

PAMFLET GENERASI TEAM



Indonesia Inklusi Bulletin 3rd Edition

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3rd Edition

Perkumpulan Pamflet Generasi

Linking and Learning Indonesia



PAMFLET



Jakarta

Perkumpulan Pamflet Generasi

Indonesia Inklusi Bulletin

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I PREFACE

Long live solidarity and inclusion!

Following positive responses from the grantee partners of Voice in Indonesia regarding the 1st and 2nd editions of the Indonesia Inklusi Bulletin, we are thrilled to announce that the 3rd edition of the Indonesia Inklusi Bulletin is now available to the public. Through Linking and Learning, we support Voice grantee partners in Indonesia to keep on innovating and exploring new experiences or ideas using creative methods. In drafting this third edition, Voice grantee partners in Indonesia actively participated in writing classes, shared ideas, and executed the editing process to present stories relevant to the situation around us.

This current edition, unlike the previous two, was completed by the involvement of grantee partners in Indonesia who recently joined Voice Indonesia, contributing to a rich diversity of the articles in this bulletin. The different angles are expected to enrich readers' perspectives on the issues of marginalised groups and inclusivity.

This bulletin listens to unheard voices and accommodates individuals and groups from varied backgrounds to


share stories and views, support each other, and celebrate diversity. The bulletin also facilitates a concrete collaboration with the partners of Indonesia Inklusi.

The Voice Indonesia team greatly appreciates Pamflet as the Linking and Learning facilitator and Voice grantee partners in Indonesia who have contributed to this 3rd edition of the Indonesia Inklusi Bulletin. Each of us plays a significant role in ensuring that everyone lives a decent life in an equal society. We believe that the power of change lies in our unity. Enjoy the reading!

Voice Indonesia





A stylized illustration of a hand holding a plate of food. The hand is yellow with a blue and white striped sleeve. The plate is white with a red border and contains various food items: a hard-boiled egg, a piece of meat, a piece of bread, a piece of vegetable, and a piece of fruit. The background is a mix of teal and purple colors with abstract shapes and patterns.

FROM THE ROAD TO THE KITCHEN: YOUTH TAKES OVER THE SPACE FOR DECOLONISATION

RMI (Dinah Rida), SimpaSio (Oni Tukan, Viona Tukan, Margaretha Kasa Kedang, Yoris Riberu), Kolektif Videoge (Citra Kader, Saputri Firman), Lakoat.Kujawas (Erlis Talan, Paselia Remasti Nati)



Indigenous peoples and local communities are confronted with challenges due to their unique identities, from being labelled as “uncivilised” to the issue of living space. These unfairly imposed stereotypes often trigger an identity crisis, intensifying the reluctance of youth to embrace their identity as part of indigenous peoples and local communities.

That being said, youth from three communities in East Nusa Tenggara who are members of the Kampung Katong Consortium refused to live in ways that reflect how others label them. Motivated by their consideration and a deep sense of belonging to their homeland, they collaboratively worked on documenting local knowledge that was likely to fade over time and identifying the identity that has shaped them.

The SimpaSio Institute collected Malay historical-cultural archives in Larantuka, Kolektif Videoge reintroduced local knowledge about food recipes from coastal areas in Labuan Bajo, and Lakoat.Kujawas documented Chinese-Mollo food recipes from the relevant village.

These young people progressively embarked upon

taking over the space, responding to the problems faced with contextual topics and methods in their respective areas. The action was taken in the spirit of decolonisation, or the process of undoing the influences of colonialism by positioning the local context as a guide to life.

Redefining Their Own Stories

In Larantuka, SimpaSio observed that the younger generation had inadequate understanding and awareness of the history and culture of their own region.

The issue was found to be rooted in the lack of comprehensive documentation, resulting in some missing points of information. Discovering physical archives on the history and culture of Larantuka was, in fact, arduous, therefore requiring interviews with cultural actors and experts, historians, and descendants of the King of Larantuka.

SimpaSio was concerned that, without any changes, the history and culture of Larantuka in the future would be remembered as a mere story passed down from generation to generation that can be made up.

Aware of this situation, the youth in Larantuka who joined the SimpaSio Institute attempted to document the Malay history and culture in Larantuka. Through interviews and literature reviews,





the Lingkar Belajar programme sought to explore and document the history and culture of the Nagi Larantuka community, such as Waibalun *ikat* weaving, as well as the treasure of traditional medicine and food, which contain meanings and philosophies.

The results of the Lingkar Belajar programme were documented in the collection of traditional medical prescriptions and traditional food recipes from Nagi Larantuka, not to mention images and videos archived in Google Drive for further data and information management.

SimpaSio found the significance of sharing these results with the community, especially the younger generation. Accordingly, SimpaSio organised the Rupa Nagi Exhibition to showcase the findings of the Lingkar Belajar programme. This institute also held a Larantuka Walking Tour to provide historical education to the general public, especially children and teenagers, about the history of the City

of Larantuka using the concept of tourism.

The concept was adopted considering that the historical and cultural sites in Larantuka are easily accessible.



Furthermore, this activity offered a fun, unique, and educative experience. The general public, children, and teenagers had the opportunity to act as tour guides and tourists during the Larantuka Walking Tour.

SimpaSio perceived this process built with good intentions as a lifelong learning journey impacting the wider community. Through the activities, the youth members of the SimpaSio creative team were also provided with the opportunity to express themselves. On that note, SimpaSio appreciates the support from the Kampung Katong programme, which has allowed its creative team to gain experience in organisational management, administrative management, and programme coordination to facilitate the effective implementation and achievement of the expected goals.

By initiating various activities, SimpaSio could bring the youth in Larantuka closer to the history and culture of their region. Understanding historical and cultural values gained from the activities could further emphasise their regional identity and become a reflection for future decision-making.

Culture Preservation Through Food: Archiving the Traditional Food of Labuan Bajo

Despite the fact that the history and art of a community can be tracked through narratives, missing cultural identity can also be found in culinary treasures. The Videoge team members,



while they were still students, were often asked about the traditional food of Labuan Bajo.

Unfortunately, this question was not easy to answer.

The variety of commodities and food available in the market is limited, possibly due to farming not being the main livelihood or a shift in land use.

With that in mind, Kolektif Videoge documented the recipes from the coastal community of Labuan Bajo in the form of a recipe book entitled *Resep Tetangga*. The book was created to introduce the culinary identity of Labuan Bajo, and it has inspired the development of our programme series, Dapur Pecah. Not just another programme, it also operated as a business unit and served as a collective forum for recreating various cuisines, all while preserving the original recipes along with their accompanying narratives.

Through our culinary research, we came to the conclusion that food is greatly influenced by culture. In collecting data, we also learned that diversity is the identity of people in the coastal areas of Labuan Bajo, which group into several tribes, such as the Bajo, Manggarai, Bugis and Bima tribes.

After learning about the recipes, we proceeded with *Telusur Musim* or fruit season observation, where we carried out a little observation on natural conditions and what fruit seasons people would celebrate in the coming month and time. The fruit season currently examined is the tamarind season in Labuan Bajo. Through this activity and piloting another programme, *Telusur Rasa*, Videoge creatively delivered the stories of local people behind the traditional food, which created an economic value.

This activity also brought our team to have a close interaction with the local people.

The Kolektif Videoge team observed the fruit season by walking through urban forests, residential areas, and narrow alleys and estimating how long the tamarind season would be enjoyed by coastal communities in Labuan Bajo.



Culture Preservation Through Food: Archiving the Traditional Food of Mollo.

Similar activities were also executed by Lakoat.Kujawas in Mollo. In addition to documenting the village's history, weaving motifs, the origins of clans, and traditional houses, they brought up narratives about traditional food.

Nowadays, we no longer find the Mollo people serving tubers, corn, or beans from plantations and forests on their dining tables. Such staple foods have been replaced by imported fast food and snacks containing harmful chemicals that negatively impact their health.


Lakoat.Kujawas started the observation by exploring the village, seeking the narratives and recipes of local food to reintroduce nutrient-dense food along with the story it carries. In this activity, the team was divided into groups, each consisting of teenagers, adults, and the elderly, and they worked in parallel. After conducting research, the team proceeded with the next activities: searching for ingredients in plantations or forests and then experimenting with existing traditional food recipes.

Children and parents were involved in the activity to familiarise them with their traditional food, which was highly valued and respected by ancestors as it was believed to take on spiritual significance. The younger generation witnessed first-hand how the elderly practised traditional rituals to manifest their respect for nature.

Traditional food reflects the unique identity of a region. Not preserving our traditional food means losing our identity. Lakoat.Kujawas endeavoured to maintain this tradition by building seed storage, presenting the results of food experiments, and providing a place to organise a cooking workshop called the Ume Fatumfaun Food Lab.

Food resulting from experiments and innovations with local ingredients was served at every event organised by Lakoat.Kujawas. It aimed to raise people's awareness that food made from local ingredients was inexpensive and rich in good nutrition for the body. From this collaboration, traditional foods such as laku tobe, bose, lu'at, and many more were reintroduced. These small teams also innovated by creating



An illustration of a hand with a yellow sleeve holding a white plate with a purple border. The plate contains various colorful food items: purple flowers, orange slices, green and orange vegetables, purple round items, a brown textured item, a blue leafy vegetable, yellow beans, and a yellow egg. The background is a teal and blue abstract design with yellow lines.

recipes using local ingredients, such as balado ubi (sweet and spicy cassava) and sop ubi (cassava soup).

As an introduction, we served traditional food during activities that involved children. The goal was to familiarise them with the taste of the meals that people used to consume in the past. While preparing a variety of pleasant menus made from processed tubers, beans, and corn from the fields, we delivered narratives that were subtly conveyed through their plates.

Walking around the city, documenting woven textiles, and uncovering ancestral recipes might not sound like significant and monumental activities. However, these were the small steps to begin construing our history from our own perspective instead of through the potentially biased lens of outsiders.

Breaking free from the shackles of colonial influences and the stereotypes imposed upon us is no easy task, especially when the youth still face limited opportunities for participation. However, through the process undertaken over nearly two years with the Kampung Katong consortium, the youth successfully demonstrated how they could empower themselves and responded to their social and environmental issues by strengthening their deep-rooted local identities.

By nurturing spirit, the 'seized' space could become a driving force, not only for the youth themselves but also for the community and the surrounding environment.



MY STORY IN DURI VILLAGE

Mama Atha
Sanggar Seroja



Kampung Duri - that is the name of the village where I live, where I came into this world, and where I have been raised to this day. This area is renowned as the second most densely populated region in Southeast Asia.

My parents used to tell stories about how migrants once predominantly inhabited this area. Nowadays, it is home to many transgender individuals. Many earn a living as street musicians, while some work as sex workers or in beauty salons. And I am one of them.

Since the 1970s, Kampung Duri has become the dwelling place for many transwomen. I remember, back then, near my house, there used to be a rented house inhabited by transwomen from various regions. One of the alleys was even named 'Gang Bencong' (literally translated as the alley of the transwomen) because the majority of its residents were transwomen.

Since I was a child, I have already behaved in a feminine way. I loved wearing girls' clothes,

playing with girls' toys, and going to the market with my mom. On top of that, whenever I played house, I

always took on the role of the mother. I also often helped my mom cook at her small eatery after school. Her eatery was situated in the heart of Pos Duri Market – even now, the market still stands, though it has undergone several renovations. I was so happy back then. Whenever I helped out at my mom's eatery, many customers specifically wanted me to serve them. They said I was cute and pretty.

Now, I have reached the age of 55 years old. Since I have been acting like a girl since childhood, the entire neighbourhood has been aware of my personality and behaviour. As time went by, I grew up to become a transwoman. Fortunately, I live in Kampung Duri, where the residents have accepted our presence, and we can harmoniously blend in with the community.

The transwomen in this area also have a space to be productive and nurture their creativity. Previously, many of them joined a performing art community called 'Teater Manekin'. On October 20, 2016, this community evolved and changed its name to 'Sanggar Seroja' – inspired by the lotus flower. Like a lotus flower that grows in murky water, we will blossom and shine forever.

We expect Sanggar Seroja to serve as a room for transgender individuals to nurture their artistic talents, enhance self-acceptance, foster constructive dialogue, promote solidarity, and create artworks to be utilised in campaigns and advocacy for diversity to realise the values of equality in society.

However, the pandemic tested our endurance. Many transwomen, especially those who worked as street musicians, struggled to make a living. Sanggar Seroja then initiated a donation to assist those impacted by the pandemic. With the support of the Queer Language Club (QLC), Sanggar Seroja provided food assistance to the community in Kampung Duri and its surroundings.

Initially, Sanggar Seroja provided assistance in the form of packed meals. I, with the help of fellow members, took on the task of cooking in a communal kitchen for the transwomen. Every day, we cooked a total of 140 packed meals. Nuke and Indri, other members of Sanggar Seroja, were in charge of distributing the meals in the Kampung Duri and Kali Anyar areas. This activity took place from the early days of the pandemic until the implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB).

After the social restriction was lifted, we provided assistance in the form of staple food and pocket money. We also established a Rolling Fund to support Sanggar Seroja members in starting culinary businesses. Over time, we managed seven small-scale culinary businesses – one of which is mine, Bolu Mama Pandan. Sanggar Seroja also continued to organise theatre performances virtually.

Considering our active engagement in environmental issues, we also created unique superhero costumes from recycled materials. The costumes include the Trans Superhero, as well as Asih, Dana, Feilan, and Tara, who represent heroes in the fields of health,

finance,
hygiene, and advocacy, respectively.
With those costumes, members





of Sanggar Seroja frequently arrange shows that raise environmental and climate change issues.

In 2023, we plan to perform a play based on our self-written fictional script. In this play, we will tell the story of a Betawi family with five children, all transwomen. The father vehemently opposes his boys' choices and even kicks them out of the home. However, these five transwomen ultimately live successfully and become well-known figures. This play will feature fellow members of Sanggar Seroja and a man playing the character of Babeh or the Father.

For me, Kampung Duri is a lovely and meaningful place.

Although many label this area as shabby and densely populated, I am delighted to live my life to the fullest here. Moreover, here, I can meet many fellow transwomen and immigrants mingling without discrimination. The locals also warmly welcome the presence of us, transwomen, and Sanggar Seroja. Even the neighbourhood unit (RT) administrators and local civic organisations continuously support our activities. Besides, children in Kampung Duri do not find us strange anymore. Anytime Sanggar Seroja arranges a rehearsal at the market or its parking lot, many children will come and watch us. Sometimes, they request to be invited to our show rehearsal.

I am truly content with how my life runs at this moment. On top of that, God has entrusted me to care for and raise a child. She calls me Mama; from then on, people address me as Mama Atha. Such a nickname has increasingly emphasised my role as a mother, although I have never experienced pregnancy and delivery stages. Also, I still can be a good person for my peers and my girl,

Incess Salju.


I wish I could also be a Mama for everyone, especially for Sanggar Seroja. (*



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES EMPOWER EACH OTHER; *WHY NOT?*

Siti Barokhatin Ni'mah
Difabel Blora Mustika



An illustration of a woman wearing a blue hijab and a purple long-sleeved top, sitting in a pink wheelchair. She is holding a colorful, patterned blanket. The background is a light blue and purple gradient with stylized mountain shapes.

That morning, a woman familiarly addressed as Wiji was weeding around her peanut crops in the field. She pulled weeds and removed pests potentially destructive to the growth of plants. At that time, Wiji, a 22-year-old woman, was actively caring for plants with the hope of reaping the best possible results. However, later on, she felt excruciating pain in her left neck once she got home.

Since the pain was worsening, a neighbour visited and helped her by giving her *kerokan* (a traditional Indonesian therapy by scraping the skin on the back using a coin). Less than an hour after *kerokan*, she found herself unable to move her left leg and then her right leg. Realising her condition, her family decided to take her to a hospital. She clearly could recall how dr. Setyoko, the attending doctor, explained that she had a tailbone fracture that might never fully recover.

Like a bolt from the blue, Wiji was shocked and disbelieving as she was certain she had never fallen or experienced a blunt impact before. The doctor further explained that any blunt impact experienced in the past may have caused such a case. After hearing his explanation, Wiji suddenly remembered. A long time ago, she did fall, and her tailbone was crushed by a bag of grass.

She shared that her family and neighbours wondered and did not expect it at all. "What happened? You went to the field in the morning looking normal, but then you suddenly could not walk and got paralysed once you were home," they wondered.

Like her family and neighbours, Wiji often pondered, questioning and disbelieving her situation. Her family has made various efforts to support Wiji to recover to normal. They even consulted with a psychic, stating that Wiji's condition was attributed to sins committed by her ancestors, forcing her to be responsible for them. Meanwhile, another psychic said that unwanted spirits plagued Wiji as a consequence of passing through a location where supernatural beings live without permission.

With a strong determination, in the third month after receiving intensive care in the hospital, she began to be able to sit without any back support. Shortly after, Wiji finally could stand up and walk, though she had to use a cane to support her. Two years passed, and Wiji managed to rise above adversity, even after her husband left her forever.

From then on, Wiji tried her luck selling snacks at her home, such as kerupuk (crunchy savoury crackers) with chilli sauce and gulali (traditional lollipop). Further, she added that instead of receiving money, she got corn because her buyers often bartered corn for the gulali she sold. That corn was collected until the amount was enough to be sold.

Realising that her income from selling snacks was insufficient, she started offering sewing services in 2004. She claimed that she once attended a sewing class when she was young. With only three hundred thousand rupiahs granted by the government, she bought a second-hand sewing machine. In her early journey as a tailor, she offered an alteration service. Slow but sure, she started making clothes and developed her skill in making garments to this day.

“Of course, there were times when I was down. But then, I remembered that I have a kid to feed, so I should be independent and make my own income,”



said Wiji. “That’s why I want to encourage people with disabilities like me to have a progressive mindset. Let’s learn together and make our own money. Please don’t give up, and remember that we have children to fight for. If you lose heart, who would take care of your children? Keep in mind that they need you.”



Empowering Others Based on their Abilities

Our organisation, Difabel Blora Mustika, is currently working on empowering women with disabilities and People Who Have Had Leprosy (OYPMK) in Blora District, Central Java. With the support from Voice, we established an Association of Women with Disabilities, referred to as PERDIFA, in six sub-districts, namely Jepon, Kunduran, Banjarejo, Ngawen, Tunjungan, and Bogorejo.

In the beginning, we collected data from 70 women with disabilities in each sub-district and selected anyone eligible to be involved in our activities. Of 70 women in Tunjungan Sub-district, 13 were selected to participate in our activities and were willing to take part in the empowerment programme. One of the participants



showed strong ambition and enthusiasm. She was Wiji, a woman with a physical disability. During our data collection, she supported us by introducing our team to other people with disabilities living around her home. She was committed to encouraging her peers to be independent and make their own money.

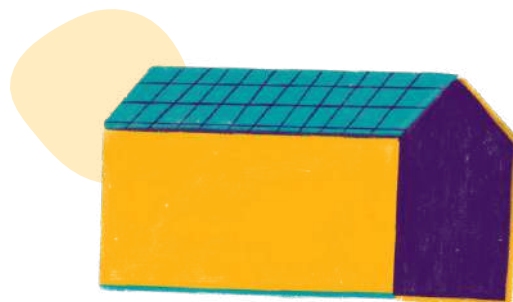
Wiji felt compelled to join in as she was aware of the condition of many less fortunate women with disabilities who lived around her. "I was moved to participate because I noticed they didn't have much to do at home every day. This condition reminded me of when I was jobless," Wiji added. "I want to do my best to help other disabled individuals until they can do something profitable, at least, to support personal needs."

As time passed by, Wiji was appointed as the Chairperson of PERDIFA for the Tunjungan Chapter. She proposed to recycle her fabric scraps into various products. For this purpose, she distributed tasks according to the potential of each member. Women with physical disabilities were assigned to cut the materials and do simple sewing. Meanwhile, visually impaired ones were responsible for grouping fabrics of the same size, and those

with mental disabilities supported the activity as much as they could.

One of the activities of PERDIFA for the Tunjungan Chapter is holding a regular meeting on Saturday. The meeting, usually attended by six to ten members, allows them to engage in social gathering activities or practice creating products, depending on their mutual agreement. Before participating in these activities, most of the members spent their time doing nothing at home, lacked self-confidence, and had limited skills. After joining PERDIFA, they have learned a lot, reduced their self-stigma, become more confident in presenting themselves in public, and acquired the ability to produce some goods.

Wiji added, "I actually welcome anyone who wants to learn, including those without disabilities. We have produced various products such as laptop sleeves, sling bags, hair ties, floor mats, and brooches. Now, those who can sew neatly can also make bed sheets, pillowcases, and bolster covers. There are already two traders who are interested in our products."



In the future, Wiji hopes that other women with disabilities who are still learning can eventually work from home and sell their products, so at least they can earn money on their own at home.

"I would like to invite those who want to learn new skills to join PERDIFA. Besides sewing, we also need special empowerment and training programmes from the government to help us become more self-reliant by improving our skills. These skills can be tailoring, knitting, embroidery, and so on," she concluded.

Remarkable journeys similar to those of Wiji and PERDIFA members in Tunjungan also occur in the other five sub-districts. They have agreed to promote economic independence for women with disabilities and OYPMK by leveraging each area's natural resources and potential. For instance, PERDIFA has taken the initiative to establish a bamboo weaving craft business in Jepon, an oyster mushroom business in Kunduran, a processed snacks business in Banjarejo, an emprit ginger syrup business in Ngawen, and an instant drinks business in Bogorejo.

Hopefully, the assistance in these six sub-districts will lead to positive changes for women with disabilities and OYPMK in the Bora Regency. We believe significant outcomes start from small changes. (*)





ACHIEVING PROSPERITY: THE WINDING JOURNEY OF WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (WHRDs)

Helen Intania Surayda, Sammi Institute
IProtectNow Consortium



Never would I have thought that the candles I put on Yu Awi's fortieth birthday cake would mark the twilight of her life. This strong woman had endured her pain for years, all while tirelessly carrying out her duties as an *advocate* for facilitating the victims of violence. She never showed me the wounds she concealed beneath her loose-fitting tops and thick jackets. Sometimes, Yu Awi would be absent from events, citing that she was sick. I assumed it was typhoid, a common disease among human rights defenders.

As her condition took a drastic turn for the worse, we finally knew that Yu Awi was battling stage 4 breast cancer. Little did I know that ordering some herbal medicine at my regular shop was an attempt to cure the cancer. She had unwavering faith it would improve her condition. Her decision to pursue herbal therapy over conventional medical treatment was a testament to her stubborn character. We even had to coax her to seek professional medical care.

But too late! There was no other choice but to lift her breasts to prevent further damage to her lungs. This stubborn, tomboyish woman had ignored her health condition for too long. As an advocate, Yu Awi opted for a non-profit approach in her role as a social worker, unlike her fellow professionals who charged fees. Due to this reason, she had not budgeted for her own health protection. As a result, Yu Awi's family

struggled to secure the necessary treatment for her.

The fact that Yu Awi's partner did not receive a fixed monthly salary worsened the situation. Both of them were committed to the human rights issue, with her partner selling books related to human rights movements. Therefore, this one-child family practically relied on Yu Awi.

Yu Awi's condition encouraged us to immediately process health insurance to ensure she could receive intensive care as soon as possible. As we waited for the medical-related issues to be resolved, we took the initiative to reach out to our colleagues working on human rights matters to fundraise. Every donation was used to support our colleague's health, covering her medical treatment costs, operational expenses, and other urgent needs.

However, God had a different plan. Despite this breadwinner's unwavering determination to heal, Yu Awi's body could no longer withstand the cancer after several treatments. The universe wanted her back.

Unfortunately, Yu Awi was not the only one who faced these challenges. Many other facilitators endure similar difficulties, with some facing even more severe issues.





Some are burdened by families who demand higher incomes and keep pressuring them, while others may face violence and threats from both the victims' families and the perpetrators. These brave facilitators often put their safety on the line while performing their jobs.

Due to these reasons, Perisai HAM was established to protect facilitators who advocate for and promote human rights, especially WHRDs (Women Human Rights Defenders). WHRDs are individuals striving to uphold women's human rights. They dedicate their lives to others but often forget or fail to fulfil their own rights. Besides, they, too, are vulnerable to violence, injustice, and various hardships, leading to a stark reminder that WHRDs should also advocate for their well-being.

WHRDs' lives are far from prosperous. They dedicate nearly 24 hours to assisting others. These individuals are required to keep their communication devices on standby, be ready to accept emergency calls, and maintain their stamina to move swiftly from one location to another, all while continually strategising to facilitate their patients.

Patients? Yup. Take Yu Awi, for instance. Her role extended beyond just offering legal support. WHRDs are tasked with guiding victims through the complex stages of physical, psychological, and social recovery.

