

## BEST PRACTICE LEARNING THROUGH UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY COLLABORATION IN THE ASIAN GAMES 2018

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### Abstract

The 2018 Asian Games were held in Indonesia from August to September as a mega sports event for Asian countries. The games were an opportunity for universities which offer an ‘event management program’ to collaborate with the organizing committee to provide learning opportunities for students and faculty lecturers. This paper illustrates how Universitas Prasetiya Mulya’s collaboration was organized with the INASGOC committee during the 2018 Asian Games. The author acted as a collaborator with the committee by negotiating student volunteering opportunities as well as becoming a volunteer herself during the opening and closing ceremonies. To explore and find the effectiveness of this collaboration research was conducted using self-evaluation questionnaires and followed by a leaderless group discussion with former students who participated in the collaboration to receive their feedback on the benefits and challenges of taking part in the collaboration as volunteers. All data were analyzed by using a descriptive qualitative method. The research identified a number of benefits and challenges of such university-industry collaborations. Students benefitted from working on a prestigious international event where team working with volunteers from other countries helped to develop their cross-cultural capability skills. One significant challenge that was encountered was maintaining contact and communication with supervisors from INASGOC before and during the collaboration – as some were temporary employees themselves. This posed problems for the students who at times needed clear instructions on what their tasks should be. A novel aspect of this paper is that it evaluates the learning that can be gained for student volunteers at a mega sports event that is only staged every four years.

**Keywords:** *university-industry collaboration, event management, sports event, Asian Games*

### Introduction

The Asian Games are considered to be the second largest multi-sport event in the world after the Olympic Games. The Asian Games, which is categorized as a mega event (Getz & Page, 2016), was held for the first time in New Delhi, India in 1951. Indonesia has hosted the Asian Games firstly in 1962 (Jakarta) and for the

second time in 2018 (Jakarta and Palembang). This event took place 18 August - 2 September 2018 and involved 13,000 volunteers and 11,300 athletes from 46 Asian countries.

This rare moment deserves full support from all Indonesian citizens, not only from sports practitioners but also educational institutions. Universitas Prasetiya Mulya (UPM) through its S1

Event degree program<sup>1</sup> collaborated with the organizing committee namely the Olympic Council of Asia, in this case, represented by the national committee of Indonesia Asian Games Organizing Committee (INASGOC). The purpose of this paper is to identify the benefits and challenges of such a collaboration, particularly from a student perspective. Through the research this paper will contribute to the body of knowledge on student volunteering at mega events.

The university plays an important role in ensuring that all curricula designed for students can ultimately be utilized when the student enters employment (Afonso, 2012). Students who have gained their knowledge in educational institutions should be able to apply their learning to actual, real-life events.

The 2018 Asian Games provided an opportunity for UPM, through its S1 Event degree program, to collaborate with INASGOC by offering students to act as volunteers for INASGOC on a number of projects before and during the games. However, a number of challenges were faced in establishing the collaboration, such as the capabilities of the students to work on specific projects and the scheduling of these projects alongside the students teaching and learning program at UPM.

These challenges were partly overcome by embedding the projects with INASGOC into the syllabi of one of the course modules on the S1 Event degree program – the `International Event` course module. This enabled the students to undertake their work with INASGOC as part of the S1 Event curriculum and as part of their scheduled timetabled activities.

This paper reflects on the collaboration between UPM and INASGOC to identify the lessons that can be learned through a university-industry collaboration of this type. This also answers the research problem, how to form the best

practice in the university-industry collaboration process.

The results of this research will be of value to other faculty lecturers who wish to include student volunteering within their curricula through industry collaboration. Industry partners will also find the contents of this paper of interest as they provide guidance on the protocols of recruiting and managing students as volunteers.

