

NEWSLETTER VIAVIA | 3 - 2008

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

This Newsletter is quite a touching one. Is it the months of October and November with the extreme heat before the rain, that brings out all these strong emotions in people?

The writers of our newsletters are not English native speakers. The editing is limited to basic grammar and spelling mistakes. We are afraid that otherwise the soul of the story and the Indonesian spirit will get lost.

Tyas wrote a personal diary while on her big trip to Belgium for the operation on her back (syringomyeli, see previous newsletter). The operation was a success, thanks to all of you and the support of BIMESA. Her observations and feelings are rather intense and at times funny and recognizable.

But if you think this is as intense as it gets, go through Siska's story and you will find yourself in tears!

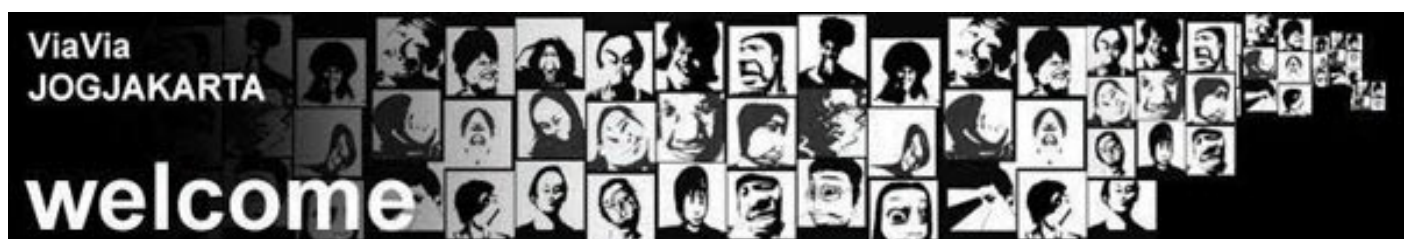
We also have two fresh babies in the extended ViaVia family and a new married couple. Teguh would like to be in their place.

Uji writes about guiding a group of young law graduates through Bali, Sulawesi, Flores and Lombok.

The next exhibition in ViaVia is announced. And have a look at Boy's illustrative creation for the planned Arabian night. We expect you there in big numbers to try Middle Eastern food and enjoy the band Sobaya which brings contemporary Arab music.

You also find this newsletter on our website www.viaviajogja.com

Happy reading!!!



**Check out our new website www.viaviajogja.com
and please provide us with comments, input, critiques, ...**

Diary of 15 days in Belgium

Tyas



About 1 month ago I got an opportunity to go to Belgium for very first time. The one thing I just could not dream about before. Now I'd like to share my experience with you.

Well, the story began when I was diagnosed of syringomyelia and hernia (You can read it in our previous newsletter). In the beginning it was a

shock to me, first of all the severeness of the disease (I was slowly getting paralyzed) and then because I had to travel alone, leave my family, and so many other things I worried about. But finally, lots of people, especially my friends convinced me that everything would be OK. That makes me face everything in an optimistic way. Mie helped me arrange everything from the beginning; she spoke to Indonesian and Belgian doctors, arranged my visa (only ready 3 days before I leave, but got it thanks to great help of the Belgian embassy in Jakarta) and all the papers I needed, she looked for the donors, and so much more. Thank you Mie! Finally I'm ready for my 2 weeks adventure.

Day 1

I fly from Jogja to Jakarta with Mie. She helped me check in in Jakarta, because this is my first time traveling by plane. When everything was OK, she came back to Jogja, and I wait for my international flight. That moment, I had (sorry) my period. That's one thing I seriously worried about, because I would have a very long trip. Usually I just use normal lady's pads. But I decided to try to use (sorry again) tampons for safety reasons, because I thought it would be better. But I really had a problem with that. I felt so uncomfortable because I was not used to it. And after 2 hours flight and landing in Kuala Lumpur, the only place that I'd like to find was a TOILET! I know there's something wrong there. And, Oh la la, my trousers (you know what happened). Then I tried the best to remove the dirt and wet, changed with normal pads, and continued my 12 hours flight with lots of heart ache. I promised myself to never use these magic tampons, ever!

Day 2

I finally arrive at schiphol airport, early in the morning, still dark, a little bit of rain, but I didn't feel the extreme cold like people told me about, yet. I still have to wait about 5 hours for my next flight. I always keep contact via sms to tell my position. On the plane to Brussels, I enjoyed the beautiful scenery down there. My first impressions of Europe from the sky. When I arrived in Brussel, I just followed where the other people are going. That's what Ingvild told me to do to find the way out. And it works! But I was a little bit confused to find my luggage, because I thought there's only 2 belts in front of me, but there are 12 belts. After I asked one of the teenagers around me, he showed me the big screen that I couldn't find before. Annemie, the wife of Bruno, the anesthesiologist (I will stay with them) was already a couple of hours waiting for me. I never met her before but it's not

difficult to find her because she had my name in her hand. After saying hello and a little bit of bla bla bla, I told her about my big problem with my trousers. She just laughed and said "Don't worry, give it to me, I will solve your problem with my magic washing machine". And, voila, when she gave my lovely trousers back, the smell is so fresh and it is extremely clean! I never can do it at home with my old fashion washing machine. I have to brush it powerful a couple of minutes, but I never get the same final result. What a wonderful magic of technology. I was so impressed! The next surprise is waiting for me on the table. I had Indonesian food for my first lunch in Belgium. It was rice, sambal goreng sayur (mixture of vegetables in a red curry sauce), and sate ayam (chicken sate). WOW. Annemie was very confused because she thought that I can only eat Indonesian meals. So she keeps thinking what she's going to cook. But in few days she will be amazed that I can eat European food. "I work at ViaVia, remember?"; I said.

