

NEWSLETTER VIAVIA | 1 - 2011

JAN | FEB | MARCH



Hello,

After a couple of turbulent months we are back on track. The volcano literally covered our plans in dust. Everything was put on hold. But, as it goes after emergencies, eventually our ACTION buttons were pushed and we rose from the ash even stronger than before.

We hired a professional chef for 6 months as a consultant for the ViaVia kitchen. He performs magic in terms of working streams, cooking techniques and motivation. During the whole month of March, David, a Belgian chef will join us and teach our staff new recipes from the world kitchen.

We have some more people joining our team. Sandra, a student economy and management at UGM, just started her internship at ViaVia and will look at marketing and management strategies. Two more interns plan to do research starting in April on how to reduce the carbon footprint of ViaVia and how to communicate this without being labeled a 'greenwasher'. Ratna is our new event manager.

In this newsletter you can read about our emergency response to the Merapi disaster. We want to thank everyone who supported us financially (Bimesa, Herman and Zamrud Java Teak, Eko Prawoto, Steven, Benny Soenarya, Jeremy, LIP, Edith and Niels, Cemeti and many others). Also thanks to all the volunteers and artists who helped us at the fundraising night. And of course thanks to all the people who joined us on our trips back and forth to the badly struck areas. We worked in different stages. First we focused on emergency distribution. Later we set up a market based voucher system to restore farmers' livelihoods in the village of Gondang1 and recently we rounded up a project on repairing the water pipes in Babadan.

In this newsletter also a piece by Laine Berman on TKI (Indonesian Overseas Workers) stranded under a bridge in Saudi Arab hiding from their abusive employers and without help from the Indonesian government.

And yet another story out of the life of a woman, fighting for her right to work. In her account 'A new day, a brand new life' we read about submission and courage. Submission to family structures, to poor health care, to God, to cultural values. Courage to strive for a better life for herself as a young modern and educated woman balancing between conservative values and modernity.

Vita shares info on some of our more exciting products in the 'ViaVia toko' and Dyah writes about exporting her living room to ViaVia in the shape of the current exhibition. And for the ones who read this newsletter regularly, look out for Uuth story. She is here again with one of her funny 'bloglike' pieces.

ViaVia and the Merapi

Uji

The Merapi erupted in October 2010. Most people thought that this eruption was just a small one and part of the 4 years cycle without much damage to the surrounding villages. Reality was different; Merapi continued to erupt furiously and vomited tons and tons of material. In the beginning of November hot ashes reached about 15 kilometers from its peak. The villagers needed to be evacuated because of the damaging effects of the ashes. Many people lost their cattle, farming land, crops, houses and all the property, which supports their life. They stayed for about two months in the evacuation camps. Without jobs, without schools, just trying to avoid becoming a victim of the anger of the volcano.. This is only a piece of the story about the Merapi.



Emergency response

Every one panicked because of the volcanic smell and the ashes covering Jogjakarta and surrounding cities. That same feeling of fear and solidarity at the same time, which we experienced after the earthquake in 2006 came back. So ViaVia initiated a fund raising to help the evacuees. We gathered and discussed together, what we could do for the evacuees within our capacities. Turned out that almost every one of the staff wanted to volunteer. We gathered as much information as possible and finally decided to distribute emergency aid by delivering logistic needs to the evacuees. Our first distribution was in the Jogjakarta area. We went to a camp near Kaliurang and we delivered goods to an evacuated old people's home that put up camp in Kasongan.

But most of the media focus went to this city and there was a constant stream of aid delivered to the south side of the volcano (the Jogjakarta side). That's why we finally focused our attention to a small village in Magelang (close to Borobudur on the west side of the volcano). We distributed food, baby and female needs, clothes, mattresses etc. We also organized some special events for the children who stayed in the evacuation camps, covered in volcanic ash. We invited them to play, to draw and to sing not to lose their happiness. We cooked healthy porridge with them and made fruit salads.

