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**ART AS ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES  
Exploring the *Pasir Putih* Community Art Perspectives in  
North Lombok Post-Disaster Situation**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines how art can transform into alternative development practices in post-disaster situation. By utilizing the internal and external network of actors, the local artists can mobilize the relief efforts from inside the shelters as response to mainstream humanitarian approach. Additionally, the local artists use their long-time existing artwork or traditional art and transform it in order to make the art relevant to a post-disaster situation. Evidence from mini-ethnography research conducted in the Pasir Putih community, West-Pemenang village, North Lombok a year after the earthquake in 2018.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Before I come to Netherlands to study (critical) development studies, back home I was a young researcher who did several research about local communities' contribution to inclusive development in Indonesia. During that time I did some engagements both in research and advocacy with these communities. They gave me a lot of insights, even with many constraints to development such as geographical location, access to education and gender discrimination to do development with their locality.

Art and creative communities in particular, been attracting my interest especially if they aim to represent what happened in the society. Through artworks, tunes and performances, I believe people can describe what they can't describe through words. However, sometimes art cannot explain by themselves. As person who study (critical) development, I believe by doing research about creative approach in development will enrich alternative insight about development, especially in the context of people everyday lives.

Putting this into disaster context, shifting local development plan from economic growth oriented to people oriented development can be more considered to build people relief - not only from the disaster but also from other causes of vulnerabilities. This research will give contribution to disaster studies that art as a process and products can be alternative way for people to relief in post disaster situation particularly in my hometown, Indonesia.

## **Keywords**

Art and development, creative development, art and social change, post-disaster, alternative development

# Chapter 1

## Sketching from scratch: the role of art in a post-disaster situation

*Art changes people. People change the world.* Thus an anonymous graffiti artist quoted the lines from John Butler's lyrics to 'Better Than', as the words were broadly sprayed on a wall. The lines were replicated in another form of art, and replicated much more when people took a picture of it and made it accessible through the Internet, so that people like me are able to come across it. Similarly, and perhaps more powerfully, I felt the same sentiment when I went to Black Panther party exhibition in The Hague, The Netherlands, in the winter of 2018. I saw many propaganda prints: flyers, posters even advertisements in newspapers to exclaim Black Panther party resistance towards racial and class exclusion in the United States from 1966 to 1982.

Art (with a capital A) is, in its many different forms, an effective tool to convey critiques on what is happening around us. Yet, the interpretation of art may be different for whoever experiences it. E.H. Gombrich, in his classic *The Story of Art*, explains that art carries a different meaning to different people, in different times (Gombrich 1995). Art does not speak for itself, there must be dialogues happening between works, audiences, scholars, and creators. As Danchev and Leslie (2009) mentioned, art can be seen as a collaborative work among scholars, curators and audiences. Artists can cite other artists, scholars can cite artists, and artists can engage what scholars say through their artworks.

As an example of this, one may listen to Don McLean's song 'Vincent'. McLean wrote *Vincent* as a tribute to Vincent van Gogh, a famous Dutch painter. He mentions some of Gogh's famous paintings, such as Starry Starry Night, in the song. I experienced the dialogue of artwork also in my own country, Indonesia. One of my favourite Indonesian poets, Joko Pinurbo wrote a beautiful piece 'Malam Ini Aku Akan Tidur di Matamu' (I want to sleep in your eyes tonight, 2004). He got inspiration from paintings of figures with black eyes, the work of Jeihan Sukmantoro, an Indonesian painter. Sukmantoro painted his first 'black eyes' in 1968, in his work 'Aku'. Jeihan painted black eyes on his paintings to illustrate Indonesia's dark political situation, in which there was "no hope".<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the dialogue of art may be heavily political. Khairani Barokka and Shebba Chhacchi, for example, are two female artists from the global South who consistently bring political messages into their artwork. Through *Indigenous Species* (2016), for example, Barokka presented the ecological destruction issues from her homeland, Indonesia, in an art book. Barokka tried to make *Indigenous Species* as inclusive as possible for different types of audiences, thus also publishing *Indigenous Species* in a Braille version<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile Chhacchi, who is famous as an artist and activist from India, brought issues about nature destruction and women's rights issues in her work since the 1980s. For example, in *Seven Lives and a Dream*,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.asumsi.co/post/jeihan-sukmantoro-si-pemberontak-bermata-hitam> accessed on 9 November 2019

<sup>2</sup> <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2017/04/19/interview-with-writerartist-khairani-barokka/> accessed on 9 November 2019

Chhacchi presented a series of women's photographs, where in the process Chhacchi encouraged the women to take control of how they wanted to represent themselves.<sup>3</sup>