Day 3

I wake up early in the morning, without having breakfast. Bruno drives me from Oostende to Roeselare to H.Hart Hospital that morning. Along the streets was so amazing. The air was so fresh, the sun starts rising in the east, the traffic was still quiet, colorful skies, beautiful landscapes of the villages and farms, milk factories, I finally realized that I'm in another part of the world. I didn't feel that I was on my way to get that scary surgery. I know that I will enjoy my priceless moments here.

H.Hart Hospital is not like a hospital for me. It feels more like a five star hotel in Indonesia. Very clean (absolutely), modern, everything is organized very well, comfortable, friendly doctors and nurses.

I still have to wait for my operation for a couple of hours. So I tried to make conversation with two other old women who stay at the same room with me. But one of them just speaks very few English words, and the other one can't speak English at all. And me, I just can speak a little bit Dutch. (klein beetje) But we still can speak with body language, and for the next few hours we just smile to each other. When I said where I'm coming from, they just said "oh, Indonesie..." Then I asked if they have been there, they just answered "nei...". They are old but still look beautiful like other old European women. I didn't have anything to do or anything to read. So I tried to borrow a Dutch comic book and magazine from them. I can just watch the pictures without understand the story.

One of the staff from the kitchen came to ask me what I wanted to have for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. She offered me the options on the menu in Dutch. I told her that I can't eat anything until my operations are finished. But she insisted, so I answered her the best I could, "Brood met smeerkaas, yoghurt, en thee voor breakfast, Kip met patat voor lunch en brood met boter, ham, yoghurt en thee voor dinner, Dank U". She was satisfied with my answers and went away. Finally my time has come, I have to move to the operation room



for my first operation of the hernia in my neck. If you ask me, "Did you feel nervous?" No, I didn't and I don't have any reason for that. Because I do believe in God, I knew that my family, my friends, and lots of people that I don't really know

were praying for me, always supporting me, and I do believe that the team of the doctors will do the best they can. That's what makes me stronger.

And, the first operation was a success. Thank you everybody for giving me this opportunity.

Day 4

It was raining that morning, dark, windy and thunder. I couldn't feel the cold outside but I could see it from the window of my room on the sixth floor. There is nothing I can do but laying on my bed, replying sms'es or talking to my friends on my mobile phone.

The lady from the kitchen came for the second time since yesterday, and asks me the same questions. I just give her the same answers, even though I know she will leave me starving here all alone.

In the afternoon, Pak Paul, an Indonesian man who has been living in Belgium since 1972, member of BIMESA, visited me. This is my first time I meet him eventhough he has often talked with me on the phone after I arrived in Belgium. He is a very nice guy. He brought me the best Belgium chocolate that I keep until I go home to Indonesia to eat it together with my family. I was glad to meet him and speak bahasa Indonesia with him. He promises me if I will be strong enough, he will take me to one of the cities in Belgium. Yes, I'm alone from Indonesia, but I never feel lonely, because I meet great people who are always helping me for everything. 6,30pm. I am ready for the second operation of syringomyelie. Dr.De Praetere, the neuro surgeon is a funny person, and he speaks Japanese fluently. Sometimes we speak Japanese to tease Bruno. (He is always there because he is an anesthetist, remember?) and it made him very curious. Dr. Lieven, the assistant just smiles when we tease each other. Before the operation, I pray by myself like with the first operation, because I know that the doctors won't ask me to pray together with them like in Indonesia. But it doesn't matter for me. I do respect the different habits and cultures.



After more than six hours, the operation was finished. The doctors woke me up and said that the operation was successful. I still felt dizzy, couldn't move my body, and I vomited all

the time. But the nurses are there whenever I need them. I just said "I need a pain killer please", or "pi pi bun" or "may I have a bed pan?", or just "VOMIT..." they understand and give the best service with a wide smile. But ooooh, I couldn't sleep with all these wires and all these things on my body.

Day 5

Thursday morning, the sun was shining so bright, very good wheather, I could hear the birds are singing, it seems like they are happy because everything is going well, and they want to celebrate it with me.

The lady from the kitchen comes for the third time and asks me still the same question like the two previous days. I answered her respectfully to make her happy, eventhough I didn't know when I would have my meals. Well, she just does

her job.