## Literature Review

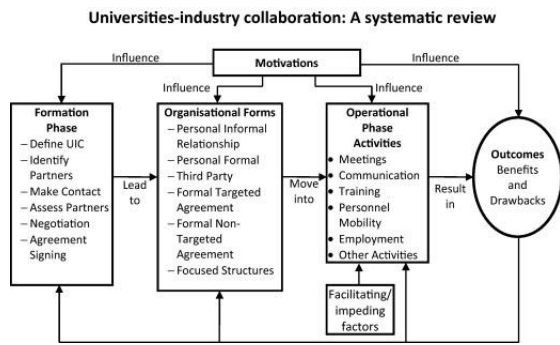
Barron, (2017) mentioned that events industry trade associations have discussed better collaboration with education to identify education-related activities such as cross-industry internships, structured training programs for students, and increased communication between the industry, academics and students through the creation of an online hub. Peksatici (2019) stated that universities and industry face some different public pressures, regulatory expectations, and including industry norms.

In addition, both sides (university and industry) also have different cultures, policies, and institutional logics. These differences affect how the academy and the industry form and manage their relationships. Zhang (2019) stated that bilateral and trilateral interactions between university, research institute, and industry, not only directly and significantly improved the lecturers and students in scientific performance but also moderately enhanced the effects of research investments on that performance.

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<sup>1</sup> Internationally popular known as bachelor program in event of tourism

Figure1: Universities-industry Collaboration



Source: Ankrah (2015)

Figure 1 illustrates the systematic review in university-industry collaboration that has been investigated by Ankrah (2015). It states that the outcome of a collaboration process is strongly influenced by motivation, both motivation from the university (faculty lecturers and students), and motivation from industry itself. Final outcomes that are usually needed by both parties can be in the form of benefits or drawbacks, both by universities and industry. This outcome should be decided from the beginning before the collaboration process is mapped conceptually.

The university industry collaboration (UIC) process begins with a formation phase. Formation phase begins with a first step through defining the expected UIC form. In the process of defining this UIC, an identification process will be carried out from the partners who will be involved, such as the vendors, other event organizers, as well as the talent that is presented. After the identification of partners is carried out, the two parties will contact each partner, as well as conducting an assessment indicator on each partner, from the industry and university. In the process of identification and assessment, negotiations are often needed to create an agreement on things that could have been missed. The first phase is then concluded with a cooperation agreement, signed by the parties involved.

The second phase in UIC is by establishing organizational forms. The

formulation of the committee is important, to determine the position where the university can be involved, where there is a restriction area for the students, and others. This second phase is a way to build personal relationships between the two parties. The organizational structure, duties and responsibilities should also be socialized in this phase. The students and lecturers involved in this phase should go through an orientation and debriefing phase to explain the targets to be achieved. In this phase, formal agreements are needed, for the targets to be achieved. This phase also ensures that there is unity, especially from the university to the industry during the event. The students and lecturers feel part of the industrial team, and vice versa.

The third phase before obtaining the final outcome is operational activity of organizing the event itself. Meetings, structured communication, discussion, and training must always be done, to adjust between planning and execution during the event. Activities and mobility of the industry should also be carried out in accordance with the structure of the position that was planned in the previous phase. The final element of the Ankrah (2015) UIC process is the outcomes of the collaboration – the benefits and drawbacks.

Ankrah's model provides an appropriate and systematic approach that can be followed when a university-industry collaboration is being planned. If the steps are followed the outcomes of the collaboration should result in more benefits than drawbacks.

University-industry collaboration is also supported by Afonso (2012) who suggested that more practically inclined education, closer to industry requirements, is required and that the participation of industry professionals in postgraduate courses and student's internships in companies are the mechanisms with greatest impact on employability. Hu, (2018) argued that future research could be done to employ the proposed framework for universities in different contexts to

maintain the competitiveness of higher education, enhance the performance and productivity of UIC, or fulfill university social responsibilities.

This paper will investigate the relevance of Ankrah's (2015) UIC process model to the collaboration between UPM and INASGOC. Until now, there has been no research using UIC research objects for the case of an international sporting event such as the Asian Games.

### **Research Methodology**

This qualitative research was conducted after the 2018 Asian Games finished. The study was conducted for six months. The four researchers gathered ten informants who were S1 Event degree program students at UPM, who were directly involved in organizing the 2018 Asian Games with INASGOC as student volunteers.