Many WHRDs do not have the luxury of working within institutions with highly stable structures and operations. In fact, most of them operate in institutions where funding stability is not always guaranteed. Despite these challenges, some WHRDs prefer to work individually due to their concern for women's issues.

While handling challenging cases, some WHRDs may experience burnout. In these moments, they find comfort and mental health support during gatherings with their fellow facilitators. These gatherings often involve simple recreational activities like watching movies, cooking, or other activities to relieve their stress.

Perisai HAM serves as a vital platform for WHRDs to advocate for their rights. It may start from advocating within their institution to the government level and other agencies. For them, a social protection guarantee becomes a basic necessity. When WHRDs are healthy, they will surely maximise their potential for the fulfilment and struggle for



human rights. If WHRDs are protected, they will definitely obtain safety, comfort, and tranquillity in performing their roles.

Such aspects of safety, comfort, and peace of mind are what we refer to as prosperity.

Perisai HAM embarked on its journey by organising an audience with the local government agencies responsible for women's affairs. Following this effort, the Health and Workers Social Security Agency joined in, performing dissemination, approaching relevant companies, and persuading them to support WHRDs by providing social responsibility funds.

While it was freshly launched, this campaign started showing results little by little. Service agencies and organisations we approached gradually provided budgets for social protection, either fully covered or structured with the cost-sharing scheme.

Our main target was to ensure legal protection for the rights of WHRDs. In Central Java, our work area, there is Central Java Governor Regulation No. 24 of 2022, which supports our advocacy.

In Article 12 of the regulation, regional governments "are obligated to protect the rights of



the defenders of the human rights of women and children as victims or the assistants of women and children as victims."

Besides the fundamental right to protection from threats and acts of violence, the regulation also orders to ensure the right to health and social security.

Driven by this governor regulation, Perisai HAM in Central Java shows a tremendous spirit of defending human rights and develops a sense of mutual support within WHRDs to reach well-being. The support can be manifested through protection from threats and violence, social protection, either for health or workers, and other services, such as psychological services, to maintain the mental well-being of WHRDs.

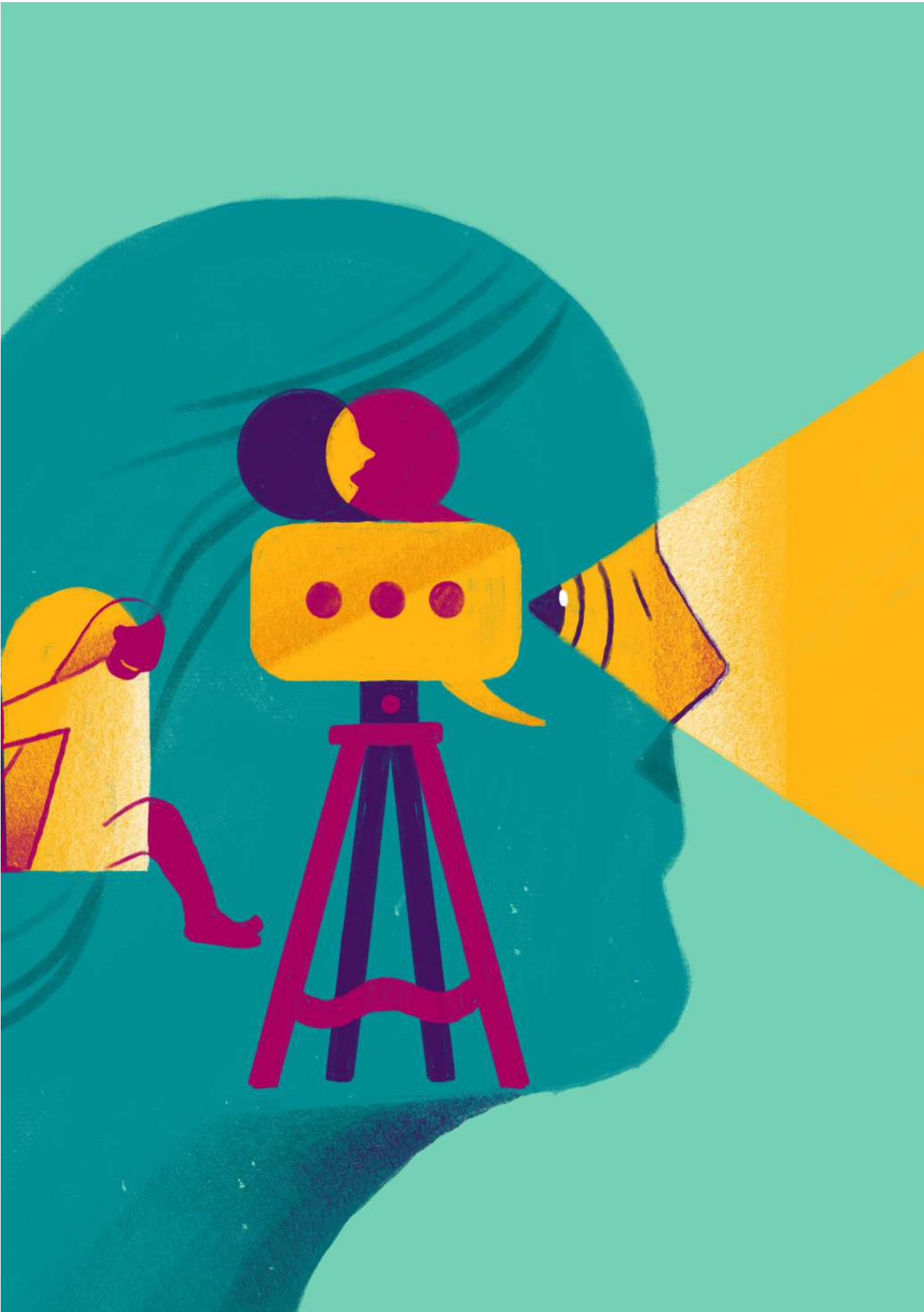
This is such a lengthy yet manageable process. To fulfil and fight for human rights, we should not forget to take care of ourselves and practice self-love so we can make the best out of and maximise our potential. Your path to achieving your greatest dreams begins with you, and it starts right now. (*)



INTRODUCING THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY AND THE STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE INCLUSIVE CINEMA

**Ahmad Fauzi
Minikino**

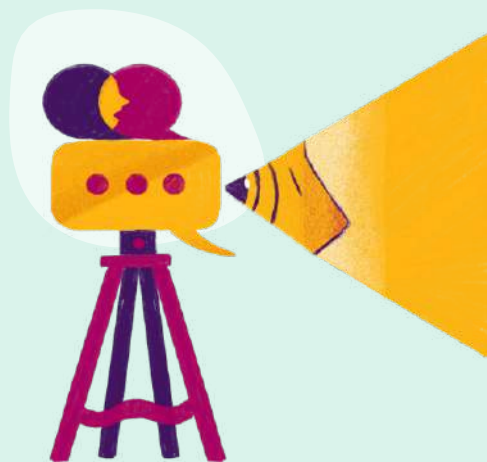




Since a young age, Elin has been keen on watching films on television or through DVDs, but what makes films interesting to her are only the visuals and expressions of the actors. In 2016, as she entered her teenage years, she began to go to a cinema to watch international films, but never domestic films.

Elin has a rational reason why she only watches international films. She is deaf, and Indonesian films are not always provided with subtitles.

Watching films is commonly viewed as an entertainment activity, and we often neglect the fact that some people out there struggle to enjoy this activity. Some mistakenly assume that deaf and visually impaired people dislike or even cannot enjoy films. In fact, they also watch films on their televisions, smartphones, or in the cinemas. For that reason, we need to keep promoting the provision of inclusive rooms to watch films.



Unfortunately, the Indonesian film industry considers subtitles necessary only when the dialogue needs to be translated.

Many of them are not aware that subtitles can be a supporting element to make films more inclusive and accessible. Activism or advocacy to provide subtitles for deaf people or closed captions (CC) continues to be promoted within the community.

CC is slightly different from subtitles in general. Both of them convey information delivered through the dialogue, but CC also describes the audio, such as "rain pattering", "tires screeching", or "someone screaming from afar", to give the essential context of the story.

When I first met with Elin in Yayasan Kino Media (Minikino), Elin told me in detail about the highlights and challenges of the deaf community in fighting for their right to be facilitated with CC. Elin shared that her peers in Jakarta advocated for CC to be featured in Indonesian films. In 2018, the deaf community specifically requested CC for two films, *Dilan* and *Two Blue Stripes*.

Recently, the deaf community in Jakarta urged [Falcon Picture Production House](#) to provide subtitles for *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (2022).

In addition to deaf people, people with visual impairments



also need to be facilitated to understand films through Audio Description (AD). AD is an audio narration that describes the scenes and any relevant information in films or videos. It is created by assuming that the audience cannot see the visuals. Therefore, the process often involves collaboration with filmmakers and direct discussions with visually impaired individuals to ensure precise and accurate narrations.



AD is also adjusted to the situation of people with visual impairments. Those people do not need information about colours, not to mention too detailed descriptions. For example, if the scene displays a woman in a green shirt sitting on the beach, the AD may briefly describe "a woman sitting on the beach," considering colour information is unnecessary for people with visual impairments.

AD is deemed more practical than another more common method, whisper cinema. In this method, a volunteer will describe the scenes by whispering to the visually impaired audience. Besides requiring an adequate number of volunteers, the weakness is that the descriptions may not precisely convey the idea of the filmmakers, raising concern that there will be misinterpretation. The volunteers may provide descriptions different from one another, or they may even change the atmosphere of the film. Meanwhile, AD can enhance the experience of watching films without affecting the quality as intended by the filmmakers.

As an international short film festival organisation, this situation urges Minikino to strive to create an inclusive room to enjoy films. We annually collect hundreds of short films from various countries. Being mindful of where the films are shown, Minikino always features Indonesian subtitles so the audience can get immersed in the story. In this way, knowledge and cultural exchange can take place owing to subtitles that serve as the medium.

Since 2019, Minikino has actively created CC for special film screenings to facilitate deaf people watching the films. Moreover, since 2020, Minikino has collaborated with several production houses of Indonesian fictional and documentary short films to rerelease films with AD, making them accessible to people with visual impairments.



Artivism of the short film Where the Wild Frangipanis Grow

During the production process, Minikino constantly involves the deaf and visually impaired individuals to assist the team and provide input. In producing the short film *Where the Wild Frangipanis Grow* (2023) by Ida Bagus Nirartha Bas Diwangkara, for instance, featuring AD was possible thanks to the support from Voice Global Indonesia through the artivism programme.

On 4 May 2023, Minikino invited Iwan Cahyadi and Jerry Juliawan from Komunitas Teratai or Kostra Foundation to give input regarding the AD for the short film. Kostra Foundation is a visually impaired community that actively encourages members to be creative and self-sufficient.

When the short film with AD was shown to Iwan and Jerry, they suggested the narration should not be too detailed. Iwan uttered, "I want to hear the back sound of a water stream, so I can imagine it like 'ah, it must be on the river'." Jerry then added, "Not everything shown in the film should be described. Let us play with our imagination."

Featuring AD and CC in *Where the Wild Frangipanis Grow* is essential, considering the issue raised in that film

is sexual violence, which can be experienced by anyone.

Based on my conversation with Nirartha, the director, this short film was inspired by her concerns stemming from two factors.

Firstly, Nirartha, as a person born into a priest's family, often felt uneasy about why all the good teachings about becoming a saint often contradicted what he faced. Secondly, this is exaggerated by the fact that media coverage has raised many issues of *sulinggih* (priests) committing sexual violence against their congregation.

Nirartha is aware that this film can provide insight into how sexual violence can be experienced by anyone and committed by anyone, including persons with disabilities. He said, "Even the victim can be a man, and men are commonly embarrassed to talk about it. This is toxic masculinity." For him, sexual violence can be experienced by people of any gender or even with disabilities. It is all about power, and anyone can be affected. For this reason, Nirartha and Minikino considered it essential to incorporate AD and CC within the film.



Accordingly, the short film *Where the Wild Frangipanis Grow* will hold a roadshow in several areas in Bali and outside Bali. This roadshow serves as a reflective meeting as well as an effort to keep on being connected and learning. During the roadshow in Bali, the working team would be accompanied by a Sign Language Interpreter in Denpasar, making it possible for deaf and visually impaired audiences invited to the event to be involved in discussions about sexual violence issues apart from just watching.

"Every region or city has its uniqueness, so even if sexual violence issues are universal, it is very contextual according to the respective cultural character," said Nirartha. "That's why we need an exchange of information."

Every single person reserves the right to access information and knowledge about sexual violence, despite the fact that there are actually only a few people privileged to have such access.

The endeavour to provide accessibility, such as subtitles, CCs, and ADs, carried out by Minikino on short films is a small step to pave everyone's way to having these conversations. (*)



STRIVING FOR THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN JAKARTA

Rifky A. Irmanda

Indonesia Mental Health Association



Since its establishment in 2008, the Indonesia Mental Health Association (IMHA) is the first organisation initiated and run by persons with disabilities to advocate for protecting and fulfilling the rights of people with mental illness in Indonesia.

What we strive for is certainly not based on mere imagination. The rights of persons with disabilities have been set out in international conventions through the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and ratified through Law No. 19 of 2011 and Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities.

For this reason, one of the IMHA branches in Jakarta coordinated with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities Organisations (OPD) in DKI Jakarta to compile a Problem Investment List (*Daftar Investasi Masalah* or DIM) for the DKI Jakarta Draft Regional Regulation on Persons with Disabilities. The result of the DIM preparation would be proposed to the regional Government of DKI Jakarta, which was in the process of drafting a regional regulation on disability rights.

In the beginning, the process of discussion went smoothly. Different points were raised by disability groups based on their respective needs. Some suggested that there should be a regulation concerning social protection, while others expected a regional regulation to address the cost of additional living expenses for persons with disabilities.

The result of the DIM formulation was aimed to be proposed to the Regional Government of DKI Jakarta. It is expected that the DKI Jakarta Regulation serves as the most appropriate regulation for persons with disabilities and a regulation model for the rest of the regions in Indonesia.

However, our journey did not go as smoothly as initially planned. In August 2022, the IMHA at

the central level and its branch in DKI Jakarta were informed that the regional regulation draft (Raperda) on Persons with Disabilities experienced significant changes after being modified and adjusted at The Ministry of Home Affairs. Not only did it change drastically, but the new version of the regulation also overlooked the rights of persons with disabilities mapped through a facilitation process.

It was surprising when we found out that the MoHA had made major changes to the draft. The Central Government removed essential articles that had been worked on by persons with disabilities based on normative reasons without considering the needs and aspirations of the disability community in DKI Jakarta.

The MoHA, for example, eliminated the granting of concessions for this group in the context of motor vehicle tax and the house ownership credit (KPR), which should have been authorised by regional governments. The ministry also deleted the article concerning the Jakarta Disability Council (DDJ), assuming that DDJ bears responsibility for performing the duties and functions of the National Commission on Disability.

However, it turns out that DDJ, as an independent non-structural institution, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this DKI regional regulation draft (Raperda). The DKI Jakarta Provincial Government requires assistance from DDJ to supervise and formulate policies that are multi-sectoral and, on the principle of regional autonomy, should become the authority of the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government. Moreover, in the previous DKI Jakarta regulation, there was already a Regional Disability Commission (KDD) with the same concept as DDJ.

The MoHA also cut off assistance for persons with disabilities. The educational scholarships for persons with disabilities are only limited to those having achievements and being economically disadvantaged instead of allowing those with any background. In this case, MoHA refused the notion that most people with disabilities – regardless of their background – remained not to have access to education. Based on the 2020 Central Statistics Agency (BPS) data, 29.35% of persons with disabilities did not complete primary education, while only 3.38% had completed higher education.

The MoHA also removed other significant articles, such as reducing the minimum quota for workers with disabilities, initially agreed to be three per cent, now become two per cent. The regional government has removed the previously established five per cent quota for procuring goods and services from MSMEs (UMKM) owned by individuals with disabilities. The implementation of daily rehabilitation services, which was previously required in every sub-district, has now become in every district. The guarantee of employment rights for persons with disabilities is no longer an obligation for employers.



Eventually, on 31 August 2022, IMHA Jakarta participated in coordinating to issue a press release from the Coalition of OPD in DKI Jakarta and the Working Group on the Implementation of the Law on Persons with Disabilities, which was submitted to the MoHA and the Jakarta Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD DKI). In September 2022, the IMHA Jakarta press statement on the DKI Jakarta draft regulations was submitted to The Regional People's Representative Council and The DKI Jakarta Provincial Government.

The IMHA at the central level and the IMHA in Jakarta continued to hold actions and hearings at the MoHA. The IMHA Jakarta coordinates with other OPDs in this action and advocacy, such as the Indonesian Blind Association (Pertuni), the Indonesian Association for the Welfare of the Deaf (Gerkatin), and the Association of Indonesian Disabled Persons (PPDFI). A total of 70 people, consisting of psychosocial, physical, and sensory disabilities, came to the streets and demanded the government bring back the regional regulation draft originally agreed upon. This action was also reported by national media coverage, such as Tempo and CNN Indonesia.

It was unfortunate that the results were not as expected. Instead of advocating for the people's aspirations that had already been accommodated into the DKI Jakarta Regional Regulation Draft, The Jakarta Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD DKI) easily accepted and approved the

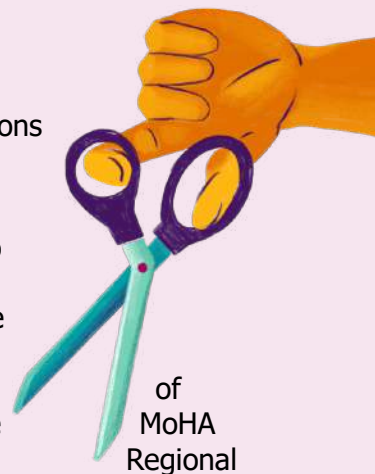
facilitation suggestions from the MoHA.

The DKI Jakarta Coalition of OPD no longer received information and the opportunity to discuss the results of facilitation from the MoHA regarding the DKI Regional Regulation Draft on Persons with Disabilities. This led the second version of the regional regulation draft to overlook its genuine principles and lose its meaning.

Accordingly, there was nothing we could do except criticise this matter. The Coalition of OPD in DKI Jakarta stated that the MoHA and DPRD DKI Jakarta have substantively, systematically, and procedurally disregarded and betrayed the aspirations of persons with disabilities.

We also cohesively rejected the facilitation advice from the MoHA regarding the DKI Regional Regulation Draft on Persons with Disabilities, urging them to withdraw the facilitated results already submitted to the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government and improve the substance of the draft by reinstating the essential articles that reflect the aspirations of persons with disabilities and involve them in future facilitations.

Advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities is an uphill battle. Even when there is a glimmer of hope, there are always those who force us to take three steps back. However, this does not necessarily mean that our struggle is worthless. We will keep on striving for this. (*)





Immortalising Those Destined to Fade Away: The Story of Youth and Elderly from the Land of Karawang



Tati Sulastri & Nurul Aeni

PPSW Pasoendan Digdaya Consortium & Community Resource Center/PSDK

One evening, I took a trip down memory lane. It was 20 years ago when I lived with my mother and my old grandfather at home. Every time I looked at my mother caring for my grandfather at home, I saw this act of caring as burdening. I hesitated to lend a hand when my mom struggled with changing Grandpa's diaper or getting him from lying down to sitting up. "Isn't this supposed to be the responsibility of Grandpa's own children?" I muttered under my breath.

Looking at my old grandpa with his wrinkled skin, white and thinning hair, and toothless smile, I simply was not interested. I never bothered to talk with him because, to be honest, I found his questions annoying, especially when I was just trying to watch the TV.

As I looked back to that self-centred version of myself, I took a deep breath, and before I knew it, tears were streaming down my cheeks.

Years went by after Grandpa passed away. In 2019, following my resignation from a garment company, I became a member of a women's organisation called the Centre for Women's Resources Development or Pusat Pengembangan Sumber Daya Wanita (PPSW) Pasoendan Digdaya. I was welcomed as a field staff member and embarked on an empowerment program for women garment workers.

However, in August 2021, PPSW Pasoendan Digdaya assigned me to a different task – the Village Budget for Healthy, Prosperous, and Skilled Elderly or Anggaran Desa Bagi Lansia Sehat Sejahtera dan Terampil (ANDIL SAHATE), a program situated in Karawang Regency, West Java. This new role required me to engage with numerous elderly individuals. In an unfamiliar place, I was tasked with accompanying a local elderly group in advocating for a village budget that would secure their rights, including access to healthcare, economic support, and more.

From a selection of areas requiring assistance, I was chosen to be a facilitator in Curug and Karanganyar Villages, Klari Subdistrict.



These areas were undergoing a transformation from agricultural to industrial regions, and the extensive land conversion was affecting the livelihoods of the elderly, who had long relied on agriculture. My team and I began our fieldwork by conducting a survey involving 200 elderly individuals to map their living conditions, which would serve as a reference for future programs.

As I delved deeper into their issues, I could not help but feel a sense of turmoil. They opened up about the challenges they faced and how they grappled with loneliness when their families left for work. Some struggled to secure an income in their old age despite having ongoing needs. Others faced difficulties accessing distant health facilities, even though they battled frequent illnesses.

Armed with a wealth of raw data, my team and I attempted to communicate with the local village government.

However, to our astonishment, they perceived these issues as mundane. "They are old already; why should it be

a problem?" jestingly commented one of the village officials we met.

"After all, they won't be around for much longer."

This lack of concern from families, communities, and the village government underscored the critical need for establishing a platform where the elderly could acquire knowledge, build self-confidence, and voice their aspirations. Moreover, my team needed to involve diverse individuals – not only the elderly but also youth and family representatives.

One morning, the elderly in the sub-village were invited to gather at one of the residents' houses by a considerate village official. Before the discussion started, I observed that the elderly sat with their legs stretched to the front due to physical issues. Some of them did not say a word during the meeting, some others unobtrusively asked why they were gathered in that house, and there were some who expected to receive assistance.

Then, the figure of my late grandfather suddenly flashed in my mind as I saw

someone resembling him – his wrinkled skin, missing teeth, even his hunchback.

Although it was not easy, this first meeting paved the way for the establishment of the Nyekar Desa community. Over the next two years, I worked in the Secretariate Office of PPSW Pasoendan Digdaya in Karanganyar Village, close to the houses of the elderly I assisted.

After some meetings with the elderly, visiting their houses, and getting acquainted with their families, I, who used to be apathetic, began to see them in a new light.

Meet one of the elderlies, Emak Endoy. She was 68 years old and a resident of Cariu Sub-village, Karanganyar.

Emak Endoy had a pleasant personality, and she constantly smiled. When she talked, you could see that she only had two teeth left. She lived in a house with walls full of cracks, a bare floor, and a kitchen that stood right on the ground. There was an old well in her backyard where she usually took water for drink, washing, and bathing.

Not alone, she lived with her daughter, who had a mental disability. Having to care for her daughter added to her burden in her old age. She still had to work nearly ten hours a day to make ends meet for herself and her daughter.

Emak Endoy should take a 30-minute journey by walking to work. If lucky,

someone might offer her a ride. She worked at a bottled water waste management company with a wage of 30,000 rupiahs per day. In a week, she had to work for six days without any workplace insurance system.

She shared that she was tired, but she was grateful for the opportunity to socialise with the other elderly in Nyekar Desa, where she could learn new things, laugh together, and share what she had been going through because she felt lonely at home. "I'm upset every time my daughter has an outburst impulsively, throwing everything around, forcefully pulling out everything inside the wardrobe, messing up the kitchen, or when she yells at the neighbours. She even swears at me," she said softly. "But here, I have a new family!"

Emak Lasem, a solitary elderly living in a stilt house beside a ricefield in Krajan Sub-village, Curug Village, also went through a similar situation. Her house had only one room with so much stuff that she could not move around freely or even stretch out her feet.

At night, she sometimes had to sleep in darkness if the lighting from the neighbours' lamps was not working.

Nearly 65 years old, Emak Lasem lived through a rough life. She continued to work as a farmworker, and her husband had gone since long ago.

Also, since she had no descendants, she had to bear the loneliness in her evening of life. "I live alone, and I have no one to rely on," she sighed. "It

would be nice if I could receive some support."

When I shook hands with her, I could feel the roughness in her hand, a testament to the hard work she had done. One day, a significant change occurred in Curug Village, which influenced her life. Due to a large-scale conversion of land from previously agricultural land to industrial land, she could not go to work at the rice field every day. However, she felt that the loneliness she suffered seemed to disappear for a while when she hung out with other elderly in the meetings held by Nyekar Desa.

With approximately 20 elderly members in every sub-village, Nyekar Desa holds a meeting once a month at a village meeting hall. The activity does not take long – only two hours at maximum – but it does require a lot of effort.

