



Best of Fulbright ETA Monthly Highlights

from September-December 2024

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Mid-Year Enrichment Conference

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Welcome to our special edition of the *Fulbright ETA Monthly Highlight* from Indonesia, where we have compiled the best ETA stories from 2024! In December, 10 English Teaching Assistants finished their first semester at their sites throughout Indonesia. We are pleased to celebrate their contributions to their host communities.

This edition showcases three categories of highlights: **School Activities, Community Engagement Projects, and Cultural Exchanges.** Read on to see how the ETAs spent their time between September and December 2024.

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 program in Yogyakarta! See what they learned in their first weeks in Indonesia.

2024 Orientation Program Welcomes ETAs to Indonesia

The ETAs of the 2024-2025 cohort arrived in Jakarta on August 5. The following morning, they attended US Embassy presentations led by Foreign Service Officers, including security briefings and an explanation of Citizen Services resources. They had the privilege of dinner with US Ambassador Kamala Lakhdhir at her residence. Ambassador Lakhdhir shared stories and wisdom shaped by her time in Indonesia. Robust conversation continued throughout the evening, enriching the ETAs' understanding of their role in US foreign policy and diplomacy.



The following day, the ETAs were greeted by Indonesian government officials, representatives from the Regional English Language Office (RELO), and members of the AMINEF team—the Fulbright Commission in Indonesia. Through panel discussions, interactive activities, and cultural displays, these meetings gave the ETAs the opportunity to establish connections and gain insights into their roles at school and within their community.

On Thursday, the ETAs traveled to their site placements, where they spent one week meeting with their school and Indonesian counterparts, allowing them to acclimate to their new home. ETAs noted cultural differences and other site-specific considerations that they would later reflect on during a three-week comprehensive orientation program in Yogyakarta.

Following their week at the site, the ETAs traveled to Yogyakarta, recognized as the cultural heart of Java. There, they were immersed in a multifaceted educational experience encompassing Indonesian language instruction, teaching pedagogy, and an exploration of Indonesian culture. Topics spanned cross-cultural understanding, Indonesian history, physical and mental health, educational systems in Indonesia, and much more. Distinguished guest speakers, some of whom

are Fulbright alums, such as Dr Baskara Wardaya, S.J. from Sahabat Insan and Sanata Dharma University; Dr Izak Lattu from Satya Wacana Christian University; Dr Samsul Ma'arif from Gadjah Mada University; Dr Sri Rejeki Murtiningsih from the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta; Dr Kelli Swazey, Fulbright Diversity, and Inclusion Liaison; Grace Wivell, PhD candidate, Fulbright Student Research, Dr Itje Chodidjah, the chief of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO; Sakdiyah Ma'ruf, MA; Hafilia Ismanto; Dr Fathur Rohim from the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Cultural, Research and Technology; and a few others enriched the orientation with their expertise, offering local and international perspectives.

During the final week of this year's orientation, the ETAs were joined by their Indonesian counterparts to complete joint sessions in team teaching. ETAs and their co-teachers collaborated to establish clear expectations, discover potential extracurricular projects, and practice co-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.

(First appeared in the September 2024 edition)

01

School Activities



During their grant in Indonesia, ETAs' primary responsibility 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.** ETAs bring innovative learning strategies to their schools from their various backgrounds and experiences in America.

Read on how ETAs **Adeena, Manav, Hira, Mary, Maria, and Hannah** impacted their classrooms!

'A Day in My Life' - Comic Strips

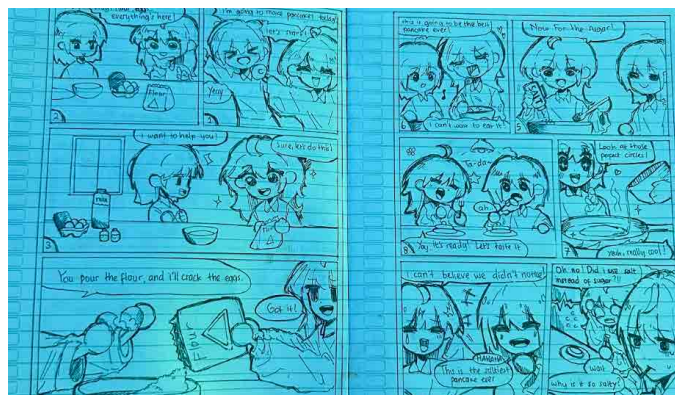
SMAN 2 Tanjungpandan, Kepulauan Bangka Belitung.

