

New Faces, Shared Spaces

ICAS 13 Volunteers

Muhammad Fuad Izzatulfikri

Working with a small, familiar team is certainly more desirable. But what if we're paired with names we've never known, faces we've never seen, and have no clue how we'll work together in between? Here's a little story about my experience as the volunteer coordinator for ICAS 13.



One month before, I met the committee and they just gave me a short briefing and some volunteer data. Since I had not met them personally, I needed to explore the data and discuss it with my teammate. It gave me a big challenge, ensuring the ideal number of volunteers for every section is a big deal. But I had great optimism for this event.

The day that the event started, I was a little bit worried, until a notification hit my

phone: So far, this has been my favorite committee, someone shared with me in a message, quietly. Perhaps it's due to a Main Committee that's so committed, joyful, and passionate. Many things were done wholeheartedly, with smiles and sincerity. That was where all my big optimism came from.

For me, volunteering isn't just about filling time or seeking distraction. At the very least, I learn about myself, about others, and about the world's interaction.

It's not merely about what is allowed or what is not, but understanding "the why" of something. Serving is noble, but don't stop there – learn and grow, embrace the dare.

When their names were chosen, we accepted whatever would come. Little sparks and whispers did arise, but fostering a positive, appreciative, and cohesive vibe was the key to thriving.

Lastly, my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in ICAS 13, especially the Inter-

national Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), AIIOC, and Universitas Airlangga. Like "The Waiting Room" in the main lobby of the Avenger Tower – the students refer to ASEEC Building Tower as "The Avenger Tower" because its design resembles the letter A on Marvel's Avengers movies – the vibrance of this event brought reflections, friendships, bittersweet moments, and glimpses of a future unknown, yet serene.

ICAS 13 Volunteer Testimonials



"The same opportunity won't come twice." I've always held onto that quote, which keeps me taking my next step towards a new opportunity when it comes. I used to be afraid of new things, afraid about the what ifs: "What if I fail? What if I disappoint my team?" But now I realize self-doubt won't take me anywhere. So here I am, taking another step towards another opportunity ahead of me. It's truly been an honor to be a part of the ICAS 13 Volunteer Team. Despite all the obstacles, I enjoyed my whole experience here – having a great team, meeting a lot of new people with different backgrounds, and being in a very supportive environment. I've learned a lot from them. Lastly, I'm very grateful to have an experience together with ICAS, and now I can also proudly say that I have my new family, that is, ICAS Team.

Aaliyah Fidela Hartono

Volunteering as part of the conference panel team at ICAS was an incredibly rewarding experience. Over the seven days, I found myself thoroughly enjoying the behind-the-scenes work. Coordinating directly with the session chairs and ensuring that each panel session ran on time and smoothly helped me sharpen my organizational and communication skills. I'm especially proud of UNAIR and the entire volunteer team for making the event flow seamlessly.

One of the highlights of my time was the opportunity to interact with so many individuals gathered to discuss pressing issues in Asian culture. Hearing their diverse perspectives, even as a business student with a basic understanding of the topics, I was able to broaden my viewpoint. I was also excited to make small talk in Mandarin and Dutch with native speakers, two languages I've been dabbling in learning. It was a personal achievement that added to the richness of the experience.

I left with a deeper appreciation for both Asian Studies and international collaboration.

Viggo Akbar Nasafra



Yesi Rahma Mustika, a Political Science student at Airlangga University, volunteered at the 13th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) from July 28 to August 1, 2024. Assigned to the registration division, I worked with students from different faculties, forming strong bonds and learning the importance of teamwork. It was my first time interacting with participants from various countries, and although I struggled with different accents and cultural nuances, it helped me improve my English and communication skills.

The event offered rich experiences, from attending academic sessions and book fairs to cultural exhibitions, which broadened my understanding of global knowledge and heritage. Observing friendships form and ideas exchanged among participants was inspiring.

This transformative experience boosted my confidence in cross-cultural communication and event management, showing me the value of collaboration across borders. It has prepared me for future challenges and inspired me to seek similar opportunities.