Indeed, it is not easy for the elderly to stay for two hours, grappling with sleepiness, headache, or burning sensation in their backs while having to stay attentive.

Hilariously, I often see some elderly women with hearing loss laughing at their friends who crack a joke. Not because they got the joke but because they found the others' laughs amusing.

We usually do aerobic exercises for the elderly and have fun dancing afterwards before starting the discussion. To liven up the atmosphere, the moves should support




the health of the elderly. After the exercises, we proceed with group learning.

The topics for the group learning include group motivation, gender issue awareness, the importance of expressing opinions, the basic rights of the elderly, maintaining health and well-being, local wisdom, and more.

The elderly show the most interest in exploring local wisdom. They look enthusiastic when they tell stories about the tales of their villages in the past. Sometimes, an elder woman may also sing local songs, such as "*Tokecang*" and "*Cing Cangkeling*", or a group of them hilariously plays a traditional children's game named *kaulinan barudak lembur*, familiarly known as *oray-orayan*.

When playing this game, two elderly hold hands with one another to form a gate, while others line up in a row, mimicking the body of a snake, and hold the shoulders of the player in their fronts while moving forward through the gate. All players will sing a song. When the song stops, the gate will attempt to catch the snake. Simply by playing such a kind of game, the elderly can laugh out loud.

Thankfully, the village government has started supporting them. Slow but sure, all elderly can now have the opportunity to voice their aspirations in any deliberation forums at the sub-village and village levels. Moreover, positive transformations are evidently shown in their personal lives.



Many members of Nyekar Desa have admitted that they have reduced their caffeine intake and smoked less. Instead, they proactively do physical exercises at home. Additionally, another group proudly told us they have just started a joint saving program.

Most importantly, they can finally accept themselves as elderly. Being elderly with all-inclusive limitations and challenges is indeed burdensome. Most members have underlined that being sick and continuously aging feels like a curse.

I reminisce about the words of an elderly who initially rejected to take part in Nyekar Desa. Once, we asked about her life, and she replied, "All I want is just to die. All my contemporaries have already gone. I have been in the world for too long."

The experience of assisting the elderly in Karawang has shifted my perspective and behaviour towards them. I am totally aware that, instead of a weakness, being old should be taken as a particular period full of experiences and wisdom.

Despite the bitter pills that Emak Endoy and Emak Lasem should swallow as the elderly, we still found sparkling in their eyes once they told us their stories. These stories, ranging from their lasting married life, adorable grandchildren, and successful stories their children have achieved, made us impressive. From their stories, I learned that happiness can be found in every stage of life, even though it forces us to deal with tough problems.

The elderly in Karawang have also increasingly lightened up my horizons on their wisdom. Their words always imply priceless messages about respecting time, building strong relationships with others, and living life gratefully. On top of that, they have inspired us to have positive behaviours and fortitude as they always do in facing life changes and challenges.

Assisting the elderly is more than just providing practical support; it is also about giving wholehearted attention, empathy, and respect. They are not the object of social charity. They are humans with emotional and social needs, just like us.

At any time, the gathering of Nyekar Desa is held, I am always committed to making them laugh out loud. It is out of my expectation that I will relish this process. If only my grandfather were still alive, I would treat him better. (*)



MY MOM, THE MAIN SUPPORTER IN MY BATTLES

Adamar Ghofari Ananda,
JTID Konsorsium Brave





I have an intense bond with my mom, yet there is one sensitive matter we have never talked about openly: my job as a transgender activist.

I am a transgender man. However, I am not brave enough to confess this frankly to my mom. We have never had an opportunity to express our feelings heart-to-heart or my identity and roles as a trans man and trans activist.

One sunny morning, my family was getting ready to attend a Family Support event hosted by Jaringan Transgender Indonesia (JTID), an organisation focusing on the fulfilment and advocacy for transgender rights in Indonesia. This event appeared to bring a light at the end of the tunnel for both of us.

It has been too long for me to have yearned for a moment when our family can sit together and solemnly listen to each other. This event became a priceless moment for us to open up, listen to, and share experiences with each other.

Through this event, I sincerely hoped that my mom could better understand

my job as a transgender activist, realise how my job impacts my life, and be aware of the significance of family support in giving strength and encouraging me to fight for transgender

rights.

More than that, I looked forward to finding a space to come out and open up about our feelings and hopes.

I expected so much to tell her what I have experienced as a trans man from A to Z. I also wanted to listen to my mom's perspectives and understand her feelings and expectations as a mom who loves me wholeheartedly.

By strengthening our mutual understanding and communication, I believed our bonding would get stronger and more harmonious.

We arrived at the venue located in Yogyakarta, surrounded by refreshing nature. I could feel the warmth and care as the JTID team welcomed us with big smiles. They genuinely explained the agenda for the upcoming four days. It included a daily session to vent and talk with our close family.

The first day unfolded with introductions and interactions with other families attending this event. We then sat in a small group of several families to introduce ourselves and share our worries, hopes, and life stories.

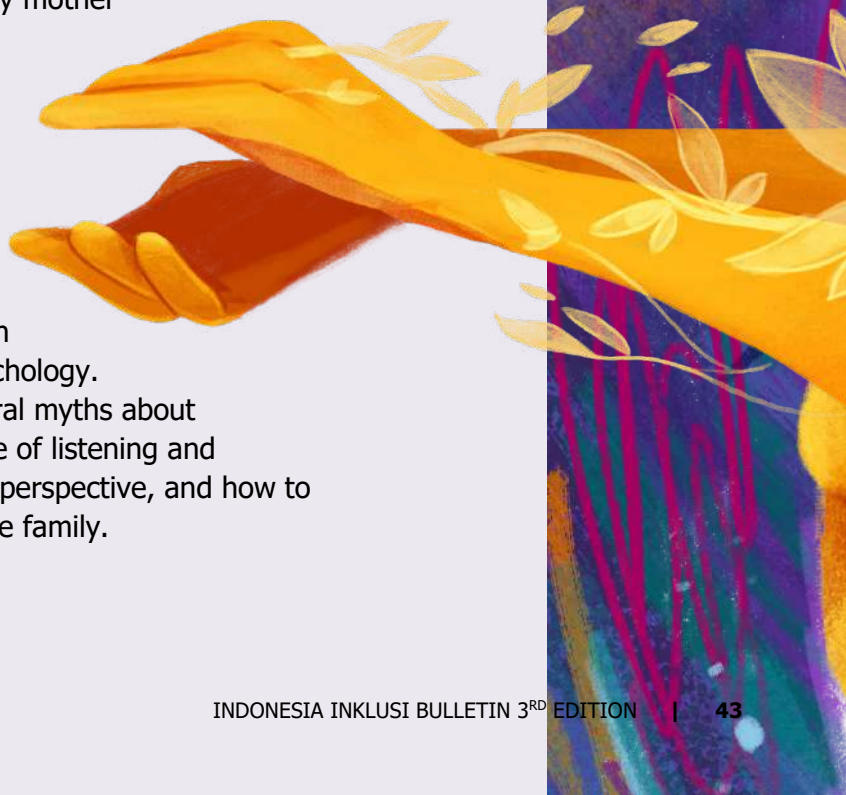
Sharing these topics with my group made me feel comfortable and safe as we shared similar experiences and understood each other.

The second day started with my first heart-to-heart session with my mother. We gathered in a comfortable room, ready to share our thoughts and feelings. I started talking about my life journey as a transgender man, recounting the struggles and difficulties I had faced and the hopes and dreams I held close.

As I spoke, my mother and other family members listened attentively, nodding in understanding, prompting curiosity, and pouring out positive support. There was once an emotional moment when my mother extended her hand to hold me and said she loved me the way I was. That was such a priceless moment that wiped away the doubts and worries in my mind.

"I only have Adam. No matter how he is, I still do love him. I know that Adam chose to live as a transgender man because he wants to protect me. He is a strong man," said my mother in front of the other participants, which had me in tears of joy.

The following days were filled with another heart-to-heart session, group discussions, and workshops led by experts on transgender and family psychology. We learned about the general myths about transgender, the importance of listening and understanding each other's perspective, and how to build solid support within the family.



On the fourth day, the atmosphere was full of hope and peace. We sat together and stared at each other with understanding and tenderness. At that time, I felt connected to my family members. They accepted me and agreed to love me the way I am, and I also understood their challenges and feelings as family.

Through this Family Support event organised by JTID, I felt the bond between my mother and me has grown better. Previously, my mother often worried about my job as a transgender activist. She was concerned about my future and feared that I might associate with people considered troublemakers by society.

However, through this heart-to-heart session and in-depth communication during this activity, I opened my heart and told my mother about my goals and the significance of my role as a transgender activist. I frankly explained to her how my occupation enables me to fight for the rights of transgender individuals and promote a more inclusive society.

Recognising my sincerity and enthusiasm, my mother began to understand me and value my endeavours. She also witnessed the community involved in this activity; the



A photo of me with my mother after participating in Family Support

people who are compassionate and dedicated to bringing about positive change. Furthermore, through the discussion and assistance of the JTID team, my mother admitted that my job has an honourable intention.

This activity helped me fix my communication with my mother. We had the opportunity to listen to each other without prejudice and understand each other better. I shared my personal experiences, and in turn, my mother expressed her feelings, concerns, and expectations regarding my life journey.

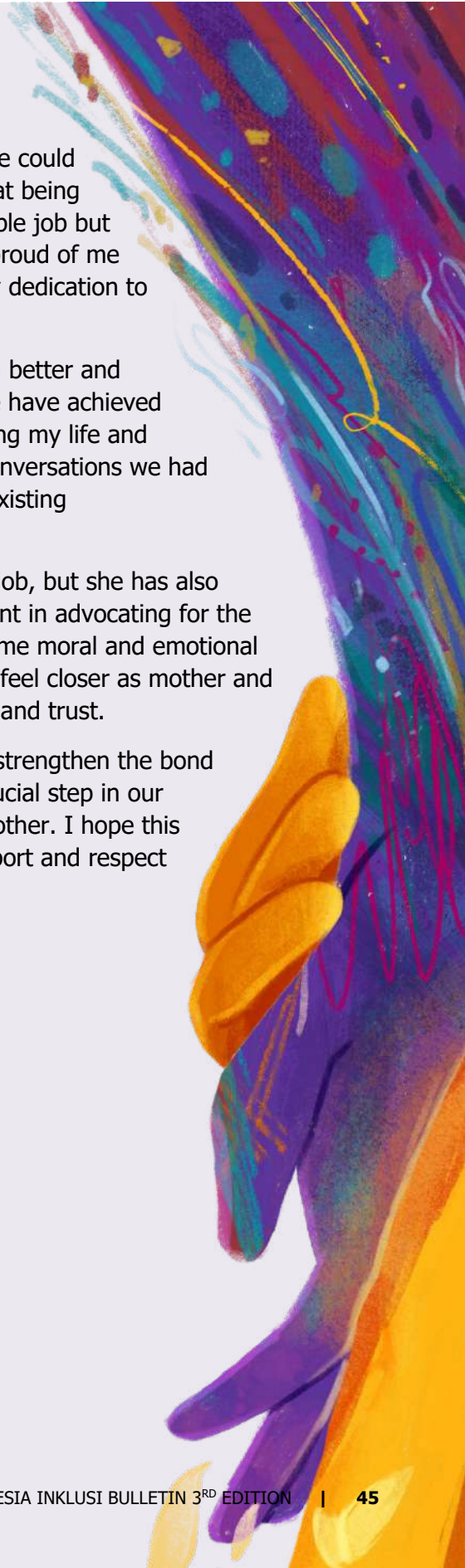


As my mother noticed my sincerity and determination to make a positive impact, she could finally release her concerns. She realised that being a transgender activist was not some unreliable job but rather a meaningful mission. My mother is proud of me and supports me to the fullest in view of my dedication to helping the transgender community.

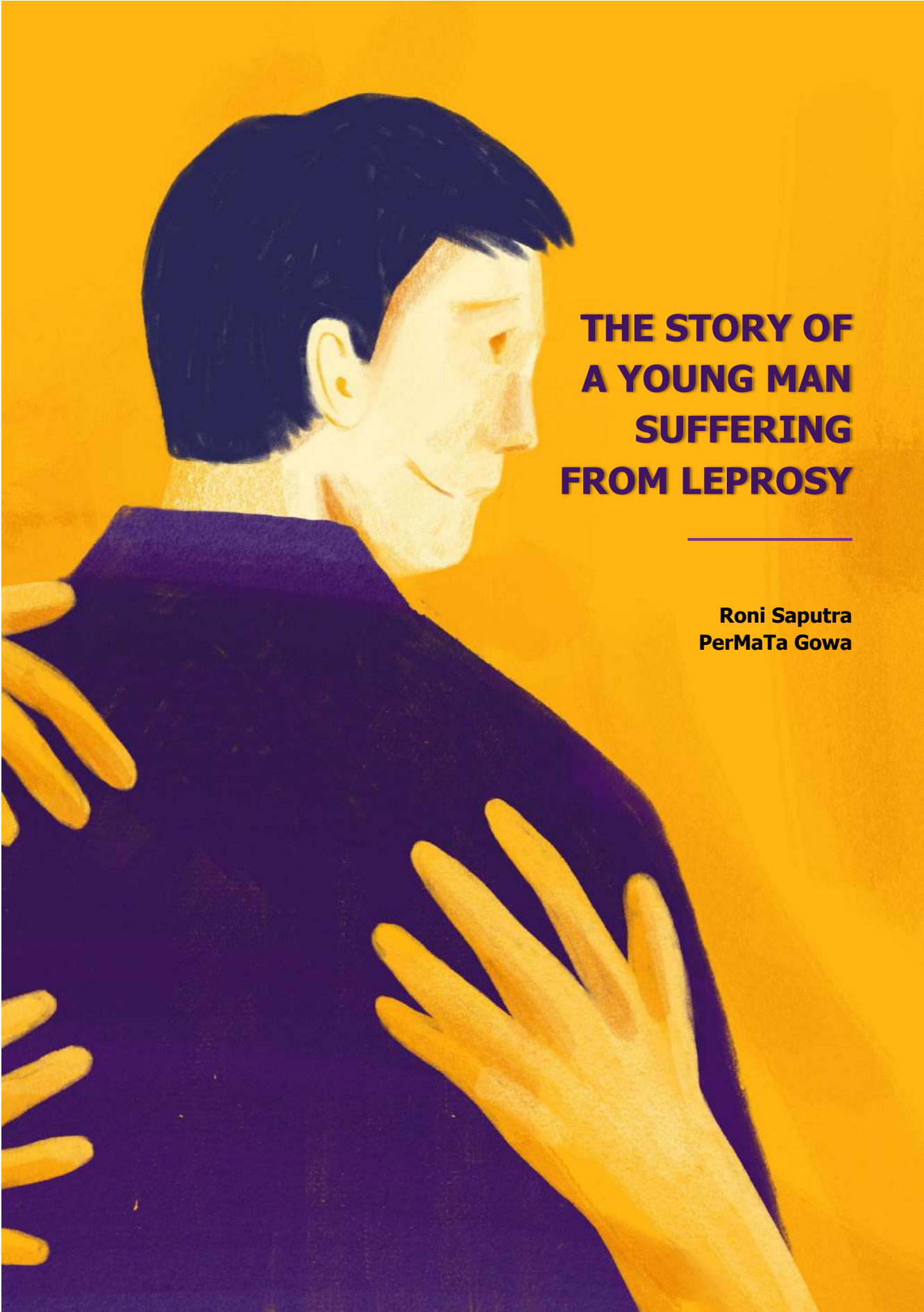
After the closing of Family Support, I have a better and more open relationship with my mother. We have achieved harmony and mutual understanding regarding my life and occupation as a transgender activist. The conversations we had during this event helped me get rid of pre-existing misunderstandings and prejudices.

Now, not only does my mother support my job, but she has also become my primary source of encouragement in advocating for the rights of transgender individuals. She gives me moral and emotional support, which means a lot to me. We both feel closer as mother and son, and her worries have turned into pride and trust.

I appreciate Family Support for helping me strengthen the bond between my mother and me. It is such a crucial step in our journey to embrace and understand one another. I hope this experience will inspire other families to support and respect their transgender children in a better way.







**THE STORY OF
A YOUNG MAN
SUFFERING
FROM LEPROSY**

**Roni Saputra
PerMaTa Gowa**



In 2015, my sister accompanied me to a dermatology and venereology clinic to consult the doctor about the strange lesions in my skin. However, the doctor claimed he had no idea how I could have developed these lesions on my right hand. After days of delving into the issue, he failed to find the answer. Due to his cluelessness, he recommended that I seek care at the community health centre (Puskesmas). In Puskesmas, I found out that I had leprosy.

The staff there immediately directed me to Pak Hasrul, who was in charge of leprosy-related cases. He then explained to me about the condition and quickly examined the lesions on my body, followed by prescribing some medicines for me. Days later, I began to develop reddish boils all over my body and had trouble sleeping at times because the boils were so painful. After three months of treatment, my right wrist started to hurt, became stiff, and I could barely move it.

While suffering from that, I went through difficulties at school. I pursued a major in architectural engineering, but it was not easy even to hold a pencil. My hand was stiff, and it felt like I got cut by a razor. Also, I was ridiculed by my classmates, who found my condition strange.

They giggled and called me "*kandala*", which means claw hand, because my hand was difficult to move and my fingers were slightly bent. Other classmates mocked me for having a weird disease and terrifying facial features. Even worse, I heard a buzz that I was "at death's door" because I was "rotting."

After months of living in this state, I was contacted by Pak Hasrul from Puskesmas, who told me that he wanted to see me at Puskesmas. As I made it there, he introduced me to two members of PerMaTa, Yuliati (the head of PerMaTa Gowa) and Rahmawati (a member of PerMaTa Gowa). Then, we greeted each other, and they looked into the lesions on my hands and feet, which were starting to darken. They also asked me which body parts had begun to feel numb.



I met with them again a few weeks later to learn about post-leprosy self-care. There, I also encountered more people who had suffered from leprosy (OYPMK),

from the elderly to children, and got to know the other members of PerMaTa.

This meeting awakened my curiosity about this disease, whose treatment is provided under the same polyclinic for tuberculosis. I came across an image of an OYPMK whose fingers were either partly or wholly gone.

Fear engulfed me as I noticed my fingers beginning to bend. I prayed fervently that my fingers would not shorten or diminish in the future.



of improving my condition, seemed to worsen it. My initially peaceful vocational high school years were consumed by this pain, lasting until my graduation in 2016. Although my treatment had concluded, I

still experienced reactions to the drugs for several days after stopping, leading me to continue taking another medication called *prednisone*.

I made a courageous choice. Every day, I confronted the excruciating pain, determined not to be in constant reliance on the medication. Eventually, I adapted to life without the medication, and the pain subsided.

I spent my days at home watching TV, reading books, and searching for job vacancies. However, most jobs hiring high school graduates like me required significant physical strength, and I could no longer lift heavy weights with my bent arms. Despite this, I remained optimistic, believing that potential lay within these limitations. I faced it all with patience and prayer, even though there were moments when I would break down in tears, feeling helpless in the face of the situation. On top of that, my father faced difficulties in walking due to a motorcycle accident.

Overwhelmed by fear, I stopped my search for information about leprosy, unwilling to accept that I had contracted this disease.

I endured the treatment period as the pain intensified day by day. I grew increasingly frustrated with the leprosy medication, which, instead





He was the one who took me to the nearby Puskesmas to get my medication during my treatment.

I was relieved when he started to manage to walk as before, and his condition was getting better. Sadly, after fully recovering, he breathed his last in December 2017. It was almost unbearable for me to live through this pain of loss. I closed my eyes at night and hoped everything was just a nightmare. Every time morning came, I was afraid to open my eyes.

Three months after losing my father, I was contacted by Rahmawaty from PerMaTa. She was the new chairperson of PerMaTa Gowa back then. She invited me to join training activities to enhance the capacities of young OYPMK in Malino, a program supported by Voice.

It was a pleasure to get involved and know other young people suffering

from leprosy. Understanding how these people went through bitter experiences and got mistreated by people around them (some even isolated themselves), I could feel the pain and suffering of those affected by leprosy. Such a fact pushed me harder to engage more actively in PerMaTa.

In PerMaTa, I was entrusted to help and motivate other OYPMK since we shared the same condition. I gradually transformed and became determined to support OYPMK. I finally managed to speak in front of the public in a project called Pakarena and was given the responsibility to become a facilitator for young OYPMK identified as targets for capacity building. This project aimed to assist lepers, especially the elderly, who are in need of support. In this activity, I was entrusted to assist youth to help the elderly lepers prepare official documents, such as Family Cards (KK), Indonesian Health Cards (KIS), etc. Upon the completion of the Pakarena program, I participated in recruiting new young lepers to join the second volume of the Pakarena project.

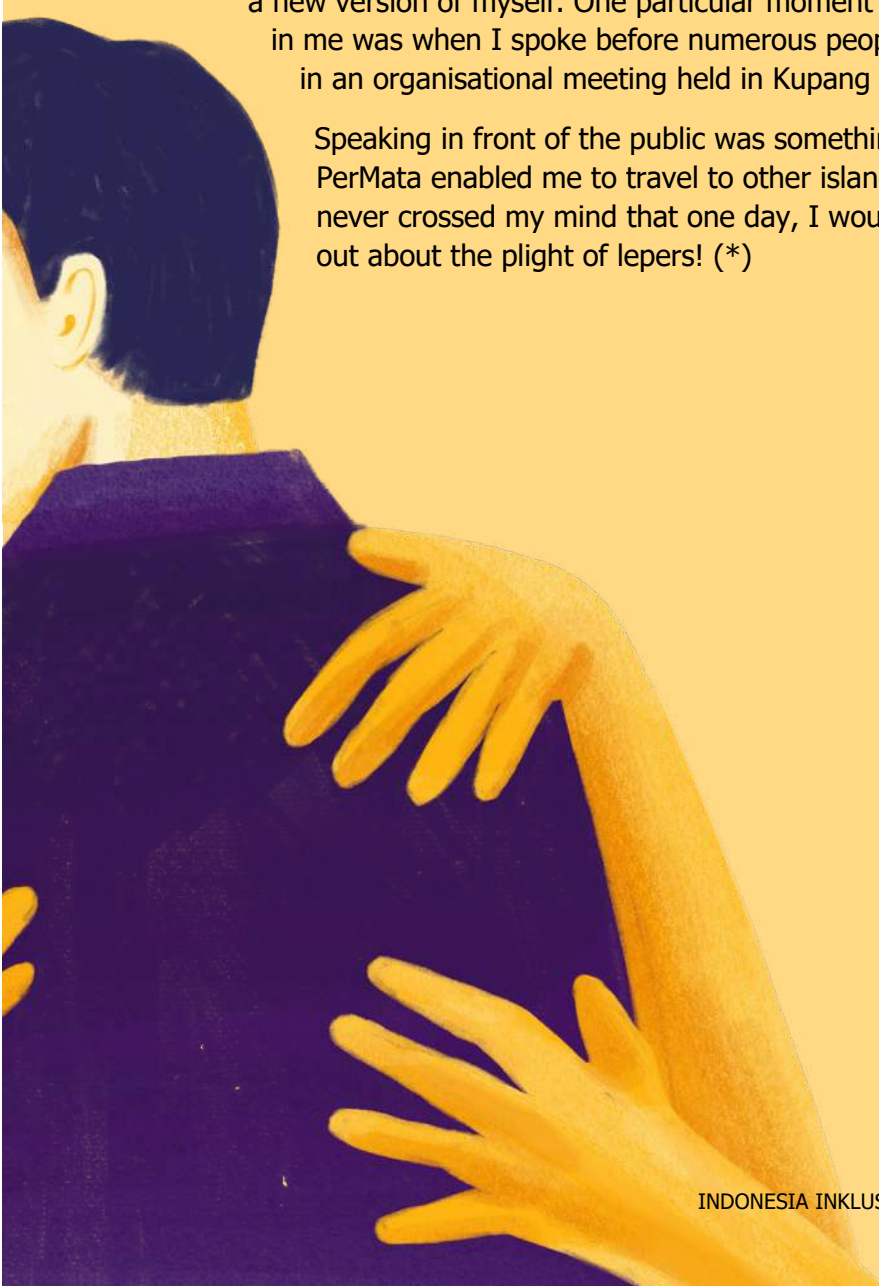


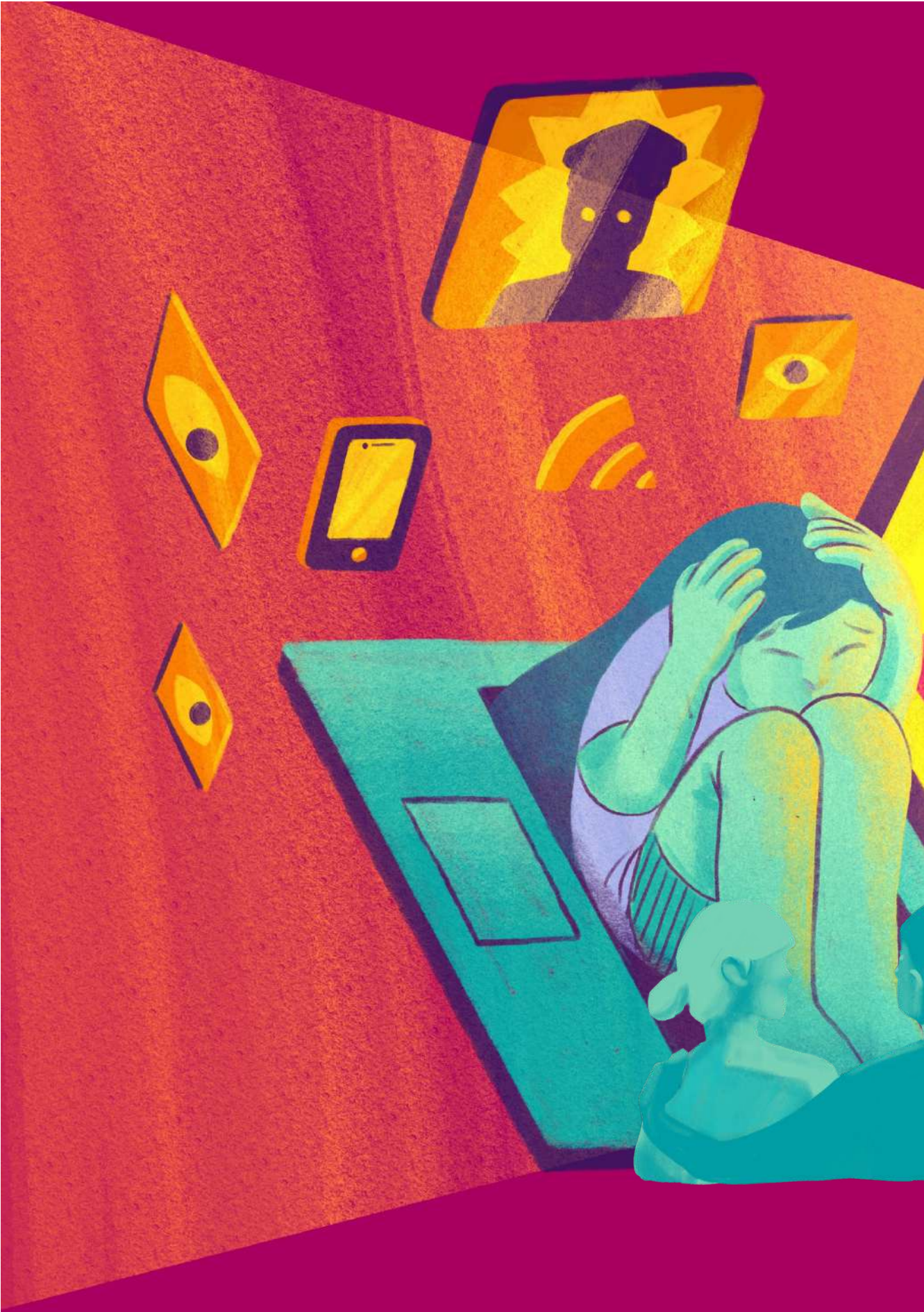
In the second edition, we provided the same training method, and I became one of the facilitators.

