

## **EISENHOWER FELLOWSHIPS – 2009 Multination Program**

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**Tri Mumpuni (Puni) ISKANDAR**  
**Executive Director**  
**IBEKA (People Centered Business and Economic Institute)**  
**Jakarta, INDONESIA**

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As Executive Director of the non-governmental organization she founded, Ms. Iskandar helps empower poor and rural communities by providing them with electricity and energy from renewable sources. Her organization, IBEKA, develops mini-hydropower plants in villages, especially those not serviced by PLN, the state electricity company. The electricity generated is sold to PLN, and the profit is invested back into the village. While in the U.S., Ms. Iskandar focused on rural community and infrastructure development and met with community organizations fostering economic self-sufficiency; foundations; and centers for renewable energy and appropriate technology.

Her fellowship meetings provided Ms. Iskandar with unique opportunities to meet with government officials, university researchers, international development experts, and academics. She noted several meetings and locations as highlights of her program. Her visits with professors working on low-technology solutions to problems of the developing world at Stanford University and University of California, Berkeley, inspired her to seek out collaborations to bring their projects to Indonesia. Her road trip from Atlanta to Auburn University introduced her to rural America and left her asking for more opportunities to learn about life in rural America, which led to an interesting visit to Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Another highlight of her program was her visit with an anthropology professor at Colorado School of Mines who teaches sustainable development classes to engineering students.

She looks forward to implementing several projects inspired by her fellowship program. Specifically, she hopes to convince universities to include in their engineering curricula courses that teach engineers to think about sustainable solutions to the problems of the developing world. She also hopes to partner with several organizations that she met in Colorado, including Engineers Without Borders, International Development Enterprise, and International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology.

On numerous occasions Ms. Iskandar was invited to talk about her work at IBEKA to audiences eager to learn about the impact of the work she is doing. She is a wonderful ambassador, so her speaking engagements provided IBEKA as well as Eisenhower Fellowships with very positive exposure.

As for the fellowship as a whole, Ms. Iskandar most enjoyed meeting rural Americans. She noted, "Everybody is so friendly and warm-hearted but the common people in the very small towns can be so enthusiastic to know about you when you appear so different (the way you dress for instance)." She concluded, "after all, what I really gain in this fellowship is respecting anyone's value regardless their belief, culture background, nationality background. We just have to understand people as long as everybody can live in harmony."