Qualitative data were collected through the leaderless group discussion method. Bass (1954) felt that leaderless group discussion (LGD) is useful as an instrument for assessing leadership potential rather than as a means for studying leadership development. Basically, in LGD, the moderator will observe and rate any potential ideas or data, where in this group of informants, they are instructed to engage in a temporarily fixed discussion and there is no leader that is designated. All data collected are then analyzed by a qualitative descriptive means.

### **The Collaboration Process**

An official announcement which stated that Indonesia will host the 2018 Asian Games was a positive momentum for the S1 Event degree program at UPM to consider how it could collaborate for mutual benefit with INASGOC as the organizing committee. UPM proposed and urged some goals of collaboration with INASGOC including (1) providing support and assistance for the best accomplishment of this country's pride event; (2) building up

an exposure of participation experiences for both students and lecturers at this international event; (3) achieving learning objectives of the course; and (4) improving institutional reputation.

According to Ankrah (2015), a university-industry collaboration has to be driven out of its motivation. Motivations could influence four parts in this collaboration including team formation, organizational form, activities phase, and the outcomes. To gain the ultimate outcomes, which are benefits and drawbacks, it is the result of well-structured meetings, communication, training, mobility, fair employment, and other bonding activities. All these outcomes start from a clear collaboration definition, goals identification, partners assessment, and a signed agreement. As mentioned by Afonso (2012), clear dimensions which are familiar called as formation phase will lead to some important forms, such as personal relationship, formal targeted agreement, and a focused structured.

As explained previously, according to Ankrah (2015) there are three stages to follow from the beginning of the collaboration until its end. The first stage is the formation phase through which contact is made with the key individuals who will be involved with the collaboration. A challenge that was experienced with INASGOC was identifying who had responsibility for initiating the collaboration with UPM as very few named individuals could be identified by UPM. Other established UPM event industry contacts were used to help identify these key contacts within INASGOC. As a result of this process, the initial INASGOC relationship was established through the Ceremonies Department.

After meeting the right individuals the purpose of the collaboration was explained and discussions sought to find a form of mutually beneficial collaboration. In the discussion, both parties expressed all concerns and limitations. Through discussion, several challenges occurred.

The discussion and negotiation time was relatively short, approximately one month before the `International Event` course module started at UPM. However, after the discussion was completed, some agreements of this discussion were reached:

1. The university determined the courses which are considered to be relevant, and then the syllabus was adjusted to the timeline of student involvement in the 2018 Asian Games.
2. INASGOC provides various options for working or participation type that can be completed by student volunteers.
3. Both parties agree on any costs and expenses arising from this collaboration
4. Both parties agree on the number of students involved along with their rights and obligations
5. Both parties agree on a time period for the duration of the collaboration
6. The organizing committee also actively provides an assessment of student performance, represented by the division supervisor according to the area where the student works

Based on these agreements both parties then entered the organizational form phase. All forms of activity plans were outlined in writing to confirm what was agreed and to enable communication of the various activities and projects to all stakeholders, including students, faculty lecturers and UPM administrators. It is very necessary for students to clearly understand their learning objectives, and what kind of activities they will have during the collaboration. Since the International Event course module lecture session schedules had to be adjusted to the INASGOC schedule, it was crucial to maintain tripartite communication between the lecturer, the organizing committee, and university administration. For example, there was a shift in the face-to-face time of another course on a particular day because

students were required to attend the committee's office, whether for a meeting or project-activities.

Operational phase activities (Ankrah, 2015) were considered as the most challenging phase of the whole process. Student involvement was divided into four large projects; firstly, involvement in the preparations for the 2018 Asian Games, including the City Beautification & LOG Department, Communication Department (four weeks), Revenue Department and Ticketing Department. Secondly, students were involved in the Opening and Closing Ceremony division (ten weeks). The attendance time of students during this period was quite flexible depending on the needs of the organizing committee. There were groups of students who were almost physically needed to be present every day at the INASGOC office, but there were also a few groups who could do their tasks remotely. The most important thing was that their work for INASGOC could be submitted according to the targeted deadline.

Besides working on their INASGOC projects, students were also required to observe any potential problems they encountered and to propose improvements using material knowledge tools that they had been taught during their S1 Event degree program at UPM. Those observations and analyses were then reported and presented to the lecturer in the class.

