

PRESS RELEASE

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2025 RANA Winner to Champion Indigenous Wisdom in Education Reform

Jakarta, June 16, 2025 – The International Selection Committee (ISC) of the **R-Adhikarya “Niche” Award (RANA)** and the **East-West Center (EWC)** proudly announce **Farli Sukanto** as the 2025 RANA Scholar. Farli has been awarded a prestigious scholarship to pursue a Master’s degree in Education at the **University of Hawai’i at Mānoa** and the EWC beginning in September 2025.

Established in 2020, the **RANA Award** provides **annual scholarships** for exceptional young leaders to pursue degree program studies at three world-class U.S. educational institutions: the **East-West Center, Stanford University,** and **Cornell University.**



From Architect to Education Innovator in Indonesia’s Remote Villages

Though trained as an architect at Parahyangan University in Bandung, Farli has dedicated over a decade to **transforming education systems in Indonesia’s rural and underserved communities.** His journey began in 2014 when he volunteered as an elementary school teacher in **Mukekuku village, Rote Ndao,** Indonesia’s southernmost island – more than 1,600 miles from Jakarta.

Witnessing first-hand the challenges of substandard education, Farli shifted his focus to systemic reform. During his tenure with the Jakarta provincial government under **Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok),** he helped redesign the teacher training system and curriculum. He also co-founded **“Bantu Guru Belajar Lagi” (Helping Teachers Relearn)** in 2017, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving literacy and numeracy instruction in remote areas. In addition, he developed a digital blended learning platform, [Sekolah.mu](https://sekolah.mu).

Since 2022, this initiative has trained over **320 elementary school teachers,** mentored **25 non-certified preschool educators,** and supported **1,599 teachers** through structured, peer-based learning groups.

Reviving Local Wisdom Through Decolonized Education

Over the past decade, Farli’s work in Rote Ndao has highlighted the significant **gap between Indonesia’s formal education system and its cultural roots.** He observed how local traditions, oral histories, and indigenous knowledge are often excluded from school curricula – **contributing to a loss of identity, inequity, and weakened community resilience.**

With support from the RANA Scholarship and EWC’s Graduate Degree Fellowship (combined value of **US\$103,000**), Farli aims to explore how **indigenous frameworks, and postcolonial theory** can help shape **inclusive, culturally grounded education policies** in Indonesia.

“I believe the most meaningful education is not the kind that separates us from our cultural roots – but the one that strengthens them. With the support of the RANA Award and the East-West Center, I hope to build curricula shaped by local wisdom, not just by foreign textbooks,” Farli said.

Equipping Communities to Lead Their Own Learning

Farli's goal is not only academic. He intends to **collaborate with local leaders and policymakers** to develop curricula that reflect local heritage, values, and lived realities. The **interdisciplinary and intercultural environment** at the East-West Center will enable him to study comparative models of decolonized education from across the Asia-Pacific, while learning **research methods grounded in community empowerment**.



Recognizing "Niche" Thinkers Who Challenge the Status Quo

Dr. Ronny Adhikarya, initiator of the RANA Award, expressed his support: "We are proud to award Farli Sukanto for his **innovative and niche** approach to education. He is not simply continuing business-as-usual – he is exploring **bold, future-facing ideas** that address some of the world's deepest educational inequities."

Dr. Adhikarya added: "Incorporating **indigenous wisdom, heritage, and oral history** into education is vital – especially in today's age of artificial intelligence and digital disruption. **Such knowledge cannot be downloaded from the internet or taught by AI.**"





About the R-Adhikarya "Niche" Award (RANA)

The **RANA Scholarship** honors individuals with **visionary and unconventional career paths** in fields that contribute to sustainable development. From 2020 to mid-2025, RANA has supported **12 winners** at top U.S. institutions: **3 at Stanford**, **4 at Cornell**, and **5 at the East-West Center**.

The award is a personal initiative by **Dr. Ronny Adhikarya** and his wife, **Mee-Ching**, in gratitude for the academic opportunities, intellectual capital, and fellowships provided by **Cornell and Stanford** that shaped his 50-year career with the **World Bank, United Nations/FAO, the East-West Center (EWC)**, and other international organizations.

Kiroyan Partners, a leading public affairs consulting firm in Indonesia, supports RANA's communication and outreach activities and shares its commitment to developing the nation's human capital.

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/RANA-PROSPECTUS>

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