Fund raising

We received donations from many sides. Bimesa (Belgian Indonesian Medical Education Social Association, a Belgian non-profit organization. Their activities cover on-site medical aid and social-educational help as well. www.bimesa.be) immediately contacted us with their proposal to help. Also special thanks to Zamrud Java Teak and Kini Furniture. We also organized a fund raising night collaborating with artists cooking for the Merapi in ViaVia.

Market based approach

In the beginning of December, many evacuees went back to their homes. They wanted to start their work and go back to their normal life. ViaVia decided to continue its support through a market base approach to give the farmers a little stimulants to get back on track. The evacuees of the camp we had supported until then came from Gondang, a village situated 7 km's from the peak of the volcano. Their farmland and crops were destroyed. We decided to give them vouchers to buy seeds for tomatoes, chilli's, mung beans, long beans, cucumber, the most grown vegetables in this area. 76 families of farmers were glad to start their nursery. At the same time, we were also happy to collaborate with the local shops that provided the seeds. We set up the voucher system, distributed it in the village with the help of the village heads and the volunteers, we organized it with the local vendors. Within two weeks it was all set up and all the vouchers were exchanged by seeds.

We thought our task was over. Until Niels and Edith sat foot in ViaVia. They had collected money from their friends and family in Holland to help people in need.

So we continued our project. This time we focused on providing clean water for the villagers in Babadan village (3 kms further from Gondang towards the peak of the volcano, so only 4 kilometers from the peak.) With their donation in addition to what we still had, we decided to provide pipes needed to repair the water system to the village. After two weeks of hard work, the villagers finally have flowing water again. Their water source is at the foot of the Merapi. The villagers had wanted to expand this source into 2 water basins in order to have a better flow of the water. This was against the wish of the spirits guarding the spring. They appeared in a dream of one of the elders to warn them against expansion. (A message against greediness.) After the water was running we also installed a personalized seed voucher system for this village.

Merapi is quiet at this moment, but the damage caused by its eruption is still going on till now. The latest threat is the cold lava flow. People have lost their house and rice fields. We would love to help again, but need to gather some more power ;).

Cold lava situation report

January 21, 2011

We are glad though to have been able to help the evacuees to get back on track. On behalf of them we would like to thank all of you who generously donated for this private initiative. BIMESA (Belgium), Zamrud Java Teak, Steven (Kini), Jeremy, Pak Eko, Benny Soenarya, LIP, Cemeti, Neils & Edit, all the artists, the ViaVia staff, thanks for your efforts.

Following Mt Merapi volcanic eruptions in October – November, 2010, 102,353 people were displaced. As the volcanic activity decreased, these communities have returned home. At the same time, in the aftermath of the disaster, cold lava floods continue to force new people into displacement.

The volcanic eruption brought 150 million m³ of volcanic debris to the surface. This cold lava is piled up along the slopes of the mountain. With heavy rains communities living within 300 meters of rivers are at risk of cold lava floods. On December 1, the first major cold lava floods caused the destruction of houses and serious damage to infrastructure.

As per January 19, 2011, cold lava has caused displacement and destruction as follows:

- 4117 persons displaced by cold lava in Magelang District. In addition, some smaller camps have not yet been registered.
- 303 houses have been destroyed in Magelang District (87 houses have disappeared, 144 are heavily damaged, 62 moderately damaged and 10 mildly damaged).
- 7 schools are damaged
- Agricultural sector is affected by cold lava
- 28 Credit Cooperatives, 36116 small businesses including 24000 agro businesses have been impacted by the eruptions. The fishery industry suffered losses of 13 billion Rupiah.
- Infrastructure is affected including main road between Magelang and Yogyakarta. 10 bridges in Magelang District are destroyed
- Water system destroyed in Tutup Ngisor Village.
- Damage is valued at 2 trillion IDR (approximately 200 million USD)

Risk analysis

According to ESDM, heavy cold lava flooding is expected until the beginning of March following heavy rainfalls at the peak of the rainy season. Furthermore, the river beds are filling up with sand, which increases the risk of flooding. There are visible signs that rivers bringing volcanic debris are close to bursting their riverbanks, and some villages have already flooded.

