INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIANSHIP:
AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF INDONESIAN LIBRARY SCHOOL COURSES*

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the writer's view about the course of International Librarianship that should be offered by library schools in Indonesia. As the course is relatively new to most library schools in Indonesia, the writer tries to propose the syllabus for the course which includes the goals and objectives and how the course should be conducted. Certain emphases are given for the course to be which comprises aspects such as library regional and international cooperation, comparative studies among libraries of particular region like South East Asia in relation to human resources, application of information technology, services and problems encountered by libraries of different countries.

Keywords : international librarianship; library cooperation; library schools

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini memaparkan pandangan penulis tentang mata kuliah Kepustakawanan Internasional yang sebaiknya diajarkan di program pendidikan perpustakaan di Indonesia. Mengingat bahwa mata kuliah ini relatif baru bagi kebanyakan perguruan tinggi yang membuka program pendidikan perpustakaan, penulis mencoba untuk mengusulkan silabus mata kuliah yang mencakup tujuan matakuliah dan bagaimana mata kuliah diajarkan. Hal-hal yang ditekankan dalam mata kuliah mencakup beberapa aspek seperti kerjasama perpustakaan di tingkat regional maupun internasional, studi komparatif di perpustakaan wilayah tertentu seperti Asia Tenggara dalam bidang sumberdaya manusia, penerapan teknologi informasi, layanan dan permasalahan yang dihadapi oleh perpustakaan di berbagai negara.

Kata kunci : kepustakawanan internasional; kerjasama perpustakaan; pendidikan perpustakaan

INTRODUCTION

Library education in Indonesia started about 50 years ago. It happened when the government of Indonesia with the support of Unesco decided to establish public library system for the people. The biggest problem was on human resources. Most of library staff at that time did not have proper education and training in library work. The need for Indonesian library school was obvious. Short courses and training then were organized. Those courses were more concentrated on the technical aspect of library operation and management. That was the emerging time of present library school at the University of Indonesia.

Sending staff to study abroad had also been undertaken especially by special libraries. This resulted in a group of librarians pioneering library development in Indonesia. Some of them also assisted library school of the University of Indonesia as part-time lecturer. It was understood that the courses offered were closely related to their day-to-day practice. In the early 1980s programs to send more staff to achieve graduate degree in library science were developed. Most state universities in Indonesia did this to get more qualified librarian for their university library. Library schools also got more opportunities to strengthen their existence.

Today there are some library schools in Indonesia. However, only three graduate library schools are presently available. The majorities are still limited to diploma program and only some offer undergraduate degree. It is

unfortunate that the program is too concentrated on the technical aspect of librarianship. However, due to the vast development of information technology (IT) and its impact to the library practice this trend is understandable. I think library schools in Indonesia should also give more attention to the "soft aspect of librarianship," including Indonesian librarianship philosophy. In addition, due to the globalization phenomena, topics on International Librarianship will become important. This topic has not been offered as regular course.

In general 'International Librarianship" consists of activities carried out among or between governmental and non-governmental institutions, organizations, groups or individuals of two or more nations, to promote, establish, develop, maintain and evaluate library and librarianship, and the library profession generally, in any part of the world. In fact some libraries in Indonesia have long been undertaking lots of activities either at regional in Asia or even at the international level. Cooperation such as the International Serials Data System (ISDS), the General Information Program of UNESCO (PGI), or Science and Technology Information for Southeast Asia (ASTINFO) followed by the COEXIST-SEA are only a few to be mentioned. Unfortunately the topic is not always in the discussion of library school classes. If it is mentioned then it is only as a sample of library cooperation activities. No further effort for deep study to understand it and take its benefit for the development of Indonesian libraries. This also happened among library practitioners.

The era of globalization actually requires a more understanding of regional or international cooperation. From the other perspective, the globalization itself actually is a 'weaponless world war.' There will be continuous competition among countries of the world, including libraries and librarians. Indonesian libraries and librarians must survive in this coming era. To do so, they should be able to work in partnership with other librarians at regional or international level. An understanding of international librarianship then is a pre-requisite for those who will play such role. Indonesian library schools accordingly are expected to prepare their students through international librarianship class. The question is how the course is offered and what is its coverage. This paper will present author's thought and proposal for such course to be offered at Indonesian library schools.