Today is the same condition like yesterday. I have nothing to do, just lying on the bed, replying sms'es or speaking on my mobile phone, and sleeping. It was boring. But I was so amazed, why I don't have to take any medicine except the painkiller? Is this another trick of the magic of European technology?

Finally I got my first dinner at 6.30pm. Two slices of brown bread with butter and ham, a cup of yoghurt and a cup of tea. Although it was so difficult for me to swallow, it still was so delicious after I suffered of starvation from three days ago. Thank God, for the meals today.

Day 6

I spent my whole time on the bed. The lady from the kitchen comes again for the fourth time. Same questions but diferrent answers, because I know that I can eat everything today, so I will choose seriously. Actually I planned to go home in the afternoon. Bruno was ready to pick me up. He helped me to get up from the bed. I made it, but it was hurting me. My back was very painful and I felt dizzy. I couldn't focus my sight, I was pale and sweating. Then Anne, one of the best nurses I met, asked me to stay one more night. And she guaranteed me that I would feel better tomorrow.

Day 7

I promise myself from last night to wake up early in the morning. That's why I start at six o'clock. I tried to get up. It was so hard but I just keep trying and trying. After a couple of minutes, I finally made it. I could sit on my bed and I tried to stand on my feet. I was so happy. Slowly but sure, I tried to walk, went to the toilet, cleaned my body, packed my stuff and I was ready to go home. When Bruno and Anne came to my room, they were surprised to see my progress. I feel like there is a positive energy here for healing that makes me much better very soon.

I had a special menu for my last lunch before I leave. It was like a ViaVia special today: Beef rollade with mashed potatoes and sauteed vegetables. WOW! Thank you Kitchen Lady. It's time to say goodbye to all the wonderful staff of the hospital. We promise to send e-mails to each other.

4.00pm at Bruno's house I meet all the doctors from BIMESA who supported me. But I didn't meet Dr.Herman, because he is in Flores with six doctors for a social project. I was surprised when Sam, one of the ViaVia customers, he also sponsored me, came. It was so amazing to meet great people like them. My friend from Holland also came with her family and spent the weekend in Oostende specially to visit me. I didn't know what to say to explain my feelings.

We were talking about everything. About Indonesia, their social project for Indonesian people, Jogja, especially ViaVia. We were talking about food, trips and courses. Some of them who have been to ViaVia were so excited to talk about their activities they booked with us. Some people were so curious about ViaVia. And they promise they will come some day. What a wonderful day that I will never forget in my whole life time.

Day 8

Every Sunday Belgian people have a tradition to get fresh bread from the bakery. Annemie just came back, when I was ready to have my breakfast that morning. She ask me to choose one of these delicious breads.

We didn't have any special program to do. I was just laying under the sun after having breakfast. But it's too windy outside, so I decided to stay in the house.



At 10.00 am my friends dropped by

to say good bye before they go back to Holland.

In the afternoon some more of my old friends, Alex and Marleen came to see me. I was very happy because I didn't meet Marleen in more than ten years. Alex is Mie's brother in law. We know each other because he has lived in Indonesia 10 years ago, now he's living in Belgium. I was surprised that Alex speaks Flemish very well. It was not the way he spoke bahasa Indonesia. Alex taught us how to use skype so we could communicate with my family in Indonesia. But it was a pity because they didn't have much time to stay. Alex had to return back to his family in Antwerpen and Marleen to Brussels. It was a short visit but it was so sweet.

Day 9

Finally I met my family via skype. It is nice after one week of communication via sms only. But we just talk for few minutes because the connection was not good.

In the afternoon I went to the revalidation center, also in Oostende, located right next to the north sea. Dr. Deneve asked me some questions about my complains and explained me what kind of therapy I will get from there.

I spent two hours to do exercises. Afterwards, the physiotherapist gave me a soft massage for a few minutes and put some kind of hot mud called 'fangou' on my back. It was really nice. When I finished my therapy I enjoyed the fresh wind of the north sea.

After lunch, we went to Brugge. Brugge is one of the beautiful towns with lots of old buildings. The government is very concerned about this heritage.

The people who like to make a new building, are not allowed to destroy the old one. They can build the new one behind the old one and leave the facades of the old ones intact. I made lots of pictures of this town because I was so amazed with all these great old houses. I was very lucky because it still is summer time, so we can see everything clearly until 9.00pm. I forgot all the pains on my back...

Day 10

Joke visited. She is one of the tour leaders of Joker Tourism. Since I was in the hospital, she kept contact with me to know my health progress. Even though I only met her a few times in ViaVia Jogja and we didn't have much time to talk to each other, now when we started talking, nothing could stop us. Especially when we talk about our crazy friends Romdie, Rita and Vita. We are laughing a lot. Now I know for whom Rita always brings fried cashew nuts with lots of garlic. It was for Joke!

At noon, Annemie took me to her mother's apartment. We walk around to the park and market nearby. She told me that if you go shopping, you have to bring your own bag to store everything you buy, or the government will charge lots of money for you to buy a plastic bag. Such a good idea. Should we try it here?