Over the last month, the English classrooms at SMAN 2 Tanjung Pandan have been filled with lessons about adjective phrases, annotation notes, recount texts, and storyboard race games. Recently, **ETA Adeena Ali** and her co-teachers have been opening the class with a few challenging rounds of Telephone, a game that always leaves her students giggling at the outcome. (The first sentence is spoken: "Pak Deny likes to drink coffee." Last sentence result: "Iced coffee.")

After the students are warmed up, English classes usually begin with an introduction to the week's focus: recount texts. For the last two weeks, students have concentrated on the different types of recount texts: imaginative, personal, and factual. The students impressively created comic strips for personal recounts based on the "A Day in My Life" theme and presented their work to the rest of the class. They shared their recounts about getting ready for school, their weekend plans, and making pancakes—only to mistakenly use salt instead of sugar.

Adeena and her co-teachers have learned that the students' engagement increases with various activities between presentations. In this unit, the students enjoyed rearranging stories like "The Hare and the Tortoise" and creating storyboards for "Cinderella," both examples of imaginative recount texts. Adeena continues to be amazed by her students' artistic skills showcased in their comic strips.

(First appeared in the September 2024 edition)



Fashioning a Sustainable Future

SMAN 15 Semarang, Central Java.



For two weeks in September, the 10th-grade students embarked on a new journey in the world of fashion design while promoting sustainability by focusing on the environmental principle of "reduce, reuse, and recycle." **ETA Manav Rungta** and his co-teachers encouraged students to creatively incorporate these sustainability concepts by using recycled materials to craft elegant dresses for male and female models. This project aimed to promote environmental betterment and sustainability within the community while fostering a deeper understanding of people's responsibility toward the environment.

On Friday, September 20, the students concluded the project by hosting a school-wide fashion show. The student models transformed the courtyard into a catwalk to present their designs to the entire school. This showcased their fashion skills and demonstrated their commitment to sustainability. The project, as a whole, illustrated how creativity can go hand in hand with environmental responsibility.

In support of the project, Manav played a key role in his 10th-grade classes by engaging with the students, assisting them in crafting their costumes and answering any questions they had. Manav's guidance helped the students embrace the challenge of turning recycled materials into innovative and stylish designs, emphasizing the importance of sustainability.

(First appeared in the September 2024 edition)

Engaging English Games in Class

SMKN 5 Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat.



During the week of October 7, **ETA Hira Baig** at SMKN 5 Pontianak led an engaging series of English language games designed to enhance students' communication skills in a fun and interactive way. The activities included popular language-learning games that got them up and moving, encouraging students to actively participate and practice their English in a lively classroom environment.

Students eagerly joined in, forming teams to compete in Swat It, where they swiftly identified and swatted the correct English words displayed on the board. The Word Relay had students racing against the clock to determine the correct word and write it on the board, promoting teamwork and quick thinking. In the Name Game, students introduced themselves and learned about their classmates, fostering a sense of community while practicing conversational English.

These games improved students' language skills and created an atmosphere of excitement and collaboration. Hira was overjoyed to see them actively moving, shouting, and interacting in English. This creative approach to teaching English proved a fun and effective strategy for motivating students to engage with the language outside of traditional lessons.

(First appeared in the October 2024 edition)



Inviting Discovery

SMAN 1 Manggar, East Belitung.

To wrap up a unit on invitations, Bu Winda and **ETA Mary Breen** from SMAN 1 Manggar knew they would have to include formal written invitations. However, they worried that rarely used words and cultural differences would make the topic difficult for their students to relate to. Mary printed out dozens of event invitations, from a baby shower to a 70th birthday party and a corporate mixer to a royal wedding. After a quick warmup, students dug into the material. In groups, they dissected the invitations to find the key information—who, what, when, and where.

Mary and Bu Winda explained some words that are common on invitations in the United States, like RSVP and formal attire. The students were very interested in learning that many parties in the US are planned for a specific number of people, which is very different from the large weddings in Belitung.

To wrap up, the students planned their events and wrote beautiful invitations using all the words they had learned. Although this topic seemed intimidating initially, it was one of the best lessons of the year!

