Japanese Polytechnic Diplomacy in Indonesia: Establishing Electrical Engineering Polytechnic Institute of Surabaya (EEPIS) as Japan's Higher Vocational Ambassador to Developing Countries through Triangular Development Cooperation

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine implications of Japan's 'polytechnic diplomacy' approach as its international development strategy towards Indonesia. Utilizing concepts and framework related to international development assistance, triangular development cooperation (TDC), and public diplomacy, this paper argues that development fund disbursement affects interactions among actors, not only in bilateral context but also multilaterally. Mainly, on how this activity transform an aid recipient into a potential partner for the donor's future international development programs. It is occurred due to the facilitation of donor's triangular development cooperation (TDC). The aid recipient's success story thus prompted the donor to perceive them as its development ambassador. the pattern continues as the donor attempts to disseminate the formula to other developing countries. The Electrical Engineering Polytechnic of Surabaya (EEPIS) exemplifies the case on how a specific foreign aid approach raises global multiplier effects to both aid provider and recipient.

Keywords: Development-Ambassador; Diplomacy; EEPIS; Japan/JICA; Vocational

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk meninjau implikasi dari strategi 'diplomasi politeknik' yang digunakan Jepang dalam pemberian bantuan pembangunan luar negeri-nya kepada Indonesia. Berdasarkan konsep dan kerangka yang ditawarkan oleh teori bantuan pembangunan luar negeri, kerjasama pembangunan triangular (TDC), dan diplomasi publik, tulisan ini menyatakan bahwa dampak yang tercipta mempengaruhi interaksi aktor-aktor yang terlibat dalam inisiasi ini. Dampaknya tidak hanya dirasakan secara bilateral, tetapi juga multilateral: program tersebut mentransformasi negara berkembang yang awalnya merupakan negara penerima bantuan menjadi negara mitra potensial dalam kerjasama pembangunan lain berdasarkan skema TDC. Kesuksesan yang dialami di negara penerima memacu negara donor untuk menjadikannya sebagai duta/representasi dari inisiatifnya. Pola pun berlanjut sebagaimana donor mereplikasi strategi yang sama kepada negara berkembang lainnya. Studi kasus pendirian Politeknik Elektronika Negeri Surabaya (PENS) menjadi contoh kasus mengenai bagaimana bantuan kerjasama internasional mempunyai implikasi berlipat bagi pihak-pihak yang terlibat.

Kata Kunci: *Diplomasi; Duta Pembangunan; Jepang/JICA; PENS; Vokasi*

Introduction

This research topic mostly derives from the strong relations between Japan and Indonesia within the framework of development cooperation in establishing the first electrical higher vocational education or electrical polytechnic in the latter country. The institution in question, which is known as the Electrical Engineering Polytechnic of Surabaya (EEPIS). Located in Surabaya—the second largest city in Indonesia, EEPIS has gained recognition to be the most excellent polytechnic in the country (Tempo 2021). It has been continuously showing its enormous achievements that accomplished both in national and international levels during the last three decades. Having its main concentration in the field of electrical, telecommunication, and information technology; EEPIS does not only portray the progress of Indonesia's advanced industrial and technological capacity, rather it also presents diverse aspects of developmental diplomacy—accounting for its existence to be a brainchild of international development assistance that has been provided by the Japanese government. Usually, the disbursement of money or fund from developed countries (i.e., donors) to developing ones (i.e., aid recipient) tend to create political implications which referred to as politics of development assistance. The issue becomes more prominent in the field of international relations and international development. Yet, the case of EEPIS as one of the main development projects conducted by Japan to Indonesia has not yet been examined by either Indonesian or Japanese scholars.