Life was hard back then: I isolated myself, complicated things, allowed self-torture, and was socially withdrawn. Now that I have found and become part of PerMaTa, my self-esteem has gradually increased. I could readjust myself to other individuals, especially my friends in PerMata. Engaging in various activities in Voice turned my sorrow into joy, loneliness into companionship, and boredom into enjoyment.

It was through sharing ups and downs that we, as PerMaTa members, could live together as brothers and sisters; our condition has connected us. I transformed into a new version of myself. One particular moment that brought out the best in me was when I spoke before numerous people representing PerMata in an organisational meeting held in Kupang in 2021.

Speaking in front of the public was something, but the fact that PerMata enabled me to travel to other islands was astonishing. It never crossed my mind that one day, I would get on a plane to speak out about the plight of lepers! (*)





A DAY AT THE POLICE STATION: ASSISTING OGBV VICTIMS

Piu & Sasha Trisha
LBH APIK Jakarta

"Thank you for contacting LBH APIK Jakarta. Please fill in your personal information below."

That was an automatic reply when a victim sent a message to the Legal Aid Institute for the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice (LBH APIK) Jakarta hotline. Aster, one of the public defenders, quickly read the short message received. Her attention was immediately drawn to the chronology of the case. The report submitted was a case of online gender-based violence (OGBV) – sexual violence committed through digital and electronic platforms.

This reported issue was not the first time; OGBV cases are widespread. Aster had received complaints about the non-consensual distribution of intimate images/videos; this was the 10th complaint she got this week.

OGBV has emerged as a new phenomenon that was increasingly prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the LBH APIK Jakarta Annual Report (2021), OGBV was the most frequently reported case last year. Through its study, LBH APIK Jakarta also identified nine types of online-based sexual violence that often occurred to women.

Based on this mentoring experience, the study became crucial advocacy material when LBH APIK Jakarta participated in establishing the Sexual Violence Crime Bill (RUU TPKS). As a result, Article 14 of the Law on Sexual Violence Crime (UU TPKS) covers the issue of electronic-based sexual violence.





With this new legal protection, Aster enthusiastically invited Ruby, a volunteer of LBH APIK Jakarta, to the police station to make an investigation report. Upon their arrival, they noticed

the victim stepping out of a different car and approaching them. Then, all three of them entered to undergo examination. In this bustling location filled with police officers, Aster and Ruby accompanied the victim. They paid close attention to every question the police asked the victim, ensuring that none would corner the victim.

One of the police officers quickly realised that Aster was reporting the case under UU TPKS and commented, "Are you reporting it under this new law?"

"Exactly, sir!" Aster replied.

The police officer seemed puzzled. He could not understand why Aster reported the case under the new law. "Wouldn't it be better to report it under the Information and Electronic Transaction Law (UU ITE) since you could impose a higher penalty?" he continued.

Aster smiled wryly. She patiently explained that UU TPKS was no ordinary law designed to regulate sexual violence crimes.

This law did not just focus on the types of violent crimes; it prioritised the victims of sexual violence's best interest to receive treatment, protection, and recovery assistance.

Aster insisted that it was not about the sentence period for the perpetrator that needed to be fought for but rather the interest of those who had suffered.

The victim might not completely grasp the details of UU TPKS, as Aster had explained since their first consultation. However, she clearly understood that her ordeal went beyond UU ITE, which regulated electronic transaction issues. The victim was aware that her experience was tied to sexual violence. She had consented to the sexual activities but never to her partner's secret recording.

Working as a facilitator to victims of sexual violence for seven years, Aster understood very well that the criminal justice process was never easy for the victims. Therefore, Aster had always explained such a challenging path to the victims during their initial consultation when confusion often clouded their minds. This tortuous process caused many victims to choose not to resolve their cases.



In addition, the victim might be diagnosed with a psychological disorder due to their traumatic experiences.



This OGBV case ended with the victim's request to withdraw the report. The victim did not intend to forgo justice for the case. Deep down, an intense anger towards the perpetrator stayed. However, the victim felt that the police investigation process exacerbated her psychological distress. Despite Aster and Ruby making every possible effort to support the victim during the investigation, the victim felt incapable of enduring an interrogation involving numerous male police officers.

After a lengthy discussion and receiving information from her facilitators, the victim focused on her recovery.

This case was just one of many cases where victims felt the justice process was not a friendly space for women. The experiences of women who were victims of sexual violence in the criminal justice system became important records for service agencies. Although UU TPKS existed as a firm guideline, it didn't mean that the reality on the ground changed immediately. The cases of victims supported by Aster painted a dark picture of the implementation of UU TPKS Law and its progressive aspirations.

Unfortunately, this case often recurs. Although UU TPKS has been enacted and breathed new life into the protection of sexual violence victims, handling sexual violence cases is still hindered from the perspective of law enforcement officers. In fact, they should have been the implementers of UU TPKS. In addition, they are the ones who determine whether UU TPKS will provide justice to the victims or remain the same as before it was enacted.



It is imperative to acknowledge that the struggle to uphold justice for victims cannot only be carried out by facilitators in various service agencies. However, academics and national human rights institutions, such as the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), also play a pivotal role in efforts to facilitate access to justice for victims of sexual violence.

In particular, legal academics can contribute to mapping out which articles have the potential for multiple interpretations when applied in handling sexual violence cases in practical settings. This mapping is valuable in determining how these articles should be read and interpreted to favour the victims.

In this context, legal academics cannot independently interpret UU TPKS articles favourable to victims. It is necessary to engage relevant stakeholders, including sexual violence victim facilitators, law enforcement officials, and human rights activists. To avoid geographical bias, academics have considered representatives from various regions of Indonesia, encompassing the western, central, and eastern parts.

The results of the interpretation of UU TPKS articles that favour victims become one of the materials in the training module on handling sexual violence for law enforcement officials. This module was prepared by Komnas Perempuan. The initiative was grounded in the mandate of UU TPKS, where law enforcement officials should possess the capacity and skills to handle sexual violence cases.

In essence, this module provides examples of high-complexity cases drawn from real-life cases handled by service agencies throughout Indonesia. Such a matters intends to ensure that law enforcement officials grasp the intricacies of actual cases and can favour the victims.

Perhaps one of the selected cases is the case encountered by a victim of OGBV who sought help from Ruby and Aster several months ago. (*)



THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN ASSISTING ELDERLY SURVIVORS

Indonesia for Humanity or Indonesia untuk
Kemanusiaan/IKa (Osi Naya Fia), '65 Joint Secretariat or
Sekber'65 (Ariani Purnandari), Nusa Tenggara Legal Aid
Association or PBH-Nusra (Yulius Regang)

Better Together Consortium



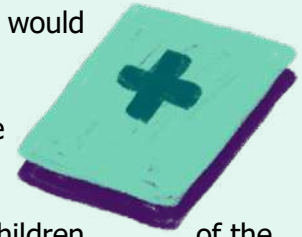
Two seemingly distant worlds could experience nearly identical issues. This is what Sundari and Tito, two volunteers from Indonesia for Humanity (IKa), encountered when they were dispatched to different regions. Tito was sent to Sikka District, East Nusa Tenggara, while Sundari was assigned making unannounced visits in Solo, Central Java. Both had the same background in handling similar issue: the twists and turns in assisting elderly survivors of the 1965 Tragedy.

This visit marked the first time Tito set foot in Sikka District, specifically at the IKa partner office, PBH Nusra. In contrast to his colleague, Sundari had visited Solo several times before. However, this was her first visit to the the Sekber '65 office, an IKa partner office in Sikka. Upon her arrival at the office, she encountered an unusual sight: no elderly individuals were gathering. There were only six volunteers addressing the challenges in the region one by one.

They admitted that finding youth in Solo is not a challenging task. Nonetheless, the challenge lay in finding youth with empathy and willingness to volunteer in assisting the elderly. Moreover, the regeneration of volunteers also posed difficulties. "Indeed, we have dealt with the issue of regeneration since the early days we began our humanitarian work," claimed one of the administrators in Solo.

The same pattern continued to repeat. They would welcome volunteers, typically college students, for internships. These students were involved in initial induction and training, but after completing their

internships, they would not continue assisting the elderly. From the diverse pool of volunteers, including grandchildren of the victims, the local community, and even students, only a few could be counted who continued their dedication and commitment to this day.



Further, Tito and Sikka also recognised the issue of such a hard regeneration. After meeting Frans from PBH Nusra, Tito heard the heart-wrenching stories from the field. In reality, PBH Nusra was not lacking in activities, yet the assistance provided by young volunteers was not consistently maintained. Volunteers could suddenly make excuses for losing interest in the organisation and lacking a sense of empathy. Most of them only committed to a big event or if a travel allowance was provided. In contrast, some individuals in Solo with remarkable determination could remain to be found. While spending time at the Sekber '65 office, Sundari noticed a young woman perhaps the same age as her. Being curious, she greeted the young woman. Her name is Purwandari, and she is one of the most dedicated young volunteers who assisted Sekber '65.



"Regardless of their religion or age, we are all equally human beings," said Purwandari, echoing a motto she had learned from this community. Since March 2021, she has been a part of the Sekber '65 community. At first, she was only conducting research for her college duties, but gradually, she became interested in actively participating in assistance activities at the hospital. Over time, she delved deeper into the issues surrounding elderly survivors of the 1965 Tragedy, from learning the Green Book and victim status as well as obtaining the Green Book from the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK).

Purwandari was enthusiastic about getting to know the lives of the elderly who lived alone. On more than one occasion, she sought permission from the community to stay with one of the survivors for over a week. One of the elderlies she accompanied had to fetch water from a well outside the house for drinking and washing clothes. Out of compassion, Purwandari rallied public donations to construct a drilled well for the daily needs of the elderly. It did not take long for this endeavour to become a reality.

To Sundari, Purwandari complained about the insufficient number of volunteers willing to assist the elderly to the hospital. For the first batch, for instance, there were 47 elderlies from Klaten and Karanganyar who needed medical treatment, 18 elderlies in the second batch, and 30 elderlies in the third

batch. Despite these vast numbers of the elderly, only five volunteers were willing to assist them.

Purwandari did make an effort to cast a wider net. There was a time when she invited a college friend to come to Solo and participate in assisting the elderly. However, her friend could only endure one week of assisting the elderly to medical appointments, citing exhaustion as the reason. That was the first and last time Purwandari invited her friend to participate.

The day after meeting Purwandari, Sundari was invited to assist an elderly survivor of the 1965 Tragedy who was going to undergo surgery. Sundari witnessed first-hand how challenging it was for Purwandari to help the elderly patient access free medical treatment using the Green Book. Alongside the elderly, Purwandari had to walk to each of the respective clinics for each illness's treatment.

Other volunteers in Sikka also experienced feeling overwhelmed and helpless. The assistance program for elderly survivors of the 1965 Tragedy was initiated by PBH Nusra in October 2021. They focus their assistance on three villages with a significant population of survivors: Ian Tena, Tua Bao, and Natarmage. When they began to map the situation, the reality was deeply concerning.



Those cries stayed vivid in the minds of the PBH Nusra volunteers, leaping to the battlefield, including Frans. One of the elderlies clearly said, "*Ami, rehi ba'a* (we are powerless now)." It was the moment of truth that Frans and his team understood that these elderlies had never been involved in any stage of development. Their rights as citizens were disregarded, and they were wholly dependent on the goodwill of others.

Such a miserable condition was not a momentary reality but rather a deeply rooted fact the elderly should pass through. Not to mention their livelihoods were uncertain. All of the elderly survivors assisted by PBH Nusra worked as farmers. They depend their life

entirely on their efforts, hard work, and the goodness of nature. If nature is unfavourable, their lives are at risk.

One of the government's flagship programs for the elderly, including elderly survivors, is the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu), which is dedicated explicitly to the elderly. However, in Sikka, they faced additional challenges compared to Solo. The remote location made it difficult for the elderly to access healthcare services.

Most of the elderly are provided with little attention, whether from families, communities, or governments. They live in remote areas, their homes are far from water sources, and they lack adequate lighting. Their rights to access healthcare and other social assistance are not a priority.



The activity of visiting, guiding, directing, and assisting the elderly during the Posyandu activities and healthcare services at Puskesmas or hospitals had become a monthly agenda for the Coordinator Organiser (CO) and young volunteers in three assisted villages. However, a deep sigh Frans often breathed out seemed enough to express the harsh reality. Volunteers in Sikka were also inconsistent, and no figures like Purwandari fought the battle alone there. Until now, young volunteers have been unable to provide vital support in assisting elderly survivors of the 1965 Tragedy.

After the visits to both areas were completed, Sundari and Tito reflected on the twists and turns of regeneration experienced by the two organisations they were assisting. As time goes by, the volunteers grow older, their lives transform, and their places of residence

move. Additionally, being a volunteer did not necessarily align with their future prospects.

One solution that comes to mind is to encourage collaboration with governments to provide volunteers who could assist the communities in the Solo and Sikka areas and are willing to understand the issues happening. In Sikka, at least, this idea has begun to be actualised with the formation of the Regional Commission of the Elderly (KOMDA Lansia), which serves as social assistance for the elderly.

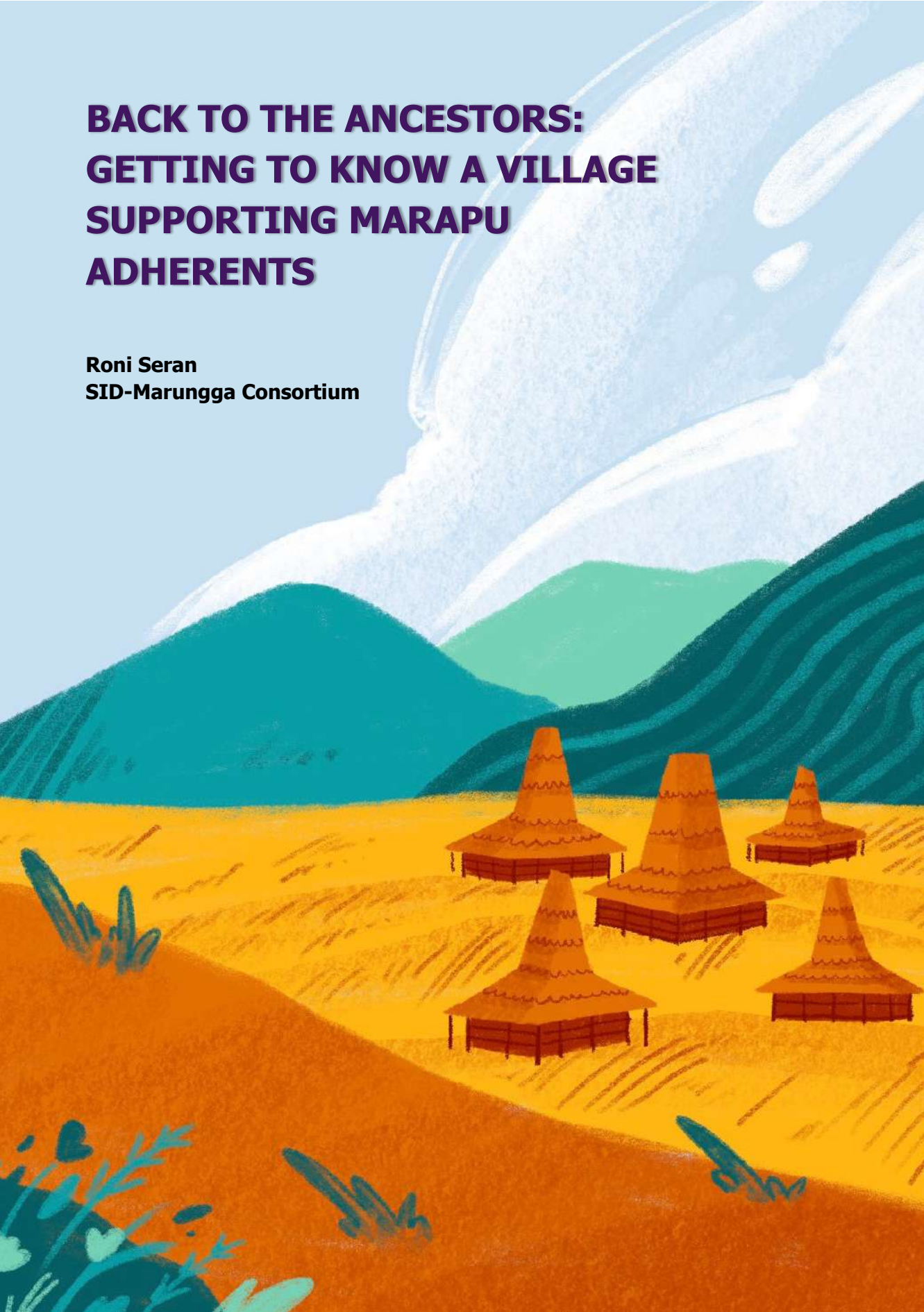
Unfortunately, the road remains long, yet our time to support these elderlies almost runs out. (*)





BACK TO THE ANCESTORS: GETTING TO KNOW A VILLAGE SUPPORTING MARAPU ADHERENTS

**Roni Seran
SID-Marungga Consortium**



On that sunny afternoon, the sky was remarkably clear, although a few clouds lingered on certain parts of the horizon. March marked the end of the rainy season on the Island of Sumba, yet the savanna remained to present a fresh vista with its vast expanse of green grass resembling a lush carpet. On that particular day, I arranged a meeting with Umbu Tamu, the Village Head of Tamburi, to discuss a matter associated with social and educational access for Marapu adherents in the village. Although he is only 33 years old, this young village head, having the complete name Lidu Lakinggela, puts a hundred per cent of his attention on the lives of Marapu adherents in the village.

Tamburi is a small village in East Sumba District, East Nusa Tenggara Province, located about 76 KM from the District Capital, Waingapu City. This village is renowned for its community's steadfast adherence to Marapu, the traditional belief of


Sumba. There, the majority of residents are Marapu adherents, reaching 70% of the village's

population. They practice rituals and produce cultural heritage, such as ikat weaving with original East Sumba motifs, as well as making traditional East Sumba musical instruments, such as the *jungga humba* and *gunggi*.

Marapu is the native belief or religion embraced by native Sumbanese, which has existed for thousands of years, long before Abrahamic religions were introduced in Indonesia. Marapu adherents believe that Marapu is their ancestors, assumed as the path towards God, an intermediary between humans and God in praying, or a spirit forwarding the prayers of a human to the Creator. In several areas, the worship Marapu adherents observe is familiarly known as *Hamayang* (prayer).

For example, they perform the Hamayang ceremony in a field, praying to the Creator to bless their livestock to reproduce optimally; in a garden, asking God to bestow good and abundant crops or harvests; in a water spring, praising the Lord to endow a sustainable water supply. Equally significant, they also practice *Hamayang* in the traditional houses of each *kabihu* or clan in particular events, such as births, marriages, or deaths.







Marapu adherents highly believe in the trilogy concept or the correlation of three elements: humans and the Creator, humans and nature, and humans with each other.

For them, maintaining the balance in daily life is indispensable. For Marapu adherents, life ethics, prohibitions, and obligations, in association with their traditional belief, are three principal aspects they should stick with throughout their life.

Before the official recognition of Belief in One Almighty God, followers of native faiths, such as Marapu on the Sumba island, were subject to discrimination. They were considered infidels, idolaters, or second-class citizens and did not receive basic rights, such as social and educational services.



In 2016, the Constitutional Court issued a decree regarding the state's recognition of the right to belief in the Almighty God, including Marapu. This decree enables greater access to social and educational services for Marapu adherents. Nevertheless, up to now, some remain less confident or pessimistic as they are not fully aware that the state has officially recognised their existence.



Since 2021, Tamburi Village has served as one of the villages involved in the area development of the Lii Marapu program carried out by Sumba Integrated Development and the Marungga Foundation.

This program, funded by VOICE Global, works on increasing social and educational access for Marapu adherents. The village community, particularly the Marapu adherents living there, strongly support this program since it is closely related to the protection and preservation of the native traditions and beliefs of Sumbanese. Likewise, the Government of Tamburi Village, as the smallest government unit in this country, also recognises the existence and rights of Marapu adherents in the village.

Before the Lii Marapu program was implemented, none of the indigenous schools were found in the village, and the budget available to support any activities related to the Marapu belief was insufficient.

Besides, Marapu adherents had suboptimal involvement in village planning as the Marapu Management Board had not been established yet. Moreover, they did not have access to social services, such as obtaining population documents and educational services from primary to senior secondary levels for children following the Marapu belief.

This village has now attained significant transformations. Umbu Tamu, who was selected as the Village Head in 2020, positively responds to any projects to be implemented and is strongly committed to advocating the beliefs, cultures, and traditions of Marapu. He proactively participated in any project activities, such as the discussion with the project team and the indigenous leaders of the village, the election and official appointment of the Marapu Management Board, as well as the training on advocacy and planning in Tamburi Village. On top of that, he also cooperated with the Marapu Management Board and the Lii Marapu team to monitor and lead the activities of the indigenous schools there.

On the other hand, obtaining financial aid to support Marapu adherents is not



The Activity of the Marapu Indigenous School in Tamburi Village

as easy as falling off a log. A wide range of efforts has already been strived for, such as intensive lobbying between the Village Government and Marapu adherents.

In fact, Marapu adherents have limited resources; thus, they are required to be trained to speak up confidently and advocate for their rights in official village forums, such as the Development Planning Deliberation (musrenbang) at the sub-village, village, and sub-district levels.