According to BPPTK a meager 20% of cold lava has been brought down to date. This means a significant risk of continued flooding for the next 4 years, with main impact during this rainy season.

24,960 households (85,924 individuals) in Magelang live in areas prone to cold lava floods (300 meters of rivers). This involves communities in 25 villages and 83 sub-villages in Srumbung, Dukun, Muntilan, Salam, Nguluwar and Sawangan sub-districts.



A New Day, A Brand New Life

Wiwit

Having a baby was never in my mind before. When I knew that I was pregnant, I was mostly shocked. I wasn't ready yet to have one. The baby was conceived after my second overland east java tour guiding for ViaVia. I was just about to start it. I still remember how hard it was to get the permission from my family to do this tour. But my mother said that a child is a blessing anyway...

During 9 months of pregnancy I tried to enjoy it, tried to deal with things that came on my mind. Everyday I learned and when its first move started to knock on my womb, I think that I started to love it... My husband and I thought that it must be a baby boy because when he moved, it was so strong. I never asked the doctor if it's a baby boy or girl. After I was 7 months pregnant we prepared for his needs, the name, a pillow, clothes etc.

Every month I went to doctor to check if it's okay or not, but never asked about its sex (my husband wants a boy, and I want a girl.) In the 9th month, I went twice to doctor. The doctor predicted that the baby would come on the 27th of august. I checked at the doctors' on the 1st of September and he said if it's not born within 3 days, he would induce he birth. Because it was the first time for me, I made a phone call to my colleague (Cisca from ViaVia...) to ask about the effect of inducing a birth. And she said actually there would be no effect but I would have more pain if I would not be dilated enough yet.

I usually walked every morning of the pregnancy. But in the morning of the 2nd of September, I got tired very fast. And when I got home, I felt my water had broken and my mother said that the time had come, be prepared. She told me to ask an apology from my father and to ask for his prayers. It was 7.00 am, and my father took me to hospital. When I got there, the nurse checked me and there was no dilation yet. So she got me induced (it was the 1st one). She said I should wait until 3.00 pm then she would see me again. The 1st attempt to induce, I could still handle it.

Then at 3.00 pm she met me and said there wasn't any progress. Still no opening yet. So she tried to induce the birth a second time through infusion. And I had to wait again for 3 hours then she would see if there was any progress. Waiting for 3 hours while you feel pain in your stomach wasn't easy, right? Well it happened to me... it was harder than the 1st one, for sure. Then 3 hours passed by, and the nurse said that it was still the first stage of opening. The hospital asked an agreement from my husband to add induction and he said ok. Because I told him that I wanted a normal birth. They gave it (it was the 3rd attempt). And I had to wait for another 4 hours to see the progress. It was the hardest part. I felt the pain more and more frequent while the water kept coming out. At 8.00 pm I felt so weak and my parents told me to keep saying the istighfar (it's how a Moslem asks an apology from Allah) then the nurse checked me and gave me oxygen. Then after a while, my stomach was shaking and I told my husband to call a nurse, and she checked me. She said that I had to relax because the baby was nervous. After 20 minutes, it happened again, and the nurse

said that the baby wasn't in a good condition. He had to be born soon. But I needed to wait until 10.00 pm to see the progress. Then at 10.00, they checked me and I was in the 3rd stage of dilation.

My husband saw how hard I tried to stand the pain. So at the last checking, he asked the nurse what was best for me. She answered that normal birth is better because she read the note from the doctor that the baby's weight was 3,5 kg. But my husband had an other opinion because he had called his friends about my condition and decided I needed to be operated. After he signed the documents, the hospital said that the surgery room was busy and the obstetrician was still helping another woman, so I could use the room at midnight. Well that meant that I had to wait for another 2 hours, again....