This *Introduction* chapter consists of two stories that connect the emic perspectives to theoretical discussion. Before I enter the discussion, I want to make clear that what I understand as 'art' is art in broader types, including but not limited to: visual art (painting, photograph, film, posters, graffiti and sculpture), narrative text (folk, tale, fiction and poem), performance (theater, dance) and music. In the *first story* I will bring more dialogues between scholars, artists, and audiences about the role of art in the middle of society, particularly in a post-disaster situation. For the *second story*, I would elaborate on the discussion more closely connected to the research: on how art can be seen as prefigurative political action to challenge the idea of mainstream development and offer an alternative. I will close the chapter with a brief overview of my research and laying out the structure of the paper.

## 1.1 The role of art in the crisis, conflict and disaster situation

*'We seek out pain in lurid glimpses -  
bent palm, shell from Lhok Nga,  
where waves bit the treetops  
and deluged the cement plant.'*

- Khairani Barokka in *Tsunami Pilgrims*, 2017.

In *Tsunami Pilgrims*, Barokka reminisced one of the giant disasters in human history: the tsunami in 2004, that struck coastal shores from Indonesia to India. *Tsunami Pilgrims* illustrates the poignant loss after the disaster as well as the traumatic feelings it caused. Through *Tsunami Pilgrims*, I figured out that artwork can be a paradox: the poem becomes beautiful because it touched the sadness feelings of the readers.

Putting this into the crisis, conflict and disaster context, perhaps artwork can function as the expression of what victims experience: loss, grief, and even mundane feelings. Dorothea Lange (1895-1965), an American journalist photographer, made masterful photographs during the Great Depression in the United States during the 1930s. One of her iconic photographs, *Migrant Mother* (1938), captured a woman named Florence Owens Thompsons with her two daughters. In the photograph, Thompsons gazed distinctly and the daughters hid their faces behind Thompsons' face.

In my eyes, *Migrant Mother* is a powerful photograph that portrays the experience of crisis from women's eyes successfully. Lucaites and Hariman (2001) mention that Lange's photograph reflected liberal democratic public culture, because Lange manages the tension between individual agency and collective action. However, as Lauck (2015) addressed, *Migrant Mother* had different implication for Florence Thompsons herself. Despite the photograph as well as Lange becoming famous, Thompsons in the first place did not want to be staged, "and felt humiliated when it became a national icon" (Lauck 2015: 6).

Meanwhile, artwork also functions to address resistance messages during conflict and war. I emphasized a popular example for this: The Beatles and their music. The Beatles, who

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/chhachhi-urvashi-anti-dowry-sit-in-1982-p81174> accessed on 9 November 2019

came from sub-urban Liverpool, England, and had a working class background, not only sang heteronormative relationship songs but also conveyed anti-war and anti-autocracy messages. The Beatles and their popular anti-war songs showed us that music can bring big influence to make people move against the Vietnam War at that era. John Lennon, as an important figure of The Beatles in his interview (1971) claimed himself as "...revolutionary artist. My art is dedicated for change." In relation to this, Sklaroff (2017) addressed that because in the Vietnam era only musicians who spoke louder about America's failure in democratic principles made the youth feel as if their own voice was heard.

However, to what extent does art play a role as more than just an expressive medium? In a post-disaster context, art can make people express their experiences to turn the problems into "how it works" (Koritz and Sancez 2014). Similar to this discussion Huss et al. (2016) did art-based research in Sri Lanka after a civil war and the tsunami. One of their findings suggested that despite art is a secondary need, the villagers still "see art as part of their endeavour to rehabilitate their community" (Huss et al. 2016: 299). As further example of how art can give direct benefit to society, with support from the government of Victoria, some local residents in Strathewen organised a project to make colorful mosaic letterboxes. This project involved the community in the process in order to heal their trauma from the Victoria bushfire disaster in 2009 (Fisher and Talve 2011).

In relation to art and development studies and practices, Lepenies (2013) emphasized that the "linear perspectives" which dominated production of knowledge and creativities, shaped the mainstream mindset surrounding development. Capous-Desylass and Morgaine (2018) addressed that art-based research is important to decolonize research and make knowledge more reflective to the society. Art can also function as representing and creating alternative development discourse (Clammer 2015), as well as make people believing and knowing (Lepenies 2013). I believe doing research about creative approaches in development will enrich alternative insight about development.

From this brief discussion we know clearly that art may be useful in crisis, war and post-disaster. However, by employing an ethnographic approach, my research will unpack the transformation of art practices and how the context of the society influences them based on artists' perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, this research is useful to see how art activities become embedded in people's everyday lives and perhaps can challenge the existing idea or practices about development in their particular contexts.