(First appeared in the November 2024 edition)



Let the Games Begin: An Indonesian and American Traditional Game Exchange
SMK Abdurrah Pekanbaru, Riau.

ETA Maria Osman and her students at SMK Abdurrah Pekanbaru turned a free week between exams into an exciting cultural exchange through games. After discussing traditional American and Indonesian games with her co-teacher, the idea of a games exchange was born. Each class was divided into groups and assigned to bring one traditional Indonesian game to teach ETA Maria. In return, Maria introduced them to traditional American games, sparking lively comparisons and conversations about cultural similarities and differences.

The week was filled with energy, laughter, and plenty of running around. Students showcased Indonesian games like *congklak*, a mancala-style game; *lompat tali*, a rope-jumping game where players leap over a rope that gets progressively higher; and *bakiak batok*, a coconut shell racing game where players stand on coconut shells tied to ropes and race to the finish line. The class also enjoyed *ular naga*, dragon snake, a spirited team game that tested both strategy and teamwork.

Maria then introduced her students to American games like Capture the Flag, Sharks and Minnows, Red Light, Green Light, Limbo, and Duck Duck Goose. Each game brought a new layer of excitement and discovery. By the end of the week, everyone had gained a deeper appreciation for the traditions of play that connect people across cultures.

Through this exchange, Maria and her students found joy in learning from one another while fostering a sense of community and curiosity. What began as a gap between exams became a meaningful celebration of shared experiences and cultural exploration.

(First appeared in the December 2024 edition)



Describing Cartoons: Culturally Relevant English Lessons
SMAN 10 Bengkulu, Bengkulu.



ETA Hannah Semmes and SMAN 10 Bengkulu co-teacher Rita enjoy catering lessons to student's interests with culturally relevant lessons in class and English Club, which meets twice a week and comprises 40+ students.

Hannah and Rita created a PowerPoint featuring well-known cartoon characters for Indonesian high school students to review descriptive text before upcoming exams. Groups clamored for the chance to describe "Masha and the Bear," a Russian preschool comedy popular in Indonesia.

After the group presentations, in which they showed off the colorful new vocabulary they had learned this year, they played Kahoot (in English) and took Buzzfeed quizzes about Thanksgiving to practice their English in fun, creative ways.

To cap it all off, on the Friday before exams, Hannah and her English Club took a group picture to commemorate the memories they had made together over the first semester. Hannah looks forward to sharing many new adventures in English language learning with students in the New Year!

(First appeared in the December 2024 edition)



02

Community Engagement Projects



ETAs also engage with their school community through extracurricular activities and projects.

ETAs combine their interests and passions with assessing community needs to join or create clubs and events at their school that further bridge the connection and impact they have at their sites.

Continue reading to see how **Annie, Kylie, Adeena, Maria, Brady, Alyssa, and Hira** engaged with their school communities outside the classroom!

Student Council Leadership Camping Trip!

SMA Xaverius Bandar Lampung, Lampung.



In September 2024, **Annie**, a **Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA)** at SMA Xaverius Bandar Lampung, attended a three-day, two-night Santiaji student council camping leadership training at Asilo Hermelink in Bandar Lampung. The event involved 67 students and 29 teachers, including candidates for the 2024/2025 OSIS and MPK student council positions from Classes X and XI. Despite the packed schedule, which began each morning at 5 a.m. with group aerobics, the students remained enthusiastic and committed to the program's goals.

The training aimed to align student leaders with the vision of SMA Xaverius Bandar Lampung: excellence, transformation, and sustainability. Throughout the weekend, the students participated in workshops on leadership topics such as public speaking and organizational management and engaged in team-building activities. Lessons emphasized the importance of being a responsible, dynamic leader by fostering cohesion and serving as a role model within the school community. Qualities such as patience, innovation, and integrity were highlighted as essential traits for leadership.

Annie enjoyed learning alongside the students and teachers, gaining valuable insights into the school's leadership values. She also cherished the time spent outside of the classroom setting to build relationships with her school community. Annie's favorite weekend memories include singing around the campfire and learning to make *pukis* (traditional Indonesian snack), *enak!* (delicious!).

(First appeared in the September 2024 edition)



Theater Talks

SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak, West Kalimantan.