At midnight, they operated me. Under the blurring effect of anesthetics, I heard the baby cry and people said it was a very big baby. After 2 hours, they brought me back to the room and I knew that I had a baby girl of 4,1kg and 52cm long. She was so big, wasn't she? I spent 4 days at the hospital. And every time my grandparents wanted to see her, they didn't know how to call her because we didn't prepare a girl's name. And they joked how if we call her Tomblok (it's how the Javanese call a fatty girl). After the 7th day the baby girl had a name, Syauqi. Her full name is Syauqina Viesdia Ramadhani. Every name has a meaning, Syauqina is an Arabic word for 'the one we missed', Viesdia is an abbreviation from my name and my husband's, Ramadhani means Ramadan because she was born in Ramadan. My husband was surprised when he took a look at the baby room knowing it's a girl. He said that he still thought that it was a boy when I was in the surgery room. Because when she cried, it was very loud. She was the loudest compared to the other 4 baby girls....

I spent 3 months in my hometown after giving birth. I really missed my life in Jogja actually, but it took 2 months to recover and a month learning to take care of the baby. But before I went back to Jogja, the Merapi erupted. The volcanic dust wasn't safe for the baby. So we delayed the journey.

Then that day is coming. I finally live in Jogja. It was a little bit difficult to adapt because it's only my husband and me now. But this is only a small problem. I really realize that the bigger problem is about to appear. Now that I am back here, I'm planning to guide again and raise my baby here. But just like I already predicted, it is hard to get the permission to guide because my husband thinks that I should take care of the baby. (Even before my pregnancy I had a hard time to get his permission to guide the overland tour)

But I don't want to repeat my mistake by arguing with him (it didn't work, I have proven it already). So what I do now is to be honest and I keep telling him about what I feel indirectly. I tell him that I do love my baby, but sometimes I need to have fun by myself, doing things that I like. I tell him that I have a capability speaking English, which I can use to do something for this new family. I tell him that my mother is a working mom also, so as long as I don't neglect my baby and I can manage my time it should not be a problem.

In Jember Bus Station

Uuth

Early in February, I guided an East Java Overland. Then as usual, after taking the tourists to the harbor to cross to Bali, I have to come back to Jogja by myself. It is a really a long journey back here. I have to change buses 3 times. Normally, in the bus, I will just put myself into my best position for sleeping. On that day, while waiting in the bus from Jember to Surabaya, I heard a strange voice that kept me awake.

Feeling a bit familiar with the language, I tried to focus my eyes on someone who was speaking in the front row of the bus. He was standing there, holding a small guitar that we call "kentrung". He was wearing a brown shirt... A tidy one... Though I'm sure he didn't iron it... Nor his wife.

With a smile on his face, he started to tell his story. Smiling all the time and trying to interact with the passengers he managed to get the attention of all of us to look at him carefully...I was amazed by his bravery and intention of being a street singer. He wasn't young anymore... Perhaps that's one of the reasons why I paid attention to him (I kind of like older people... HAHHAHAHA).

He spoke unordinary language in the bus. Most of us speak Javanese with an East Javanese accent. I speak Bahasa for the sake of my life (I'm afraid that I speak Javanese the wrong way, it's so difficult with all those levels). He spoke English. He tried to... He frankly said that he wasn't a good English speaker, but he tried to.

"I help the street children. We have a shelter for them and I'm here to collect some money for their school... Etc etc."

He's a foster father for some street children. He helps some kids to study, helping them paying the admission fee for the school. I don't really understand the song, I didn't even recognize it and I am not sure that the song really exists. (Not thinking that I am better than others, I really appreciate his effort. Really.) Although later, probably he lied about the helping stuff, I really appreciated his effort to speak English... Partly amazed by his speech and the busy driver who asked him to get down, I gave him a little money. And nicely, he answered, "Thank you very much."