In the supermarket I saw many kinds of wine, and I imagined buying it this easily in Indonesia for our customers. But that was just a dream knowing the condition of our country. Finally, time to get massage, do some exercises and put a lovely 'fangou' on my back at the revalidation center. I think I forgot to tell you how big and luxurious this place is. People who had an accident and need rehabilitation, come here. I was very lucky because they sponsored me to get this therapy. Thank you Dr.Deneve and all staff.

Day 11

Every morning Bruno checks my wounds and put some antiseptic on it. That day he works the night shift. He started to work in the garden, he was mowing the lawn and cutting the bamboo trees. There was something new for me when I saw him crushing all the bamboo trees with such a modern machine, and then spreading it around the rose plants. It's good for fertilization and for the environment. That's right. Why won't we do the same thing instead of just burning it and make more pollution?

Somebody came with a lot of amazing organic vegetables and fruits. She just plants it for a hobby and gives it away to Bruno's family. Again, I am just thinking how we can get organic vegetables and fruits in these big sizes, because as long as I know we only can get it in small size and with lots of worms. But I forgot to ask her the secrets. Pity.

Before I go to the therapy, Annemie took me to the library to borrow some books. When I told her about a book by Irshad Manji that I really wanted to bring with me but I didn't dare to, she was very interested. So I tried to find it there. And I was surprised when I found it in a Dutch edition. She was very happy to read it. Enjoy your reading, Annemie....

Day 12

I didn't have anything special to do since the morning. The children, Lisa and Justine are still at school and will come for lunch, because their school is just nearby. They have a very good system of education here. The school starts at 08.00am, and they come for lunch at around 12.00pm, afterward they are back at school until 03.00pm.

After having lunch with the whole family with full of fun, Bruno and Annemie took me for a walk to the beach with their lovely dog, Zappa. I have a new experience here. Anyone who takes a pet for a walk, has to bring a bag. They need it when the pet poops. They have to take it from the sidewalk and put it into the garbage bin otherwise the government will fine them. I think our government here does not have any time for things like that because they are very busy with many other big problems we have in Indonesia.

We walked along the beautiful north beach until my time had come for the therapy.

I feel less pain in my back. Normally I take two pain killers a day, but since yesterday I didn't take any of it. I was very happy with my progress.

Day 13

Pak Paul picked me up at 09.00am, to take me to Gent. After about an hour drive, we arrived in the stunning city of Gent. Gent is known as a the student city. Just like Brugge, there are many great old style buildings. Pak Paul is a very good guide for me. He takes me to many beautiful places, and always explains everything I want to know.

It was amazing when he told me that old people and infants

get a special discount price. For example, when they visit one of the tourist area and when they take public transportation, like the bus or the train. Another thing, drivers are very respectful to pedestrians. I really hope that in Indonesia, one day cars will stop instantly when they see that someone wants to cross the street. But so far in Indonesia, we have to wait until all the cars pass, and then we can cross the street safely.

I tried to imagine how many people can stay, pray, and sing together on Sunday, Christmas or Easter in the very big and beautiful old style churches I saw. But I was a little bit disappointed because most of the churches are not more than just a history museum or a theatre building. The collapse of European Christianity, I think. Anyway, it was an amazing moment for me to see the heritage of buildings from the middle ages. Thank you Pak Paul for the great trip I had.

Finally, Pak Paul took me back to Oostende directly to the Revalidation Center to get my last therapy and say goodbye to all the staff who gave me the best service ever.

Day 14

Bruno removed the "zipper" from my wound on my back, before I go home otherwise I will have a problem with the metal detector in the airport. Actually my visa is until the 28th of September, but I was getting better very soon, so I can go home earlier than I thought.

Mireille one of the members of BIMESA invited me to have dinner in a very fancy French Restaurant as a farewell party. At that moment I was a bit afraid, because I didn't know much about 'table manners', and I have a problem with my hands to hold knife and fork. But when the food came, there's nothing to worry about. Amazingly many kinds of seafood on very big plates. It was a very famous and typical French restaurant. We didn't need a knife. We just ate it like that with our hands, sometimes we just need a fork, a needle, or a grip. I just saw this kind of food in "Mr.Beans Holliday" movie. It was a great experience for me to see and taste the real one. Thank you Mireille.

Day 15

It was Sunday, another fresh bread from the bakery and it would be my last day.

I wanted to enjoy it. That's why I didn't refuse when Annemie asked me to come with her to see Bruno playing football with other old men just for fun on the beach. The oldest man is more than 80 years old. Isn't that amazing?

Afterwards Bruno took me to visit his father who lives in one of the pretty villages around Roeselare. I was glad to meet him. He is a very nice person even though he didn't speak English, but he could understand what I was saying. He stays alone in his big house even after his wife passed away 18 years ago. I was thinking, it is not possible in Indonesia for an old man like him to stay alone at home. For safety and many other reasons of course.

He was a doctor and one of the donors of BIMESA. When he celebrated his 50 years at his job, he wrote on the invitation, that instead of bringing presents or flowers, it was better to bring some money for supporting BIMESA. That's why he said, he was very happy to meet me too.

