on the ground mindlessly. However, Katrien reminded them, "Convenience doesn't always mean it's the best practice, especially as we work to respect and preserve the environment."

The impactful day inspired the Nature Lovers club to embrace 'acts of service' for environmental stewardship. Beyond exploration, students now strive to actively safeguard the natural spaces they cherish as they continue to explore, appreciate, and protect their environment.

(First appeared in the December 2023 edition)

Cultural Exchange

o3

The main tenant of the Fulbright Exchange program is cultural understanding. **Through the Fulbright ETA grant, awardees have a great opportunity to learn about the local culture at their site.** In doing so they also **share aspects of American culture with community members to ensure it is a two-way exchange of information and understanding.**



Read through these last pages to see how **Harrison, Parker, Tineer, Katrien, Lily, Natalie, and Allison** have participated in cultural exchange.

Sasirangan Saturdays

SMAN 4 Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

ETA Lillian Rhinehart was able to attend a *Sasirangan* workshop with her English co-teachers, *Ibu Nita* and *Ibu Yulia*. Here, Lily not only got to learn how to sew, band together the design, and dye *Sasirangan* but also gained valuable insight into the origins of the art.

Sasirangan is the traditional clothing of South Kalimantan. The title of *Sasirangan* originated from the Banjar words *sirang* or *menyirang*, meaning “to stitch together”. As the name suggests, designs are created by sewing patterns with thick string. Next, the patterns will be rubber banded to prevent the dye from penetrating or covering the design. The sewing, banding, and dyeing techniques combine to form special motifs. Each color and design has its rich history and meaning. Originally, *Sasirangan* was worn by the wealthy and powerful populations of Sasirangan, in addition to being used to heal the sick. Different colors were associated with various spiritual and mystical properties, with each motif having to be guided by the insight of local spiritual leaders or elders.

Today, the intricate and expressive art has made its way into the everyday fashion and identity of South Kalimantan. Each piece of *Sasirangan* is made uniquely and with intention, often taking days to months to create. As *Ibu Yulia* has said, “If it is not expressive, bright, and standing out, it is not *Sasirangan*!” Lily was honored to learn about the art and even bought her own *Sasirangan* for casual wear and her school uniform. Lily has loved learning more about this identity and is excited to learn more about South Kalimantan’s history and identity.

(First appeared in the September 2023 edition)



Bedhol Projo Parade

SMAN 1 Sedayu, Yogyakarta.



In her first two weeks, **ETA Allison Gross** has been met with opportunities to immerse herself in the vibrant culture of Sedayu at every turn. One memorable event was the *Bedhol Projo* parade, a splendid display of local traditions and community spirit. Accompanied by her counterpart, *Ibu Martini*, as well as her gracious host, *Ibu Retno*, Allison joined the lively procession that spanned an impressive 2.5 kilometers.

The parade consisted of about 150-200 people decorated in traditional, colorful Javanese clothing; some carried two massive vegetable floats, and others played drums, all smiling and laughing as they marched through the village.

The parade aimed to recreate a historical government relocation– from a central location in Sleman regency to a more local village location– to provide the community resources more efficiently and directly. There was traditional dancing, a lot of eating, and a lengthy and engaging ceremonial procedure centered around the village chiefs.

Additionally, she frequented the traditional market, engaging in strained– albeit heartwarming– conversations in her broken Indonesian with the local women while searching for the beloved *kelapa muda*, young coconuts. Allison’s journey in Sedayu thus far has affirmed her commitment to forging connections within the community and has bolstered her eagerness to embrace the rich tapestry of its culture present around her.

(First appeared in the September 2023 edition)



Lok Baintan, a traditional floating market! SMKN 3 Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

For **ETA Natalie Suh**, September was an exciting month in Banjarmasin that consisted of a Banjarese wedding, a trip to a floating market, and time in the classroom to get to know students.

