

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beyond Remittances: Migration as a Strategy for Human Capital Investment

The Vision of a 2026 RANA Scholar from Timor-Leste

Jakarta, June 2, 2026 – The [R-Adhikarya 'Niche' Award \(RANA\) Program](#), in collaboration with the East-West Center (EWC) in Hawai'i, USA, has announced **Jose "Eliano" Da Silva** of Timor-Leste as the **2026 recipient of the EWC/RANA Scholarship Award** to pursue a Master's degree in Economics at the University of Hawai'i and the East-West Center beginning in September 2026.

The scholarship, valued at appr. US\$103,000, covers tuition, housing, health insurance, books, living stipends, and related educational expenses.

Growing up in Lospalos, a rural town in Timor-Leste, Eliano helped his family raise cattle under modest economic circumstances. He often walked long distances to attend school and studied under difficult conditions, frequently without electricity and relying on borrowed or public computers with unstable internet connections.

Despite these challenges, Eliano's academic achievements and involvement in youth leadership and community initiatives opened opportunities for him to study at the United World College in Thailand before continuing his undergraduate studies at Luther College in Iowa, USA.

At Luther College, Eliano became actively involved in leadership, diplomacy, and community engagement initiatives. He served as Vice President of the Luther College Model United Nations Program, helped organize TEDx events, and in 2025 co-led a youth empowerment and peacebuilding initiative in Timor-Leste through the internationally recognized Projects for Peace program.

Eliano's academic interest focuses on migration, labor mobility, and human capital development. Through his independent research on Timorese migrant workers in the United Kingdom, he became increasingly interested in how migration can contribute not only through remittances, but also through education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and long-term community empowerment.

One of the key questions he hopes to explore is how migration opportunities can positively shape the aspirations and future trajectories of young people from under-represented rural communities. He is particularly interested in how labor mobility can contribute to stronger and more sustainable rural communities.



"I am pleased that RANA's International Selection Committee (ISC) selected Eliano for this scholarship," said Ronny Adhikarya, Founder of the RANA Program, "because he represents the kind of innovative and socially committed leadership needed in many developing countries today."

According to Adhikarya, Eliano aims to develop evidence-based policies that expand migration opportunities while creating broader opportunities for young people, especially those from under-represented communities. He is also interested in exploring how labor mobility and remittances can become strategic tools for strengthening education, skills development, youth sociopreneurship, and long-term community development within communities themselves.

The RANA Scholarship is expected to help Eliano pursue transdisciplinary approaches and "NICHE"-oriented approaches to migration and public policy including encouraging migrant income and remittances to be invested more productively in education, skills development, and long-term community empowerment in rural communities throughout Timor-Leste and beyond.



"Migration should not merely be viewed as the export of workers. It can also become a strategic investment in education, skills, leadership, and future nation-building."

While technological advances and Artificial Intelligence (AI) continue to reshape societies and economies, Eliano also believes that genuine development requires more than technological access alone.

Adhikarya agrees, adding: "Such insights and tacit knowledge cannot simply be downloaded from cyberspace – nor fully taught by AI alone."

Since 2020, the annual RANA Scholarship Program has supported students pursuing studies at three world-class educational institutions in the United States: The East-West Center (EWC), Stanford University, and Cornell University.



About the R-Adhikarya “Niche” Award (RANA)

The R-Adhikarya “Niche” Award (RANA) supports visionary individuals pursuing innovative and unconventional pathways beyond “more-of-the-same” approaches in education, leadership, and social development. Since 2020, RANA has supported 14 award recipients at the East-West Center (EWC), Stanford University, and Cornell University.

Starting in 2026, the RANA program also supports scholarships for the COMBI (Communication for Behavior Impact) Institute’s professional development program in Indonesia, conducted in collaboration with City University of New York (CUNY) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The award is a personal initiative by Dr. Ronny Adhikarya and his wife, Mee-Ching, who offer RANA in gratitude for the fellowships and intellectual opportunities that shaped Dr. Adhikarya’s international development career with the World Bank, the United Nations/FAO, and other global institutions. Kiroyan Partners (KP) supports RANA’s communication and public outreach initiatives.

More information on RANA Prospectus can be found on:

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

For media inquiries, please contact:

Kiroyan Partners
Attn: Verlyana “Veve” Hitipeuw and/or Made “Intan” Iswari Satria
Menara Karya, 10th Floor Suite H
Jl. H.R. Rasuna Said Blok X-5 Kav. 1-2
Jakarta 12950 - INDONESIA
Phone: +62-21-5794-4694
E-mail: veve.hitipeuw@kiroyan-partners.com / intan.iswari@kiroyan-partners.com
Website: www.kiroyan-partners.com

Supported by:



EAST-WEST
CENTER



Cornell University



College of Agriculture
and Life Sciences
Global Development