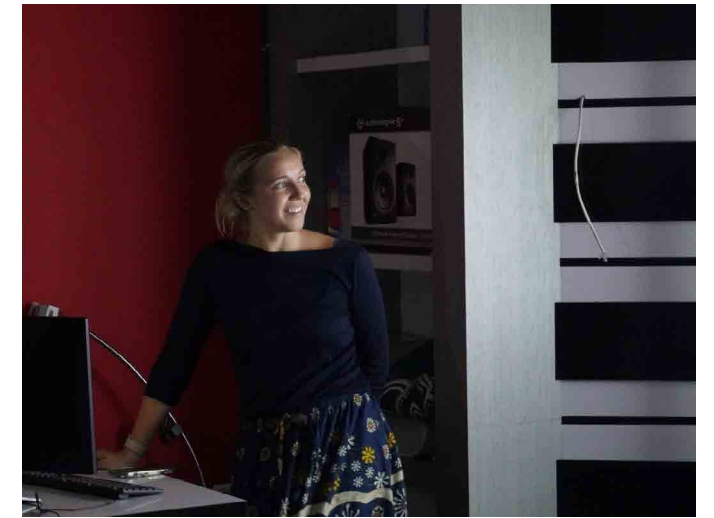
ETA Kylie Eiselstein began a "Theater Talks" project with the American Corner at Universitas Tanjungpura (Amcor UNTAN) this month. The series will take place once every two weeks throughout the year, with Kylie as the primary speaker.

At the first session, to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, students gathered to watch Disney's "Coco" (there weren't many dry eyes in the audience!) and discuss idioms found in the film, such as "follow in someone's footsteps" and "skeleton in the closet."

To honor International Space Week, the second session featured Denis Villeneuve's sci-fi flick, "Arrival." As a group, they discussed themes of communication and understanding. They also took a look at Abbott and Costello's famous comedy routine, "Who's on First?"—which the students thought was hilarious!—to see how easy miscommunication can be. Although "Arrival's" abstract content makes it difficult to understand, Kylie was beyond impressed with the audience's critical thinking and thoughtful responses to the film's concepts. They explicated complex vocabulary like "non-zero-sum game" and analyzed "Arrival's" unique use of the "flashback."

Kylie looks forward to working with Amcor UNTAN for the rest of the year, creating memorable movie-going experiences for the community. Special shoutouts to Ibu Stella, Ibu Endah, Ibu Olivia, and all the staff and volunteers at Amcor UNTAN Amcor!

(First appeared in the October 2024 edition)



Art Festival – Storytelling

SMAN 2 Tanjungpandan, Kepulauan Bangka Belitung.

ETA Adeena Ali recently attended the SMA Negeri 2 Tanjung Pandan students' Art Festival, where she was invited to judge the "English Storytelling" competition. Student finalists showcased their storytelling skills by retelling legends such as "*Si Kelingking*" (The Little Finger), "*Putri Nurjanu*" (Princess Nurjanu), and "*Raja Berekor*" (The King of Tail). The festival also featured narrative dance performances and a theatrical adaptation of "*Putri Nurjanu*," which marked the event's conclusion.

In addition to her role as a judge, ETA Adeena Ali visited various food stalls to support her students, who were selling popular dishes like *kentang goreng* (french fries), *es teh* (iced tea), peach squash, *dim sum* (small plates of bite-sized dumplings and other snack dishes). This provided a valuable opportunity for students to practice their English skills. As they engaged with her, they delivered their sales pitches and interacted in English, enhancing their communication ability.

Through these activities, the students improved their language skills and gained confidence in speaking English in real-world scenarios. The Art Festival was a successful event that combined creativity, cultural expression, and language learning, leaving a lasting impression on the students and their audience.

(First appeared in the October 2024 edition)



SMK Abdurrah's Local WORDS Storytelling Competition

SMK Abdurrah Pekanbaru, Riau.

On November 23, **ETA Maria Osman** and SMK Abdurrah Pekanbaru hosted their local WORDS storytelling and storybook competition, culminating a month of preparation and creativity. The competition was not just about storytelling—it was a journey of learning and growth. Through weeks of workshops and preparation, the students deepened their connection to tradition, honed their creativity, and built confidence in their storytelling abilities.

Students from grades 10 and 11 worked diligently in workshops led by ETA Maria to craft their narratives centered on this year's theme, Tradition. The event brought together 11 talented students who presented their imaginative stories alongside beautifully illustrated storybooks.