This street singer reminded me of BABEH. Babeh (or 'father'), a poor street side cigarette seller, was a serial killer in Jakarta, pretending to be an angel helping street children. He would sexually abuse kids and kill and mutilate their bodies and throw the pieces here and there. . He was finally caught and put to prison in the beginning of 2010. It shocked our whole nation and made many wonder why the government still cannot protect the most vulnerable

I'm not trying to say that this man is the same as BABEH. I'm not a psychic. I can't tell people's personality or future. And since I believe I can read people's eyes, I can tell that this street singer I saw is a good man...

Life is never easy for poor people. For those marginal communities... We can't push people to do good things, especially when they urgently need to fulfill their primary needs. One thing that I always try to remember is that I have to look at myself in the mirror ... I'm not a perfect human; hence I can't judge people when they do the wrong thing.

God creates us in different way, with different characters. Some do good, some don't...

One year abroad: Indonesia

Sandra

Today exactly six months ago, so in July 2010, I took seat in a plane from Hamburg, Germany and one day later I arrived in Yogyakarta. That was the beginning of my two semesters abroad. I am a student in Bremen and supposed to do two semesters of my studies in Indonesia. I already had language and culture courses in Germany so I had a rough idea about what was expecting me but hearing things or seeing pictures is totally different from experiencing it yourself.

After six months I can say that I made many new friends, learned a lot and experienced several of new things, some small and some big, some amazing and some scary. Getting in contact with people in Indonesia is pretty easy. Everyone here is so friendly and for sure everyone wants to get to know you. As a "bule" (white person) you stick out of the crowd and have a lot of attention on you. This is really weird because everyone is looking at you no matter where you are but if you give them a smile you will also get one back and after some time you just get used to it. If you get to know people closer they will welcome you into their family naturally

and you will end up having a lot more brothers and sisters than before.

I learned a lot in the last six months an. People here focus more on the personal aspect of life and the relationships between each other. There is so much more respect and hospitality in the everyday life in Indonesia than in Germany. Things are just different here. Another example is time. Indonesians have a lot of time or they just take it. If you are meeting someone you can be sure that he or she will be at least 30 minutes late (if you are lucky) and if you cannot do something today you can still do it tomorrow, or the day after. This shows that it is not enough to do as much as possible when you cannot enjoy it because you have such a tight schedule but it also means that many things take a veeery long time to get done.

To be honest my parents did not like it so much when I told them I was going to stay one year in Indonesia. On their minds was not only Bali, the "paradise" but also tsunamis

and bombings. Luckily I have not experienced one of the last so far but I have been here in Yogya when Merapi erupted in November 2010. That was one of the scarier experiences I had in Indonesia. If you ask yourself why not the scariest: well, you never sat in the front of a bus from Yogya to Bali...The Indonesian traffic is a topic for itself. On the first sight it looks like the total chaos but there is some kind of a system (at least

that is what I think but I can also be totally wrong).

But these are only little things compared to the beauty of Indonesia's countryside and the friendliness of the people. I fall in love with this country over and over again and even though I still have seven more months here it feels like far too little.

Hi Jogjakarta!

Ratna

I am Ratna Djuwita, just call me Ratna. You can blame me now for I am one of my kind that make Jogja even more and more crowded. :D

I was born in Sumedang, a small town in West Java on the 28th February 1984. I have been interested in mass media, film, music, and art.

After spending so much time in doing thesis for my study, Journalism, finally my journey begins.

In 2002, it all started. I joined TRaFFic (Territorial Research for Film Independent Community), an independent community with young members from Bandung who are also interested in movie.

My next step was Radio Paramuda. I was in a programming team for 3 months. Then I "jumped" to Radio Oz as a member of off air division.

The journey then continued. My music interest lead me to be involved in RIPPLE magazine. RIPPLE was a pioneer mass media that discusses youth's culture in sub culture community, or in short, RIPPLE is a cutting edge magazine.