From these deliberations, they could formulate strategic policies to support Marapu adherents in Tamburi Village, for example, a Decree of the Village Head stipulating the Marapu indigenous school implementation.



In addition, the village budget is also beneficial to support the transportation needs of the Marapu indigenous school facilitators in Tamburi Village. For the 2023 village development budget, the amount reached IDR12 million.

Aside from that, he also contributed another form of support by collecting the data of the Tamburi village community embracing the Marapu belief. Such a measure aimed to discover the completeness of administrative population documents they have, such as Family Cards and National Identity Cards.

Furthermore, this support was also meant to raise the existence of the Marapu belief in the village after the issuance of the Constitutional Court Decree Number 97 of 2016 concerning the state's official recognition of the Belief in One Almighty God (including Marapu).

Through support in the form of programs and policies implemented by the Head of Tamburi Village, up to now, 62 children have routinely taken part in any activities held in the indigenous school. In this indigenous school, children learn a wide range of things associated with the culture of Sumba and the Marapu belief in compliance with the guidebook for the indigenous school implementation developed by the Lii Marapu programme.

"Culture is habits and customs passed down from ancestors," said the village head in the middle of our meeting. "It serves as the foundation for our people in living our daily life as Sumbanese."

At the bottom of his heart, as a young generation, Umbu Tamu strongly expects that the Marapu belief in the village can be sustainably preserved and developed.

Apart from the Marapu belief, the cultures and customs of the people of East Sumba passed down by the ancestors should also be protected and maintained to make them sustainable as the foundation for the community in living their daily lives. (*)



THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS, THE DEAF CAN "SPEAK"

**Namira Fathya, Kota Kita
Konsorsium Kreasi (GerkatIn Solo,
Kota Kita, and Ruang Atas)**



Have you ever skipped communicating with people for a day? Perhaps the deaf people in Indonesia have been used to swallowing such a bitter pill every day.

Commonly, deaf people in Indonesia communicate using Indonesian Sign Language or Bisindo, a language slightly different from the verbal language used by hearing people. Consequently, deaf people find diverse obstacles, discrimination, and challenges in receiving information in public spaces. Not to mention, they have to struggle to voice their opinion and concerns.

Such a condition has led numerous organisations and communities of deaf people in Indonesia to promote the expanded use of Bisindo, particularly in public spaces. To date, Bisindo has not been recognised and used as an official language for deaf students. Moreover, teachers in special schools are not equipped with the skills to adjust to the needs of deaf students.

As an illustration, a wide number of teachers continue to explain materials in a fast-paced speech and do not use boards in teaching. As a result, deaf students should go the extra mile to understand the subject materials verbally presented. Consequently, it leads to unequal educational quality acquired by deaf students and students without auditory disorders. Our Gerkatin fellows claimed that not all deaf people can comprehensively understand informational texts in public spaces.



On the other side, visual languages are naturally easier for deaf people to understand. Such a fact indicates the potential of visual languages to bridge the information gap between deaf and hearing people.

Prayers are answered. In the past few years, the Government of Solo City, Central Java, has fully supported any artists' initiatives to decorate public spaces with mural paintings.

If these mural paintings contribute to serving as the advocacy medium for deaf people, these two "poles" can have better two-way communication. Therefore, we established a consortium involving Kota Kita, Gerkatin Solo, and Ruang Atas to arrange a program, namely Kreativitas dalam Partisipasi untuk Solo Kota Inklusi or KREASI (Eng: Creativity in Participation for Solo City as an Inclusive City).



Each organisation engages in different areas – while Kota Kita is an organisation with expertise in developing participatory

methods for urban planning, Gerkatin Solo is experienced in providing contribution and advocacy spaces for deaf people in Surakarta City, and Ruang Atas plays a role in facilitating art activities.

These three different focuses become the basis for KREASI in organising a series of participatory art-based activities for deaf youth in Solo City to enable them to express their collective aspirations through murals planned at three points of public spaces in Solo City.

Capturing Daily Life through Photovoice

Nevertheless, before enabling deaf people to express their aspirations through murals, we have a big homework where we should make them get used to speaking up and have the courage to voice out.

In practice, living a lifetime with limited communication makes deaf people often feel insecure and less likely to speak critically. There should be a trigger that stimulates them to be more expressive, and one of the options is

holding a photography workshop as a forum to speak up, familiarly known as photovoice.

Why should it be photography? First things first, this method opens up a space for deaf people to communicate through a visual medium considered to be more natural and convenient for them. Besides, photovoice only requires a basic cellphone camera; thus, it is affordable for every participant. Lastly, photovoice is regarded as a potent method to capture issues they are dealing with daily, in which such a way may seem trivial. Still, it remains urgent to discuss it to explore the challenges minority groups have to grapple with.

The photovoice workshop took place from February to March 2023. During the preparation stage, we focused on two concerns.

First, we contemplated inquiries or prompts to be asked of the participants. The prompts should be arranged as simply as possible; thus, the participants can easily understand, yet they remain to record the aspirations of the participants thoroughly. In addition, the inquiries should also be adjusted to the participants to make them understandable. Second, we discussed the facilitation technique. Any facilitation forms involving minority groups should be made by highly considering the convenience of the participants.

In this photovoice workshop for deaf people, for example, we made sure to arrange the seat position as comfortably as possible for them to tell any story without disruptions.



We started the session by presenting basic photography material, covering the lighting, composition, and tips for amazing captures only using a cellphone camera.

Following the presentation, we prompted, "*what do you like about Solo City?*" and instructed the participants to answer. We gave them 30 minutes to capture a photo around the workshop venue, which will be the answer to the prompt.

Following this photo hunting, the participants were invited to discuss the photos they captured. At the end of the session, we assigned the participants a task to answer a prompt through a photo to be discussed in the next session. By implementing a method to be adopted for the following sessions, the participants could immediately ask and clarify if they found confusion.

In the next two sessions, through photos they captured, they were invited to convey their needs, challenges, and aspirations. **All narratives being told by the participants in the photovoice workshop were collected and summarised to be a collective story. This collective story would be their capital to collaborate in creating murals.**

Reflecting on the Inclusivity Movements, Arts, and Public Spaces

In May 2023, we held an exhibition displaying participants' photographs and stories captured during the workshop. The exhibition, organised for one week in Solo City, began with a walking tour, where three representatives of the participants were asked to share their photography works and creative processes with visitors.



To close the event, we held a public discussion presenting three speakers from each organisation in the consortium.

This discussion aimed to reflect on how an art community could support the inclusivity movement in public spaces.

Aprilian Bima, a deaf activist, firmly asserted that information is a right for everyone without exception. Therefore, bridging the communication barriers encountered by Deaf people and HoH appears to be an urgent task. Apart from that, arts communities can also proactively participate in advocating for inclusivity issues.

According to Chairol Imam, a representative from Ruang Atas, it can be implemented by creating and enjoying artwork.

In creating artworks, non-disabled artists can learn directly about inclusivity issues from the community and artists with disabilities and collaborate with them to highlight inclusivity themes. In terms of enjoying audio and audio-visual works, artists could provide access for deaf people by, for example, presenting sign language interpreters at music concerts and displaying subtitles for Indonesian films played in cinemas. Firstly, it is essential to examine the city's policies and whether they adequately accommodate the needs of people with

disabilities. Additionally, the process of drafting relevant regulations at the city level should also be assessed to determine whether it has involved disability groups.

The second aspect revolves around the society. A city cannot be considered inclusive if the stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities remain circulating. Lastly, it relates to the infrastructure since an inclusive city should provide physical infrastructure in public spaces, such as guiding blocks, visual information, and braille signage.

After the discussion, we continued with a free session for the visitors to get to know each other. Some who had never met deaf people asked the participants about their photos. In another corner, many enthusiastic visitors learned sign language with the deaf people.

Little did we expect that the Photovoice Workshop and Exhibition initiative could be a starting point for exchanging ideas and knowledge among the deaf community. Building a more inclusive city is a collective task, and the responsibility extends beyond deaf people.

Therefore, creating more opportunities for them to express themselves is crucial. (*)



"THERE ARE ONLY TWO GENDERS, MALE AND FEMALE! THAT'S IT!": A STORY OF TRANSWOMEN IN MAUMERE

Yulia Aron,
KAHE Organisation



On February 10, 2023, my friends and I, representing the KAHE Organisation, were granted a valuable opportunity.

We visited Mami Vera's house, the head of PERWAKAS (An Association of Transwomen from Sikka Regency), to share stories about the lives of transwomen in Maumere, Sikka Regency.

At first, I felt a bit awkward. There was a hesitancy within me, a reluctance to socialise and get to know them more closely. However, the event, which took place in the evening on Mami Vera's backyard terrace, was filled with laughter and jokes.

The drizzle that slowly subsided further warmed this personal and communal experience.

This visit became part of the program of Cerita Keberagaman dari Maumere (a diversity story from Maumere) - a program initiated by the KAHE Organisation to gather residents, especially young people, from various contexts and backgrounds to get to know each other, share stories, and embrace diversity in Maumere. In this program, the KAHE Organisation collaborated with the students of IFTK Ledalero, its Student Executive Board, the Campus Ministry, PERWAKAS, and other youth communities in Maumere

This visit, where we exchanged stories with the members of PERWAKAS, offered us a profound insight into the

lives and activities of transwomen in Maumere. Established in 1998 with the support of Bapak Lambert Purek from Cinta Kehidupan Foundation, PERWAKAS has served as a home for Maumere's transwomen. Haji Mona was the first chairperson of PERWAKAS. This group's name was inspired by a transwomen association in Surabaya known as PERWAKOS (An Association of Transwomen in Surabaya) at that time.

Listening to the stories of the transwomen that evening, particularly Haji Mona and Mak Wahida, revealed the challenging lives of those who joined PERWAKAS. These people had to endure numerous stigmas and discrimination to obtain recognition within the local community.

As members of PERWAKAS, the transwomen were unwavering in their commitment to socialise with the broader community. Their efforts included diverse activities, from volleyball matches and street marching competitions to providing essential assistance through public kitchens during disasters. They even organised an event to elect a transwoman queen across Flores Lembata.





The results of PERWAKAS efforts continue to benefit Maumere transwomen today. Their dedication has improved societal acceptance, reduced discrimination, and decreased the stigma against transwomen and the broader queer community.

What immediately caught my attention upon meeting them was their unique appearance, their skilful use of makeup, and their fashion sense. Transwomen, in particular, are known for looking beautiful, graceful, and fashionable. Ma Dewi, a respected senior within PERWAKAS, acknowledged this characteristic. I first met Ma Dewi at a workshop on gender and reproductive health. At that event, Ma Dewi dressed very gracefully and beautifully. She wore a dark blue dress with transparent black sleeves, balanced on black nine-centimetre heels, and complemented with rosy red lipstick.

Ma Dewi Nagin, her full name, is a prominent actor in the PERWAKAS movement. Born in Maumere in 1979, she spent most of her childhood in Jayapura and Merauke. Ma Dewi moved to Merauke with her older sister in 1987 and returned to Maumere in 1995. It was during this transformative journey that she began to embrace her identity as a trans woman fully.

SOGIESC workshop with those who joined the Program of Cerita Keberagaman dari Maumere (a diversity story from Maumere)

Ma Dewi confronted numerous challenges from her family and society to become a full-fledged trans woman. However, she remained determined. To escape her older brother's abuse and to pursue her longing for freedom, Ma Dewi finally decided to look for a boarding house and work as a mobile washerwoman.

As time passed, this boarding house became where other transwomen sought shelter.

As the oldest sister responsible for other younger trans under her care, Ma Dewi also took an additional job to support their lives.



Ma Dewi frequently gathered and shared stories with other transwomen. One evening, Ma Dewi was asked by a Social Service representative to gather her friends for a meeting.

During this meeting, they were asked to establish an association to accommodate the needs of transwomen. With the help of Bapak Lamber Purek, they founded PERWAKAS.

The association empowers its members by focusing on providing beauty salons. This type of service aligns with their preference and daily lives. Some have even expanded their offerings to include fashion styling and culinary-related business. Ma Dewi, recognising the prominence of this trend, agrees that in Maumere, transwomen are closely associated with beauty.

One of the pioneers in this economic endeavour is Bunda Lis, a 65-year-old senior member of PERWAKAS. Lis Anriani Alen, her full name, is the owner of the first transwoman-owned salon in Maumere.

Unlike Ma Dewi who faced rejection from her family, Bunda Lis found acceptance, especially from her parents and sisters.

Since young, she has spent time hanging out and playing with her female friends and exhibited feminine behaviour.

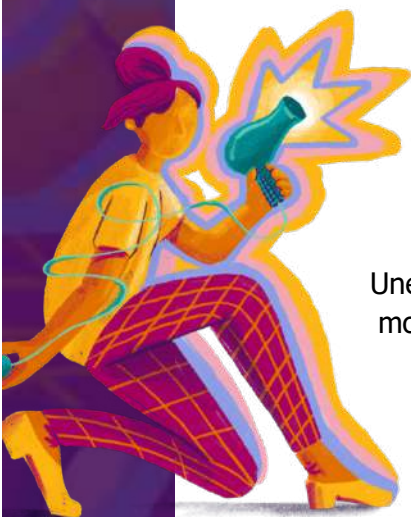
While her parents had no problem with that, her oldest sister was strongly against her.

As a senior trans woman, Bunda Lis has lived through a myriad of bittersweet experiences. She once worked as a ship's cook, where her co-workers recognised her haircutting and makeup skills.

Acting on their advice, without thinking any further, she then moved to Surabaya to meet with other transwomen from PERWAKOS and gain knowledge about salon management.

Unexpectedly, later in 1996, Bunda Lis was informed that her mother's condition was drastically worsening.

In light of this information, she moved back to her hometown and opened the first transwoman-owned salon in Maumere.

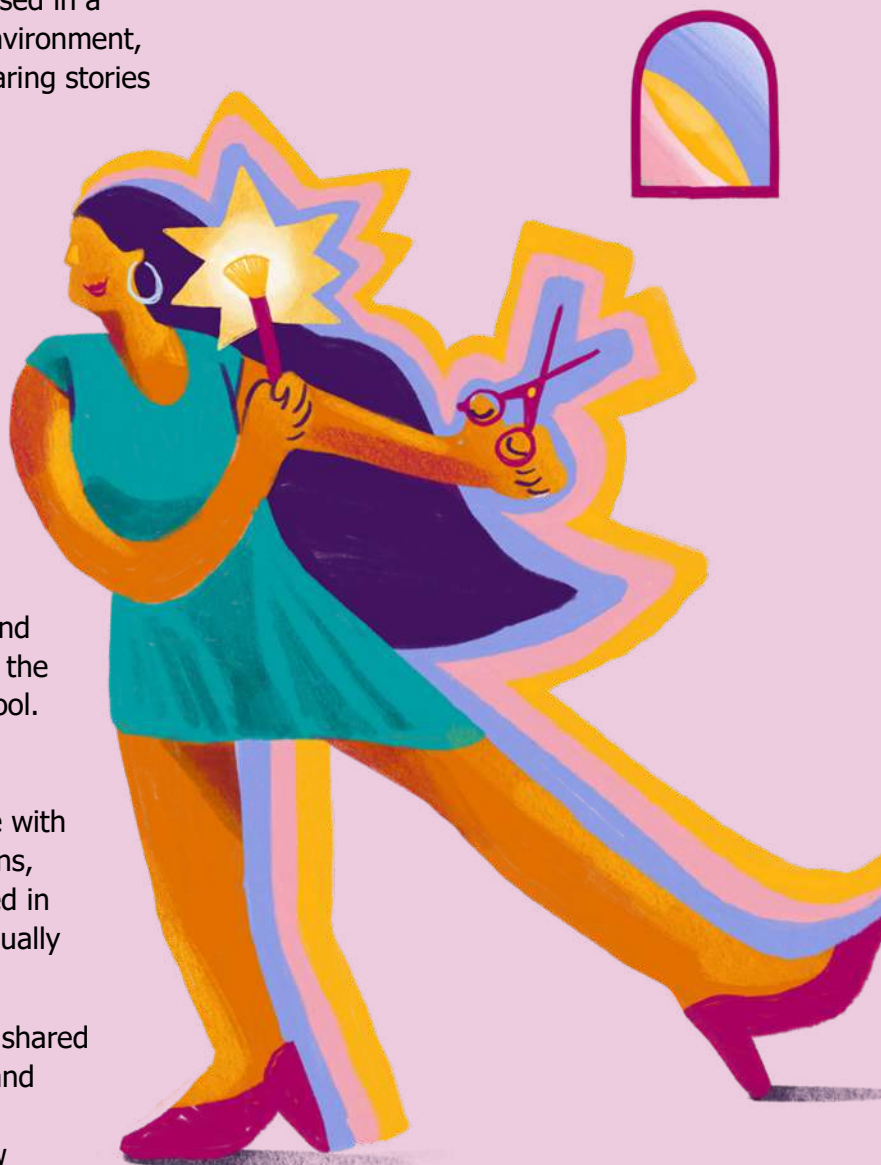


As a woman born and raised in a dominantly patriarchal environment, being acquainted and sharing stories with transwomen from PERWAKAS was such an extraordinary and precious moment for me.

In my younger days, when I behaved "inappropriately" as a girl, my mother would scold me, "There are only men and women in this world. Nothing else!"

These words used to sound normal to me, and I held the same view until high school. However, after meeting, sharing stories with, and working alongside people with diverse gender expressions, those words that had lived in my head for so long gradually faded away.

Through the stories they shared during the get-together and collaboration with PERWAKAS, I gained new insights into various forms of gender expression. Living as a man and woman in society is the result of cultural construction believed by the people in Maumere. Meanwhile, transwomen take their own paths to fully express their individuality as humans. (*)





ACHIEVING A DEFERRED DREAM: THE STORY OF A DISABLED PERSON WHO RETURNED TO WORK

**Agus Wahyudi & Dianita
Sehati Sukoharjo**



Listyorini is a person with a physical disability whose dream is simple: feeling empowered and capable of contributing to her family's economic well-being.

Initially, it was beyond her reach, given her long-impaired hand and leg, which hindered her ability to support the economy of her family. Meanwhile, her family was in a tight financial situation, and she had to raise her son, who was a primary school student. Due to this circumstance, she was often looked down on by her family and viewed as helpless for having a specific physical condition.

Also, there was nothing significant in her daily life. Just like other housewives in general, Listyorini was busy taking care of the house, cooking, and completing other domestic chores. One day, unfortunately, her family's finances were in a precarious state, which intensified her desire to work and be independent. This 38-year-old lady secretly dreamt of working in a garment factory in her hometown, Wonogiri, Central Java.

However, because of her limitations, her dream seemed impossible to realise. Her lack of self-assurance and the feeling of not fitting in left her with doubts about stepping forward to achieve her dream. She was extremely upset that she wanted to run and confront that situation, but alas, she had no idea what to do. One day, she met an acquaintance suggesting her another solution.

That person was Simun, an activist working on disability-related issues who also served as a facilitator at the Disability Service Unit in the Sector of Manpower in Wonogiri.

This unit is a government agency aiming to improve the access of people with disabilities and ensure the protection for workers with disabilities. As he met Listyorini and listened to her concerns, he advised her to join a sewing training organised by the Office of Manpower and Transmigration in cooperation with the Vocational Training Centre (BLK).

Listyorini was so excited to hear that, and enthusiasm resurfaced in her. A lady who had to give up on her dream could finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Finally, the time came for this mother of a son to take a five-day sewing training. During this training, Listyorini looked very enthusiastic and full of spirit. However, she continued pondering every obstacle she had to overcome, especially the limited access to transportation from home to the BLK location.

Besides, her physical disability forced her to adapt. When operating a high-speed sewing machine, for example, her not-fully-functioning left leg often made it harder to control the dynamo pedal in a stable way the speed might be too low or too high. Then, since her left hand was no help, she had to use



her mouth to pull the thread, removing and inserting the spool into the bobbin.

It was also unfortunate that the Job Training Centre building was not yet fully accessible to persons with disabilities.



Notwithstanding the limitations, Listyorini decided to keep going. After participating in basic sewing training for five days, she took part in a closing ceremony attended by representatives of several companies that were recruiting prospective workers with disabilities.

The assistant from ULD Ketenagakerjaan selected participants deemed to be highly interested in working for a particular company. There were four people chosen, and one of them was Listyorini.

Then, the next process was challenging. ULD Ketenagakerjaan assisted the four people in preparing job applications and job interviews. Oftentimes, preparing documents was not an easy task for these people with disabilities, and Simun had to help them prepare job application letters and ensure that all requirements were met.

The prospective workers with disabilities also regularly communicated by telephone or were directly assisted if they experienced difficulties. The next day, they applied to the company with Simun's help as the assistant from ULD Ketenagakerjaan. Simun's role here was pivotal because not all companies could be fully prepared to hire workers with disabilities.



The HRD department frequently expressed doubt about the four candidates, asking them where they could be placed with their limited physical condition.

After they were directed to meet the representative of the HRD department, Bartje, they proceeded with further selection. As a result, the department announced that two workers with disabilities were decided to be hired and could work immediately after the interview. Meanwhile, the status of two other workers remained pending for appropriate placement.

Hearing the announcement, Listyorini was a bundle of nerves, wondering whether she could be one of those lucky two. As she got anxious about the result, she decided to pray and wish for her dreams to come true. Her prayers turned out not to be in vain. It was then announced that Listyorini successfully got the job at the company.



No words could describe how much she felt contented.

It was a dream come true! Still, the next journey was an uphill battle. On her first day of work, Listyorini felt sort of discouraged and lacked self-esteem since a lot of people seemed to undervalue her. Her physical condition came as unexpected to many of her co-workers. Some even wondered how someone like Listyorini made it to work at the company.

This made her feel disheartened. However, Listyorini's determination to succeed overshadowed any negative opinions that were cast upon her. She assured herself to be strong and able to work. "I need to show the world that people with disabilities like me can also work," said Listyorini, recalling those days.

Bit by bit, the co-workers managed to understand and accept her condition. Some even started to acknowledge her presence in the workplace. This was because Listyorini could demonstrate that her disability did not interfere with her capability to work. She proved that she deserves the same opportunities as

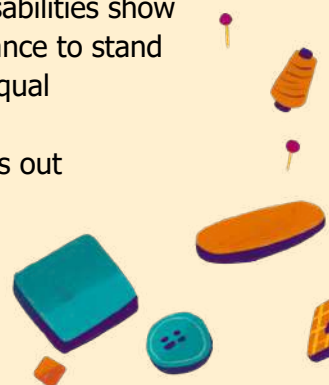
people without disabilities, including in getting a job.

It appeared that Listyorini's presence had a noteworthy impact on the company. Because Listyorini worked diligently, she received special attention from the supervisor, and her leader conveyed to HRD that the company should pay attention to the need for appropriate accommodation for people with disabilities like Listyorini.

Bartje as a part of the HRD department often coordinated with Simun as the ULD Employment assistant to provide appropriate accommodation and accessibility for people with disabilities in the workplace. Simun eagerly called or came directly to the company to inform them which section should be given access.