Three judges evaluated the storybooks, applauding the students' efforts and originality. The excitement was palpable as participants proudly showcased their work to an audience of peers, teachers, and judges. After much anticipation, one winner emerged, earning the opportunity to represent SMK Abdurrah Pekanbaru at the national WORDS competition in Jakarta this February. ETA Maria looks forward to accompanying the winner and cheering them on as they share their story on a national stage.

(First appeared in the November 2024 edition)



A Not-Too-Far Journey Down the Street

SMKN 1 Kutalimbaru, North Sumatra.

On November 14, **ETA Brady Allen**, along with students and his counterpart from his English Club at SMKN 1 Kutalimbaru, took a trip down the road to a local elementary school, SD 104227 Dusun IV Kampung Toba, a nearby elementary school. The short journey from SMKN 1 to the school took just five minutes by motorbike. The elementary school is the site of one of Brady's Community Engagement Projects (CEP).

Upon arrival, Brady, his students, and his counterpart were greeted by a swarm of energetic and happy children. It was the first time many had seen or heard a foreigner speak. After rounding up all the children into a classroom, Brady and his companions introduced themselves to the students.

Once introductions were complete, the topic of the first meeting was announced, "Counting and Numbers." Brady began teaching the students numbers, starting from number one. To the shock of Brady and his SMKN 1 peers, the students began counting out loud before Brady could even write the following number. The students' knowledge was impressive, and Brady decided to introduce some basic phrases, such as "My name is" and "Nice to meet you." Many brave students came to the front to practice speaking with Brady and his counterpart.

Eventually, it was time to go, which meant many photos and high-fives. Brady left with all smiles as a group of boys bid farewell by running after him as he rode away on the motorbike.

(First appeared in the November 2024 edition)



Koperasi English Fridays
SMAN 1 Tomohon, North Sulawesi.

While December brought exams and anticipation for the holidays among the SMAN 1 Tomohon community, **ETA Alyssa Guiang** laid the foundation for a community engagement project to help students, teachers, and staff practice their English skills!

Fridays at SMAN 1 Tomohon are called “English Fridays,” where students are encouraged to use English throughout the day. To motivate this, Alyssa created large posters to hang up at the school store, known as the *Koperasi*, to assist the school community in conversing and completing their transactions in English. The posters include translations from Indonesian to English of numbers, names of products, useful phrases, greetings, and other helpful words. The objective of this project is to initiate English use outside of the classroom in a way that reaches both students and faculty beyond Alyssa’s teaching hours.

Alyssa started by identifying the vocabulary and phrases that would be useful for students, teachers, and staff to use when going about their business in the *Koperasi*. Then, she designed these posters one by one on Canva, a graphic design platform, asking for student input on the poster designs. Afterward, Alyssa converted these designs into PDFs and printed them at a local print shop. She then brought the freshly printed posters to the school and received help attaching them to the walls of the school store.

The day after the posters were put up, Alyssa saw students reciting the information in English, which indicates how this project has started to encourage the use of English. She looks forward to cheering on school members as they practice their English on Fridays next semester!

(First appeared in the December 2024 edition)



Guest Lecture on Democracy in America
SMKN 5 Pontianak, West Kalimantan.



On December 2, **Hira Baig**, an **English Teaching Assistant (ETA)** at SMKN 5 Pontianak, was invited to be a guest speaker (*Kuliah Tamu*) for the Civic Education (*Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*) undergraduate students at Universitas Tanjungpura. The lecture topic was “Democracy in America,” where Hira provided an overview of the American political system and its democratic processes, focusing on the 2024 US Presidential Election.

During the lecture, Hira introduced key concepts such as the Electoral College, the roles of the Democratic and Republican parties, and the three branches of the US government: executive, legislative, and judicial. The lecture also covered the system of checks and balances that maintains the separation of powers within the government. To enhance the learning experience, informative videos illustrated these concepts.

The lecture was interactive, with a pre-and post-lecture Kahoot quiz to gauge students’ understanding of the material. Most of the lecture was in English, with some translation to ensure comprehension. Approximately 80 students attended the session, engaging in lively discussions and asking insightful questions about American democracy.

This event provided an excellent opportunity for cross-cultural exchange and helped foster a greater understanding of the US political system. It aligned with the goals of the ETA program to promote mutual understanding and enhance students’ language and civic knowledge.