In my five-year-dealing-with-media, at the end, I was back in track. I, then, joined OPENLABS, a new media art under

Common Room Foundation, to inspire me with ideas and concepts. I ended it in 2008.

My life is blessed, after OPENLABS, I have got a chance to work for a fashion label called EAT. It was amazing because I can give my idea to develop and apply my knowledge about art, fashion, and music into a creative industry.

Then, after "jumping all around Bandung and West Java, I chose Jogja to restart everything. I want to re-research and re-interpret some things I love. Well, hell ya! I sound romantic!

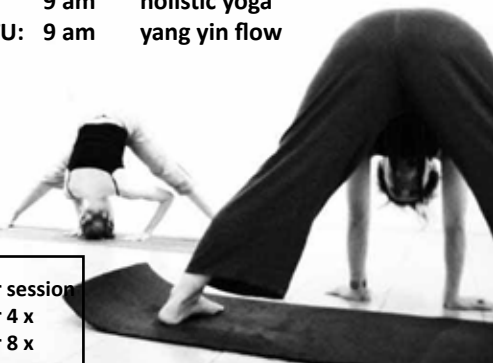
Continuing my study is definitely my main purpose to be here in Jogja, but above all, Jogja reminds me of all the struggles I've been through so far. YUP!!! I want to live from things I love. Music, movie, theater, performance, dance, and all kinds of art. Hopefully I get something from this magnificent city.

And life takes side for me! I have got another challenge by being the new event manager for ViaVia. Whatta life!!! Everything is new! New people (almost every time), new discourse, and new culture.

It is for sure a groovy thing!!! ;)

YOGA

MONDAY - SENIN:	9 am	yin yoga
TUESDAY - SELASA:	9 am	holistic yoga
WEDNESDAY - RABU:	9 am	hatha yoga
THURSDAY - KAMIS:	9 am	holistic yoga
	5 pm	hatha yoga
FRIDAY - JUM'AT:	9 am	holistic yoga
SATURDAY - SABTU:	9 am	yang yin flow



Rp 40.000,-	per session
Rp 140.000,-	per 4 x
Rp 250.000,-	per 8 x

NEEM PRODUCTS

Vita

Indonesia is a rich country full of natural resources. But often we don't see anymore that in fact we can get a lot from nature. We got spoiled by instant food and factory man-made goods. We even tend to believe that it is more effective and works wonders.

It is proven wrong!!!!

According to an ethno-botanical expert in Indonesia, 34 ethnic groups use 78 different species of plants against mosquitoes, our most dangerous 'predator'. 133 species of plants are used against fever, digestion and so on. We would like to see a new start and use this local wisdom and knowledge and rediscover its values.

One of the trees that prove to be very useful for both humans and animals alike, is the Neem tree. In Bali it is called the Nagasari Tree. The Balinese use only the leaves, mostly as a

mosquito repellent but actually all the parts of the tree can be used for different ailments. We decided to sell products of the Neem tree in our shop because of the sustainable and eco-friendly way the company in Bali is producing these products and because of their mission to work on reforestation at the same time.

From www.indoneem.com:

Yayasan MACK is trying to persuade Indonesians to plant the tree and harvest the seeds to provide a local supply of neem oil. The seed cake, which is left after the oil is pressed from the seeds, is an excellent fertilizer with natural insecticide properties. The company's experiments with neem trees in Indonesia extend to Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, the Riau and Flores. Besides its value as an insecticide, the neem tree also effectively controls erosion. Very fast-growing when well cultivated, the roots of the neem trees bring nutrients from deep in the earth, rapidly improving soil conditions.