We still had enough time to watch a basketball match in the stadion nearby. I won't forget that moment, because I have never seen a real one before. I totally enjoyed it. I supported the Belgian team who won against the Betlehem team.

Sometimes I felt guilty to my family and friends who were thinking that I was suffering of my illness instead of having fun here. But I tried to convince myself that I had to enjoy every single moment because the opportunity doesn't come twice.

Day 16

I woke up early in the morning and asked Bruno to check and cover my wound for the last time. I have to make sure that nothing is wrong with it because I will have a very long trip. Everything is packed up since yesterday. Annemie helped me a lot because I couldn't do it myself. I was ready to go, but I felt that there is part of my soul is staying here. It was difficult for me to leave this family and all the nice people after I had my hard time of my surgery. They gave me everything more than I ever imagined or expected. But I know I have to go back to my family and friends, my work, and my real world. There are many things I have learned and I have made new friendships too. But there are many things I have to do, so I hope I can make everything better for my life in the future. Special thanks to God, who sent me amazing people and friends to help me. Mie, you are my best boss ever. All the donors, without you I couldn't get the world class hospital service. Bruno's family, for your love and care. Dr.De Praetere, Mr.Lieven Hantson, BIMESA (Paul and all the others), Dr.Deneve for arranging everything. Family and friends, for all your support and prayers, everyone that I can't mention one by one, thank you for everything.

THE END



VZW BIMESA

When you read the last newsletter you must have wondered about what or who Bimesa was. Thanks to the hospitality of Mie and ViaVia in general we may introduce ourselves in this newsletter.

VZW Bimesa is an abbreviation of Belgian Indonesian Medical Social Association. It is a Belgian non-profit organisation but please don't confuse it with an NGO or non governmental organisation. Our activities cover on-site medical aid and social-educational help as well. We are mostly self supporting and voluntary work is one of the basic philosophies. Indeed some extraordinary acts such as Tyas' operation need extra financial support. We also organize fundraising happenings like Indonesian cultural nights or Indonesian music performances.

It all started in February 2004 when some founders had the wish to do something for the Indonesian people in need, without looking at the origin, culture or religion. So Bimesa was born. Unfortunately, a few months later the devastating Tsunami hit North-Sumatra. That is why we focussed on the relief of the Tsunami survivors by sending a physician and a container with dental units, microscopes and so on to Aceh in 2005. Thereafter in 2006 and 2007 Flores was (and is) our priority. While I am writing this article a team of stomatologists and dentists are working there. Last month, in collaboration with VZW See and Smile, three ophthalmologists worked in Flores for one week. They will return there next year. They all did a great job! Providing books for a local junior high school in Sumba was another of our successful actions.

On the educational field some members have given lectures in various Indonesian universities in order to share their European experiences.

You realize that our main activities mainly go to communities of people and not to individuals. From time to time it is extremely difficult to make a choice, simply because our budget is limited. The balance between humanity and equality is sometimes too narrow. As a matter of fact the case of Tyas was an exception. It was too urgent to wait and we

I wish I could be...

Teguh

This month, October was happy and joyful for everybody. We have two new mommies with their babies, two new members of the ViaVia family. Within a period of 10 days Evi delivered a girl and Ayu delivered a boy. Another happy moment was the marriage of Latifa (actually she got married in June 2008, but now was the official celebration).

I wish I could be one of them, getting married and then have a lot of children. This is my dream.

To tell you the truth, sometimes I feel jealous with all who have already married and have children. I'm afraid that I won't have enough time to make my dream come true. I'm also afraid that I will become a man who will never get married. I know it's weird, but it's true.



didn't have much time left. When Dr. Bruno Verhamme, anaesthetist and member of Bimesa, told us about her health condition, we concluded that an immediate act was

the first choice. Luckily Bruno's colleagues Dr. De Praetere (neurosurgeon), Mr. Lieven (nurse), Dr. Deneve (physiotherapist) and Bruno himself were prepared to work for free. The hospital accepted this as a humanitarian action and only a minimal cost had to be paid. After two weeks and two successful operations Tyas went home on the 22nd of September. By staying on-line with Skype every Sunday at 12 o'clock central European time we keep in touch. Our impression is that she is making progress. Anyway her health deterioration or in particular the threatening paralysis should be stopped by the operation. Furthermore her complaints about repeated headaches or migraines belong to the past. We should not forget that such a chronic disease needs a very long time to recover. And we encourage her to do all necessary exercises.

In conclusion we wish to thank all of you! You are: Mie, Bruno, Annemie, all doctors mentioned above, Joker, the Belgian Embassy in Jakarta, all the people who made generous donations, all paramedics of the hospital of Roeselare and BZIO Oostende, and all the people we might forget. There were so many persons involved. If you like to stay informed about our future actions please feel free to send an e-mail to our e-mail address stated below.