(First appeared in the December 2024 edition)

03

Cultural Exchanges



The main tenet of the Fulbright program is building mutual cultural understanding. Through the Fulbright ETA grant, grantees have a tremendous opportunity to learn about the local culture at their site while also sharing aspects of American culture with community members.

Read these last pages to discover how **Brady, Alyssa, Manav, Annie, Hannah, Mary, and Kylie** participated in cross-cultural exchange!

Singing an American Classic at English Club

SMKN 1 Kutalimbaru, North Sumatra.

September has been filled with excitement and much enthusiasm at SMKN 1 Kutalimbaru. **ETA Brady Allen** has felt a very warm welcome from his students and fellow teachers. During his first few weeks of teaching, grade 10 students got to know Brady and his life in the US through his presentations about his life and American culture. Brady is greeted with many “hello, mister” and smiles whenever he walks from class to class.

The cheerfulness and enthusiasm carry over to the English Club, which Brady began hosting this month. The English Club’s first meeting was a huge success and attracted more than 60 students. Brady started the first meeting with a presentation all about his life in America and elsewhere. He introduced students to his hometown, favorite foods, favorite sports, university, family, and friends. The students were thrilled with the videos Brady showed of some of America’s most beautiful national parks and the atmosphere at his university’s football games.

At the end of the presentation, a student asked Brady, “What’s your favorite song?” Nervous that he would be asked to sing the song in front of all the students, Brady responded with “Country Roads.” The students responded with cheers, leading Brady to pull up the lyrics on the projector. And so, the class began singing along to the famous song, “Country roads, take me home.” The karaoke session capped an amazing end to the first English Club meeting.

(First appeared in the September 2024 edition)



Kolintang Classroom

SMAN 1 Tomohon, North Sulawesi.



On the third of October, one of **ETA Alyssa Guiang's** classes brought the classroom to her! Morning classes were just starting at SMAN 1 Tomohon, and Alyssa was invited outside to try playing *kolintang*, a traditional percussion instrument native to the Minahasa regency in North Sulawesi. This instrument is usually played in an ensemble accompanied by singing and dancing. The word *kolintang* originates from the sounds of the notes: “tong” for low notes, “tang” for middle notes, and “ting” for high notes. This upbeat music greets you every time you touch down at Manado airport.

During some afternoons at SMAN 1 Tomohon, you may hear these instruments clinking to the tunes of an American classic such as “Can’t Help Falling in Love” by Elvis Presley. Minahasans typically invite others to play *kolintang* by saying, “Let’s play tong-ting-tang,” a warm invitation was extended to ETA Alyssa herself. After she enthusiastically agreed, Alyssa was taught a few chords to support the melody of the *kolintang* music while the students supportively looked on. With a few minutes of practice, Alyssa joined the class ensemble in a mini performance watched by the vice principals of the high school. The group erupted in applause, and Alyssa was invited to continue learning about *kolintang* music in her free time.

Alyssa found it lovely to be invited to learn more about her community’s traditional music and to discover the joy of making music alongside her students and a fellow teacher!

(First appeared in the October 2024 edition)



Bridging US Education with Semarang Classrooms

SMAN 15 Semarang, Central Jawa.



At the end of October, **ETA Manav Rungta** gave a compelling hour-long lecture at the MGMP (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran*) English teachers' workgroup meeting for senior high schools in Semarang. His presentation focused on the American education system, particularly in relation to English language instruction throughout elementary, middle, and high school. Speaking to all the English teachers in Semarang, Manav provided a comprehensive overview of the curriculum used in American schools, highlighting various teaching techniques commonly applied in the US. He also discussed how these methods could be adapted and implemented in Indonesian classrooms to enhance English language education.

In addition to sharing insights on US education, Manav explained the teaching techniques he applies in his classes, offering practical examples to the teachers. He then spoke about the Fulbright program, his involvement with AMINEF, and other opportunities available through these programs, providing valuable information for those interested in pursuing international and cultural exchange paths.

The session concluded with an engaging question-and-answer segment, where Manav addressed the teachers' queries and offered further guidance on improving English education in their schools. His contributions helped bridge cross-cultural teaching practices and foster collaboration among educators.

(First appeared in the October 2024 edition)

A Month Full of Culture and Connection!

SMA Xaverius Bandar Lampung, Lampung.