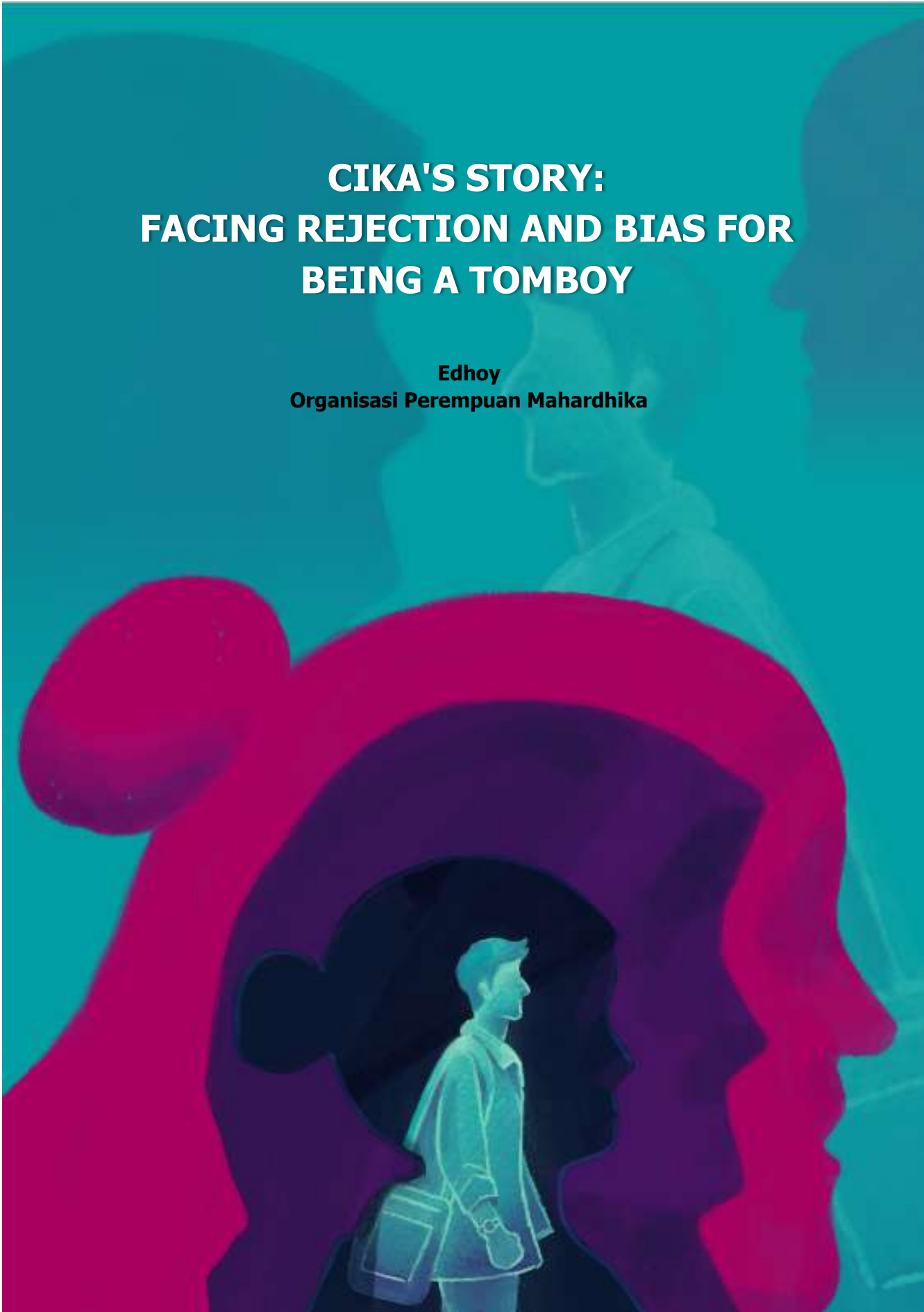
Simun also made it clear to the company that providing appropriate accommodation and access would not cost much. Right now, the HRD office, which used to have only stairs, now has ramps and handrails. They have even added a designated parking spot for individuals with disabilities right outside the building.

The challenges faced by Listyorini and her friends with disabilities show that they deserve a chance to stand out. When given that equal opportunity and proper accommodation, it turns out Listyorini is just as awesome as the rest. (*)



CIKA'S STORY: FACING REJECTION AND BIAS FOR BEING A TOMBOY

Edhoy
Organisasi Perempuan Mahardhika



That evening, Cika and I were set to meet up with other members of Pelangi Mahardhika community to talk about the organisation's internal stuff. Since the event was a little while later, I thought it would be nice to have a conversation with Cika first at my single room. As we kicked back, I casually brought up the topic of her job application.

Cika did not seem too bothered. A week back, we bumped into each other outside the gate of PT Kawasan Berikat Nusantara (KBN) industrial area, in Cakung District, Jakarta. The tomboyish gal mentioned she had been hustling, sending out job applications. Now, while waiting for the water to boil, I saw her all caught up with her phone, chatting with someone with this intense look.

"Who's got your attention, Cika?" I asked. "Looks like some serious stuff."

Cika took a deep breath. "Oh, you know, I'm trying to ring up this WhatsApp number of a dude who works at PT K," she said, referring to a garment company in Cakung. "They offered me a shot. If I'm up for it, I can swing by tomorrow to apply. But I gotta have some cash on me if I wanna get in. They said once I bring it, they'll guide me to the employee reception department."

She was still hopeful, but hearing Cika's story left me feeling a mix of frustration and sympathy. In her tough financial situation, she was cutting back on her daily meals and even

asked for a bribe when applying for a job. It had been three days since Cika applied to PT K, and she hadn't heard back.

The crazy thing is, from what I heard, PT K was going on a hiring spree. She also tossed in an application at PT D, which had job openings too, but no luck there either. It's crazy, considering she has got 11 years of experience as a sewing operator in garment factories in Subang Regency.

My mind wandered back to my recent conversation with Abel, another buddy from Pelangi Mahardhika. Much like Cika, Abel had a tomboyish look. The difference was, Abel managed to snag a job in the PT KBN industrial area, but the whole experience was downright strange.

Abel once spilled how her job applications used to get rejected, and they would say there were no more job openings. Guess what? There were still job listings hanging right on the factory gate. I have no idea what made Abel decide to give it another shot, but this time with a hijab on.

And bingo! That's when Abel finally got a job at one of the garment factories in the PT KBN industrial area.

At the beginning, Abel was a sewing operator. Feeling like part of the crew, Abel eventually ditched the hijab. But for some reason, not too long after, Abel got shuffled to the materials supply department, teaming up

with the line operators – a role that demanded serious hustle, pushing a lorry stacked with heaps of materials.

I remembered Abel's story because she had passed on a message to Cika when she got wind that her fellow buddy was also trying her luck in Cakung. Tell Cika, when she's applying for a job, it's better to have a hijab on to up her chances of getting in," Abel advised.

"I applied for days without any luck, but the moment I covered my short hair with a hijab, I was immediately accepted!"

Abel's advice got me worried. I handed a cup of hot tea to Cika, who was still glued to her cellphone screen. "Oh, by the way, Cika, did you find out why you weren't accepted at PT D when you applied yesterday?" I asked.

"I'm baffled too, but they said I didn't look tidy enough," Cika responded.

"To be honest, I was pretty upset during the training. The trainer was quite bitchy, didn't give us any proper guidance, and didn't allow us to ask questions. We only got one attempt. During the test, I was paired up with another applicant who also applied that day.

She's a tomboy too, but her hair wasn't as short as mine," Cika explained.

"And you know what? In another group, three people were being tested by a different trainer," she continued. "We could see they were given proper guidance and three

attempts. Even though their stitches weren't very neat, some were even worse than mine, they were given the chance to redo them," Cika concluded.

The story then takes a bitter twist. Everyone from that other group was accepted.

"So, you and the other tomboy weren't accepted?" I asked, my voice rising a bit. "Did you ever try asking the person who tested you why the other group, despite having their sewing tested, got a chance to redo it, while you two didn't?"

"I was too scared. That person was really bitchy. She barely glanced at our sewing results, handed back our application letter, and bluntly said, 'Sorry, you weren't accepted.' So, I just left," Cika replied.

"Isn't it just bad luck that you got a cranky trainer?" I said, trying to lighten her mood.

"I have no idea. It's infuriating because she's just an employee," Cika ranted. "And if it's because we look tomboyish, that's a personal bias. As a trainer, she can't act like that, right?" Cika stated and asked at the same time.

"Moreover, if it's about us being tomboys, why not reject us outright from the beginning?"

Cika's story didn't end there. "When we were about to take the sewing test, there were five people in our group. Inside, there were already two people ready to test us," she explained.

"So, when we entered, the three more feminine girls were directed to sit in the sewing row on the right, and then the two of us who were tomboyish were told to sit in the row on the left. That's where we ended up with that bitchy trainer."

Even though the bitterness lingered, I was no longer surprised by the reasons for job rejections like what Cika went through. In the Perempuan Mahardhika labour organisation and its associated community of diversity, Pelangi Mahardhika, we frequently heard absurd stories, much like Cika and Abel's experiences. It wasn't once or twice that we received reports from workers who faced discrimination, harassment, and even violence due to

their gender expressions and sexual orientations. This included being rejected for looking tomboyish.

Officially, companies have no written regulations that prohibit workers with certain gender expressions and sexual orientations from applying for jobs.

However, in reality, within the work environment,

there is a strong bias from company staff against such individuals. They create a culture of discrimination, harassment, and bullying that made it difficult for minority groups to obtain equal employment rights.

Pelangi Mahardhika focuses on encouraging its members – including me, Abel, and Cika – to advocate for their rights. Apart from providing education through campaigns on social media, workshops, discussions, and actions, Perempuan Mahardhika is actively reaching out to labour unions and network alliances to collectively urge the government to immediately ratify the ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. It includes removing violence and harassment against vulnerable groups.

When Cika and I left for the Perempuan Mahardhika regular meeting in its office, I realised that our struggle was familiar. Even our members' basic rights are still threatened. Once in a while, in that meeting, I saw Cika glancing at her phone, maybe hoping she got a more exciting answer rather than the factory's "insider" who asked for a bribe earlier.

I was tempted to suggest Abel use a hijab, but I chose not to. If only we lived in a world where Abel and Cika did not need money or pretend to be another person to seek a job. (*)





PAYUNG DARA, THE PORTRAYAL OF INDONESIAN YOUNG WOMEN

Kania Bening Rahmayna
Kembang Gula Foundation



The puberty phase of young women is often considered a simple problem, but the reality is not as it seems. Along with her hormonal changes, women also have questions of self-existence and self-confidence.

However, women do not obtain frequent information about what they are facing. The data from the Women for Humanity and Human Rights Solo (2021) records that 84% of teenagers aged 12-17 in Solo do not receive reproductive health education from their family, school, or community.

In fact, education will help them know about reproductive health, healthy relationships, and avoid undesirable events like child marriage and violence in relationships. Without adequate education, female teenagers can only recognise these issues through their peers, who have little understanding of their bodies.

This situation gets even more serious because the number of sexual harassment by youth in Solo Raya, our working area, increases significantly. According to the data of The Religious Affairs Office in Solo, the cases of child marriage and

divorce
caused by
sexual
harassment
increase
annually,
with the
closest

person as the perpetrators.

The data from The Women for Humanity and Human Rights also records that, out of 80 reported cases of sexual harassment in 2021, 68 of them occurred within household. Most cases of sexual harassment.

Kembang Gula Foundation, a non-profit organisation engaged in education and advocacy for women, responds to the situation by producing an art film titled *Payung Dara*. We hope that this film becomes our effort to disseminate what happens to women when they go through puberty and the importance of reproductive health education to prevent sexual harassment, especially within family.

Payung Dara is directed by Reni Aprilia and produced by Kembang Gula Foundation with the support of the Women Studies Centre of Solo. In the movie, a 13-year-old teenager named Dara is experiencing confusion when her breasts appear bigger than usual. When she is at school or out, she is trying to cover her breasts which are exposed through her clothes, but the perverted stares from her male friends make her more and more uncomfortable.

Unfortunately, Dara only lives with her deaf grandmother and her busy uncle. She cannot talk to them comfortably and freely about what is happening to her body. She is trying to communicate it once or twice, but they cannot give her a satisfying answer. Finally, she is forced to understand what is



happening to herself without her parents' guidance.

Payung Dara tries to portray the daily life of a female teenager who experienced puberty. In one of the scenes, Dara is talking to her close friend, and then her friend recommends Dara to buy a bra to cover

her breasts. Her interaction with her male friends and her surroundings changes, and suddenly, Dara should explore a world that is significantly more unsafe for her.

Dara represents young women compelled to learn about reproductive health from their peers, open-minded and well-informed educators (not every school has them),

and other information from limited sources that they must seek out themselves, which may be inadequate or unreliable. Dara's character is also portrayed from an underprivileged family to illustrate how common this problem is. Millions of young women experience it. They have to figure out their bodies without the support of the government or family.

Before the filming of *Payung Dara*, The Women Studies Centre of Solo collected short responses by inviting the locals and communities. Besides finding out the public's opinion about the film, the event was also an opportunity to campaign for the importance of sexual and reproductive education for young women to reduce



▲ Post-production FGD

the number of sexual harassment and child marriage.

Pre-shooting *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) was conducted in October 2022 at Kratonan Cultural House, Surakarta. Participants agree that this film is capable of delivering information about teenage reproductive health. However, the participants desire a reinforcement of Nenek's character, Dara's family background, social environment, and cultural surroundings.

Uniquely, the participants show curiosity about more evident conflicts experienced by teenagers. For example, Dara's demonstrate about her sexual harassment and how she avoids it. Conflicts and interactions between school peers of Dara were also asked to be widened to strengthen the importance of improving peers' knowledge.

Several months later, on March 2023, the crew of *Payung Dara* arranged another FGD with parents, teachers, college students, and students of

similar age to Dara's character as the participants.

This time, the FGD will be carried out after the shooting is completed.

The unique point is both groups that joined the FGD indicate the stereotypes, presuppositions, and feelings of uncomfortable issues of women and comprehensive sexuality education. A lot of people feel this film is "not appropriate to watch for a wide audience" and vulgar because it displays a bra, which is considered too male-centric because it depicts men who are the perpetrators of harassment, and it is more appropriate watching solely for women.

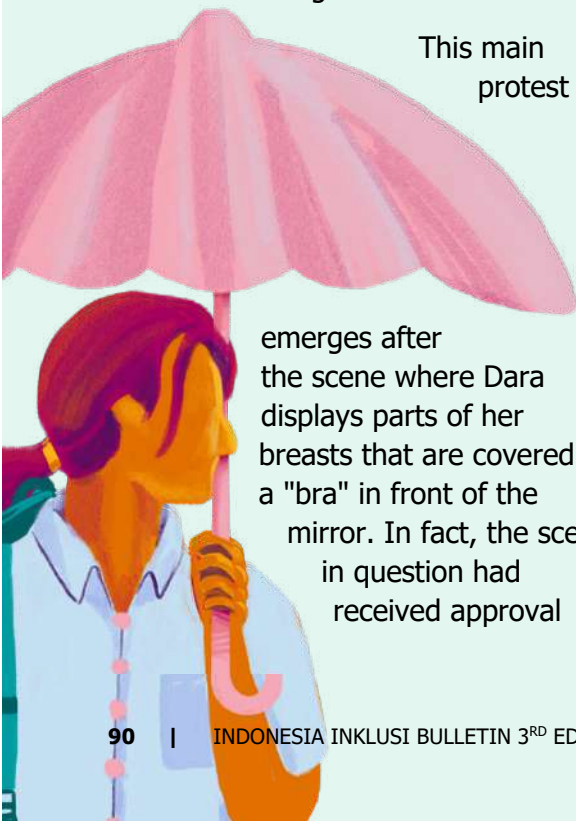
The first group, for example, suggests some scenes should be censored and Dara's clothes should be more appropriated for the reason of being attuned to Javanese culture and religious doctrine.

from the actor's family without coercion.

Uniquely, the second group consists of representatives of parents, students and teenagers who demonstrated more enthusiasm for the film *Payung Dara*. They tend to agree with the film's content and highlight parental assistance's importance in the child's growth and development process. This film also brings awareness to the importance of education about puberty that is delivered openly and clearly.

Hopefully, through the film *Payung Dara*, we can bring awareness about the importance of reproductive health to children and female teenagers in Indonesia. This film is expected to encourage young women to recognise changes in themselves by having more self-awareness and self-care.

In addition, this film can educate the public because people today still think that reproductive health and sexuality issues are restricted and should not be discussed. Hopefully, this film allowed the community to have more open discussions, and the community realised that these issues were important to discuss together. (*)



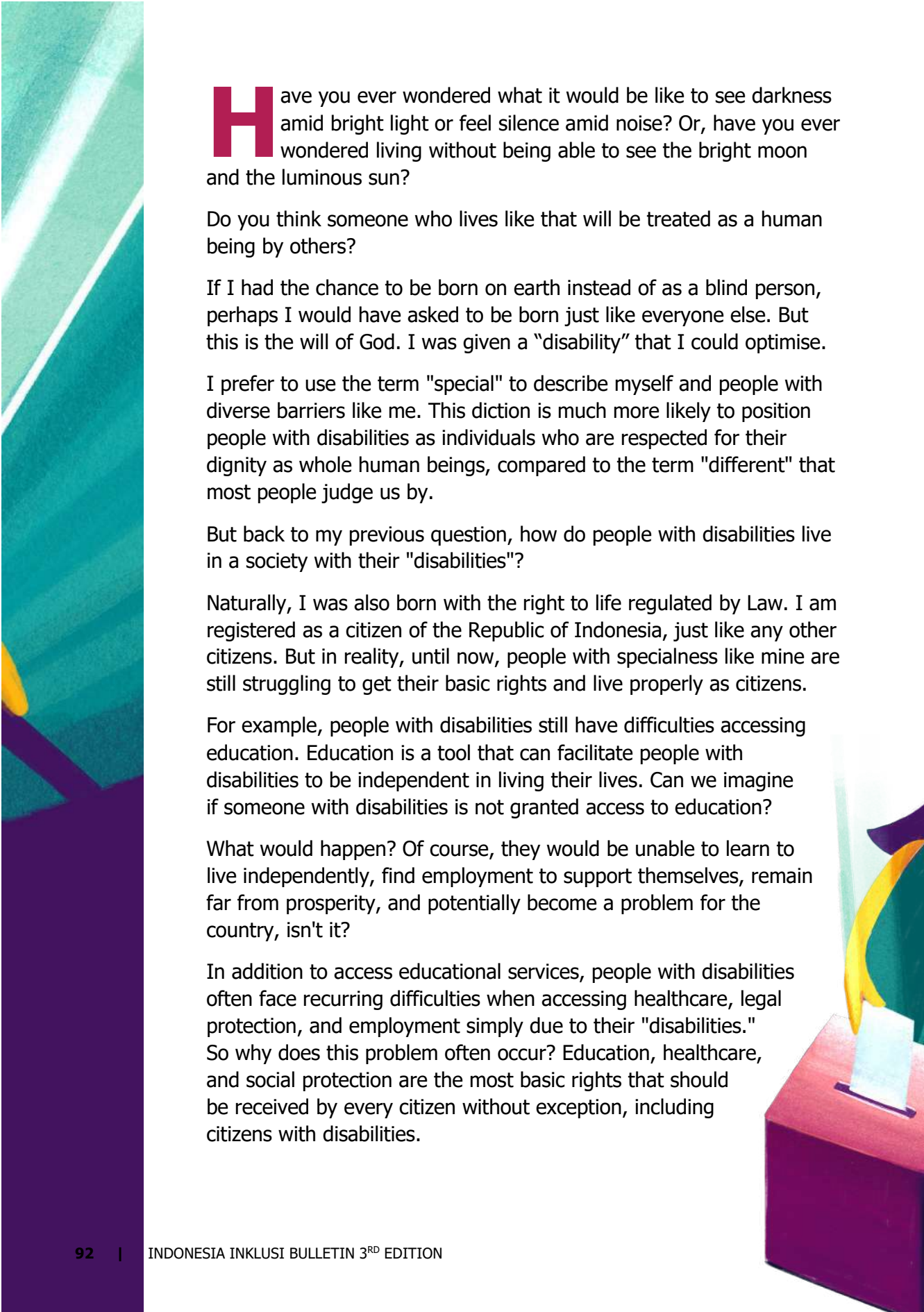
This main protest

emerges after the scene where Dara displays parts of her breasts that are covered by a "bra" in front of the mirror. In fact, the scene in question had received approval



**LIFE WITHOUT LIGHT:
THE STORY OF YOUTH WITH
DISABILITIES LEARNING
POLITICS**

**Alifa Aulia Shalsabila (Cahaya Inklusi
Indonesia Foundation) & Rizki Estrada
(Perkumpulan Inisiatif)**



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to see darkness amid bright light or feel silence amid noise? Or, have you ever wondered living without being able to see the bright moon and the luminous sun?

Do you think someone who lives like that will be treated as a human being by others?

If I had the chance to be born on earth instead of as a blind person, perhaps I would have asked to be born just like everyone else. But this is the will of God. I was given a "disability" that I could optimise.

I prefer to use the term "special" to describe myself and people with diverse barriers like me. This diction is much more likely to position people with disabilities as individuals who are respected for their dignity as whole human beings, compared to the term "different" that most people judge us by.

But back to my previous question, how do people with disabilities live in a society with their "disabilities"?

Naturally, I was also born with the right to life regulated by Law. I am registered as a citizen of the Republic of Indonesia, just like any other citizens. But in reality, until now, people with specialness like mine are still struggling to get their basic rights and live properly as citizens.

For example, people with disabilities still have difficulties accessing education. Education is a tool that can facilitate people with disabilities to be independent in living their lives. Can we imagine if someone with disabilities is not granted access to education?

What would happen? Of course, they would be unable to learn to live independently, find employment to support themselves, remain far from prosperity, and potentially become a problem for the country, isn't it?

In addition to access educational services, people with disabilities often face recurring difficulties when accessing healthcare, legal protection, and employment simply due to their "disabilities." So why does this problem often occur? Education, healthcare, and social protection are the most basic rights that should be received by every citizen without exception, including citizens with disabilities.

But how can the government become aware of the "disabilities" of people with special needs, and why should their issues be considered? One way to make the voices of people with disabilities like me heard by government authorities is by empowering our political rights. When we are included in the democratic process, the opportunities will open up for people with disabilities to express their aspirations.

By having critical political awareness, we can choose who can represent our voices in the House of Representatives, regional head, village chiefs, and even the head of state. We can also influence the political commitments of government leaders and advocate for ways in implementing more accommodating policies for people with disabilities.

I finally came to understand after I had the opportunity to participate in a political literacy program initiated by YCAI in the last three years.

The activities that were given are interesting for me, because I have rarely experienced them.

Among them there is a school leadership for young people with disabilities which I also attended, and through the information distributed by Cahaya Inklusi Foundation.

From that information, I learned a lot about citizenship and reflected on



having the right to vote and be elected as a citizen with a disability. One of the emphases is the concept that my status and that of other disabled friends are equal.

It did not end there, the activity continued with a democracy camp for disabled young people, which affiliate all kinds of young people with disabilities to an outdoor activity. After the sharing session, we were startled by the opportunity to express our aspirations directly in front of three members of the House of Representatives from Bandung who were present.

The latest serial of webinars held by YCAI on May 2023 about disability and elections, I was irritated when one of the interviewees from Perludem announced the list of potential voters in 2024 was dominated by those aged 20-24 years, 25-29 years and 30-34 years old. How about the list of voters who range from 18-19 years old? And am I, from a group of young people who have other specialties, already included on this list?

The key to the answer was revealed when the second interviewee from the National Commission on Human Rights



Indonesia
(Komnas HAM)

spoke up. They explained that they observed 17 underprivileged groups in the next election, including people with disabilities and first-time voters. According to the recent observing results, socialisation and distribution of election information have not been suited to the needs of people with disabilities.

Throughout that depiction, I started to realise such information is still difficult to understand and appears to be the biggest challenge for young people with disabilities to obtain adequate political literacy. The right to political education has not been able to reach a wide range of disabilities and has not been friendly in accommodating their "specificities".

We don't need to go too far, as very few political parties are still willing to recruit people with disabilities as their cadres.

Let's talk about something simple. The socialisation or campaign conducted by legislative candidates to convey their vision and mission did not reach our voters with disabilities, especially young voters with disabilities.

One of the reasons is that they use campaign media that is not accessible

to us. For example, when legislative elections are approaching, candidates often put up banners everywhere or distribute leaflets containing photos of candidates and writing their vision and mission.

How could a blind person like me access all that?

I realise this is also why I have never voted in two elections despite having the right to vote.

Because I needed to find out who the candidates were and their visions. Many other people with disabilities also experience this sense of exclusion. According to Perludem's observation, there are still many citizens with disabilities who have not been registered as voters.

Not surprisingly, the political knowledge and understanding of young people with disabilities is insufficient. Was this taken into consideration by the parties involved in the election?

At the young age of 25, and as a woman with my speciality, I am grateful to have been given a reasonable opportunity by the VIOLET program. After interpreting the activities, I participated in, my perspective and attitude changed.



Political rights for young people with disabilities are fundamental in fulfilling our request to live as citizens.

In addition, to live in a society with our inherent specialness, we need recognition not only from authorities or authorities but also from those closest to us.

We also need the support of a society that is aware and critical and treats other citizens equally without marginalising the abilities of someone with a disability.

Isn't the younger generation with disabilities also the people who will continue the nation's sustainability? Or perhaps most people hesitate to provide political literacy to young people with disabilities because they consider it unimportant and doubt their abilities? It's possible.

Because in reality today, there are not many parties who are moved to reach out to young people with disabilities in providing

political literacy to build critical awareness of their political rights during this time.

I hope that in the future, there will be enough innovative programmes such as Perkumpulan Inisiatif and YCAI,

which not only provide opportunities but also accommodate more young people with disabilities in understanding their rights as full citizens. Elections are not just about voting and being elected but also about guarding the political promises of elected leaders. (*)




NOT JUST REPORTING, JOURNALISTS ARE HUMAN RIGHT DEFENDERS

*Why does it have to be called
abortion? Can we change the
title?"*

Nyur Yawati & Chrisant Raisha
IPAS Indonesian Foundation





This is not the first time and not the last time Susi has used the media to voice the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups. For Susi, a journalist's job is not only to report but also to advocate for human rights. However, Susi faced rejection from her editor once again when she submitted a news article about the right to safe abortion for rape survivors.

