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From the Danantara Indonesia **Investor Relations** Team

PEOPLE AT DANANTARA INDONESIA

No Direct Flights

Interns arriving, colleagues who once returned from abroad, and why it is the same story.

Danantara Indonesia Diaries Issue 42 - Friday, 11 September 2026

Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia

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"Economically speaking, it is blessed **to give and to receive.**"

ANNALEE SAXENIAN, professor and former dean of University of California, Berkeley's School of Information

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This is Abdul Halim Labi II's first time in Asia, and Jakarta gave him the classic welcome.

He has lost his wallet somewhere in SCBD. He has eaten his way through a great deal of *pisang goreng*, which reminds him of the food in his native American South and his father's home country of Sierra Leone. He has also joined *sholat Jumat* here, a particularly memorable experience.

Halim, as he is known, is in Jakarta for an internship with Danantara Investment Management (DIM). He came to Jakarta by way of Palo Alto, where he is studying for a Juris Doctor degree. A public interest fund at his law school covers internships like Halim's at public-serving institutions such as sovereign funds.

"What actually drew me here is the chance to watch a sovereign fund get built from scratch in a developing country," Halim told us at the investor relations team. "I'd like to eventually carry that to Africa."


Pandu Sjahrir, DIM's CEO, holds an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia

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"What actually drew me here is the chance to watch a sovereign fund get built from scratch in a developing country."

\- Abdul Halim Labi II

For DIM, there is much we have to build by leaning on institutions the world already trusts. At the end of the day, in the eyes of international stakeholders, DIM is a new institution, and one that must prove its worth.

Trust is not soft. It is a financial asset, one that lowers the cost of capital and widens the pool of willing partners.

One part of building that network runs through Stanford. DIM's CEO, Pandu Sjahrir, studied there for his MBA, and Dr. Ashby Monk, a member of our board of advisors, has spent his career helping institutional investors design durable operating models.

This year, we welcomed two postgraduate interns from the university: Giotama Lokanta, a Tangerang native and first-year MBA student who goes by Gio, and Halim, from the law school. Together, they are the clearest case yet for why we want a formal pipeline.

Abdul Halim Labi II: The North Star

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There is no direct flight from Atlanta to Jakarta, so anyone making that particular journey learns to expect a layover somewhere. For Halim, that layover is an internship, taken in the middle of a law degree in progress.

He grew up in Atlanta and studied international development at The University of the South, a liberal arts college in Tennessee. He then joined Deloitte as an M&A analyst. It was on those deals that a thesis formed.

“Regulation often acted as a catalyst in capital markets rather than simply an inhibitor,” he says, pointing to David Rubenstein, Jerome Powell, and Orlando Bravo as proof that legal training can read markets rather than sit apart from them.

Photo credit: Abdul Halim Labi II

Stanford Law was where he chose to test that thesis, drawn by the chance to get “feet on the ground in Silicon Valley coupled alongside a world-class legal education.” He plans to return to the commercial side after graduation, carrying with him the mentors, classmates, and friends the school has given him along the way.

He is, by his own account, the first American to work at Danantara Indonesia, fueled by a deep passion for developing economies.

“As the son of a native-born American mother and an immigrant father from West Africa, my north star is to help define future relations between the United States and Africa,” he says. Southeast Asia and Africa carry among the largest youth populations in the world, and he sees Danantara Indonesia as a model worth studying for the other.

His father’s side of that story runs through Sierra Leone specifically, where Halim had already interned before Jakarta.

None of it happened without help. Halim credits the Levin Center for Public Service and Public Interest Law, which funds internships at public-serving institutions like sovereign funds. When DIM needed a read on US investment law, that same network connected him to the Head of CFIUS and National Defense Advisory at an Am Law 100 firm within days, a level of support he calls “clear and immediate.”

What are his next steps? Among them is helping with American talent acquisition for DIM.

Halim interviewing DIM CEO Pandu for a Stanford podcast project / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia

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Giotama Lokanta: Building the Engine

Gio spent twenty-nine years in Indonesia, studying at Institut Teknologi Bandung then working across sectors like consulting, policy, and corporate buyouts before he ever left for business school.

He interned at the Boston Consulting Group, took the offer that followed, and spent his early career in industrial goods, work that took him to plantations and manufacturing sites outside the big cities. There he noticed how an industry can accelerate an area's economic and infrastructure development, bringing banks, hotels, and restaurants with it, and enabling factory staff to send their children to university on their salary.