COURSE RATIONALE

To answer the above questions the author applies the logic of strategic planning process. Indonesian libraries and their librarians should identify their future collaborator in the library work. This has to be followed by a strategic plan to achieve that position. Making assumptions is the first step in determining the future position.This means that understanding changes at local, national, regional and international level is essential. This will be achieved if a complete set of parameters that influence the library and librarian has been determined.

In my opinion, globalization and information technology (IT) are two most important parameters. Globalization is not just a discourse. It actually had been agreed and implemented in such trade areas like Asean Free Trade Area (AFTA) and Asia Pacific Economic Consortium (APEC). Indonesia is bounded to both agreements. There will be strong competition among members to take the most benefit of the agreed cooperation (peaceful world war?). Every country will compete. The fairest result if win-win solutions are to be achieved is deeper understanding and stronger collaboration among libraries and librarians of the member countries.

Studies will concentrate on specific aspects that can be collaborated with Indonesia for the benefit of all. During the digital era, IT will become important parameter to affect libraries. In Indonesia the application of computer for library housekeeping had been started since 1980s. The progress of IT itself is very amazing. It can be said that libraries in the future will depend on IT. It will be interesting to study the development of IT in the library in AFTA or APEC countries. Not to be neglected is the social and humanistic aspect of technology. After all technology is for human being.

Exploring one of Indonesian library problems will become the first topic of study in other countries to know how they tackle problems. To fully understand the problem requires background knowledge of the condition of libraries in other countries. This will be part of the study. At the end of the class students have to present the result of the study and offer solutions to problems identified. A discussion of the possibility of its implementation in Indonesia is the core of the paper which then will be presented in a class seminar with the possibility to invite outer audiences.

PROPOSED COURSE SYLLABUS

Goals:
1. To learn library development and services in AFTA and APEC member countries
2. To learn existing library cooperation among AFTA and APEC member countries
3. To learn issues and problems facing the development of libraries, the success and failures of various

approaches, especially in relation to the socio-humanistic and technical aspect of IT

4. To take advantage of the experinences for library development in Indonesia.

Course objectives:

1. To identify and discuss the cooperation that Indonesian libraries have been undertaking at the regional and international level
2. To identify and discuss major issues facing libraries, library services and the library profession in AFTA and APEC member countries
3. To describe various aspects and training approaches in the field of IT application for library work and housekeeping activities
4. To identify the most suitable approach in solving Indonesian library problems

Course topics:

1. Regional and international cooperation
2. Study of librarianship in AFTA and APEC member countries
3. State of the art of IT application in library work of AFTA and APEC member countries
4. Knowledge and skills involved
5. Contemporary issues
6. Education and training on librarianship
7. Professional associations

Course output:

At the end of the class students will produce a paper comparing particular problems and solutions between countries studied and Indonesia, that will be presented in a class seminar

Course outcome:

For the completion of the course, students should be able to identify current trends in international librarianship in comparison with the situation in Indonesia and finding alternative ways that can be implemented in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Courses on International Librarianship have not been offered as regular course in graduate library schools in Indonesia. Globalization and the digital era force Indonesian libraries and librarians to catch up with their partners abroad. Collaboration between Indonesian libraries and librarians with partners from AFTA and APEC member countries needs to be strengthened. This effort requires more

understanding to the situation of the member countries of AFTA and APEC. Courses on International Librarianship will enable students of library schools to understand the specialities of a selected issue of comparative librarianship. To initiate the course, a proposal is presented to be discussed and hopefully can be implemented in graduate library schools in Indonesia.

Further development of the course actually will also depend on the practitioners. Ideally the course is followed by regular interactive discussions between libraries and library schools. International Librarianship ideally will be a discourse that from them will emanate thoughts and ideas to leverage Indonesian libraries and librarians at the same level with their counterpart abroad.