In the first four weeks of the UPM – INASGOC collaboration there was not any involvement with INASGOC by students from other universities. There were 32 UPM S1 Event degree program students divided into several groups according to the needs of INASGOC. The division of groups was based on the lecturer's consideration. Those considerations included student's capabilities, previous project's performance, and their interests according to the various projects provided by INASGOC. Another challenge faced was that not all of the division supervisors were

informed about this collaboration, which led to different interpretations and expectations from students by each supervisor in every division. This was compounded by the fact that most supervisors were hired as temporary workers and most of them had another main job besides being an organizer of this international event. Their working time was irregular. This created communication problems with students who also had to attend the UPM campus for the continuation of their S1 Event course modules.

During the next ten-week working project period, students were specifically involved to assist the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. They worked under the supervision of an experienced organizer who had managed several Olympic sport ceremonies. This was an ideal opportunity for students to learn a lot about event management from a world-wide organizer working to international standards.

In this phase, UPM students were merged with volunteers who had applied from all over Indonesia, including students from other universities who also did a collaboration with INASGOC. This phase helped develop further the UPM students' interpersonal and communication skills and in particular the ability to communicate with others who have different backgrounds of education, age, point of view, and even culture. For example, some supervisors were foreign nationals, such as American, British, French, Malaysian, Russian, and Belgian.

UPM students were also required to have well-structured time management skills. Effective time management was critically required since the students could not come late for any meetings and at the same time, they had an obligation to attend other course modules on the UPM campus. However, the hard work and fatigue of the students paid off when the 2018 Asian Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies were successfully implemented and

received outstanding praise from various parties.

To assess whether the learning objectives of the collaboration had been achieved four evaluative methods were used. First, written tests were conducted during the mid-term examinations. A mid-term test was devised to assess if students could understand all the material concepts that were covered in the semester's formal teaching program. Secondly, the students made oral presentations, using an analytical framework, to report and assess their experiences working for INASGOC. Thirdly, observation in field practice were conducted through monitoring and asking for feedback from the students' supervisors. Finally, during the 2018 Asian Games the number of spectators and event visitors was assessed as a means of indicating activity and engagement with the various projects the UPM students had been involved with organising.

### **Why It Is Essential**

Collaboration between industry and academia, especially for students, is very important. The UPM S1 Event degree program first started in 2015 and the opportunity to collaborate on a mega sports event with INASGOC in 2018 on the Asian Games provided many important benefits for the development of the S1 program and its students.

One of the benefits is for both national and international accreditation of the S1 Event degree program. Accreditation audit criteria require evidence being provided of university-industry collaboration and the UPM-INASGOC collaboration is very strong evidence of this. The collaboration process which is assessed during these accreditations is required not only to benefit the university, the faculty lecturers, but also the students. The accreditation audit will also assess the scale of the event carried out in the collaboration.

Directly, the collaboration between the S1 Event degree program and INASGOC also raised the S1 Event as a brand image, as well as the program's reputation in the eyes of the public and industrial association (Indonesian event association). The Asian Games event is an international sporting event with high prestige. Those involved in it will have a high prestige because the involvement of the entire committee will be publicly announced.

In addition to brand image and prestige, the S1 Event degree program at UPM should be proud because trust was given by INASGOC as a partner in organizing the Asian Games to the UPM faculty lecturers and the students. Of course, to carry out an international event as big as the Asian Games, INASGOC has many requirements for anyone who wants to partner with them. The S1 Event degree program can also learn about the mechanism and fulfillment of standards from an international sports event organization in selecting their partners. In other words, by collaborating with INASGOC through the S1 Event degree program, UPM is considered to be able to meet all of INASGOC criteria for its suppliers and partners.

This collaboration is also quite essential from a micro perspective. Collaboration has some benefit of adjusting to learning objectives that were agreed upon from the program start. The learning objective is to gain knowledge not only theoretically, but also practically, in the form of practical experience at international events organization and management.