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Oh yeah... my name's Teguh. I work as a waiter in ViaVia Café. I joined ViaVia as a freelance guide in 2005. But soon after I started working as a waiter. Its fun, although sometimes I get bored. One of my efforts is that no matter what and where, I have to smile to every guest (always). I am glad though because I can learn many things here. To be professional is my intention. I want to make the most of satisfying our guests with all my hospitality and services.

My other intention of working in ViaVia is to fulfill my financial need. I'm also a university student and some day I want to work or study abroad. I really hope that I can finish my studies as soon as possible. So, at this moment, study and working hard are the keys of my life.

Well, when you visit ViaVia and see me, the cutest waiter (because he's the only male waiter ViaVia, editor), just say hello... Then, I'll give you the best service!!



**Ayu
Gede
Rama**



**Evi
Aurelia**

My "little sister's" wedding Teguh

She is about 20 year's old, small, très petite. But she's married already. Yeah, her name is Latifa, the youngest of the staff in ViaVia. Two years ago, she joined ViaVia, after graduating from high school. We graduated from the same school; she was one of my juniors there.

In June 2008, she married a man, Didik, from ViaVia's neighbor, "Janur Café". Didik is the last prince of Latifa. On October 25, 2008, they organized their wedding reception.

It was wonderful that all the ViaVia staff went to her reception. It was a very long ceremony, as long as our trip to her village. She lives in a village near Wonosari, 2 hours drive from Jogja. Wonosari is a hilly area with a nice view and a nice variety of crops and trees.

When we arrived at noon the bride and groom were not ready yet. But, nonetheless it was great because we didn't have to work that afternoon (we only re-opened at 6 p.m.). Her wedding ceremony was traditional, including the dress up. All of a sudden, I thought that someday, might looked like that.

We had to wait for more than an hour before the ceremony started. It started after a truck loaded full with Didik's family arrived. The bride came out with her parents, went to the dais on which the bridal couple sits, while the master of ceremony



delivered his long Javanese speech. Not long after that, the groom appeared. The traditional ceremony had begun.

Latifa welcomed Didik, they were throwing leaves each other, called "Balangan". Balangan is meant as an exorcism of the devil.

Then it continued with "Wiji Dadi": the groom's left foot stepped on an egg, and then the bride washed his foot with flowered water. It meant that the groom's ready to be a husband and father in his new family and the bride will always serve her husband.

Then, the bride's father escorted the new couple to their seats, her mother covered them with a red cloth, called "sindur". This part of the ceremony is called "Sindur Binayang" (meaning that the father shows the road of happiness and the mother encourages them).

There were several more rituals, but unfortunately we couldn't stay till the end. We had to go back, and we were hungry. So, we said goodbye. But, thank God... before we left, one of Latifa's family served our lunch. With a full stomach, we took some pictures with Latifa and Didik, and said good bye to them.

Tired but fun...

Congratulations to Latifa and Didik... We hope both of you will be happy together forever...



**Experience living in a traditional Javanese house in
a typical neighborhood of South Jogjakarta**



Facilities: hygienic bathroom with hot shower, 2 double beds with mosquito nets, kitchen with fridge, terrace and garden, cleaning service.

Central location near Jalan Prawirotaman, close to VIAVIA and other restaurants, close to antique shops, CEMETI art gallery, and the trendy art scene.

Bike rental available.

**Rp 200.000 per night
Rp 1.200.000 per week
Rp 4.000.000 per month**

**Reservation
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Trip with Belgian law graduates

Uji

It was my first trip with a group of mainly lawyers. Going on a trip with people working in a field where they have to be argumentative and persuasive! Waw, what a challenge! More so, it was also my first trip with a group to Bali, Tana Toraja (Sulawesi), Komodo Island, Lombok, and Gili Island. But I got new experiences and new friends from this trip.

The tour started in Bali. I took the last flight from Jogja to Bali. After waiting for about 2 hours at the airport, I finally got to meet them. We would stay 3 days in Bali and explore the main highlights. We visited Tanah Lot, Menjangan island for snorkeling, GitGit waterfall, Ulun Danu Temple, Kintamani, the mother temple "Besakih" and we discovered Ubud by bike. We used Bali as a starting point for the next three weeks, so when we were in Besakih we decided to do a small worship with a priest as a blessing for the rest of the tour. It was nice and fun even. The priest gave each of us a bowl with flowers. He started the ceremony by asking us to take a flower from our bowl and put it on the tip of our fingers. For a while, we became a bit Balinese performing a daily ritual. The priest spread some holy water on our heads and stuck a bit of rice on our foreheads. It means that we are purified, blessed, and ready for our travels to Tana Toraja.

(Actually this ceremony was a 'smart' trick of a Balinese guide to get money. After we finished praying, the temple guide asked for a tip in Euro's! But since I was the tour leader and knew what was going on, we 'voluntarily' gave 5000 Rp)



We left Bali by plane to Makassar, in Sulawesi, where we stayed 1 night. Makassar is a busy city and extremely hot and humid. We made a small city tour by becak, enjoyed sunset at Losari Beach, and looked for some colonial atmosphere in Rotterdam Fort. We met a TV crew in Rotterdam Fort. They invited us to be in their program... we became a famous group... The next morning, we prepared for a long ride of 8 hours to Rantepao in Tana Toraja through hilly areas but with good views. We visited Bantimurung waterfall and stopped at the "Erotic Mountain" on the way there. We'd stay 4 nights in a small but cozy hotel.