Therefore, this paper aims to examine the further implications of a particular donor's diplomatic approach to a developing country with the emphasize on the case of EEIPS. Particularly, it elaborates the impact of cooperation towards the relations among actors involved—comprising Japan as donor and Indonesia as aid recipient. Utilizing concepts and framework related to international development assistance, triangular development cooperation (TDC), and public diplomacy, this paper argues that most of the development fund disbursement from a donor to developing countries affects interactions among actors, not only in bilateral context but also in international realm, mainly on how an aid recipient is transformed into a potential co-donor for the developed country's future international development programs. The donor gains leverage to disseminate its development concept as a result of successful implementation and developmental transformation on the aid recipient's side. In exchange, the latter thus gradually changing its status to become potential co-donor to the former's future international development initiatives—hence recognized and portrayed as its "ambassador". In

context of the Japanese polytechnic diplomacy in Indonesia, EEPIS has played a prominent role as Japan's development ambassador in promoting the notion of excellent vocational higher education. It illustrates on how a specific foreign aid diplomacy raises complex dan multiplier effects to both provider and recipient of development fund.

In elaborating the arguments, the paper consists of six parts: first, the paper's introduction; second, theoretical framework; third, Japan's polytechnic diplomacy in Indonesia and EEPIS's early development; fourth, Japan's triangular development cooperation and the impact for EEPIS; fifth, Japan's strategies to promote EEPIS as its vocational ambassador; and sixth, conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Foreign development fund, or also known as official development assistance (ODA), is one of the products of international development cooperation—commonly given by developed countries to developing ones oriented to improve welfare on the latter. Being a part of global development issues, the disbursement of foreign assistance from donors to recipient countries also correlates strongly to diplomacy, as it is representing of one state's foreign policy towards other countries (Morgenthau 1962:301; Lancaster 2007:8; Barston 2014:1). This phenomenon is considered very complex, either in terms of its conceptual aspects or when one tries to question donors' motives and intents. To some extent, a particular donor often prioritizes a certain field of area more compared to others, depending to its own objectives in providing the fund in the first place. Most targeted sectors are usually along the lines of health, education, equality/democracy, economic participation/poverty alleviation, and environmental preservation. Therefore, foreign assistance plays a major role in international relations, and often referred as a diplomatic strategy.

As any other diplomatic strategies, development diplomacy also aims to obtain soft power (Nye Jr 2008), a leverage which is gained by one state towards others due to its peaceful approach. This characteristic is in congruence with a specific diplomatic means of the so-called public diplomacy (Gilboa 2008:58), which relies on accommodative ways of interaction among states, notably by image-building and promotion of certain values, culture, principles, and policies oriented towards other states' society. In terms of foreign assistance, this kind of leverage is illustrated by some influential states—among them being aid donorscthat can spread their preferences to other country—particularly developing

ones—not by using threat, coercion, and violent ways. Rather, they maximize the distribution of resources, assets, and rewards to create compliance and obedience.

Influential effects shown by soft power is similar to attractive power (Nye Jr 2008: 95). Developing countries are likely to follow, as well as to obey donors' development recommendations, as the latter usually has the tendency to pursue the former's success story. They do not only act, follow, adopt certain values, but often carrying them further by trying to socializing donor's values and cultures internationally. This connotes two potential behaviours demonstrated by developing countries in responding donors' public diplomacy, especially the one which delivered through development assistance. First, developing countries plays a passive role by only accepting, following, and imitating values that have been promoted during the cooperation; Second, developing countries conduct an active role in dealing with donor's assistance by disseminating, promoting, and spreading the donor's values worldwide.

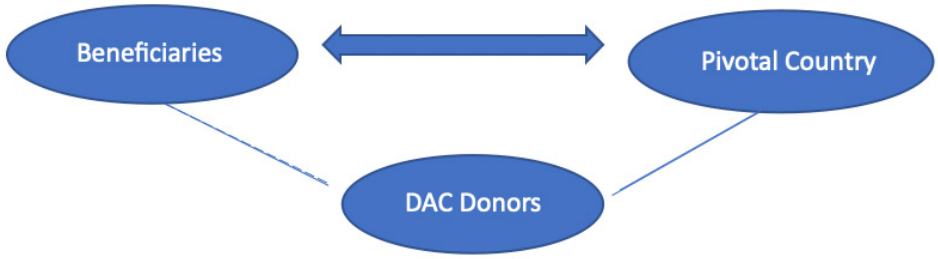
Indeed, the latter is more impactful compared to the former, for taking a more active role in development cooperation would also yield positive transformations for recipient countries and simultaneously increasing its international role as it is getting more involved and innovative in shaping other donor's initiatives. Due to the circumstance, the position of developing countries is relatively equal to those from developed countries. Prior, development cooperation positioned the former in a mediocre place—giving room only to receive advice and recommendations from influential actors and less space to manoeuvre. However, not all developing countries has the same capability to undertake more. Some necessary aspects are needed to be considered, for instance having adequate capacity and experience in conducting international development projects.