## 1.2 Overview of the research paper

My professional encounter with a group of artists from North Lombok, under a community called *Pasir Putih*, inspired me to learn more about how artists try to *change the world* with their artwork. I have known them just from 2017 and have been intrigued to unpack their perspectives on putting the artwork in the middle of society. From the artists' perspective, their works are driven by problems around them - hence this research paper aims to examine how *Pasir Putih* as an art community has been transforming and performing alternative development practices in a post-disaster context. Having these objectives in mind, I came up with this main research question: *how does community art fill the gap between people and development and make people more to work together in post-disaster situations?* I use the term community art as meaning art which done collaboratively and has social or political relevance to the society.

In the following chapter 2, I will elaborate on the methodological approach, and consider discussions, dilemmas and challenges during four weeks of ethnographic process in West Pemenang village, North Lombok. This chapter also will also give background information about the research

The first research sub-question: *What other interventions exist besides community art in post-disaster situation? In which situations can art projects come as an alternative solution for post-disaster problems?* will be examined in chapter 3. In the chapter, I will elaborate on two initiatives from Pasir Putih after the disaster happened: *Pura-Pura Relawan* and the *Art Quake* project. Additionally, this chapter will explore how Pasir Putih initiatives interacted with other interventions in the post-disaster phase.

Chapter 4 consists of personal stories of three Pasir Putih artists: Oka, Dani and Ana. With their stories, I will explore the second sub research question: *How do local artists understand community art in a post-disaster situation?* Oka, Dani and Ana's stories will shed perspectives that art can transform into alternative development practices. In chapter 5, I will synthesise all the stories from the site into a conclusion and reflection.

# Chapter 2

## Methodology: Exercising a mini ethnography in the North Lombok post-disaster situation

This chapter is a space where I would like to tell about this research more from my perspective and experiences as a researcher. I would elaborate my mini ethnographic journey with the Pasir Putih community in West Pemenang village, Pemenang sub-district, North Lombok, which included participant observation and triangulation processes. As I'm ready to be surprised during the process, in this chapter I would address dilemmas regarding my positionality as well as challenges that I faced during the research period. Last but not least, *situating the knowledge* of my research to a particular context, namely the post-disaster situation in Pemenang sub-district with its social and culture, which are also necessary to put into methodological discussions.

### 2.1 Setting the stage: who are Pasir Putih? Are they artists?

I have known the Pasir Putih community since mid-2017, when I visited their office near Bangsal Harbour, Pemenang village. I came there with a college from Centre for Innovation Policy and Governance Jakarta to propose Pasir Putih to become one of the partners in the *Voice: Echoing Evidence* project. In the project, we would assist marginal communities to do research and advocacy about local policy. As a community, Pasir Putih not only focuses on creating artworks such as performance, short films, and drawings, but they also do archiving and research work.

Pasir Putih was initiated on 7 January 2010 by five undergraduate students in Pemenang, one of them being, Muhammad Gazali or Gazali - the current director of Pasir Putih. They consist of 13 active members and only 2 of them are women. Interestingly, none of them attained a formal education in art. Most of them have a bachelor's degree from different fields such as communication and education studies. They have skills in art by doing, as is the case with, for example, Muhammad Hamdani, or Dani, who can now claim to be a video artist and has many videos in his portfolio. Dani joined Pasir Putih when he was 17 years old, when he had not yet attained the skill for handling a camera or video recorder. Other members encouraged him to learn: "I used to write many poems before, but Zikri (an artist from Forum Lenteng) suggested me to make a visual form of poems. He said that the visual also can be poetic."

Four of the Pasir Putih artists include Dani, Rusli Oka, or Oka (also a video artist), and Onyong (an illustrator), when I was in the field, they also contributed as a teacher for extracurricular art subjects in junior high schools in North Lombok. I met 8 out of 13 Pasir Putih members. For the female members, I only had conversations with Martini Supiana, or Ana, because she is the sole female artist in Pasir Putih.

On their website, Pasir Putih define themselves as "*organisasi nirlaba egaliter berbasis di Kecamatan Pemenang, Lombok Utara, Nusa Tenggara Barat oleh pegiat kultural, aktivis media dan seniman sejak tahun 2010* (an egalitarian non-profit organisation which is initiated by cultural and

media activists, and artists in Pemenang district, North Lombok since 2010)".<sup>4</sup> When Pasir Putih started as an organisation, they were part of *Aku Massa*, a capacity building programme in media studies: including its history and practical skills. This program was initiated by *Forum Lenteng*, a media and art organisation based in Jakarta, Indonesia.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, although Pasir Putih is rooted in North Lombok, they have had a strong connection with *Forum Lenteng* since their inception.