In November 2024, **Annie Cowen**, a **Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA)** at SMA Xaverius Bandar Lampung, broadened students' understanding of American culture through engaging activities and events designed to strengthen their English skills and promote cultural exchange.

The month began with Halloween trivia, during which Annie shared the history and traditions of the holiday with her students through fun, themed questions, and small prizes, helping to expand their understanding of global traditions.

Annie also launched her first Community Engagement Project (CEP), Chill and Chat Hang-Outs with Miss Annie. These casual after-school meetings have allowed students to practice English in a relaxed environment, helping to build stronger relationships and boost confidence.

Later in the month, Annie hosted a workshop to prepare students for the WORDS storybook and storytelling competition. In this session, students learned techniques for crafting engaging stories, received personalized feedback from Annie, and enjoyed donuts as a treat.

Annie closed the month by organizing a pizza party celebrating International Education Week. This event offered students a taste of American traditions by hearing from a Fulbright alumna from Bandar Lampung who had previously studied in the US while also providing a space to discuss study-abroad opportunities.

Each event provided a unique opportunity to deepen students' knowledge of American culture while fostering relationship-building and English practice. Annie is thrilled to see her students embrace these new experiences and looks forward to more cultural exchanges inside and outside the classroom.

(First appeared in the November 2024 edition)



Singing, Storytelling, Speeches, Oh My! SMAN 10 Bengkulu, Bengkulu.



ETA Hannah Semmes and SMAN 10 Bengkulu co-teachers adopted a no-phone policy in English class. Despite initial resistance, students reported higher satisfaction with the learning experience in “exit ticket” surveys and found it more fun. Empirically, Hannah and the teachers noted two key advantages: 1) students must retrieve previous lessons from memory, reinforcing long-term learning, and 2) students naturally adopt leadership positions, helping each other across language levels.

In the English Club, students translated and performed English covers of *dangdut* (traditional/Indonesian Electronic Dance Music/EDM party songs). It turns out the lyrics are “spicier” than Hannah realized. The school also celebrated *Bulan Bahasa* (Language Month) with an English storytelling and speech competition, where Hannah served as a judge. She was awestruck by riveting renditions of classic Indonesian tales like “The Crying Stone.” Though each story originated in different geographical and cultural contexts across the archipelago, most shared one lesson: respect your parents—or die.

Hannah had a blast meeting with kindergarteners and first graders at HighScope during International Culture Week. She was invited by Bengkulu-based Fulbright alumna *Ibu Ruri* to read “Garbancito,” a Spanish children’s book, and to share Native American culture.

To cap it off, Hannah was invited to duet “I Will Always Love You” on stage at the beautiful Sunda wedding of a fellow English teacher. The crowd reported that co-teacher *Ibu Henny* has the voice of an angel. The consensus was that Hannah could have done better—everyone’s a critic!

(First appeared in the November 2024 edition)



Giving Thanks to Teachers SMAN 1 Manggar, East Belitung.

National Teacher’s Day started with a bang at SMAN 1 Manggar as students set off firecrackers after the morning assembly! It coincided with Thanksgiving week in the United States, so it was a great opportunity for **ETA Mary Breen** to discuss the differences between celebrations in the US and Indonesia.

Teacher Appreciation Day at her high school in the US was marked by the students and parents bringing in a special breakfast for the teachers. In class, she introduced common foods and traditions from American Thanksgiving to her 10th-grade classes. Then, they finished a unit on invitations by planning their own Thanksgiving party, using Indonesian and American traditions. The students were very impressed by the size of a roast turkey, but most also decided the menu would be better with *nasi goreng* (fried rice).

For lunch, Mary joined other teachers for a special meal featuring *nasi goreng* and the vegetable *cah kangkung*. They discussed Thanksgiving too, and Mary found out that it is more fun to compare and contrast holiday traditions over a table of food! This year, Mary is thankful for sharing meals and for everyone who has welcomed her to Indonesia.

(First appeared in the December 2024 edition)



Class Competitions – Year X

SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak, West Kalimantan.

At the beginning of October, **ETA Kylie Eiselstein** wanted her students to get comfortable answering oral questions and practicing fundamental vocabulary. In each class in Year X, students were divided into four teams of ten students. Each team chose a name (memorable mentions include Migu-Migu, Cheerful, Sunshine, Kelapa Rasa Jeruk, and more).