According to literatures in development discourse, one of the most strategic way to prompt developing countries to be active players in cooperation can be facilitated through the framework of triangular development cooperation (TDC), or also known as tripartite, or trilateral cooperation (Tsonuda 1998; Hosono 2016; Fordelone 2011; Chaturvedi 2012). The concept is originally taken from the framework of South-South cooperation (SSC). It is the latest approach of international development cooperation, complementing the previous one which merely focuses on traditional relations between developed countries as donors and developing countries as recipients. Bergamaschi and Tickner (2017) believes that the framework of SSC is inevitably helping developing

countries towards an equal playing field with donors in initiating development projects, regional integration, and multilateral negotiations.

Hence, TDC is a further stage of international development collaboration, as it empower both North-South and South-South cooperation. By this definition, TDC emphasizes on partnerships of three parties: 1) development assistance committee (DAC)/donors; 2) pivotal countries which are developing countries that implement the programmes/projects (co-donors); and 3) beneficiary countries which are also developing countries but only passively receive the project's facilitation (Figure 1).

Figures 1. Scheme of Triangular Development Cooperation



Source: JICA 2012

The scheme provided by TDC enables developing countries to access various, and a broader range of resources, expertise, and capacities to achieve their national and international objectives—key ingredients for such country to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs). Fordelone (2011) identifies TDC as a constructive strategy to strengthen SSC, mainly by enhancing the capacity of developing countries to be the potential providers of SSC—thus becoming future potential beneficiaries; strengthening relations between DAC countries and SSC; as well as promoting regional integration. In general, TDC becomes increasingly popular because it elevates development cooperation among DAC, pivotal, and beneficiary countries into the most constructive model. This framework generates scale-ups, capacity developments, development experiences, and pioneering innovation among developing countries (JICA 2014).

For several scholars (Ferdelone 2017; Hosono 2016), the main advantage of TDC mostly lies in the side of pivotal countries, especially due to the projects' financial needs and funds has been provided by developed countries. Also, TDC enhances the role of pivotal states in supporting

international development cooperation since they can conduct adaptive knowledge sharing by reconstructing innovative ideas taken from developed countries through unique combination of techniques and applications that fits with the conditions of developing countries. this method then becomes habitual best practices among developing countries. Due to the aforementioned characteristics and benefits, the United Nations has officially defined TDC as a new model of cooperation in 2019; although it has been globally introduced in 1960s' (ECOSOC 2017).

However, when examining the comprehensive impact and influence of TDC among the three actors involved; DAC members or donors are the ones who more likely to obtain more benefits compared to others. This refers to the previous discussion on intention, as well as implications of foreign aid disbursement when it relates to public diplomacy. The provision of development assistance, including TDC, creates a new issue on the motives of developed countries' political economy which consist of tangible and intangible objectives. The former refers to economic gains, while the latter highlights the positive image received by donors, both along and post-implementation of TDC. This positive image connects to the main objective of donor's public diplomacy. As a result, when those targets have been achieved within the project, it connotes that donor's diplomatic goals relatively have been accomplished. For example, since a donor country has been recognized as the supporter of technological development, it affects the preferences of other countries and how they see the donor country in question. More developed and developing countries will request for donor's assistance to set up the similar project worldwide. At the end, within the frame of TDC, an international project that based on—or laden with--a particular donor's perspective/value is likely to increase the donor's international recognition within the context of international development cooperation.

This paper elaborates Japan's new diplomatic approach called "polytechnic diplomacy" in promoting its international development cooperation in Indonesia. It refers to a more specific form of diplomatic strategy through the promotion of vocational higher education, known as polytechnic. According to Agrawal (2013) and Kemal (2005), vocational education and training (VET) focuses on definite provisions and imparts the practical skills according to the latest technology which allow individuals to engage in a specific occupational activity and becoming skilled manpower for national industrialization.