We were so lucky to be in Tana Toraja at the right time. The 1st day already, we attended a festival to commemorate the Independence Day and the anniversary of Tana Toraja. We were present at cultural events from all the districts with

traditional dance, marching bands, carnivals, and exhibitions. On the 2nd day, we visited Londa village with its famous burial site, a cave containing coffins and bones with rows of TauTau effigies overhead. KeteKesu, another traditional village has a group of old Tongkonan (traditional house in Toraja). Here we also saw some hanging graves with fine carvings and cliff graves.

In the afternoon we skipped one night in the hotel and stayed in a traditional house with a family. One of our freelance guides, Pius, stems from Toraja and his family and friends were happily receiving us as their guests. We were glad to do this because this way we got to know how real life and culture is in Toraja. We prepared our food, we ate with the family, washed dishes, and had good conversations till night.

The 3rd day was bloody! We went to a big funeral ceremony where tens of buffaloes were slaughtered. According to the Torajan, the soul of a deceased goes to the next world named "Puya", the afterlife. They believe that the soul of the animal will follow its master as new livestock. That's the reason why they sacrifice buffaloes and pigs. Many villagers and tourists attend this ceremony. Blood of the animals was everywhere, like an ocean of blood. I couldn't stay a whole day in that place. We decided to leave and walk to the village. After we were overwhelmed with the color red, we enjoyed the green color of the surroundings and the rice fields ... so green and peaceful, far away from noise and pollution. It was so refreshing. We even stopped in front of the church to watch children playing their music and sing songs. We enjoyed it so much that we were not aware of the time and before we knew it was dark.

We spent our last day in Toraja visiting some more tourist attractions. We went to the traditional village of Pallawa and Sa'dan which were very touristy. We continued our trip to Batutumonga (very nice view hills) and other burial sites of Loko'mata where the corpses are put into a big stone and to Mori, a megalith burial site. As goodbye dinner, the owner of the hotel cooked special Torajan dishes; a huge dinner party.

Loaded with lots of new impressions we flew back to Bali to move on by small aircraft (Fokker S50) to Komodo airport in Labuhan Bajo. It was a smelly aircraft but nice to see the east part of Indonesia from the sky. Labuhan Bajo is a small dry place and it looks more like a jungle than a city. Fishery is one of the main incomes of the population. Many men also work in infrastructure and women are rarely to be seen on the street. We stayed only one night in Labuhan Bajo, to prepare our boat trip to Komodo National Park for the next 3 days.

These three days we spent on a boat. We visited Rinca Island, Komodo Island, Pink Beach for snorkeling, Moyo Island, Satonda Island, and Medang Island. What we will never forget from this boat trip was the big waves on the second night. On the way from Komodo Island to Satonda Island we have to pass Sape Strait. Huge waves and wild winds were our blanket that night. Our bodies were cracking. Luckily we survived. Rinca island was another highlight. The Komodo

varanes were plenty and we even saw a buffalo carcass being chewed on by plenty of varanes. We got off the boat in East Lombok. We explored the east part of Lombok by car right to the foot of Mount Rinjani. Here, we walked to the Sindanggile waterfall and Tiukellep waterfall. And finally we arrived in Senggigi on the same day. We spent 1 day in Lombok touring on a motorbike to Sasak traditional village, a pottery village and to the turquoise beach of Kuta.

All the memories of this trip are priceless. We got morning

price in Bali, special tropical fruit price, car and driver without license, an Erotic Mountain in Sulawesi, we were TV stars, and we survived a crazy boat trip safely. Finally, to wash away all these emotions we spent our last days on a tropical bounty island. Just to relax and to be lazy.

Besides being a great tour, it was also once again proven that whatever people do in life, while traveling everyone shares the same excitements.

Upcoming exhibition

Cocomomo Custom Hand Made
19 November to 19 December 2008

Everything started from an internet blog that I created one year ago as my 'drawing paper', which at first was a media to show the things I made. At that time, I uploaded a drawing of my design of a laptop bag, because at that time all laptop bags were black and boring. Since then, many people have 'found' me, and almost all of transactions took place through internet.

And that was when my hobby-gone-crazy era started. My personal Cocomomo brand was born, derived from my own created icons "Coco the rabbit" and "Momo the mongoose". Flora, fauna, and daily life inspire nearly all Cocomomo designs. I work with simple hand stitching (application and embroidery) which adds to the typical characteristics of the Cocomomo design. And because of the choice of eye-candy colors and materials, customers often associate it with cutesy design'.

This is my first exhibition. It has been delayed for several months. To be or not to be, this time it has to be done. While still clinging on to the cutesy and colorful style, this time me and Cocomomo are not only bringing you bags, but we also explore other fashion elements.

