

# Better Legal Education in Indonesia

1<sup>st</sup> Newsletter

2019/1

## Legal education and national development

In its current *Medium Term National Development Plan* (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional), the Indonesian government has set out its mission to further work on the emergence of Indonesia as a “developed, equitable and democratic society based on law”. Among the priorities that have been identified in reaching this aim are, among others, “clean, effective, democratic and reliable governance” and “a policy of restructuring the national education curriculum with advanced civic education”, as well as “to build Indonesia from its periphery” and “to strengthen diversity and social restoration by highlighting the policy of education for diversity and creating spaces of dialogue among citizens”.

It is clear that, in all of these applaudable aims, university education and especially the education of young *legal professionals* plays a pivotal role. For a very large part, it must be a new generation of highly motivated, skilled, and ethically inclined law graduates who will have to implement this vision of a fair and diverse society under the rule of law as future government officials, civil servants, judges, scholars and practicing lawyers. Legal education reform, therefore, is one of the most important starting points on the way towards the government's development goals. And given Indonesia's character as a very diverse nation, always facing the risk of insurmountable economic, cultural and political cleavages between Java's economic and administrative powerhouses and more ‘remote’, legal education in the “periphery” must be a focal point.

In keeping with these realisations and the ambitions of the Indonesian government, improving legal education, especially with regard to skills and professional ethics, is one of the aims of the *Orange Knowledge Programme*, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with NUFFIC, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education as the programme manager, through which a number of generous grants have been awarded to projects in Indonesia.

*The Orange Knowledge Programme is a € 220 m Dutch global development programme, available in 54 developing countries and managed by Nuffic, a Dutch non-profit organisation for internationalisation in education. Launched mid-2017, it aims to have provided tens of thousands with the possibility to change their future through education and training by mid-2022.*



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The Faculties of Law of Airlangga University in Surabaya and Maastricht University, the Netherlands, in collaboration with the Maastricht School of Management (MSM) have been awarded a grant under the Orange Knowledge Programme to embark on the important mission of strengthening skills, ethics, and integrity in Indonesian legal education. Together with their partners at the Faculties of Law of Haluoleo University (Kendari, Sulawesi Tenggara), Trunojoyo University (Madura, Jawa Timur), University Nusa Cendana (Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur), Mulawarman University (Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur), and Borneo University (Tarakan, Kalimantan Utara), they will invest, collaborate and join forces in order to educate law graduates throughout Indonesia with the necessary skills and professional ethics to take on and contribute the lawyers' share to the development tasks Indonesia is currently facing.

The overall aim of this project is to improve and strengthen legal education and the skills of legal graduates in general, with a strong focus on questions of the rule of law, good governance, and ethics.

# Project activities and outputs

In the course of our projects, the following outputs will be produced, which reflect our comprehensive approach to modernizing legal education in Indonesia:

1. Efficient faculty organization, education management, and quality assurance
2. Highly skilled teaching staff trained in problem-based learning (PBL) and a practice-oriented approach to teaching law, including interactive, student-centered teaching methods.
3. An improved curriculum with a focus on professional legal skills, ethics, and good governance, including several new courses and in-class moot courts
4. An Indonesia-wide network of providers of legal education who are active in modernizing innovating the law curricula nationwide, including both Java's educational hubs and universities in the Indonesian periphery. This network will, among others, host a new national moot court competition focusing on issues of ethics and good governance. In Addition, a new interactive online platform to disseminate news, discuss topics around law and legal education, and facilitate fruitful exchange between professionals, interested parties, and the public at large throughout the country.

All of these outputs are realized in close cooperation between Maastricht University, Universitas Airlangga, and the Maastricht School of Management, but also with our five regional partner universities, who benefit directly by receiving training, structural assistance, new curricular content, and help in implementing project outcomes in their particular circumstances. Along with other universities, our five partners will participate actively in the newly established network, working towards closing the educational gap between Indonesia's islands, cultures, and communities.



## Impact

All of these project outputs together aim at realizing a larger and more sustainable impact that could be achieved through smaller, less encompassing interventions alone. A brief summary:

Embedding legal education in a system of quality management and efficient organizational structures makes universities fit for autonomous future developments;

Promoting alignment in legal education curricula and a better match between didactics and exams, as well as practical skills and substantive knowledge of the law will lead to law graduates fit for Indonesia's transforming legal labour market; strengthening professional skills and links between students and legal professions through a practice-oriented curriculum will help improve Indonesia's legal system in the long run.

Building a strong focus on legal ethics, the rule of law, good governance, and integrity of legal professionals as an integral part of the university law curriculum is a direct investment in the full implementation of the rule of law in the future.

Promoting pan-Indonesian exchange and closer relations between legal educators and practitioners through the legal education network and the moot court competition will help bridge existing gaps between central and more marginal regions of the Country.

Fostering pan-Indonesian public access and debate with respect to constitutional issues, good governance, and the rule of law through an interactive website will work towards a better mutual understanding and more fruitful discourse throughout Indonesia.





## *Further Information and Contact*

The project is directed and coordinated by Prof. Dr. Aalt Willem Heringa and Dr. Sascha Hardt of Maastricht University and Prof. Dr. Radian Salman and Dr. Rosa Ristawati of Universitas Airlangga. Please contact Dr. Sascha Hardt or Dr Rosa Ristawati for any queries you may have or suggestions you may advance.

Our purpose is to send out information about the progress of this project twice a year via this newsletter, and at the end of the project.