Products available in ViaVia fair trade shop:

SOAP & SHAMPOO

- **NeemBa Shampoo**
Works effectively to reduce dandruff and bacteria. With velvet extract, NeemBa Shampoo gives freshness every day.
- **NeemBa Liquid Soap**
Protects skin against bacteria and fungus and natural fragrance from velvet extract give fresh fragrance every day.
- **NeemBa Hand Wash**
Especially formulated with neem as natural antiseptic agent,

enriched with patchouli and aloe vera extract combined with natural color from rosella flowers, to cleanse and protect your hands against bacteria and fungus.

- **NeemBa Soap**
Ingredients: Natural Neem Oil, Palm Oil, Essential Oil and available on Lavender, Orange, Patchouli and Rose Fragrance. Protects skin effectively against tropical skin disease; Refreshes skin with natural therapy fragrance; Helps moisten and stops skin irritation; Prevents acne and refreshes skin when daily applied.

HEALTH CARE

- **NeemBa Capsules**
A natural product made from pure neem leaves. NeemBa Capsules can treat or protect as follows: Strengthen immune system; NeemBa Capsules can help to prevent or to correct as follows: allergies, arthritis, bronchitis, diabetes, diarrhea, gonorrhea, malaria, migraine, reduce nicotine effects, rheumatics, TBC, tonsil problem, etc.
- **NeemBa Herbal Tea**
A tea with multifunctions for health
- **Mosquito Spray and Insect Splash Repellent**
- **Mosquito Incense**
It is formulated from neem extract combined with citronella
- **Mosquito and insect lotion**
With natural citronella except against mosquito and other insects

All these products you can find in the ViaVia shop, why don't you try them??

CURRENT EXHIBITION

A Story about the Passion Fruit a growing exhibition

This is a story about a Passion Fruit. A passion fruit tree grows wildly with abundant flowers and is seen by the artists as the perfect icon for this growing exhibition. What does this growing exhibition mean? In this exhibition, the visitors are asked to join by posting their own scribbles.

The artists involved in this exhibition present their verbal narrations translated to their visual artwork. The carpenter made wooden artwork; the knitter made knit work; a humanitarian worker put a picture of a woman. The passion fruit exhibition invites people to join with their own narratives from their own world..

House of Markisa

House of Markisa (HoM) is not a serious project or a lost-direction community. HoM is my house in Nitiprayan, the village of artists. In a 10 x 8-meter Javanese house, I stay with my cousin and a best friend. My cousin is a photographer and lecturer in ISI Surakarta (Surakarta's Art Institute). And my best friend is an architect. At the moment, I am studying psychology in Sanata Dharma

University. Our very different backgrounds makes we have a very unique interaction in the house.

In HoM, we have a backyard full of flowers and fruits from our passion fruit tree. There, we spend most of our time together just to chat or drink a cup of coffee. Our friends often drop by and this makes our house their comfortable place to hang out. We've got artists, carpenters, NGO people, writers, journalist, foreigners, etc. And as they are "poisoned", they love to spend time, tell stories, and party.

As a host, I am glad that my house is useful for others. Moreover, there are loads of friends who create their artwork in my house. As a fine art event organizer, I meet lots of artists with their broad contemporary perception. It leads my imagination to move my verbal narration (from conversations at home) into visual narration in an exhibition.

It felt like blessed by nature that ViaVia offered me to have an exhibition there. So, I "move my house in Nitiprayan" to ViaVia. I asked all my dear fellows, artists or whoever, to create artwork of any kind. And, how do I set up my exhibition? I work in displaying. The way I display the work is not about putting my friends in an interaction. I just arrange their stories, sincerely, just like what I do in the HoM.

I think if you want to find a definition of a house, you should come and stop by in our house ---The House of Markisa.

The writer is a fine art event organizer who collected artwork for A Story about the Passion Fruit.