The students who all participated in this program gained valuable experience because they were able to learn from real cases in international events management, which will be very difficult to repeat in the future. Students also have a portfolio of international events practical experience from this collaboration that they can use when applying for full time jobs after graduation and when they are working in

the events industry. A more noble thing from this collaboration is to contribute to the service of the Indonesian nation and state in showing the image of Indonesia, to the other Asian member countries.

### **Reflection and Lessons Learned**

A leaderless group discussion (LGD) was chosen to provide a liberal space for informants, in this case, students to convey all benefits as well as challenges they faced during the 'best practice' learning process. LGD shows that students get a variety of benefits from this collaboration, although not specifically related to the syllabi planned at the beginning of the International Event course module. Interestingly, students felt that this collaboration was a means of applying other course module subject content such as volunteer management and human resources management to their work experiences with INASGOC. However, most students thought that best practice learning during the 2018 Asian Games provided them with pride and prestige, which had no measurable value, compared with the other students who were not involved with the collaboration. Students who participated in the collaboration also felt that this experience provided:

- \* valuable network opportunities for them both nationally and internationally
- \* enhanced practical work experience that could be included on their CVs
- \* adding value for them when they apply for a job
- \* providing confidence to start and to open their own business
- \* insight into new methods and conditions when working with event communities from various countries and continents, such as time management and emotional control
- \* insight into business practices such as inventory control and logistics

Through the LGD process several major difficulties were identified by the

UPM S1 Event degree program students (internal) and by students from other universities (external) – see Figure 2.

Figure 2: Difficulties Encountered<sup>2</sup>

Internal	External
It is difficult to find networks that relate to decision makers at INASGOC to collaborate with	The complexity of INASGOC organization structure
It takes time to convince INASGOC to accept the offer of collaboration	There is a high expectation from INASGOC to place students in a broad different division
The period of student practical learning takes quite long (2 months)	There is a high expectation from INASGOC to involve more number of students
During this period of collaboration, students are needing to take other subject modules (there are 7 other subject modules in total) with high number of credits.	Other lecturers and faculties who do not involve on this collaboration need to make some schedule adjustment
There is a credit regulation from University to not allow any compensation given to students, who have external organization activities, if it is clash with other subjects	Organizational structure change, on decision makers itself, at INASGOC. Immediate adjustment is required
A challenge to compensate students activities with an ideal subject marks	Different departments, different division, create different workloads

Nevertheless, students have learned from some of the challenges they faced. The main challenges were:

- \* the difficulty of work patterns and forms regulation, in particular a very heavy daily workload
- \* working with people from many international communities with different emotional backgrounds and cultures
- \* an unclear form of work and organisational structure due to changes in supervisors and other key workers employed by INASGOC and the absence of job descriptions and SOPs
- \* the dynamics of the whole team, considering that volunteers come from different backgrounds, without any forms of interpersonal relations exchange
- \* a heavy burden of work activities for the students - coping with demands from both volunteering with INASGOC and the curriculum requirements of being an S1 Event degree program student at UPM
- \* maintaining motivation for the INASGOC work as a low rate of financial compensation was paid to the students

Apart from the challenges and benefits obtained by students, the informants also gave several suggestions related to how to improve this type of university-industry collaboration.

The first recommendation is a neater preliminary preparation between the two parties, along with a clear position and job description for each job, as well as proper volunteer training and personal bonding before the project started. The second recommendation is to adjust the best practice learning period with class schedules for other subjects, and whole learning objectives, by determining these objectives before the subjects were created and lectured, and even before the project was begun, in order to obtain more effective results. The final recommendation is to add more existence and coordinated communication between the university,

<sup>2</sup> Data collected during the LGD process



students as project executors, and the industry. Apart from these recommendations the students greatly appreciated this valuable opportunity to collaborate with INASGOC, while also appreciating greatly the hard work of the lecturer who organised and led the collaboration between UPM and INASGOC. Not only did the faculty lecturer organise the collaboration but she also volunteered at the 2018 Asian Games – an extremely beneficial learning opportunity itself.

