

A Polytechnic student from Indonesia: “If you see an opportunity, rush to it!”

Teguh Imanullah, a Polytechnic University student from Indonesia, knows how to successfully combine academic and social activities. Teguh has been living in Russia for more than seven years, he knows Russian very well, studies at Institute of Machinery, Materials, and Transport Master’s degree program and participates in most student events. And not only in the city, but also internationally. Talking with Teguh, we assumed that he has all the chances to become a prominent public figure in the future. Teguh is the winner of the «Student of the Year» contest and winner of the «Leader of Public Diplomacy» contest, chairman of the Indonesian community at Polytechnic University and representative body of the National Youth Committee of Indonesia in Russia and Belarus. He participated in the BRICS+ International Municipal Forum and the Congress of Young Scientists in Sochi. Thanks to Teguh, students from more than 35 schools in Indonesia’s Jambi province are aware of the educational opportunities in Russia. In an interview with SPbPU International Office, Teguh Imanullah described how his life in Russia began, what Polytechnic University has become for him and what role friends can play in determining his choice.



— Teguh, how did your Russian story begin?

— I came to Russia in 2016. As I remember now, I couldn't even read the word «airport» in Russian. But that's the kind of person I am: if I need something, I take it and do it. My studies in Russia began in Belgorod, first at the preparatory department, then at the Bachelor's degree program. I graduated in 2021, and then I went to St. Petersburg, where I entered the master's degree program at the Institute of Machinery, Materials, and Transport, SPbPU.

— **Why St. Petersburg and why Polytechnic University?**

— I went for advice to a friend, he was the best student in our university in Belgorod. He recommended to me universities in St. Petersburg and Moscow. I was not close in spirit to the capitals, so I preferred St. Petersburg. My friend told me: if it's St. Petersburg, then it's Polytechnic University. I began to look for information about the university, found out that it had the specialty I needed and the prospects for my future career. I already knew that there was a very friendly community of Indonesians in St. Petersburg. Despite the fact that it is cold in St. Petersburg and it gets dark early, I had a feeling it would be interesting.



— **So you entrusted your friend in your choice?**

— It turns out that I did. But, of course, I did a lot of searching myself — I studied your rankings, I saw that your PR is excellent, you have opportunities for extracurricular activities, you can participate in different events. St. Petersburg has

a developed industry, a variety of technologies, there is a nuclear power plant near the city. If you suddenly get stressed, you go to the center for a walk, and life gets better at once. They say that Russia is the land of opportunity. Well, St. Petersburg is a city of opportunities.

— **What do you study at Polytechnic University?**

— I really love my field — materials and materials science. Polytechnic University changed my life a hundred percent and it gives its students good opportunities. I have quite a philosophical approach to my studies. For me, university is first and foremost a place for self-realization. It is important for me to understand why I study this or that subject and not just memorize notes. Elon Musk once said: «Real education is communication.» I completely agree.



— **Does the climate of St. Petersburg hinder your active life?**

— I would put it this way: climate affects a person's character. Here's an example. I participated in the Student of the Year contest and wrote a post. The organizers immediately saw it and reposted it. The pace of the work is very intense. There is a correlation with the climate: time is short, it's cold, you have to work faster. This even affects technological development. I was at the international youth forum in the Tula region. Tula is the heart of metallurgical cluster. I was curious about the difference between metal production in Russia and in Europe. I asked the

experts about this. They told me that in Europe parts are more complicated and incomprehensible. Whereas we need specific, simple and competitive parts. Their quality is often better than European ones. I like this kind of practical approach.

— **You won the Student of the Year contest. Did you have any premonition of winning?**

— Pavel Nedelko, Assistant Vice Rector for International Affairs at SPbPU, recommended me to take part in this competition. From my first days at Polytechnic University, he became my mentor. At first I didn't want to register, and I didn't expect to be a winner until the very last. But my portfolio made a big impression on the jury. I was the first student from Indonesia to win the competition. I even had a big interview for the Indonesian media.



— **How do you find a balance between academic and social activities?**

— If you expect me to answer that it's easy, it's not. It was very difficult for me to find that balance. Successful people who are leaders in their fields are an example to me. If they succeeded, I will succeed too. Now the trend of interdisciplinary education is gaining popularity. Society and business need people who are able to work in several areas. You can do different kinds of activities and eventually choose some new idea out of that, which will be a reflection of your previous experience. I feel like I'm now moving where I've

planned to go, and that it's just getting started.

— **What other events are you involved in and what events are you hosting?**

— We did Alumni Week — it was online, it was attended by ministry representatives, successful alumni who became university rectors. We did an Indonesian language project with Russian participants. In Indonesia we visit schools, tell them about scholarship opportunities in Russia in different programs. Pupils of more than 35 schools of my native province Jambi know about it. And it is more than one thousand people. Last November I took part in the BRICS+ International Municipal Forum, where I spoke in the youth section. I talked about interdisciplinary approach, intercultural dialogue, environmental problems.



— **As far as we know, you are also involved in Polytechnic University student communities.**

— Yes, the TutorForces tutoring service, the international student club PolyUnion — these are great projects that are very useful to international students. I constantly communicate with undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students from Indonesia. There is a popular phrase that Russians don't leave each other behind. And neither do we! I love challenges, and I try to show that each of us can achieve something.

— **What advice would you give to other students to succeed?**

— You don't have to be afraid to try. You don't have to wait for opportunities. You have to run and take it. Seriously, if you see an opportunity, rush for it! Sometimes people know there's an opportunity, but they put it off until later. You don't have to put it off! It all starts with you. Time is running ahead, and the most important thing is to be helpful to each other, to be supportive of each other. That's one of the basics. And don't forget to study. Studying is a priority.

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