"I owe my education to the helping hands of my parents' siblings," he says. "No single person can be the 'rich uncle' to all Indonesian kids, but I think the country and its industry can." That belief pulled him into government, a BCG secondment to the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment that grew from two months to eight before turning into a full-time job, spent on energy transition policy and investment work under Rachmat Kaimuddin, his mentor.

From there he moved into a private sector team doing corporate M&A to build industry, in and from Indonesia, before pursuing an MBA degree to sharpen that mission.

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"No single person can be the 'rich uncle' to all Indonesian kids, but I think the country and its industry can."

- Giotama Lokanta

Gio at the office / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia

Gio says that developing industries require partnerships that comeass with capital, technology, and know-how, and learning about investment is one of the paths towards that. After discussing with mentors, seniors, and lecturers, Gio was convinced that DIM is the way to go.

It is one of the few places trying to fuse private sector discipline with a public mandate, money, institutions, and talent, diaspora included, all under one roof. The fastest way to learn how that mix actually works is to get exposed to it early.

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Nine weeks into the internship, Gio has already touched multiple deals in private credit and private equity across digital infrastructure, energy transition materials, and electric vehicles. His day-to-day is less about running the model than connecting its numbers to the business underneath, the underlying economics, and the direction of the sector.

What comes after the internship is mostly a question of where he points the rest of his MBA time, which classes to take, which people to meet, how much further to go on the investment vs. the technology side. He wants more exposure to investment and capital markets in the near term.

The bigger goal sits further out, contributing directly to Indonesia's economic development through industrialization and investment: work he has described as sitting between the public and private sectors rather than fully inside either one.

"Going back to Indonesia has always been the goal," Gio tells us. "For me, the MBA is not a path away from home, but a way to become more effective when I return: to build the skills, experience, and perspective to make a greater impact in Indonesia."

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A Two-Way Street

A few issues ago, we profiled colleagues who made the opposite trip, Indonesians who built careers abroad and chose to come home.

"I was able to study and work abroad thanks to the support of many people, including scholarships from this country," said Rani Piputri, our Senior Director of Public Investments, who came to DIM from Saemor Capital in Amsterdam, Aspect Capital in London, and Goldman Sachs Asset Management in New York. "So now I feel it is time to give back."

Halim and Gio are the same idea from a different starting point: talent from outside Indonesia choosing Danantara Indonesia the way Rani and her colleagues once chose to come back to it.

We previously profiled six colleagues who were members of the Indonesian diaspora. Watch them on the Danantara Indonesia YouTube channel or read their stories in Danantara Indonesia Diaries issue 9 / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia

Neither arrival changes a balance sheet by itself. What it does is compound. An intern who has a good summer becomes someone willing to vouch for Danantara Indonesia at a dinner in Palo Alto. It is the same way a returning colleague becomes someone willing to vouch for it at a dinner in Jakarta.

That is what building a reputation actually looks like from the inside: one person choosing to say yes at a time, long before the institution has fully earned the choice. One concrete next step in building that network further is GMIX, a Stanford Graduate School of Business program that places first-year MBA students with sponsor organizations for a focused, minimum four-week summer project.

Ultimately, the plainest measure of whether DIM has burnished its profile overseas will not be a ranking or a headline. It will be decided the same way trust always compounds. One Halim, one Gio, one Rani at a time, until enough of them have said yes that the choice stops looking like a leap.

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Did You Know?

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Small but mighty: despite its size, CFA Society Indonesia has been an active and spirited community, providing continuous education to build local investment expertise since 2003 / Photo credit: CFA Society Indonesia

Jakarta is now the world's most populous city. That distinction does not automatically translate into financial firepower.

Indonesia as a whole has just about 400 active CFA charterholders. The New York City metropolitan area, with about half of Jakarta's population, has more than 9,500.

In other words, there are probably literal office buildings in Manhattan with more CFA charterholders than the whole country of Indonesia.

A gap like that is not just about a talent shortage. It is the kind of condition that institutions can help close by building better standards, local expertise, and market depth that make a country more investable.

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__Danantara Indonesia Diaries__ is a newsletter produced by Danantara Indonesia's investor relations team.