### **Further Collaboration**

Collaboration between the S1 Event degree program at UPM with INASGOC should always be maintained. Although INASGOC is an ad-hoc committee that was formed only when the 2018 Asian Games took place, there were people in the INASGOC committee who became Ministers in President Joko Widodo's cabinet. Some examples are the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Mr. Wishnutama and Minister of BUMN (public company ministry), Mr. Erick Thohir. This means that UPM has to continue to maintain its good relations with these key individuals and the Ministries that they lead.

This can be done in a number of ways as these Government Ministers (through their departments) can provide other opportunities for collaboration in the future. In this regard, the UPM S1 Event degree program has to be always pro-active in building relationships with ad-hoc organizations or committees such as INASGOC, which was formed by the government as a committee for organizing the 2018 Asian Games. Several international sporting events will take place in Indonesia in the years ahead such as the Moto GP Race in Lombok and Formula E in Jakarta. The S1 Event degree program can utilize these international sport programs to actively collaborate, based on

the success of the collaboration with INASGOC.

Moreover, the S1 Event degree program should assist students to prepare themselves before they get involved in the committee of similar international events. Some relevant course module subjects to be given are Event Operation Management, MICE Management, and Venue and Facility Management. By providing subject content on these course modules in the classroom students will be better prepared and able to collaborate with the new core committees before the event.

Faculty lecturers should also carry out several actions. One action is to keep identifying university-industry collaboration opportunities and maintaining very good relations with the events industry in Indonesia. Some concrete steps that can be taken include: showing high initiative in looking for international events and making priority considerations if several international events are held simultaneously. Faculty lecturers also have an opportunity to organise a broad industry networking event in order to open cooperation with selected national committees, maybe even faculty lecturers will become members of the board of an organizing committee.

To realize these targets, faculty lecturers are required to develop negotiation skills, especially so that course module learning objectives are still achieved as desired when an industry collaboration is established. In addition to negotiation skills, faculty lecturers are also required to have communication skills to coordinate with various parties or divisions on campus so that all parties support this activity.

The outcomes of negotiation and communication with industry collaborators should be written in the form of an agreement and should be documented in a written contract. This guideline is very important in validating the negotiation and communication process between faculties and industry.

Faculty lecturers are also faced with the challenge of taking more time to monitor and evaluate the collaboration process periodically. The evaluation and monitoring process might be done by visiting students when they are volunteering. Thus, even faculty lecturers can become volunteers with students by directly being involved from pre-collaboration to post-collaboration. The time that the faculty lecturer has to invest into creating the university-industry collaboration should not be underestimated – it is a major commitment in both time and personal energy. However, such investment is worth it as the benefits of university-industry collaboration outweigh the costs.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper has been to explain and assess one very special university-industry collaboration that took place in 2018 for S1 Event degree program students at UPM. To provide a framework for assessing the collaboration process Ankrah's (2015) model was used.

The findings from the research that was undertaken for this paper have identified both benefits and challenges that have arisen for the students, their faculty lecturers and for the industry partner - INASGOC. These benefits and challenges have been explained in the previous sections of this paper. Although there is positive feedback from the UPM-INASGOC collaboration, there are still aspects that need to be considered when similar university-industry collaborations are organised in the future.

A key learning point is that both parties to the collaboration need to fully understand the motivations that each has for establishing the collaboration. This is the starting place for all future collaborations – what are the expectations of each party in terms of outcomes from the collaboration.

Clear, open, intensive and frequent communication between the parties is

necessary for the collaboration to run effectively – this ensures that the organizational and operational phases from the Ankrah (2015) model are achievable. If there is a breakdown of communication then many challenges will arise which could result in the desired outcomes not being achieved.

From a student perspective clear briefing information has to be provided for them and appropriate job descriptions provided that explain accurately the work tasks they have to undertake. Regular meetings with their supervisors in the work place are essential for monitoring the progress of their work and to provide an opportunity for discussing any difficulties that are being faced.

If the above learning points are followed then there is an increased likelihood that the benefits of the university-industry collaboration will outweigh the disadvantages. There is no doubt, though, that university-industry collaborative projects are very challenging to organize successfully, but if they are systematically developed following the Ankrah (2015) model the benefits for all concerned will be significant.

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