

**“START changed my perspective; now I see planning as a key tool for development.”**



As a member of the Indonesia Association of Urban and Regional Planners (IAP), Raka Suryandaru first encountered START in 2011 at a science policy dialogue in Jakarta held in partnership by IAP and START. Since that fateful meeting, Raka has worked with START on several projects, including the 2012 Advanced Institute on Forensic Investigations of Disasters (FORIN) and the Planning Integrated Coastal Adaptation Strategies for North Jakarta (PICAS) project.

Through participating in START programs, Raka has seen growth in his professional development, project management skills, and confidence. Just a few years ago, Raka viewed urban planning simply as a numbers exercise, but he recently noted, “START changed my perspective; now I see planning as a key tool for development.”

Raka credits START and the Advanced Institute on FORIN for his first professional experience outside of Indonesia, where he was given the opportunity to engage with an

international community tackling like-minded problems. It opened his eyes to a wider network of international colleagues and opened doors for him to collaborate with other organizations. This exposure led Raka to pursue a scholarship MSc Planning for Sustainability and Climate Change at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, which he recently completed.

Now back home, Raka looks forward to developing even better plans for the people of Indonesia. Raka reflects that: “START has had a strong influence in my career as a professional... I’ve learned that there are people and communities we need to incorporate as partners in the planning process. We must be able to work with all different types of people from influential businessmen down to the most vulnerable.”