Japan's Polytechnic Diplomacy in Indonesia and EEPIS's Early Development

Bilateral relations between Japan and Indonesia have been started since 1958 when Japanese government officially opened its diplomatic representative in Jakarta. Japanese assistance to Indonesia's development has been continuously growing ever since—shown, among other, by the constantly increasing provisions of development fund for education. The establishment of the first polytechnic in Indonesia, specialising in electrical and telecommunication technology, called EEPIS (Electrical Engineering Polytechnic Institute of Surabaya) in 1988 exemplifies the case. The creation of the institute aims to support state's industrialization by creating skilled human resources in the fields of electrical, telecommunication, and information technology.

Previously, Indonesia had acknowledged and established some polytechnic institutions. In the late of 1960's, there were two private polytechnics in Central Java. In 1985, the government established six state-owned/state-sponsored polytechnics with supports from World Bank (Politeknik Negeri Bandung, n.d)—for instance, Polytechnic of North Sumatera University (USU), Polytechnic of Sriwijaya University (Unsri), Polytechnic of Indonesia University (UI), Polytechnic of Diponegoro University (Undip), Polytechnic of Brawijaya University (UB), and Centre for Polytechnic Education Development of Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). Most of them usually offer very diverse practical skill subjects, from technical to social/humanities. Among them are civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering; accountancy; foreign languages; broadcasting; and library & data studies.

EEPIS used to be considered as a part of, and affiliated with Sepuluh Nopember Institute Technology (ITS). It was not a while after the first sixth state-owned/state-sponsored polytechnics have been established that EEPIS managed to own its own structure. Regardless, EEPIS, in its own rights, has gained special attention in Indonesia's polytechnic history. This is mainly due to its position as the first advanced electrical polytechnic in Indonesia, a field which was considered still underdeveloped in the country at that time. In Japan's view, EEPIS represents the introduction of building massive national industrialization by creating practical skilled employment like in Japanese polytechnics (JICA 2018:253), and to some extent also represents the development of Japanese community technical college—the so-called Kosen (Hasegawa 2009). Therefore, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) started to visit ITS in 1985 to see the opportunity of cooperation and conducted

a feasibility study in the year after. Japan finally agreed to establish cooperation in 1987, with JICA as its channel. Its premier initiation included a training and internship project to Japan provided for the first-five EEPIS's lecturers.

The cooperation has been conducted until 2006, divided into two terms and four types of projects (JICA 2018). The first term (1986-1999) consisted of "Construction Project of the Electronic Engineering Polytechnic Institute in Surabaya" (grant aid) and "Project for Electronic Engineering Polytechnic Institute of Surabaya" (technical cooperation). It was followed by the second term (2000-2006) comprising of "The Project for Expansion of EEPIS" (grant aid) and "The Project for Strengthening of Polytechnic Education in Electric-related Technology" (technical cooperation). The values of these technical projects are reaching ¥1.8 billion (Japan Embassy 2004). The consecutive two term of Japan's assistance to EEPIS has facilitated the polytechnic to open several Diploma 3 (D3) and Diploma 4 (D4) programs, which are managed by four departments: Department of Electrical Engineering, Department of Information Computer Engineering, Department of Mechanical and Energy Engineering, and Department of Creative Multimedia Engineering (JICA 2018).

During the first decade of its development, EEPIS successfully accomplished several international achievements. These are considered phenomenal for a new polytechnic from a developing country. In 1991, EEPIS participated in the first international competition at NHK Robot Contest in Tokyo as the only non-Japanese participant. Surprisingly, it also won the second runner-up and "the Best Idea" award. Accomplishments on robotics have been constantly prevalent ever since. Two years later, EEPIS founded and organized "Indonesia's Robot Contest" as the first national robotic competition in the country. Furthermore, the polytechnic eventually sealed the championship at NHK Robot Competition by becoming the first winner during the event held in 2001. Due to these continuous success, robotic technology has gained popularity in Indonesia, from students in higher education level to elementary schools. As a result, EEPIS has been recognized as the pioneer of robotic education and competition in Indonesia (ITS 2005).

