




TMDU graduates are active at the forefront of their fields in countries worldwide. Studying abroad helped them deepen their knowledge as healthcare professionals, benefiting both their field and patients around the globe.

Letters from TMDU Overseas Alumni

Letter 01

TMDU and I: A Decade of Experience, Lifelong Lessons



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MY FIRST ENCOUNTER with TMDU was through Professor Kazuhiro Eto who came to the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, where I was doing my Japanese Universities Preparatory Programme under the Malaysian Look East Policy, to interview students interested in pursuing medicine or dentistry in Japan. My preparatory programme was sponsored by the Malaysian Public Service Department, but the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology sponsored my bachelor’s degree. That was more than 20 years ago when I was still a teenager. As if it were yesterday, I remember registering and meeting my classmates, all of whom were Japanese except for a Malaysian boy. It was an intimidating experience.

Before flying to Japan, I thought my Japanese was good as I came first or second in all the Japanese examinations at the University of Malaya. But I learned the hard way. I failed several subjects in my first year at TMDU as I could not understand what was being

taught. The Japanese I had learned was not the same as the one being spoken!

But I had many caring friends who helped me pull through dental school. They spent their valuable time teaching me after class, making sure I understood the lessons. Their kindness did not stop there. They always made sure I never felt lonely living so far from home. We had much fun together. We had sleepovers, outings to lots of interesting places and experienced exciting things. They did not care that I looked and dressed differently. They respected my lifestyle and my rather limited choice of food. They stood by me through the six years of dental school and thanks to them, not only did I improve my Japanese and graduate from dental school, but I also passed the Japanese Dental Board License examination. All my lecturers were great too. I was so impressed by their helpfulness and modesty.

These good memories of TMDU, coupled with TMDU’s reputation as a leading higher learning institution in den-



With the Dean and the head dental therapist of the Faculty of Dentistry, UKM, at one of our community dental projects where we provide consultations and simple treatment to the public for free.

tistry, prompted me to return to do my PhD in Oral Health Promotion under the tutelage of Professor Yoko Kawaguchi, eight years after graduating from dental school. My experiences in graduate school at TMDU were just as important as those gained previously. This time, I was sponsored by the National University of Malaysia (UKM) and the Malaysian Public Service Department.

In the Oral Health Promotion Department (OHP), Professor Kawaguchi stressed the importance of doing things together as if we were one big family. We usually had lunch together and discussed everything from clinical matters and research to sharing funny stories. Like any family, not everything was sunshine and rainbows. But all these positive and not so positive experiences help build one’s character. They are life lessons money can’t buy. Now, back in Malaysia, I appreciate the experience and everything Professor Kawaguchi

and OHP taught me. I also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to every beautiful soul who helped me at TMDU. Space constraints mean I can’t mention all your names, but please know that I am deeply touched by your kind hospitality.


Three years have passed since I finished my graduate studies. I am a senior

lecturer and dental public health specialist at the Centre for Family Oral Health, Faculty of Dentistry, UKM, Kuala Lumpur. I was also appointed the Assistant Dean for Teaching & Citra (Liberal Education) of the Faculty, effective January 2018. At UKM, I’m trying to adopt the good things I learned during my 10 years at TMDU.

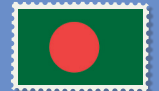
I have spent a quarter of my life at TMDU, which will always be my second home after Malaysia. May TMDU continue to flourish and cultivate professionals with knowledge and humanity, thereby contributing to people’s wellbeing, not just in Japan but throughout the world.

Letter 02

A Leadership Journey in Public Health: Inspiring Experience at TMDU



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IN 2005, I earned my Master of Science in Population Science and Human Resource Development from the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. I joined the same department in the year 2006 as a lecturer where my main task was to carry out research and teaching. Since Population Science is one of the core methodological disciplines under the umbrella of Public Health research, and being a demographer and academician, I decided to go overseas to seek more advanced education in public health in order to contribute to the health and wellbeing of the Bangladeshi people.

In 2009, I received an offer from the University of Tokyo to study for a Master of Health Science in Community and Global Health for two years under ADB-JSP scholarship. During my study at Tokyo University, I heard about the Public Health Leadership Course, a specially crafted PhD program at TMDU in the Division of Public Health. The flexibility of the program at such a respected institution was a perfect match, and I considered myself privileged to have enrolled, graduating with a PhD in Medical Science. After completing the master’s degree, I was accepted as a PhD student in the Department of Global Health Entrepreneurship, TMDU, where I studied from October 2011 to September 2015.

I had an incredible time at TMDU during my 4-year program. The university gave me the opportunity to explore and develop both as an academic and as a person. Even more, the university provided me with the essential skills and knowledge to conduct my own research and gave me opportunities to work and meet with peers from all over the world. During my PhD study, I was shown great support by both faculty and administrative staff working in Global Health Entrepreneurship. It was also enjoyable to participate in and learn from the frequent scientific talks and presentations organized by the department, as well as from visiting scientists from other Japanese and international universities.

While studying at TMDU, I published several research articles in various renowned international journals. I also received the “Bangladesh University Grant Commission Award” from the honorable President of Bangladesh for doing excellent research work. I was lucky enough to be a student of Professor Keiko Nakamura, from whose expertise and critical thinking I learned so much. Her support and the encouragement of my lab colleagues made it possible for me to accomplish this journey.

Upon returning to Bangladesh in 2015, I was promoted as Associate Professor



Receiving UGC gold medal from the honorable president of Bangladesh

in the Department of Population Science and Human Resource Development, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. Apart from my main duties at the university, I and several colleagues established a non-profit organization (Bridge of Community Development Foundation) to conduct public health research and related training for capacity development and service activities in Bangladesh.

My relationship with TMDU continues and in 2017 I joined the Department of Global Health Entrepreneurship as a JSPS Postdoc Fellow. Recognizing the impact of socio-economic inequality on uncontrolled diabetes, we are currently conducting a cohort study to identify the perceived barriers in explaining socioeconomic differences in adherence to poor glycemic control in Bangladesh.

To conclude, living in Japan and especially studying at TMDU gave me incredible opportunities to gain knowledge and experience, to network with other students and faculty, who always encouraged me to keep learning about everything. Moreover, the Japanese culture of discipline, spirit and respect greatly shaped my professional and personal habits. I hope all future students at TMDU will awaken to their unlimited potential, as I did.