Yesi Rahma Mustika



When I reflect on my experience at the ICAS 13 Conference, the memories are as vivid as the colors of Surabaya's bustling streets. ICAS 13, the International Convention of Asia Scholars, is a gathering that attracts scholars, experts, and enthusiasts from across the globe. When I was assigned the role of liaison officer for buses, I knew that I had a responsibility to present Surabaya as a whole. My role required me to navigate both the logistical and cultural aspects of the conference. Coordinating buses for hundreds of attendees was no small feat. The pressure was palpable, but so was the excitement. But the true essence of my duties lay in the participant's happiness. Showing off Surabaya was not just about pointing out landmarks; it was about weaving a narrative.

The ICAS 13 Conference was a personal journey of rediscovery. It reinforced my love for Surabaya and highlighted the importance of sharing our unique stories with the world. It was more than just an event; it was a celebration of unity in diversity, and I was privileged to be a part of it.

Cysakaren Diva Pratiwi

I gained so many valuable experiences. One of the highlights was meeting two new friends while we were on duty at film screenings. It was just the three of us. That time together really bonded us, and it was nice to feel like we were forming a meaningful connection.

Throughout ICAS, I was able to apply what I had learned in my two semesters at college directly to real-life situations. For example, when a foreign visitor wanted to buy food or drinks at the local food stall, I stepped in as a translator. Another time, I acted as a spontaneous tour guide. One moment that stands out was when I lent money to a professor from Mexico because she couldn't pay using QRIS. She later returned the money and gave me more than I had lent her, but I regretted not asking for her business card as a keepsake.

Volunteering at ICAS also gave me a glimpse into what my future career might look like as an English major. It made me start rethinking and reshaping my dreams, and this experience has been a stepping stone in shaping my future and aspirations.

Nurun Zahrah

ICAS13 was indeed an event that was out of my comfort zone. It was also my first time joining an event in another campus of Universitas Airlangga. As someone who is a part of many committees, I usually join the design team, but this time, I became the head of the consumption and health team. At first it was a rough start, with me being new to the job and with the unclear details from the higher ups. It became smoother as the days passed and I got to interact with students from other majors. Frankly, my experience could be a bit boring compared to others, but one experience I can say is pretty unique was when I was called to the hospital to check on a sick participant on the first day. To be honest, it was quite exciting, as I wanted to put my English-speaking abilities into action and there I was, being a translator for a participant and the hospital staff. During my time looking after the participant, I had a good small talk with his

friend about our interests and I shared a few things about Indonesia, mainly regarding the health sector. As much as the friend insisted that I could leave since I had confirmed their presence at the hospital, I couldn't, as I knew I had this responsibility to make sure the sick participant was well enough if he were to be discharged. At that moment, I could say the medical student in me came to life, as my only thinking was that the patient's wellbeing comes first, despite the circumstances I was in. It was getting late and my phone was almost out of battery, but as I stayed longer, the more I realized that there might have been miscommunications because of the language barrier. At the end of the day, everything went smoothly. I could really say this was a unique experience and I would definitely go through it again and hopefully as a participant next time.

Ni Putu Sevina Lovyanti



ICAS 2024 was an extremely astonishing experience for me. I am Aurellia, the girl who didn't expect anything, arrived at the ASEC Tower for the last day of ICAS 2024, thinking it would be just another typical event. She was ready to assist with any technicalities just like days before, but nothing beyond that. However, before she walked in, things took a sharp turn. She was asked to step up as the coordinator for the very last day – an overwhelming responsibility, for sure.

Suddenly, the fate of over 200 participants, a lineup of prominent speakers, and intricate logistics were in her hands. She barely had time to process it. From ensuring sessions ran seamlessly to troubleshooting tech glitches, it was somehow chaotic, but she quickly stood up because she knew that she was chosen as the substitute coordinator for ASEC because of her hard work and determination. Despite the whirlwind of demands and the constant buzzing of her phone due to the coordination among the group, Aurellia rose to the challenge, ensuring the event ended successfully. What began as an ordinary day turned into a test of her strength, and she thrived, marking it as another opportunity to grow, and embrace herself.

Aurellia Saraswati