From early establishment and along its development, EEPIS has continuously gained national and international recognition. All of these success stories led The Indonesian Higher Education Ministry to nominate EEPIS as the national resource polytechnic in Indonesia, as well as the best Indonesia's polytechnic in 2015 when the Indonesian Board on

Higher Education (DIKTI) initially established the ranking system among universities/higher institutions. Alongside with EEPIS's continuous development, the Indonesian government has paid more attention towards polytechnic. Overtime, the existence of polytechnics in the country has been gradually increasing, both in term of number and quality. Some of them are under EEPIS assistantship, such as Polytechnic of Batam, Polytechnic Caltex (Riau), Polytechnic of Bangka Belitung, Polytechnic of Banyuwangi, and Polytechnic of Madura. Moreover, EEPIS is also responsible for the development of 42 community colleges which provide Diploma 1 (D1) program (PENS 2011).

Japan's Triangular Development Cooperation and the Impact for EEPIS: Recognition as Development Ambassador

As noted previously during the years of the project cooperation, JICA has not only provided development assistance to EEPIS, but also transformed the institution to become the centre of excellence in context of higher vocational institution. Japan has been massively promoting the polytechnic's transformation worldwide, especially towards other developing countries in Asia, Pacific, and Africa. This effort signify Japan's portrayal as a strong supporter of higher vocational education in developing countries.

In context of Indonesia-Japan partnership, provisions of education assistance granted to EEPIS entails a broader diplomatic implication, in which Japan appears to be the most influential actor in transforming EEPIS like it is today. EEPIS displays the positive outcome of Japanese development and educational cultivation. In this regard, EEPIS indirectly becomes Japan's development ambassador. This attracts other developing countries to follows Indonesia's footstep in adopting Japan's polytechnic model and embracing vocational support from Japan. Although not explicitly mentioning that EEPIS role as Japanese polytechnic ambassador, Japan often promotes EEPIS's success story worldwide.

Referring to the framework of TDC and SSC, EEPIS's case illustrates how the Japanese government conducting its polytechnic diplomacy in Indonesia by employing two diplomatic approaches. First, Japan has intensively involved EEPIS as the representative of the Indonesian government to play the role as strategic partner in its development projects, especially in vocational education. Second, Japan has the intention to promotes similar vocational system towards other developing states.

Historically, the notion of TDC and SSC have significantly left a mark in the dynamics of Japanese global contribution and its pattern of conducting development assistance to developing countries. United Nations Social and Economic Council (Economic Security Council 2008) states that Japan is the most active donor that offers TDC internationally, alongside the United Nations (UN). There are two main drivers that prompt the adoption of TDC within Japan's international cooperation framework, one of them is related to one of Japan's critical development junctures. After immediately recovering from the great destruction due to World War II, Japan has transformed into a strong economic powerhouse in Asia. It started in 1954 when Japan took part in supporting the Colombo Plan, and its contribution has been significantly increasing ever since. This achievement has its peak in the late 1980s' when Japan was considered as the most important supplier of international development assistance, particularly in term of the amount of the fund (Tsunoda 1998). It eventually became the top donor in 1991 and the continue to held the title for next five years.

However, this circumstance has also triggered suspicion from other international actors of Japan's true intent, whom accused of gaining more self-benefit in disbursing international assistance. Regardless of the critics, Japan has tried to portray itself to be more inclusive and empowering developing countries with all its development programs.

Secondly, Japan's new role in promoting human security concept, which is also prominent in its international development cooperation. This was marked with the involvement of Sadako Ogata, a Japanese senior diplomat in introducing the concept of human security in the early 1990s'. Ogata gave significant contribution during the making of UN Human Development Report, and even trusted with co-chairing the Commission of Human Security—together with Amartya Sen (Oberleitner 2005:185). Human security concept was eventually adopted in the new Japanese ODA Charter in 1991 and becoming one of Japanese development orientations. The initiative has been promoted globally which also employs TDC framework in the implementation.