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God made everything beautiful at His time

Siska

16 March 2006 was my first experience in a surgery room. It was time to deliver my first baby in a big hospital in Jogja. My obstetrician said that it would be too risky for the baby if I would deliver the natural way. The decision for a caesarean was made after several tests. During the 30 minutes long test my baby's heart beat dropped twice. Dedy (my husband) and I had to sign some papers stating we agreed to have a caesarean. For my baby's sake, I would do anything, even though I was very afraid at the time. However, Dedy and my mom strengthened me.

7.30 a.m. I am already inside the surgery room together with the obstetrician, a nurse and a nun. Maybe because I looked scared and tense, the nun always tried to sooth me.

8.00 a.m. my first baby girl was born. She was 3.6 kg and 51 cm long, big enough for an Indonesian baby girl. After being born, the nurse said that she had to take the baby immediately to the baby room for some medical actions. The nurse said, my baby looked like having difficulties breathing. So, at that moment I had not seen my baby yet.

9.00 a.m. I already moved to a regular room. But I still haven't seen my baby. I only saw her on the pictures that my sister took. You'd never believe that my baby was sick if you saw her picture. She looked big and healthy. But if you'd see her in the box at the baby's room, you'd see how difficult she breathed.

We called the baby Dyca, which is an abbreviation from Dedy and Cisca. We were so happy that day with the birth of Dyca. We were busy making phone calls and sending sms'es to share our happiness. It was our day...

Almost evening, that day, but Dyca didn't getting better. Her difficult breathing was getting worse because she cried. The doctor took 2 x-rays of her lungs. But not a single word came out from the doctor about the result and what really happened with her. I tried to think positively and prayed for her.

17 March 2006, 4.30 a.m., a nurse from the baby room came in to my room and told me that Dyca cried all the time, it made it more and more difficult for her to breath (I didn't know which come first, she cried because she couldn't breath, or her difficulty to breath made her cry). I really wanted to go to the baby's room and see her, but the nurse didn't allow me.

The nurse asked Dedy to follow her to the baby's room, if Dyca needed a medical action, Dedy would give the permission as her parent. Dedy left me alone in my room, without his wallet and his mobile phone. He thought, he only went to the baby's room. I prayed a rosary in my room. I asked for the best according to Him.

9.00 a.m., no news from Dedy. I asked one of the nurses for Dedy. But no one knew where he was. When I asked how Dyca was, the nurse said that she had to check with another nurse from the baby's room. But she never came back to my room to inform me about Dyca. I started to worry... I couldn't



reach Dedy, he left his mobile phone in the room.

Then I received a phone call from my mother who said that Dedy went to another hospital to help Dyca. Dyca needed a respirator. At that time, the tool in our hospital was used by another patient, so Dyca used another tool in another hospital. I felt a little bit calm, at least I knew that the doctor tried to help her.

After that, Dedy's mobile phone kept ringing. His friends called him. I answered every incoming call. But every time I answered the phone call, his friends sounded very strange. They seemed confused about what to say. They asked how my baby was... I said I didn't know because Dedy left his mobile phone with me. Then they hung up the phone and wished me luck.

Not long after that my mobile phone rang. It was Dedy's friend in Jakarta. When I answered the phone, she immediately said, "Cisca... Very deep condolence for you..." I was surprised and asked why she said so. Her voice turned confused, and then she said she'll call me later. I was very very scared... I couldn't think positive anymore. Suddenly, someone sent an sms to Dedy. It was his office colleague; he was in Australia at that time. The text read, "Dedy, I'm sorry for the death of your first baby girl. Bla... Bla... Bla..." I couldn't read anymore. I had a headache instantly... It hurt so much... I screamed as loud as I could, but I covered my mouth with my pillow.

I lost Dyca, my baby, before I touched her... Before I hugged her... Not even saw her alive... I cried and cried and cried alone in my room.

At 11.00 a.m. Dedy called me and said that Dyca was in my parents in law house. I was angry with him, how could he not inform me immediately about Dyca. How could I, as her mother, be the last person to know about her death, not from my husband but from his friend, who was in Australia. Dedy was speechless... He didn't expect that I already knew about Dyca. (However, several days later, I could understand why Dedy didn't inform me straight away about Dyca's death).

Dyca was buried at 3.00 p.m. that day. I had permission from the hospital to attend my baby's funeral; a nurse accompanied me with the ambulance.

On the way to my parents in law's house, I told myself not to cry. I've shed a lot of tears that afternoon. But I couldn't. No matter how hard I tried, I cried when I saw Dyca in her coffin. She smiled.

Before they closed her coffin, I kissed her forehead and whispered, "Good bye my angel..." with tears in my eyes (even now, I'm crying when I write this story).

Dedy and I believed that God prepared a great plan for us with Dyca's death. That belief and the support from friends and family, strengthened us to continue our life.

God made everything beautiful at His time...

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ARABIAN NIGHT

MUSIC, DANCE, FOOD, NAIL ART

VIAVIA

SATURDAY NIGHT

8 - 11 - 2008