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GROWING MINDS

The Hadipoespito family grew a small computer course into a one-stop education center.

By **ARDIAN WIBISONO**

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ina Nusantara (Binus) started when its visionary founder the late Joseph Wibowo Hadipoespito and his children offered the Modern Computer Course in Jakarta just over four decades ago, in 1974. Now Binus has transformed into

one of the largest one-stop education centers in the country with four business units: a school, university, affiliated business, and education management, with more than 33,000 student and accepting 8,000 new ones each year and still growing.

The group is now run by the second generation Bernard Gunawan Hadipoespito, Joseph's fourth child and now chief executive of Binus. Bernard remembers that his father wanted to continue to contribute to the country after the war against the Netherlands occupation ended. Joseph was a businessmen and war veteran that helped the Indonesian military with logistics in East Java, an efforts that awarded him several honorary medals such as the *Guerilla Star*. A navy general, the late Rudy Purwana, who is also a friend of Joseph during the war, is the one that gave the name Bina Nusantara that means building the archipelago.

"We want to provide a one-stop education center, from primary school to the doctorate level," says Bernard. In the beginning, the computer course offered its student programming skills such as Cobol, Basic and Fortran programming languages. Computers were new in the country at the time, but the family figured it would boom in the future and Indonesians should have such skills to master them.



ROY RUBIANTO FOR FORBES INDONESIA



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Bernard, his brother Carmelus Susilo, and his sister, the late Theresia Widya Suryaningsih, later to become the first rector at the university, were involved from the start as well. All three had a background in electrical engineering from Trisakti University. Aside from teaching the course, they worked on other aspects too. Bernard was in charge of setting up the infrastructure and support, his brother helped with lecturer recruitment, while his sister helped prepare the academic structure. There were three parallel classes, each with a capacity of 15 students, but they were always full. "The course was a short term education, lasting only two months, so then we opened a six month programming school and the demand was extraordinary high. These students wanted to go a higher level and we consider it would be good if they could get a degree and not just the skills," he says.

From there, the course expanded to the Computer Technical Academy with Informatics Management as its first major in 1981 and changed the name to AMIK Bina Nusantara in 1985. The need for professional workers in information technology drove AMIK Binus to further development, and in 1986 it was officially listed as Institute of Information Management and Computer Science Bina Nusantara, and a year later started its first diploma and undergraduate program.

Bina Nusantara University was then established in 1996 and the academy was merged into it a couple years later. In 1998, Binus began expanding its business from higher education to also primary school and started with a high school in its Kijang campus. By that time Binus had a Kijang campus, a Syahdan campus and a building in Anggrek, all in West Jakarta. Bernard recalls the demand was also high so they immediately open another campus in Simprug in South Jakarta.

Bernard says that on the academic side Binus wants to be a world-class knowledge institution. To get there, it is focusing on five aspects: continuously improving the academic quality, endorsing high impact research, internationalization, bridging with the professional world and preparing entrepreneurial skills, and maintaining the trust of its stakeholders.

To maintain high quality standards, Binus is using evaluations from international well-known institutions. Last year Binus was recognized as a three-star university with a five-stars or the highest

point in teaching, employability, facilities, access and engagement by British based Quacquarelli Symonds. Especially in the research fields, Binus ranks number 18 from a total of 3,200 higher education institutions in Indonesia both private and state-owned, but ranked number one in terms of a private university.

Bernard also wants students to have real-world experience before they graduate, so it is compulsory for undergraduates to work in the professional world for a year before they graduate. The feedback from that experience is then used to improve the curriculum. "One out of three of our graduates is either an entrepreneur or working at a global organization. This year we would like it to increase to two out of three," Bernard adds.

On the business side, Binus is also planning a robust growth through its business units run by five of Hadipoepito's family third generation. Starting this year, Binus will try to grab the market outside of Jakarta by opening the Binus University Learning Community that offers a long distance class program. One was opened in Palembang at the end of last year and another in Semarang in January. Bernard says Binus plans to have 16 such centers outside of Jakarta by 2018. This program is a seed program for full-fledged universities; the earliest slated to be in Bandung and Malang.

Binus is also opening up non-formal education business like how they started in 1974, this time as an English course for children two to 12 years old that involves a high-tech approach named RISE. Two have been opened so far, in the FX Mall in Jakarta and the Living World Mall in Serpong. Binus is also offering education management services for those who want to open their own school, the one that has been operated in the Kalbis Institute that is affiliated with Boenjamin Setiawan's Kalbe Farma. Bernard says the dream for Binus is to go international someday.

"Education in Indonesia is a very promising business, look at the population potential and the quality. There are 3,200 higher education institutions in the country and according to the director general of higher education there are less than 10% with any quality. Students want to attend the best. As long as we run these education institutions well and continuously improve their human resources, we will continue to grow," Bernard says.