In adopting TDC within its development cooperation, Japan believes that there are 4 values that can be promoted worldwide (JICA 2012). First, TDC enhances capacity development of pivotal state, transforming itself to become more than just a recipient. However, when a developing country wish to elevate its position as a full-fledged provider of TDC, it must have improvement on individuals' capacity, regulations, mechanism, and national policies—aspects that Japan would support. Second, TDC

scales up the beneficiary's side of the bargain. Most of TDC programs are small in the scale of operation and the expected results are usually limited in the beneficiary countries. But, with its approach, Japan provides beneficiary countries with opportunities to apply adaptive knowledge through facilitation from a pivotal state. Third, it creates development capacity at the beneficiary side. This can be found by examining JICA's experiences and operations, which provide deep insight on specific professional issues and potential scale-up opportunities. Fourth, TDC triggers innovation from developing countries. These actors can play a role in pioneering new expertise in TDC's context. The cooperation between pivotal and beneficiary countries would be solidified, particularly among ministries' officials in the two countries.

Japan's Strategies to Promote EEPIS as Its Vocational Ambassador

After conducting the first polytechnic diplomacy in Indonesia through EEPIS, Japan has not only promoted the institution in both Japan and Indonesia, but also disseminated EEPIS's achievement worldwide. In this regard, EEPIS gains two level of recognitions, in the domestic and international contexts. This paper emphasizes to the latter, which JICA portrays its cooperation with EEPIS are extending further beyond Indonesia's border (JICA n.d). Of course, EEPIS's achievements do not only represents the institutional accomplishment per se; a significant amount of credit is brought to Japan as the main donor.

Japan's recognition towards EEPIS as its polytechnic ambassador leads to the intention to evolve EEPIS's role to be a potential partner, to some extent, in creating similar success story to other developing countries. EEPIS is no longer seen as the foreign aid recipient, rather relatively as an equal partner to expand polytechnic diplomacy. This illustrates that TDC framework has gradually adopted in the context of development cooperation between Indonesia-Japan. As a result, EEPIS has obtained a reputation as a new rising global development actor in the field of higher vocational education. Furthermore, JICA also includes EEPIS as its successful project in most international events and reports (JICA 2018).

In the global dissemination effort to promote EEPIS's excellent profile as the Japanese polytechnic ambassador, Japan applies two main strategies: first, it frequently refers to, and appoints the institution to be the host of vocational international training for polytechnic educators from developing countries; and second, it gradually introduces the institution ecome the role model, as well as mentor for other polytechnics assisted

by Japan from other developing countries.

The first strategy revolves a lot around the field of adaptive electrical engineering and information coming technology as subjects of EEPI's main pedagogic training designed for foreign educators. This is Japan's direct strategy that has been embedded to the cooperation. The orientation to employ TDC at EEPIS was started in 1993 when JICA appointed the polytechnic to be the host and organizer of a series of capacity-building program for developing countries called the Third Country Training Program (TCTP). This initiation which also known as International Training of Information Technology Application in Electronic Application, became the annual joint-program between JICA and EEPIS. The program invites polytechnic teaching staff from developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Pacific to have short course on electrical engineering and information technology at EEPIS.

TCTP has been conducted within the timeframe of the cooperation, but then eventually extended until 2011— following the new project's framework (JICA 2018). According to JICA's report (2018), the participants who attended to the program in 1993-2004 were 149, originated from countries such as Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Brunei, Vietnam, Sri Lanka; while 21 were local academics from Indonesia. The program focused on cultivating electrical engineering education in the targeted countries. Whereas in 2004-2006, there were 59 participants who came from Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Fiji, UAE, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Different from the former activity, the latter program put more emphasize on enhancing the quality of information technology education in the targeted countries. Despite this program was integrated to the partnership between JICA and EEPIS, yet it came later after Japan and Indonesia had agreed to set up the first term of cooperation. TCTP thus became an additional activity that was inserted into the agreement.