Susi is a journalist from Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. She is a contributor to one of the more prominent national media outlets. Debating arguments with editors has become Susi's daily routine. Especially when she seeks to publish in-depth coverage of issues related to vulnerable groups and minorities. Manuscript cut, titles changed, content altered here and there are the risks she accepts if she cannot maintain the obtained result of her coverage.

"I explained slowly to the editor that the issue of abortion for survivors must be discussed; it is not taboo," she said.

Harmonising editorial views is not easy. She managed to persuade other editors to publish the article on abortion without changing the title and content, although some irrelevant discussion was cut. Susi also agreed. Susi's article was successfully published at 11 p.m., even though it was published at an unpopular time. The editorial team wants to be safe.

How does the average media newsroom policy view the issue of abortion for rape victims? According to research by IPAS Indonesia Foundation and Konde.com (2022), newsroom attitudes in Indonesia are uneven based on a study of six popular media involving focus group discussions with eight journalists. All interviewees revealed that the editor has no specific regulation to write about this topic adequately, let alone with a perspective that supports victims.

Some newsrooms provide guidelines that ask journalists to refer to the Journalistic Code of Ethics, while others avoid subtle terms such as "honour-taking" and use more accurate words such as "rape". In other media, the abortion issue is covered without problems. Still, they use keywords easily found on search pages - making them vulnerable to using terms just for sensationalising.

Time constraints and the number of daily news demands journalists must fulfil often become another problem when collecting data and information. A research report conducted by Konde.co and IPAS Indonesia Foundation (2022) explains that almost all journalists have a minimum number of news stories that must be submitted every day.

They also often only want to write news that has already gone viral because they are required to produce information that attracts a lot of readers.

Therefore, it is easier for journalists to achieve their writing targets rather than doing coverage that requires more effort in getting sources.

Another challenge is the lack of data and information on this issue and sexuality and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues as a whole. The rape and sexual assault cases fall into a complicated and sensitive category. The interviewees did not want to be interviewed, so little data was available. As a result, our media newsrooms often have a poor understanding of this issue.

Whether intentional or not, they inflict the burden of stigma on the victim.

Unfortunately, quite a few journalists with good intentions aim to address the issue of abortion for rape survivors, but they have not done so properly. In addition to the difficulty in accessing data, journalists, accompanied by the IPAS Foundation, admit that they were always stuck when interviewing government and police sources. Willingly or not, they depend on the survivor's confession, and that's where the issue begins.

The ethics of reporting sexual violence issues demand caution in seeking information from victims. Don't let the victims experience further violence just because journalists are unable to put themselves in the victims' perspective.

However, in reality, sometimes journalists even chase victims to be

interviewed, enticing them with promises like "this is a good story" or "this opportunity can be used to report the perpetrator."

There are many examples of unethical reporting of victims, such as disclosing victims' personal information (name, school, workplace, etc). Similarly, describing the victim's circumstances excessively during the incident creates the impression that the event occurred because of the victim's fault.

For example, by explaining what clothes the victim was wearing at the time if she was alone and why she did not scream when she was attacked.

Therefore, before undertaking the task of reporting sexual violence issues, journalists need to undergo specific training. Susi, a journalist from Lombok, was one of the eight participants of the IPAS Indonesia Foundation's SRHR coverage training in September - November 2022. In addition to gaining knowledge on writing and ethics reporting sensitive cases like sexual violence, this workshop provides journalists and IPAS with a platform to share data and information on suitable interviewees.

This workshop serves as a venue for them to share their experiences during field reporting.

For example, Estu, a young journalist from East Java, found it challenging to approach interviewees even though they knew each other.

"Even though we



already know each other, it does not guarantee they will open up about the information," Estu recalled. "I had to repeatedly clarify the intent behind my questions without offending the interviewee."

Susi once waited an entire day to interview survivors at the rehabilitation centre successfully. "It is challenging to talk to them, I spent an entire day observing their routines," she said. "I told them I am a journalist wanting to observe and publish it in the media. Survivors' identity will remain secret. Besides, some SOPs prohibit taking pictures and recording, so I left my phone with the guard because survivors are uncomfortable if we bring our phones."

Frequent interactions with social workers helped Susi to gather information. It also helped her to get different perspectives. "I went to my social workers friends, to discuss whether our perspectives were the same," she said. "This coverage would not be successful without others' perspective."

Undeniably, the advocacy journalism model, in which journalists use the media as a platform for issue advocacy, is becoming less popular. Writing articles that create public opinion requires much effort, including gathering commitment from the media, citizens, and government.

The journalist needs more support to develop their skills. Besides the workshops that Susi and her friends attended, the IPAS Indonesia Foundation has other training programs for young journalists.

"The fellowship program helped me to write about abortion topic," said Melani, one of the participants. "Some interviewee from the community and supporting data provided by the IPAS Foundation were helpful in the writing process."

Likewise, Susi said that attending the training helped her to put information into writing that is safe for victims and acceptable to the public. "This is not a difficult task because we already have mentoring and training. Compiling structured writing requires mentors who are in sync and have the same spirit," she said.

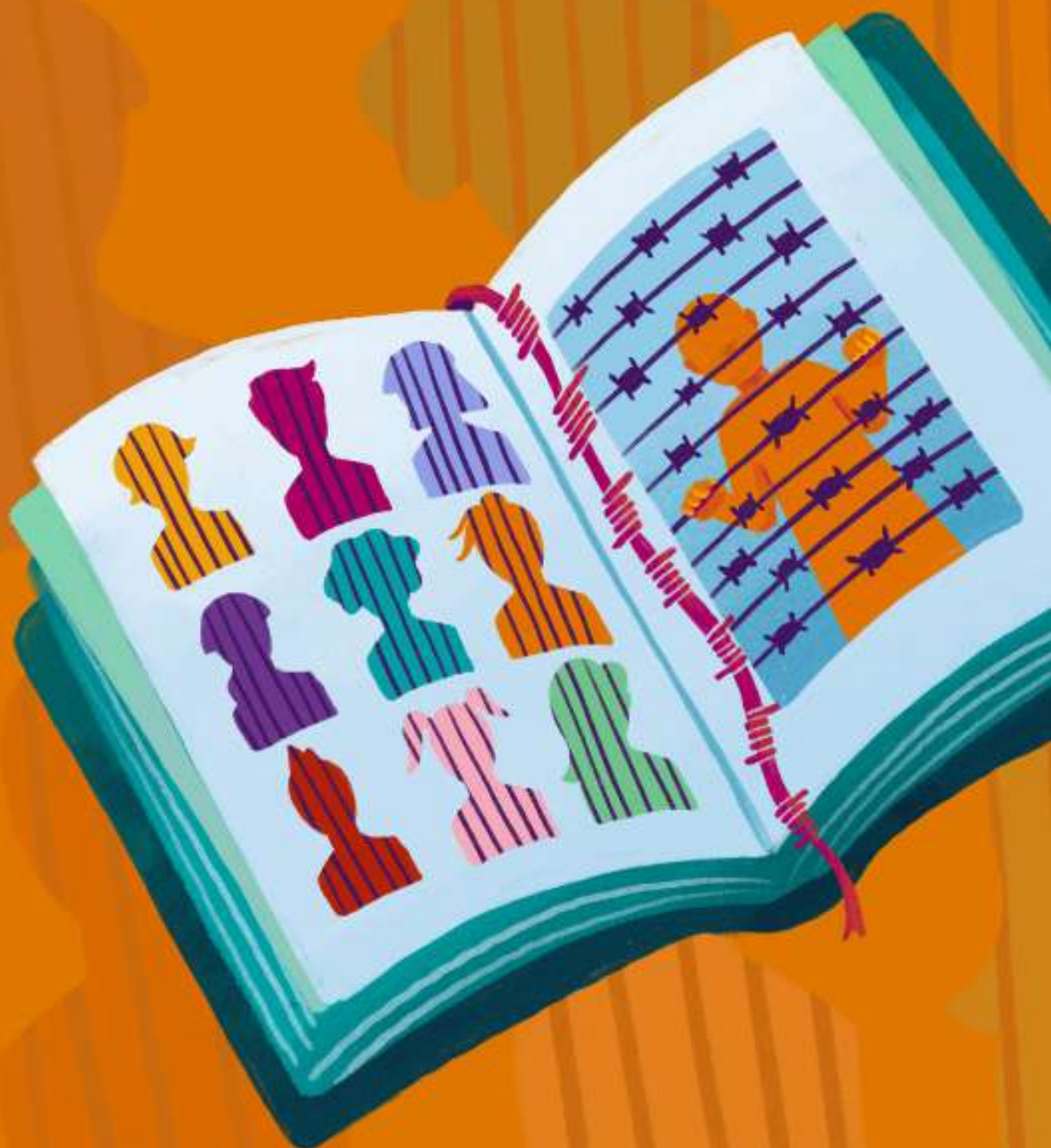
Journalism is not only about news coverage but also conducting advocacy to defend human rights. This is how the media acts as a watchdog, monitoring and encouraging the government to enact supportive policies for the victims.

"We want government to take a greater action for the victims. Not only good, but also comprehensive. As a journalist, we also work to encourage the enactment of supportive policies for the public," said Susi. (*)



COMPLEX REGULATIONS STRANGLE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Dede Tata YIFoS Indonesia





In the political year 2023, many political individuals and organisations attempt to gain public approval through sweet talk. This is why cliché phrases like "we are with the people" and "eradicate poverty" are common. However, oddly, a new narrative has emerged and become part of the mass commotion: the 'Reject LGBT' campaign.

The moral panic regarding this new style has become one of the defining features within Indonesia's political landscape over the past five years.

The cause is religious politics. Research from The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (2023) reveals that

Indonesia has more than 237 million Muslim population on average that considers faith is important in daily life.

Therefore, as an effort to attract sympathy and the majority of Muslim voters, political figures compete to find a scapegoat for not following Islamic religious law. One of the scapegoats is LGBT.

Starting with insults on social media timelines or biased media coverage influences the public's behaviour. Directly or not, the LGBTQ community – including those who engage in social work and counselling – feels mentally and physically exhausted. This condition is like a time bomb. Just wait for the right time until it changes into actual violence.

This issue is currently experienced by our associate at the Youth Interfaith Forum on Sexuality (YIFoS) Indonesia.

Refer it as "X" city, one of the cities with lovely surroundings in West Java.

Last year, the regional government "X" legitimised counter-LGBT narratives by enacting discriminatory regional regulations. According to the new regulations, anyone can report a person *suspected* of being part of the LGBT community to a specialised team formed by the Regional Legislative Council (DPRD) consisting of various related agencies, mass organisations, as well as religious figures.

However, this regulation does not particularly apply to the residents but everyone in the city as well.

In March 2023, the effect of this new regulation began to appear. In the southern part of the city, people from our associates and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in the field of HIV/AIDS held an appreciation night for health workers who

aid in solving the HIV/AIDS cases. Simultaneously, the event was accompanied by creative performances such as lip sync, fashion shows and drama from the community, including LGBT people. The activities were not concealed – people from various sexual backgrounds, including heterosexuals and other allies came as well.

The activities occurred at night and there were several NGOs participating, such as YIFoS Indonesia, Satu Keadilan

Foundation, Kami Ada, and many more.

Representative of the health service such as the Community Health Centre (Puskesmas) also present as recipients of the appreciation that will be given.

At first, the activities ran smoothly and the organisers had made rules such as not allowing any photos/videos/sound recordings during the activities. However, the atmosphere started to change when a group of people came to gather next to the building where the activities were taking place. After further inspection, turned out that the group consisted of government officials such as the sub-district head, village head, Territorial Defence management (Babinsa), Security and Law enforcement officials (Babinkamtibmas) along with several people wearing mass organisation clothing.

They demanded for a clarification and even a permit for the event, and accused that the event was an orgy. The organisers explained to them as it is, while also backed with the presence of health service workers.

However, the group of intruders was not satisfied with the explanation from only one health service representative. They urged every single health service representative in the event to do some explanation to them. That made the health workers feel uncomfortable.

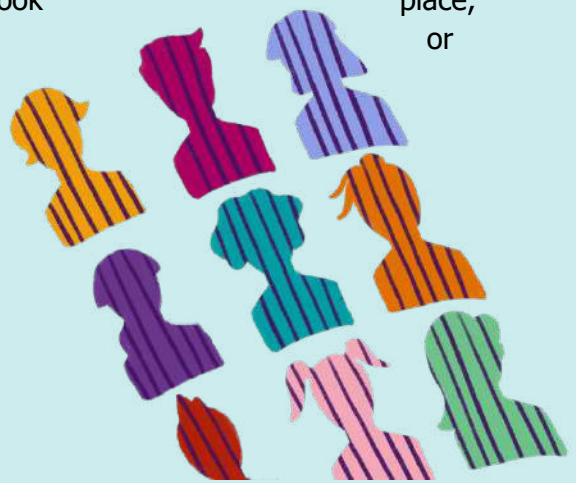
The ruckus between the organisers and the group went on for 30 minutes and they refused to leave the venue. They only agreed to leave after they were

allowed to have three of their people stay and watch the remainder of the event. The rule set by the organisers that forbid any pictures or videos to be taken was ignored.

They took pictures and videos for 5 minutes in the building and they then left without asking for any more demands.

But still, the committee were suspicious. We suspected that it was too good to be true that the group of people simply left. When representatives from YIFoS Indonesia and Kami Ada checked the conditions at the entrance and exit, initially nothing seemed to be out of place. However, 15 minutes after the first group left, three people in shirts and jeans forced the organisers to promptly end the event. If not complied, they threatened to have reporters come and reveal the event to the public.

The committee tried to negotiate, but the three people were persistent. They admitted that part of the mass organisation disagreed with the event. It is strongly suspected that there were informants or intruders among them who had entered and taken pictures before the activity took place, or



during the audience registration process to be precise.

As the situation continued to get worse, YIFoS Indonesia, Satu Keadilan Foundation, and Kami Ada decided to take an initiative. The organisers have lost hope and admitted that they could no longer negotiate further. We coordinated with the head of the organisers to minimise the negative impacts on the event and the participants. It was agreed that we would accelerate the series of activities, and each of us would play a role in crisis management.

We assembled an emergency team on site with the task of mapping out the event building and creating an escape scheme in case the opposing mass organisation turned out to have prepared a mass. When the three people claiming to be a mass organisation left and scattered around the event building, we immediately asked the performers, audience, award winners, and everyone involved in the event to exit the building one by one.

We requested that they remain calm and do not appear panicked, as if the event was originally already ending. Some individuals also use this opportunity to change their clothes inside the building so that their identity did not "stand out" too much.

This scheme stretched for quite some time, but fortunately in a conducive manner.

For two hours, our team carried out a sweep around the building to ensure

that everyone had left the event area, boarded the provided online transportation, and was not being followed by unknown people.

Representatives from the organisers also went around the location to ensure that no documents or pieces of paper were left behind.

On the way home, a committee representative admitted that they are no strangers to this kind of incident. Every time the political year approaches, there will be discriminatory regulations that limit the rights to freedom of expression and gathering. It is just that now it is the LGBT community that becomes the receiving end of such discrimination.

In fact, Indonesia, as a country with abundant legal products, should understand its duties to its people more than any other countries. One of the most important one? To maintain every individual's sense of security and comfort. (*)



A LOOK INTO THE JOURNEY OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Siti Chofivah
SAPDA



The life of a parent of a child with disability is like walking in an endless wilderness – we don't know what new threats would come, and when the dangers would end. They are in a constant war with themselves, dispelling society's stigma towards their children, and keeping up with unusual children's growth and development.

As part of SAPDA, an organisation working on disability issues, I work as a companion for parents who have children with disabilities. We team up with parents and involve them in the program to sustain the process of children's growth and development. All so that children get what they deserve.

Every time there is a session accompanying parents of children with disability, I always ask: when do you make time for yourself? Most of them answered during showers, only for ten minutes at most.

The rest of their time and energy are spent on their children. Usually, when this kind of situation has piled up, there is one powerful sentence that immensely boosts their energy, "If not me, who else?"

Not to mention, not all parents have access to accurate and adequate information. One of the mothers, let's call her Retno, was perplexed when her child was diagnosed with autism in 1999. At that time, there were only five doctors specialising in autism in Indonesia.

That is why Retno had no one to guide her. Even during the first six months of diagnosis, Retno went to great lengths to go back and forth from Jakarta to



Balikpapan to find out more about her child's condition.

"In a state of shock, I could only pray, if God has really trusted me with this child, please grant me strength and patience," said Retno. "Most parents would immediately feel down or blame themselves. I try to motivate myself by thinking that I am the chosen woman."

These last words from Retno are often the key factor for parents of children with special needs. Retno's process of self-acceptance of her situation made her child's development improved quite significantly, although in the end it slowed down naturally, especially in the language skills.

Lina, one of the accompanied mothers raising a child with down syndrome, also showed a quick response. "At first I was constantly crying and thinking all sorts of things, but over time I was able to accept it," she recalled. "I had no clue how to raise my child, but with a lot of input from doctors and the people around me encouraging me, *Bismillah*, I take care of my child."

Lina admitted that she had suspected that there was something different about her child since early on. Even

then, when the diagnosis of down syndrome reached her, she was still stunned and even fell into depression for several months. The presence of the people around her that tend to be supportive helped Lina achieve self-acceptance. She was also grateful that she was accompanied by a supportive husband, so the couple can strengthen each other.



their children. It is irreversible, only ever going forward. While the mother is still drowning in her feelings, her child continues to grow and develop. Meanwhile, the rhythm of growth and development of children with special needs requires more attention and extra effort.

The surrounding environment also supported Nuri's instinct, who felt suspicious when her child stayed still like a statue during breastfeeding. "The first time I breastfed, my child did not want to touch or look," she said. "When carried, he moved his hands away and always avoided eye contact."

There are quite a few children aged 2-5 years old but cannot yet crawl, talk, and walk. If a mother is still in the phase of denial or even blaming herself, the child's development will stagnate or even decline.

The process of self-blame never happened, she stated, because "there was full support from the family." Even after the diagnosis of autism was delivered and the family had to go through major adjustments, they stood together.

To make things worse, there is only a short period of time during which children with special needs can develop significantly. According to research and psychological science in general, stimulation of children with disabilities will be optimally effective for children only up to 14 years of age. Over than that, therapy and stimulation will have less impact.

Although each family's dynamics are certainly different, the stories of the three mothers I accompanied show the importance of parents quickly realising and processing their own feelings. They immediately took action to look for alternatives among the many life choices they can make so they can raise their children optimally. The presence of the closest support system, namely family, has also supported them in coping with their inner turmoil.

The childhood phase is the most crucial phase in the development of children with disabilities. Unfortunately, based on my experience as a companion, it is in these early phases that most parents are still struggling with feelings of anger, denial, and self-blame. As a result, the "golden" window to boost children's growth and development is simply missed.

Mothers of children with disabilities are racing against the advancing age of

The three mothers I encountered quickly found ways to accept their unusual circumstances.



Then, they quickly identify what skills that can support their children's development. Retno, Lina, and Nuri have all found that their children can develop if their art-related skills—such as music, batik, dancing, and making unique creations and handicrafts—are honed.

They did research from magazines, books, consult with doctors and psychologists, gather with communities of parents who have children with disabilities, and have regular discussions with institutions that have concerns

in issues of disability. That is how parents develop appropriate parenting patterns, both to optimise physical therapies and to make sure the children acquire proper nutrition.

Then when the child enters school, children with disabilities are faced with overwhelming emotional turmoil and development. The cause is that they face negative stigma from those around them, including because of their different physical appearance. Children experience bullying from friends, the community, and even their closest family who cannot yet accept their condition. As a result, children struggle to accept their own identities. Oftentimes, this is what damages the self-image of children with disabilities and makes their development stall.

As the challenges faced become increasingly complex, parents' parenting patterns started to shift. There are two tendencies in parenting

styles that often emerge, namely the protective style and the democratic style. The first one, the protective style, is overly restraining the child in order to maintain safety or protect the child from harm and something terrible.

Generally, this style is chosen because parents love their children too much and do not want them to get hurt after being exposed to the negative stigma of disabilities.

However, a democratic parenting style that emphasises dialogue and views children as whole humans usually has more successful outcomes. Children with disabilities tend to adapt more easily to the environment so that they can quickly get through the process of self-acceptance. The reason is that their parents focus on their children's speciality and prioritise to stimulate their development.

The experience of being a facilitator for parents with disabled children taught me that people must accept, make sense of, and be grateful for life whatever it brings. The life of children with disabilities is tough and full of twists and turns. However, they always say this in difficult times: "If not us, then who?" (*)



STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE ELDERLY: A STORY FROM GUNUNGKIDUL

Wiwin Rizky Dwi Saputra
ERAT Indonesia



Wonosari (in Javanese, it is called 'Kapanewon Wonosari') is a subdistrict in the district of Gunungkidul and has a unique demographic condition. It is located in the southeast of Yogyakarta. Around 16% of its 90,000 population are elderly. However, the government of this subdistrict has not been able to prosper them.

Many of them are called 'solitary elderly' – a term for elderlies that live alone either because they are not married, do not have children, or are being left by their family who might work or live outside the city.

They have been used to those rumours about their deplorable condition.

It is said that a lot of Simbah (a Javanese term used by younger people to call the elderly) in Kapanewon Wonosari do not have an Identity Card (KTP) or health insurance such as an Indonesian Health Card (KIS). Even a facilitator who worked in Kapanewon Wonosari reported that there was one of them who had to take a pedicab to a health facility and pay a large amount of money for a health examination despite her old age and poor economic condition. Besides, she was also taking care of her visually impaired child.

After receiving a lot of discoveries from organisations supporting solitary elderlies, some organisations incorporated within the Solidarity Movement (GERAK

Solidaritas) took the initiative to conduct research to map the actual condition of the solitary elderlies based on their social, health, and economic conditions, as well as the level of support and vulnerability. A total of 151 elderlies participated in this research, and the result was surprising.

This research found that, on average, elderlies in Kapanewon Wonosari had a middle to lower-class economic status, were barely reached by health facilities, and were isolated from various sources of information. In addition, many of them had physical problems such as being visually and hearing impaired or not being able to walk.

Jumiyem and Mento Sariyah, two elderlies who were in the spotlight of our research team, had experienced this. Jumiyem had only discovered that she did not have KTP when processing the death certificate of her husband. She did not know that she lost her KTP and had to process it to get it back. Because of that, Jumiyem had difficulty accessing health insurance.

On the other hand, Mento Sariyah faced more worrying problems. He was 102 years old and lived alone in a weak condition. He even could not get up from his dirty and smelly mattress anymore. Fortunately, his close neighbours sometimes visited and took care of him.

These results encouraged GERAK Solidaritas to form a senior support centre called Megar Sore in November 2022. This organisation regularly met at Sanggar Pojo Sumakno. Sumirah, a community figure who cared about the elderly condition, came forward and was elected as the leader of Megah Sore. This organisation was established as a form of the community's concern for the



solitary elderly who need special support. By collaborating directly with the community, the scope of Megah Sore's work was expanding. Similar cases, such as those encountered by Jumiyeem and Mento Sariyah, continuously appeared.

There were more specific challenges, for instance: a

lot of elderly could not read, had difficulty communicating with others in Indonesian, and did not have smartphones. Furthermore, their house and neighbours' houses were far from each other.

An elderly accompanied by Megar Sore even had to use a unique way to ask for help. He had a serious illness, and he no longer could walk since then. His house was far from his neighbours' houses, so he used his kentongan (a slit drum used in traditional villages to communicate) to signal them that he needed help.

Sometimes, the elderly did not ask for things. When we visited them, we sometimes just told stories to each other. The approach of visiting him was one of our strategies to pay more attention to his condition. He admitted that he wanted to tell stories, but there was no place for him to do it.

Until now, Megar Sore has conducted regular meetings as a way to exchange information and strengthen the organisations. Megar Sore also regularly reached out to the solitary elderly to map their needs, be their someone to talk to, and re-establish communication with their family, closest neighbours, and the local government. Not once or

twice, Megar Sore helped the solitary elderlies to process administrative documents such as KTP or health insurance.

Some other things that the Senior Support Centre (SSC) Megar Sore had done were learning advocacy and communicating with Social Service, Population and Civil Registry Offices (Dukcapil), or local government to provide support for elderly needs, especially for the solitary elderlies.

SSC Megar Sore also held a campaign inviting people to care for the elderly by making videos containing related content, and presenting radio talk shows to encourage more people to care for the elderly.

Currently, there are quite a lot of solitary elderlies living in Kapanewon Wonosari, Gunungkidul, and most of them are extremely poor. Things discovered when working in the field came to be materials for discussion to help provide solutions, as well as to continue learning to support solitary elderlies.

Megar Sore is determined to support the elderly as much as possible and communicate their future condition to relevant agencies. Megar Sore has raised the enthusiasm of the community, from children to the pre-elderly, to support elderly activities in local villages. With the encouragement and enthusiasm given by the local community, the elderly is motivated to socialise with each other.