You can say hi to her on: dyahsoemarno@gmail.com



Stranded Indonesian Overseas Workers Need our Support

Laine Berman, for the Jogja Gender Working Group

One typically hot night in 1987, I was coming home from an expat party to my compound in Bahrain. I was a teacher at the Bahrain University and our compound was pretty much the only expat compound that did not have a high wall and security. Bahrain was safe in those days. I never thought about violence or robbery and never even locked my door. On this fateful night, as I left my car and walked to my corner house I heard a strange sound in the bushes next to the wall. Upon investigation, I found a dark skinned woman huddled beneath the shrubs, sobbing and holding her torn dress to cover her near nakedness. When she came into the light of my home, I realized she had burn and beating marks all over her back, arms and face. Tini, a middle aged Indonesian housemaid had escaped from her hell of rape, abuse, violence, and cruelty only to find her way to me.

Tini's story is one I have heard hundreds of times over since then – and can be seen first hand on flights between Indonesia and Hong Kong, Taiwan and Dubai. Desperately poor women are lured into 'exciting work opportunities' by agents who take fees from the workers and their employers. They provide minimal training, usually a prison-like accommodation in Jakarta while awaiting a position, and zero support once they have gotten on that flight. Upon arrival in their destination, the maid's passport is held by their employer – an illegal act in most countries – as a guarantee that she will stay. With no supervision or support, the employer is free to treat this person as anything they like. She may be treated kindly and fairly but she may also be a punching-bag, a sex slave, an unpaid work horse with no set hours or time off, or anything else desired by the employer.

In trying to seek help for Tini, I learned a great deal about this modern form of slavery. There was no Indonesian embassy in Bahrain so no one was available to help. The nearest Embassy was in Riyadh and numerous phone calls achieved nothing. Tini had no passport. She had arrived in Bahrain more than 2 years ago with her husband, whose whereabouts were completely unknown to her. She was forced to move location several times – one being a brothel, but because of her age and dark skin, she didn't earn enough money. She was moved to a tailor's shop, and then to several homes as maid, each of which was more violent than the next. Since we could find no way to assist her, Tini lived with me for a year. When I left Bahrain, she was moved into the care of friends.

What ever happened to Tini and far too many like her can be gleaned from these recent articles and movements to assist the more than 200 Indonesian overseas workers who are currently living in absolute hell under the Kandarrah bridge in

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. They, like Tini, have chosen to run and accept whatever fate chance hands them than to remain in the abusive environment of their employer. While there is an Indonesian Embassy in the region, they insist they cannot help – which makes no sense. The Foreign Ministry insists it has no funds to bring them home. A quick google search has shown how these stateless people have been reported in the news for over a year and no help has been provided – except for the kind souls who give them food and blankets. Among the crowds are also young children – fathered by employers and unrecognized and undocumented anywhere.



Because there has been no commitment by the Indonesian state to help these people and, at least, help them to regain their passports and come home, several community based organizations here in Indonesia and abroad have taken it upon themselves to do something. Here in Jogja, the Gender Working Group has joined with national movements to collect Rp.1,000 (less than USD 0.10) per person to bring home the stranded Indonesian workers. The movement is intended to demonstrate to the government how many people actually care about this inhumane situation and shame them into accepting their responsibility to protect citizens. They estimate it will cost IDR 1,7 billion to bring home 200 workers – an amount that comparatively speaking, is less than 9% of the president's yearly budget for international travel.

You too can help. ViaVia has a collection box for donations. Donations can also be sent to the following bank accounts managed by the Migrant Care Foundation in Jakarta:
No Rek 038601000234306, BRI cab. Rawamangun
No Rek 908.01.01086.00.3, Bank CIMB Niaga Rawamangun Jakarta Timur.

Please help us to demonstrate human kindness, consideration and support to those in Indonesian high positions who have forgotten their vows of office.

Sources:
Rp1000untukTKI.net
<http://ajisaka.dagdigdug.com/2010/04/27/cerita-dari-kandarrah/>
<http://nasiona1.vivanews.com/news/read/200003-menggelandang-di-jem-batan-jeddah-tradisi-tki>
http://youtu.be/watch?v=_eluRupcDS0&feature=related