

The Magical Strength of *Nrimo* and *Gotong-Royong* A Quick Response Report Following the May 27, 2006 Earthquake in Yogyakarta

Kwartarini Wahyu Yuniarti
Faculty of Psychology
Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract. People's response and ways of coping to disasters vary across events. This quick response report aims to learn about the life reconstruction of the survivors within the 1st week following the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake. Initial unstructured interviews and observations were used during the emergency phase, and followed up with a quick survey of 677 survivors. Descriptive analysis and follow-up interviews were undertaken to verify the results. During the first three days after the disaster, survivors seemed to be in a period of shock. They accepted the event as determined by God (*nrimo*=accepting). The survey showed more than 90% believed that God will help them, but also that more than 90% started doing something. Local slogans can be widely observed, e.g., "Dlingo-Bangkit" (Revive-Dlingo!). The local belief in *nrimo* seemed to yield positive energy, which enabled survivors to revive in a relatively short time. The "culture-of-waiting" seemed to function as a way to unify energy in "Gotong-Royong" (or mutual assistance).

Key words: disaster, Yogyakarta, local culture, revive, mutual assistance, positive energy

Abstrak. Respons dan cara menghadapi bencana sangat bervariasi dalam setiap kejadian. Studi "respons cepat" ini bertujuan untuk mempelajari proses kebangkitan kembali para penderita dalam minggu pertama setelah mengalami gempa bumi. Wawancara dan observasi tak-terstruktur dilakukan pada masa darurat, diikuti dengan survei cepat pada 677 orang yang terselamatkan. Analisis deskriptif dan wawancara verifikasi dilakukan setelah survei. Periode "terguncang" dialami pada 3 hari pertama. Masyarakat menerima kejadian tersebut sebagai sesuatu yang telah ditentukan oleh Allah (menerima = "*nrimo*"). Hasil survei menunjukkan bahwa lebih dari 90% percaya bahwa Allah pasti menolong mereka, bahkan lebih dari 90% telah melakukan sesuatu untuk bangkit kembali. Slogan "Dlingo Bangkit" banyak dijumpai di Desa Dlingo dan Turi. Tampaknya kepercayaan lokal dalam "*nrimo*" menyimpan energi positif, sedangkan "Gotong Royong" merupakan penyatuan energi positif dari para *survivor*, karenanya mereka bangkit dalam waktu yang relatif singkat.

Kata kunci: bencana, Yogyakarta, *nrimo*, bangkit, gotong royong, energi positif

Living with risk brings to light the urgent need for action to be taken—and the people who are doing so—in building sustainable societies in an increasingly disaster prone-world. Indonesia, as an archipelago country, has overwhelming potentials for disaster. Within the last three years Indonesia has experienced five major natural disasters across the country. The series of disaster has left psychological problems behind, in addition to economical

and physical destruction. While many people are aware of the terrible impact of disasters throughout the world, few realize that this is a problem that we can do something about. Colossal systematic efforts are required to identify and address the risks and to minimize potential disaster effects. There is a limited amount of research examining psychological responses to disasters in countries other than the United States and European (Green, 1998; Sattler, Preston, Kaiser, Olivera, Valdez, & Schlueter, 2002). This was due to a number of substantial hurdles in conducting this kind of research (Sattler et al., 2002). With regard to the need of learning the strength and weakness part of the society, this field study, which was conducted in Yogyakarta following the earthquake on May 27th, 2006, aimed to explore pattern of sur-

This article was presented at the "World Conference of Humanitarian Studies", Groningen, 4th to 7th of February 2009.

Correspondence should be addressed to Kwartarini W. Yuniarti, M.Med.Sc., Ph.D. Faculty of Psychology, Gadjah Mada University, Jalan Sosiohumaniora 1, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia. E-mail: kwartarini_yuniarti@yahoo.com phone: +62 8180 4227 402 fax: +62 274 550 436