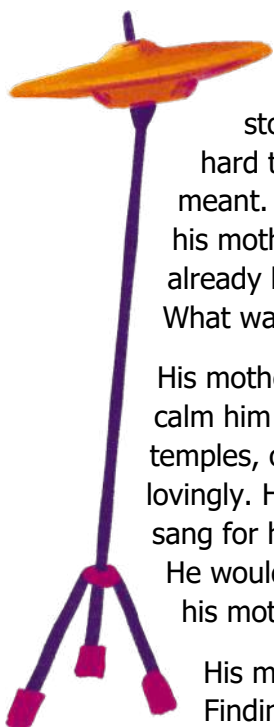
Most importantly, this means that the elderly can have their basic rights: enjoying their old age happily. (*)

SOARING BEYOND DREAMS, ADIT THE DRUMMER WITH DOWN SYNDROME

**Artika Kristanti dan Emsyarfi
Down Syndrome Care Foundation (Yapesdi)**



That cute baby was born with a flat nose, chubby cheeks, and straight, sleek hair. He looked like a Korean baby. The Maghrib call to prayer faintly resounded as the midwife took the little, red baby to his mother. Despite begging for milk, he soundly slept. Everyone who saw him thought that he was adorable. He tended to be calm every day.



However, once he cried, everyone would struggle to stop him and find it hard to identify what it meant. It definitely confused his mother so much. He had already been clean and full. What was the problem?

His mother always tried to calm him down, stroking his temples, or patting his thighs lovingly. His mother would also sing for him. Just like magic! He would stop crying when his mother sang a song.

His mother noticed it. Finding that her baby reacted to song humming, the mother began to communicate with the baby by humming or making rhythmic beats, such as applauding, making small beats on the baby's crib, and others.

She was really happy and emotionally touched. Imagine! It was because, until the age of five months, the baby had never smiled or laughed at all.

"Oh my God! What has happened to my baby?" the mother begged. "Why does he react to things slowly?"

His name was Adit. He was born to parents who worked as a civil servant and a farmer in Payakumbuh, West Sumatera. His parents finally got upset with the fact that Adit reacted to things slower than a normal baby, and they ended up taking Adit to a doctor. After being examined several times, Adit was diagnosed with Down Syndrome.

The doctor said that Adit's intellectual and abilities to analyse material were very low. There were only a few lessons that Adit could take. However, children with Down Syndrome have a special ability. They are excellent imitators.

They quietly pay attention to things they like, then try to imitate them with their own version and understanding.

They usually do it in a simple way, but it can make other people emotionally touched and feel proud of them.

Every time he watched musicians on television, Adit reacted positively by imitating the guitarists and drummers' movements.

Adit was born in a remote village with complete facilities. He seemed to understand and had a great tolerance towards his family and surrounding environment. He did not ask for expensive musical instruments. He chose the plate rack as his "music store" and took anything he could



hit. Pans, cake pans, blender glasses, basins, gallons of mineral water, buckets, spoons, and others mostly became Adit's target.

His mother was happy to see him hitting those things happily. However, at the same time, she was nervous since there were always broken ones after he hit them.

After Adit had experimented with kitchen tools for a long time, his mother started thinking about buying him real musical instruments so that his dream of becoming a drummer on television would come true. His mother chose small drums, large drums, tipung, to individual cymbals. His grandmother and grandfather supported him by giving one set of drums for Adit as a gift.

However, the reality outside was tough. As the child of parents who both worked and lived in the village, Adit's life was quite rough. A lot of schools could not tolerate the presence of children with special needs. Since toddler, Adit had always moved from one school to another. He often became the target of bullying by his friends, their parents, even teachers.

After wandering around, Adit got accepted at Mutiara Karina Playful School. In this school, Adit got friends and teachers who loved him and accepted his condition.

His friends were smaller than him,

but the teachers still accepted him.

The teachers taught the other students to respect Adit, who reacted to things slower than a normal child and often did not understand the teacher's instructions. Gradually, Adit began to build his self-confidence.

Apart from studying and socialising at school, Adit continued to practice his artistic talents at home. He learned how to sing, dance, and play various musical instruments such as harmonica, guitar, keyboard, kolintang (a traditional xylophone), tambourine, and kendang (two-headed traditional drum). Among all those musical instruments, kendang and percussion were the ones he was most skilled at.

Whenever Adit practiced at home by imitating drummers on television or YouTube, his mother would always be by his side. As the music went on, Mom would clap her hands to the tune, shake her hips, or even sing. All these efforts were meant to encourage Adit. If the tempo were off, Mom would raise her hand and Adit had to correct it accordingly.

At first, Adit seemed to be agitated when Mom noticed his mistakes. But over time, Adit understood the code. Equipped with the ability to play the drums, Adit's mother was motivated to





join a community for children with Down Syndrome and other disabilities. If all went well, Mom wanted for more stage performances to appreciate Adit's

musical talent. In

reality, there are not so many children with Down Syndrome who are capable of mastering drums skilfully. The way Adit acquired drums has attracted the attention of media crews, government officials, and private agencies. He received a lot of invitation to perform at their events.

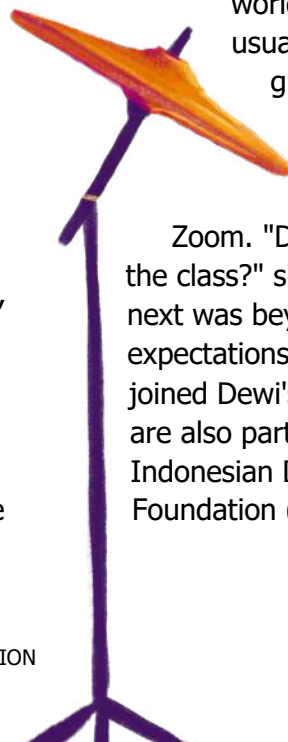
Adit's remarkable performances also attracted audience in Indonesian cities one at a time. From Bukittinggi and Padang in West Sumatra, then Jakarta, Depok, and Malang, to Yogyakarta. These cities provided professional stage and invited Adit to showcase his talent. From local community events, institutions, to national television channels, this young drummer's struggle to reach the limits of achieving his dreams has begun to be recorded and told in various printed, online, and television media.

Despite his son's increased popularity, Adit's Mom has been diligently looking for the track records of other children with Down Syndrome in Indonesia. She

seems to be desperately trying to find his dearest son peers of the same age and condition in a healthy, supporting environment to give Adit chances to be a better individual and musician at the same time. One public figure that caught Adit's Mom attention was Dewi Tjakrawinata and her son, Morgan. She was astonished by Dewi's dedication to her child, as well as Morgan's ability to master three languages and be able to live independently.

After spending some time looking for each other's information and being friends on social media, in 2011 they met in person at an event in Jakarta. There, Dewi first got acquainted with this extraordinary parent and drummer from Payakumbuh. After returning to Sumatra, both Adit's Mom and Dewi maintained continuous communication. Adit's Mom often asked for various suggestions for her son's progress and development.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, Dewi, who had usually given lessons to groups of children with Down Syndrome in Jakarta, opened her online lessons via Zoom. "Does Adit want to join the class?" she asked. What went next was beyond anyone's expectations. In 2020, Adit officially joined Dewi's online classes, which are also part of her organisation, Indonesian Down Syndrome Care Foundation (Yapesdi).



The class provides a lot of learning material, ranging from public speaking, civil rights, foreign languages, and reproductive health education for teenagers. Children in Yapesdi are also taught how to express their attention and affection to their parents, channel their emotional expressions in a healthy way, and hone their talents.



When Adit first joined the class, no doubt he was still a bit withdrawn. Many students had met each other before in offline meetings, while Adit was the only student coming from out of town. Not to mention

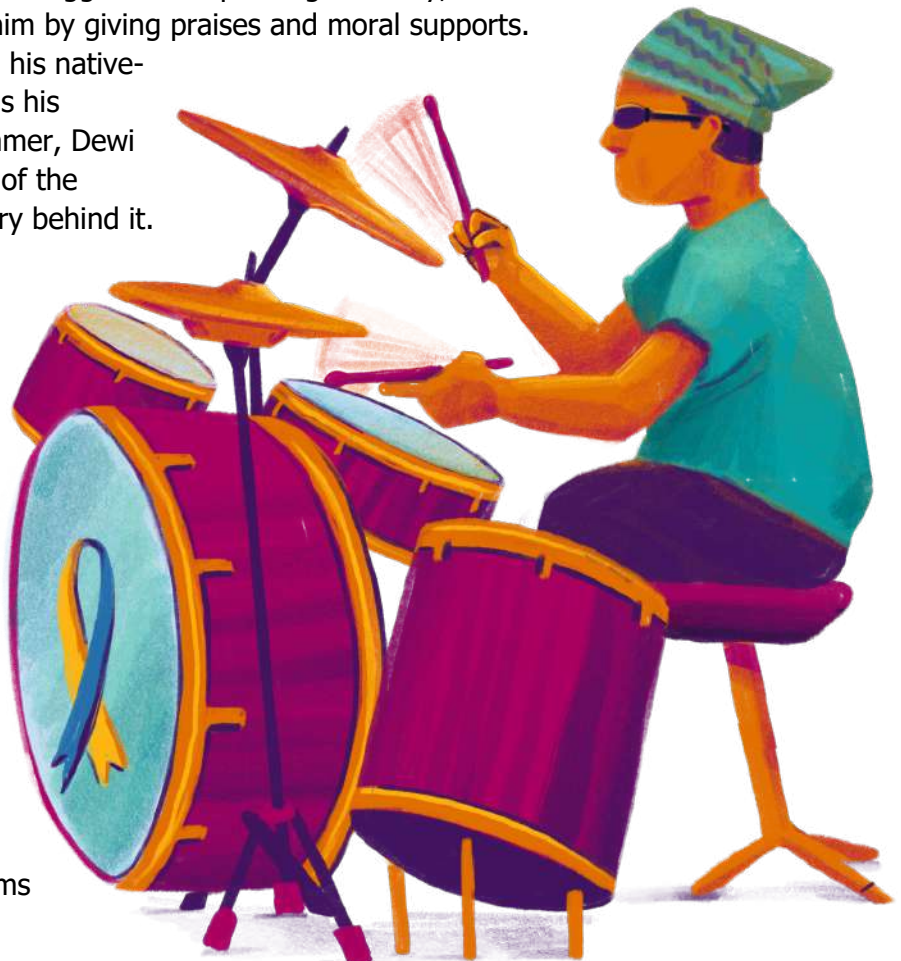
that many of his activities were fairly different from his other peers. But slowly, Adit was able to adjust to the environment with the help of his teacher's patience and understanding.

Often times, Dewi asked Adit to play his drums during class or when a seminar was held. Aware that Adit struggled with speaking difficulty, his teachers always encouraged him by giving praises and moral supports.

Every time Adit wore his native-patterned bandana as his trademark as a drummer, Dewi would ask the origin of the bandana and the story behind it. These small attentions gradually raised Adit's self-confidence.

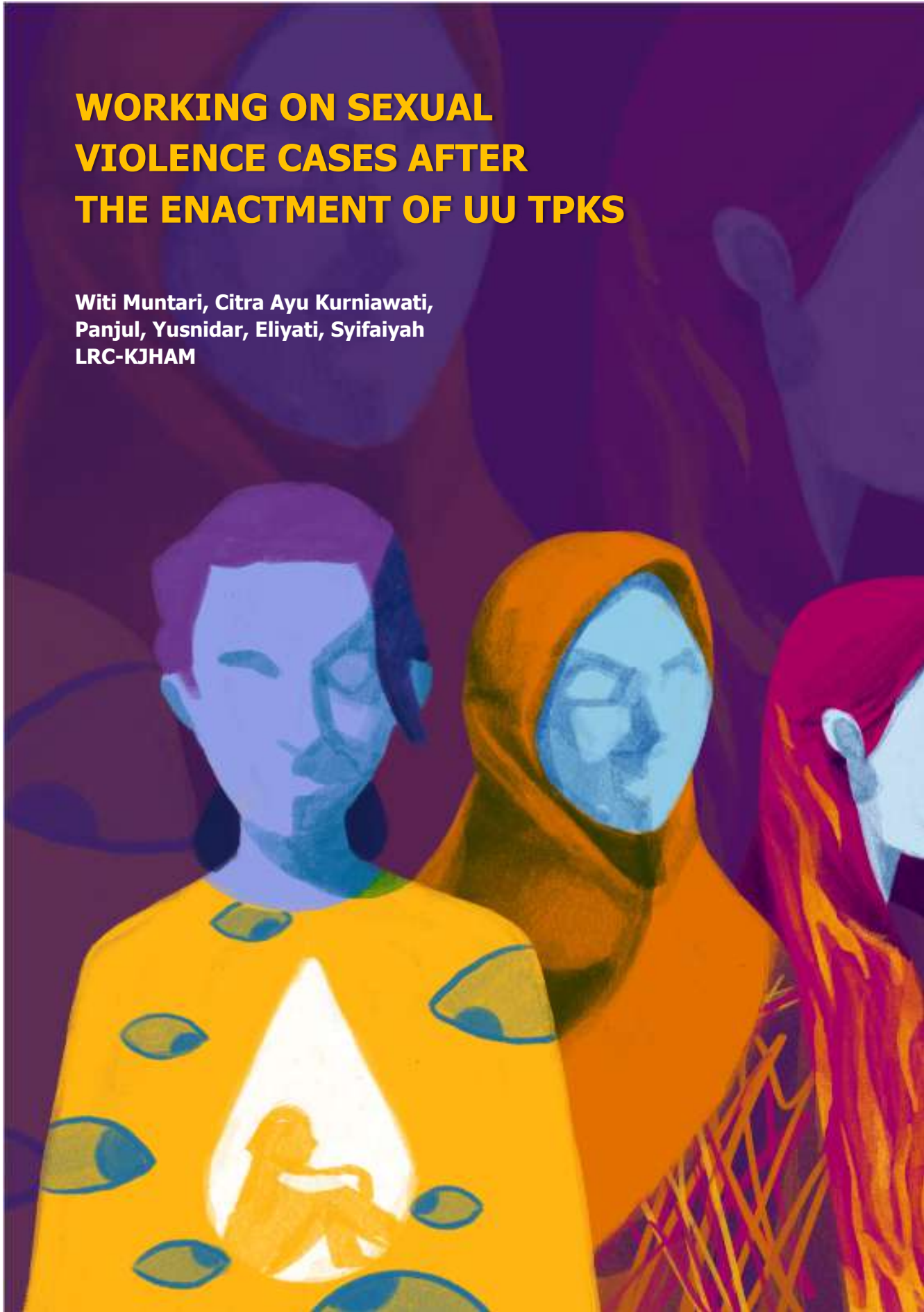
Adit's journey is undoubtedly still a long one ahead.

But with the presence of safe and supportive rooms to grow, it is beyond impossible for those with Down Syndrome to nurture and make their dreams come true. (*)



WORKING ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASES AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF UU TPKS

Witi Muntari, Citra Ayu Kurniawati,
Panjul, Yusnidar, Eliyati, Syifaiyah
LRC-KJHAM



The enactment of Law No. 12/2022 about Sexual Violence Crimes (Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual, abbrev. UU TPKS) has naturally become a new oasis to improve the treatment of protecting victims of sexual abuse. After a year of its enactment, has the Law brought significant changes in access to justice for the victims?

Sad to say, it has not. Throughout 2022, the LRC-KJHAM organisation had recorded 92 cases of violence against women reported in the Central Java region alone. A total of 57 of them were cases of sexual violence and of those, only one case was processed using the UU TPKS.

Our advisors have encouraged the police to use the Law in cases of sexual violence, but in reality, the implementation is far from success. Problems surrounding social stigma, cultural context and customs, not to mention the pressure on women as victims indubitably haunt the handling of these cases.

One example occurred in Central Java, when a 22-year-old woman reported to our advisors that she experienced sexual violence in her own dormitory. The perpetrator sneaked into her room while she was sleeping, and only after the victim awoke, local residents came to help. As the results, the victim underwent intense trauma; she always cried, had no appetite, suffered from insomnia, and even thought to commit suicide. The victim eventually wanted to go to the Sector Police to report this incident. Her report was received using Criminal Code articles 281 and 290. But because

the perpetrator's father begged the victim to let his son go, in the end the victim withdrew the report. The cause was not pity or momentary kindness. The victim was aware that in society, sexual violence is a disgrace. She knew that she would receive endless pressure from the perpetrator's family and the people around him. Ultimately, she decided not to pursue the case any longer.

One of our networks in Central Java, the Talita Kum organisation, even reported that not a single case of sexual violence they handled was prosecuted. Their role is fairly limited to the psychological recovery process.

Due to this lack of justice, Talita Kum told us that their advisees tend to be very closed-off, suffering from trust issues, and undergoing difficulties of telling their share of the story. They have to spend 3-4 intense meetings before being able to tell their advisors something.

The question is, why do these victims insist on not continuing their cases? And the answer remains: they are worried about being exposed to stigma and social discrimination.

In the province of Nangroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD), this stigma is even enshrined in law. According to our network at LBH APIK Aceh, in 2022, they handled 18 reports of sexual violence cases. And yet, UU TPKS lost its power there, as law enforcement officers tend to adhere more to local legal codes or Qanun Jinayat. An unfortunate example of this case emerged when they received a report of a young woman with mental disabilities who was raped by her

neighbour. The incident was repeated many times, and was only discovered when the victim was already heavily pregnant. When it was first reported to village officials and the police, this case was not considered critical as they thought that the victim was already an adult and had consented to the sexual relations.

When the victim's family wanted to go further to court, the law stopped them. In the enactment of Qanun Aceh No. 6/2014, an adult victim has the potential to be considered as the perpetrator and receive punishment if they cannot prove their innocence and if the sexual violence acts happen more than once. Therefore legally, the victim can also be the perpetrator, and will be punished alongside the actual perpetrator.

Article 77 of Qanun Jinayat also limits other regulations implemented in Aceh, including UU TPKS. Ultimately, it becomes increasingly difficult for victims to obtain fair justice and appropriate recovery.

In reality, the families of these victims responded to the incidents by taking extreme steps. If the victim is already an adult and the violence occurred during their dating period, for instance, both victim and perpetrator will be reconciled and then married.

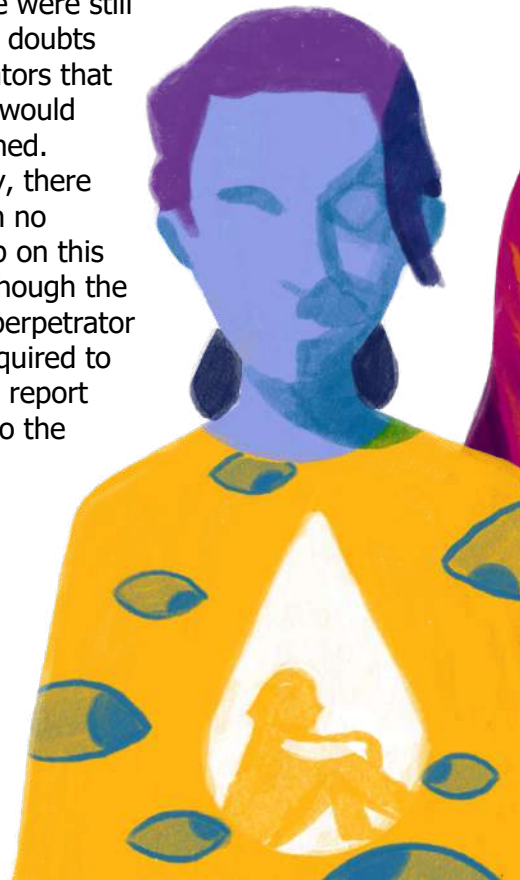
Similarly, if not almost identical, the situation also happened at TRUK-F, our network in Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara. They have at least a rare precedent: the only sexual violence case processed under UU TPKS in Maumere.

According to the report, the victim was sick and asked to be treated by his father-in-law, who worked as a shaman. While carrying out the ritual, the perpetrator committed sexual violence. Initially, the victim thought of forgiving and not reporting the perpetrator as he was his own in-law, not to mention that the husband also begged them to reconcile. But because the perpetrator did not want to admit his mistake and apologise, and even went beyond threatening the victim for defamation, the victim finally reported it to the police.

In this case, our advisor encouraged the use of UU TPKS, but the police themselves experienced difficulty in choosing the appropriate article for the case.


In the end, the case was transferred to PPA Unit where they used article 6A in UU TPKS.

But there were still lingering doubts investigators that the files would be returned. Currently, there has been no follow-up on this case, although the alleged perpetrator is still required to regularly report himself to the police.



Afterwards, there are three cases of adult sexual violence which were reported to TRUK-F and processed under UU TPKS. However, investigators answered that currently only the first case would be tried using the Law. If the file is upgraded to P21 status, then other cases of sexual violence will also be processed using UU TPKS.

Case handling may have stalled, but the stigma against victims continues. According to the local custom, the victim is considered to have violated etiquette. The victim was exiled from the village because she was deemed to bring disaster and disgrace to the surrounding environment. In local beliefs, the presences of people like victims will bring floods and storms, so the village must be "cleansed".



Local traditional institutions performed a cleansing ritual by burning all the victim's clothes and cut trees around the victim's house. This ritual is known as Demu Leto Wulan. The suffering didn't stop there; she was even told to leave the village and was forbidden to return at all.

She was accompanied by TRUK-F advisors who provided psychological supports, access to a safe house, and health services as well as legal assistance.

Progressively, the case became even more complicated when it was found that the victim was pregnant. Currently, the victim has given birth and is undergoing recovery, and will continue her education.

With the birth of her child, the case becomes "easier" to handle as law enforcements can use the Child

Protection Law (UU Perlindungan Anak).

Turns out, even after a year of its enactment, UU TPKS has yet to help female victims to fight for their justice. From Aceh, Central Java, to East Nusa Tenggara, victims all over Indonesia find it difficult to achieve fair justice. The government, law enforcement officials, and service provider institutions should work together to seriously implement UU TPKS.

Cases in Aceh and NTT prove that the presence of national law in the central government level alone is not sufficient. In Aceh, the government should review several regulations, especially Qanun Aceh No. 6/2014 Article 77 so that UU TPKS can be implemented optimally. Meanwhile in East Nusa Tenggara, there must be collaborative efforts with traditional/local institutions to support case handling, protection, and recovery of victims.

In a country as complex as Indonesia, one law is proven to be very inadequate. Every element must move together to protect the victims at all costs. (*)

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This newsletter edition contains many interesting stories and experiences from various points of view, from personal to collective stories, from those who want to understand, fight for, and obtain their rights in this far-from-ideal world.

Writing approaches from various subjects are very reflective. We are able to realise that in order to live safely and comfortably, it requires a lot of process and time as well as many layers of challenges. Our journey and struggle may still be far ahead, especially for a world that is friendly to everyone. We hope that through the stories shared in this newsletter, they can inspire others to share their own narratives on inclusivity and intersectionality in our discussion space.



Thank you for reading this newsletter, we hope that the 3rd edition of Indonesia Inclusion doesn't stop with you. See you in another edition. Don't forget to follow us

on Instagram @indonesiainklusi.id and website

indonesiainklusi.id for further acquaintance! Long live Viva Indonesia Inclusion!

Linking and Learning: The Spirit of Inclusive Collaboration

Indonesia Inclusion is a community that brings together various civil society organisations to learn from and connect with each other.

The established network rises from, but is not limited to, Voice grantees in the Voice Linking and Learning program.

The main principle of this community is to make the grantees as the centre of all Linking and Learning activities. Every initiative and decision taken by this community is made by the grantees and for the grantees.

This community encourages collaboration, exchange and learning, innovation, and the application of new knowledge among the participating organisations. This collaboration aims to set an agenda and shared aspiration achievable with the cooperation and participation of all the organisations involved.

In addition, Indonesia Inclusion is expected to keep growing and expanding, not limited to the Voice framework. Currently, there are at least five rights-holder groups supported by these organisations, including: people with disabilities; female victims of exploitation,

harassment, and/or violence; age-discriminated vulnerable groups, especially the youth and elderly; indigenous people and ethnic minorities; as well as sexual and gender minorities.

The diversity of issues and identities in Indonesia Inclusion opens a great opportunity to encourage innovative and meaningful collaboration. Inclusion underlies every interaction in this community.

Every person and organisation has the right to participate fully with fair distribution of responsibilities.

The spirit of connecting with and learning from others promotes the principle "to leave no one behind". Everyone has the opportunity and potential to define the objectives of the community and achieve them through inclusive collaboration.



A collaboration amongst:



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
KOMNAS PEREMPUAN
KOMISI NASIONAL ANTI KEKERASAN TERHADAP PEREMPUAN

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