After her first week of classroom observation, the English teachers at SMKN 3 took Natalie out for an excursion to *Lok Baintan* (a traditional floating market) over the weekend. **ETA's Lily Rhinehart** and **Tineer Ahmed**, based in Banjarbaru, also joined with their teachers. They arrived at the dock around 6:00 a.m., where they climbed on top of a boat to get to the market. Together, they witnessed a beautiful sunrise on the river, bought local fruits, and ate delicious sate. As soon as they pulled up to the market, vendors paddled their canoes right up to the boat to sell their fruits, vegetables, fish, baked goods, and so much more. It was an incredible experience for Natalie and all who came along.

(First appeared in the September 2023 edition)



Milestone Moments: Celebrating Two Decades at SMKN 1 Cangkringan SMKN 1 Cangkringan, Yogyakarta.

The week of October 2 marked the twentieth anniversary of the founding of SMKN 1 Cangkringan. While school anniversaries are customarily celebrated throughout Indonesia, SMKN 1 Cangkringan's twentieth called for a celebration of unparalleled scale. The week-long celebration commenced with three days of competition and fun in athletics, culinary expression, performance arts, fashion, and more. The anniversary week, which was almost exclusively organized by students, offered the opportunity for participation from regional schools and community members of all ages.

ETA Parker Raybourne had the opportunity to partake in the week of festivities by judging class food stalls (cafes), performing with fellow school faculty in the student show, and, perhaps most notably, walking in the *Kirab*.

A *Kirab* is a procession held during celebratory events in Java. This *Kirab* rounded the week, kicking off the penultimate anniversary celebration and ceremony. SMKN 1 Cangkringan's *Kirab* featured a *Cucuk Lampah* (traditional Javanese dance), the school's flag bearers, and each class's *tumpeng* (traditional food presentation used in celebrations). Parker sported Yogyakarta's traditional clothing to present gifts to regional leaders and officials. The celebration concluded with a "massive" outdoor *dangdut* concert. Parker hopes that by partaking in local celebrations, he is better equipped to discuss local customs, increase cultural exchange, and ultimately inform his English teaching approach.

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Students Celebrate the Spirit of Halloween and Sumpah Pemuda Day SMAN 3 Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan.

The students in SMAN 3 were waiting for the week of cultural immersion using costumes. First, 11th-grade students dressed in their traditional attire to represent their culture to commemorate *Hari Sumpah Pemuda* (Youth Pledge Day). In 1928, the Indonesian Youth Congress created this declaration to unite the power of all young Indonesians. Now, October 28 is recognized as a significant milestone in the nation's struggle for peace and independence. The class discussed *Hari Sumpah Pemuda* with **ETA Tineer Ahmed** and *Ibu Ari* after watching a history video in English. Then, they had a fashion show describing their outfits as students guessed which region they were from. The range of cultures went from Aceh to Papua.



Along with Indonesian culture, students in the English club celebrated American culture with Halloween activities. Halloween is not popular in Banjarbaru, yet students know it from social media. Students learned more facts and common symbols associated with Halloween. Later, they made paper face masks and cut-outs of ghosts, pumpkins, spiders, and cats. They were very eager for the following club meeting where they could dress up in a costume and go trick-or-treating to different classrooms around the school campus! To join SMAGA (SMA Tiga or SMA Negeri Tiga) Halloween with Tineer and *Ibu Ari*, teachers *Ibu Arie K* (SMAN 3 Banjarbaru), **ETA Natalie** (SMKN 3 Banjarmasin), and **ETA Lily** (SMAN 4 Banjarbaru) also gave students candy when they visited their classrooms. The month of October allowed students to show their creativity.

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A Cultural Celebration

SMAN 1 Matauli Pandan, North Sumatra.



October 28 marked the annual Youth Pledge Day, aka *Hari Sumpah Pemuda*, in Indonesia. Students of SMAN 1 Matauli Pandan initiated the celebration with a festive parade around the school's campus, highlighting the traditional fashion from twelve unique Indonesian communities. Before the day's events, all students were divided into twelve groups representing different provinces and assigned to research the traditional cuisine and culture of their respective regions. Following the parade, everyone hurried into the decorated gymnasium as students put the final touches on their designated food stands before opening for business.