Exemplifying triangular cooperation, TCTP is designed as a scheme in which JICA provides the funds for participants from developing countries —the beneficiaries—to have technical training program in collaboration with pivotal countries that is responsible for transferring or sharing adaptive development experiences, knowledge, and technology. In this regard, EEPIS has been transformed into pivotal actor in TDC's framework. The polytechnic has enough leverage to support TCTP with JICA since it has invented and modified good knowledge, technology,

or mechanism efficiently, which were obtained from Japan through previous development cooperation.

Accordingly, the financial necessities for the annual TCTP were provided by Japan, whereas EEPIS provided innovative teaching methods and adaptive technologies. During the period of cooperation, the program was given a grant for 80 million ¥ (JICA 2001). The program consisted of 120 hour-training and designed by EEPIS in 6 main activities: experiments, workshops (module design & programming), company visits, experiment by design or project works, and action plans (PENS 2010). This program was proven effective along the years for the development of polytechnic in Asia and Africa, since EEPIS's approaches fit with the condition and technological development in the regions. From EEPIS' perspective, financial issues became less problematic because there was sustainable support from Japan; at the same time, the program's budget were as also seen as less-expensive for Japan, compared to conducting similar event on its own. Therefore, the strategy strongly highlights the importance of "adaptive knowledge sharing" among parties that involved in TDC. However, it must be noted that the adaptive idea sharing is not merely about embracing the latest technology from developed countries, but also on adopting the feasible technology that was modified by a fellow pivotal country.

The second strategy is exemplified as a further stage of the polytechnic's role after it has been assigned as the host of international training. Japan would massively promote EEPIS as its potential partner for other developing countries that intend to establish similar polytechnic. Although, the initiative to involve EEPIS in assisting other countries have been officially started by the Japanese government in 2009 (Hasegawa 2009)—illustrated by EEPIS's assignment to facilitate Tumba College Technology in Rwanda from 2009 to 2015 and Polytechnic in University of Timor Leste (2010); JICA often included EEPIS to take part in several of international events. Among them was the appointment of EEPIS as the member of the Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network (SEEDnet) from 2001-2008 (JICA 2014). SEEDnet is an autonomous sub-network of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) for engineering education that was established in April 2001. EEPIS , together with ITB and UGM as Indonesia's representatives, thus officially stands with other 19 prestigious universities across ASEAN, as well as 11 Japanese universities as its member (SEEDnet, 2008).

By integrating EEPIS to such a forum like SEEDnet, it is considered as a breakthrough for JICA to introduce the excellent Indonesian polytechnic

in assisting other ASEAN countries to create similar higher vocational institution in future development programs. Hasegawa (2009) reports that JICA has been very satisfied working with EEPIS, for it has high capabilities and motivation in making polytechnic education to gain international traction. For Japan, EEPIS remains an influential and important partner as well as cooperation resource—which, in turn, also the reason prompting JICA to sustain its relations with EEPIS. The polytechnic has played an inevitable role as a vocational institution that supplies experts for JICA projects and third country trainings (Hasegawa 2009).

Another forum that also used by Japan to promote EEPIS's international capacity is through the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC). JICA has once integrated TCTP that is usually organized by EEPIS, with NAM CSSTC in 2003. In that event, EEPIS was appointed as the keynote speaker as well as organizing committee (CSST 2003).

Conclusion

Japanese polytechnic diplomacy in Indonesia, represented by EEPIS, becomes Japan's first initiative in bringing polytechnic education towards, and making it available for the developing world. It began with a step oriented to enhance the quality of higher vocational education in Indonesia, where it would also contribute towards national economic development by supporting Japanese investments in Indonesia. Within a decade of its existence, EEPIS has succeeded to obtain national and international achievements, which lead the polytechnic to have a prominent status in Japanese perspective. Based on the TDC framework, this recognition is more strengthened. Subsequently, EEPIS' role expanded, especially when Japan appoints EEPIS to be its "ambassador" to disseminate the polytechnic diplomacy worldwide. By facilitating EEPIS to play a role as a potential provider (pivotal country) for higher vocational education training in the framework of SSC and to involve in several international institutions, Japan eventually acknowledges that the Indonesian vocational institution is able to act as its representative in international development cooperation.

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