Students completed a warm-up activity to win points at the beginning of every class. The goal of this grade-wide competition is to spur confidence in quickly responding in English while establishing a sense of routine and consistency at the start of each English class.

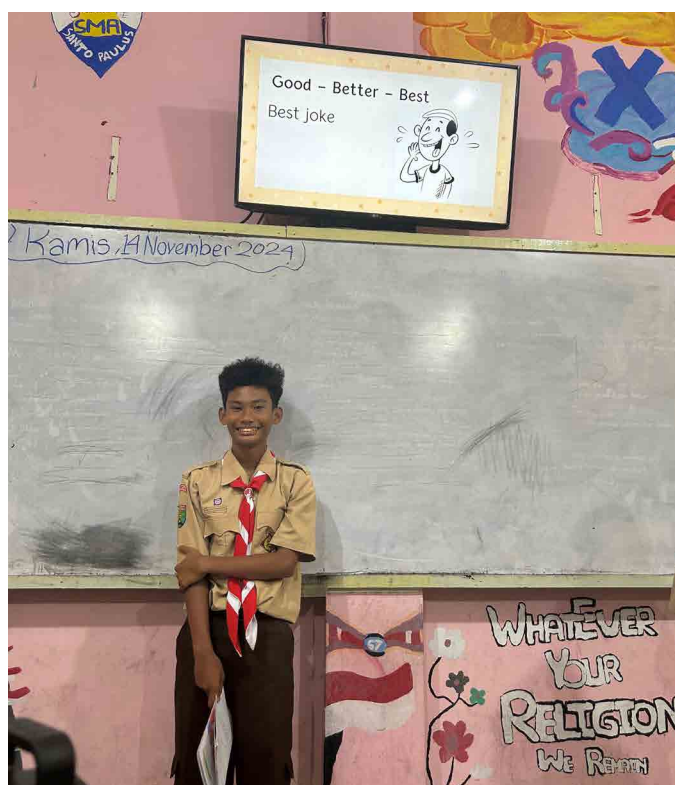
In the last week of school, the warm-up activity was “good-better-best,” in which each team competed in a range of small competitions and then was rated “good,” “better,” and “best.”

Some of these small competitions include the best joke in English, the most bottle flips in one minute, the best drawing, and more. This allowed students to showcase different talents and have a lot of fun doing it!

At the end of the semester, the winning teams were announced in each class and given a small prize. Additionally, the scores of each class were calculated. Across all of Year X, the top three scores were XB with 204, XE with 211, and XH taking the W with 221.

As Kylie has already informed her students, every class starts at 0 points next semester, and the teams will be switched up. With the students now accustomed to the spirit of the competition and gaining the confidence to take risks and speak out, Kylie is excited to see their enthusiasm next semester!

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Mid-Year Enrichment Conference

ETAs closed out 2024 by meeting in Jakarta for a professional development conference with 10 co-teachers who accompanied them to participate. **This conference also marked the mid-year point of the ETAs' grants in Indonesia. Read more about the Indonesian ETAs' journey in 2024 in this final section!**

Fulbright ETA 2024 Mid-Year Enrichment Conference

English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) and their co-teachers (Indonesian English teachers they work with at their schools) participated in the annual Fulbright ETA Program Mid-Year Enrichment Conference in Jakarta from December 9 to 13, 2024.

The conference marks the halfway point of the grant and allows ETAs and co-teachers to share their experiences, learn best practices from one another, and gain more knowledge on teaching, community building, cross-cultural communication, and problem-solving skills. These skills will continue to strengthen their collaboration in the second semester.

The ETAs helped to lead sessions, shared activity inspiration, and worked with AMINEF behind the scenes to make the conference successful.

ETAs and co-teachers participated in various sessions, ranging from “The State of Indonesia Today” to meetings with an Indonesian Government Panel. ETAs appreciated sessions led by their fellow ETAs, opportunities to learn from one another, structured work time with their co-teachers, and a visit to American Space Voice of Istiqlal at Istiqlal Mosque. Co-teachers also enjoyed the sessions, particularly those related to cross-cultural communication, teaching, Community Engagement Projects, and scholarships.

Each participant indicated they gained valuable new knowledge and insights from the conference. Participants were eager to return to their schools and incorporate new ideas into their classrooms. ETAs and co-teachers are especially looking forward to planning the WORDS Storytelling Competition, additional Community Engagement Projects, and workshops at their schools in the second semester.

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