ETA Katrien Weemaes accompanied the traditional dance club to commence the day's festivities with a performance featuring the traditional dances from Aceh (*Tari Saman*), West Sumatra (*Tari Piring* and *Tari Indang*), Riau (*Tari Zapin*), and North Sumatra (*Tari Tor Tor*). Following the historical fashion of the Tapanuli Tengah region, Katrien wore *Uis Gara*, which consisted of red clothes adorned with golden patterns, representing the official traditional attire of the Karo community.

Students continued to commemorate the day with a fashion show exhibiting the unique culture of their designated province. Simultaneously, they sold a variety of delectable refreshments, aspiring to win for the most creative fashion designs and food stands across all twelve groups. The day's agenda concluded with final debates for the top five OSIS (student council) candidates and a speech competition for selecting the 2023 Miss and Mas Matauli titleholders. Katrien felt deeply honored to participate in *Hari Sumpah Pemuda*, witnessing the Matauli school community's celebration of the adage, 'Our Culture is Our Home.'

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Manado Cultural Festival

SMKN 3 Manado, North Sulawesi.

During November, students at SMKN 3 Manado follow a special curriculum designed to help them understand the civic spirit of *Pancasila*, the set of five fundamental tenets underlying the Indonesian national constitution.



Students also complete special projects related to their future careers. **ETA Harrison Crawford** supported many of these projects, from giving feedback on job training presentations to judging the presentations by culinary students, who demonstrated their learning by preparing a great variety of traditional dishes. Students introduced their creations to Harrison and other teachers as if they were customers in a restaurant and answered detailed questions about each order.

Finally, students combined their projects into a festival featuring dances, crafts, and food. The students also got a surprise when Harrison performed the traditional *Minahasa* war dance, known as *Kabasaran*, with a group of students. Harrison secretly practiced with the dance team for several days to show the school community how much he had learned about *Minahasa* culture.

After the performance, Harrison and his counterpart gave a brief interview for CNN Indonesia, which featured video clips of the performance on national television. These videos have gone viral around Manado and nearby cities, sharing various memes and remixes. Many locals have reached out to Harrison on social media to talk about the performance and welcome Harrison to their community.

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Mid-Year Enrichment Conference

ETAs concluded this calendar year by meeting in Jakarta for a professional development conference. **This conference also marks the mid-year point for the ETAs grant.** Finish reading the journey of the Fulbright ETAs by reading our last article.



Eleven English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) and their co-teachers (Indonesian English teachers they work with at their school) participated in the annual Fulbright ETA Program Mid-Year Enrichment Conference in Jakarta from December 11 – 14, 2023. The conference marks the halfway point of the grant. It allows ETAs and co-teachers to share their experience, learn some best practices from each other, and gain more knowledge on teaching, community building, cross-cultural communication, and problem-solving skills that hopefully will strengthen their collaboration in the second semester.

The ETAs also stepped up to lead sessions, share activities, and pull together the behind-the-scenes work to make the conference successful.



ETAs and co-teachers participated in various sessions ranging from the State of Indonesia Today to meeting with the Indonesian Government Panel. Most ETAs enjoyed sessions led by their fellow ETAs, the opportunity to learn from each other, to have some working time with their co-teachers, and to visit @america. Co-teachers enjoyed most sessions they joined, particularly the Cross-cultural Communication, all sessions related to teaching, Community Engagement Project and WORDS, working time with their ETAs, and scholarship sessions. Most of them also appreciated the opportunity to visit @america.

Everyone felt they got some new information or knowledge from the conference. They were ready to return to their school and put it into practice in their classroom. ETAs and co-teachers also felt excited about planning the WORDS Storytelling Competition, Community Engagement Projects, or even a workshop at their school.

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