From my first visit to Pasir Putih in 2017, I learned that they were doing the following activities: organising the *Bangsal Menggawe Festival*, hosting movie screening, creating a platform for citizen journalism<sup>6</sup> and broadcasting a local TV streaming program.<sup>7</sup> When I went back to Pasir Putih for the current research fieldwork (from 15 July to 7 August 2019), I asked Muhammad Sibawaihi, or Siba, the program director in Pasir Putih, about how they decided the activities that they wanted to organise, because it seems that they do not restrict themselves to initiate or seek support for non-art projects, despite the fact that they always put artistic aspects in their activities. They currently are currently proposing a research project about archiving herbal plants in North Lombok for survival in disaster situations to the Ministry of Education and Culture.<sup>8</sup> This implies that their activities have a broad focus, and one can hardly say that they only do art projects. In one informal conversation, Siba addressed to me that the main focus of Pasir Putih activities is media. "We want to address *permasalahan lokal* (locality problems) through media. Media can be anything, film, photography, archives and art projects," said Siba.

After having had many informal conversations with Pasir Putih, I found out that they define themselves more flexibly rather than just 'artist'. Among people in Pemenang village, they defined themselves as *warga* (citizens/inhabitants). "Ya, kami *warga* saja (We are *warga*). We are part of them", as Gazali said to me on my second day in West Pemenang village (16 July 2019). When they explained their work or even themselves among people in the village, they avoid to use term *art* or *artist* to make their work more relevant to people in Pemenang. Being *warga* is also part of their strategy to involve people into their activities. They hold a value that they usually describe to me as, "our activities are from *warga*, by *warga* and for *warga*".

In another opportunity, Gazali addressed to me that they are artists to some extent, because they do artistic activities most of the time. However, they defined themselves as artists to people outside Pemenang, for example to introduce themselves and work to get support from external sources. For example, a week after I arrived in Pemenang Village, Siba

<sup>4</sup> <http://pasirputih.org/tentang-organisasi/>, accessed on 27 September 2019

<sup>5</sup> <http://akumassa.org/id/kilas-balik-komunitas-pasir-putih/> accessed on 27 September 2019

<sup>6</sup> Pasir Putih initiated a platform called Berajah Aksara, [berajahaksara.org](http://berajahaksara.org), where everyone can leave messages or writings as long as it relates to locality issues in Lombok Island. However, currently the contributors are still only Pasir Putih artists. As Siba said to me, this platform is also part of "knowledge distribution" from the activities that Pasir Putih already initiated.

<sup>7</sup> Before the earthquake happened, Pasir Putih streamed a local TV program called Berugak TV. In Berugak TV they recorded people's daily lives in the Pemenang district and some "how to", or tutorial videos from people in Pemenang. As Dani told me, this program is a counter narrative from mainstream TV programmes. He also said that *warga* enjoyed seeing themselves and neighbours on TV.

<sup>8</sup> They proposed this research as part of Kemah Budaya Pemuda (Culture Camp for Youth) in Yogyakarta last July 2019, as part of the Ministry of Education and Culture programme. The Pasir Putih community was selected to be involved in the camp, however at the end they did not get the grant to support their research. In the last discussion that I followed, they still wanted to continue the research without grants from the government.

and Ahmad Ijtihad (Ijtihad), another Pasir Putih artist, said goodbye to me because they were going to East Nusa Tenggara for a month as part of *Seniman Mengajar* program. This program is initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Siba took part in the program as a media artist, while Ijtihad enrolled as a video and photography artist. They shared knowledge, experiences and skills to local communities in the area.

## 2.2 Mini ethnography research: immersion in Pasir Putih camp, archives review and triangulation interview

On July 2018, the earthquake struck in Lombok island, leaving North Lombok as the most damaged area. Pasir Putih, as an art community based in North Lombok, also experienced the damaged neighbourhood. During that time, I was in touch with Pasir Putih artists and they told me that they initiated some artistic activities in response post disaster situation. They named the project *Art Quake*, which included many artistic activities: mini-concerts, movie screenings, and video and drawing workshops.

This phenomenon intrigued me to explore how Pasir Putih as a community is transforming their project in response to the disaster situation. According to Oka, Pasir Putih had no knowledge of earthquakes before the 2018 earthquake struck. A year after the earthquake, Pasir Putih's activities have been in response to the problems in North Lombok in post-disaster context. Therefore, examining their knowledge transformation in response the post-disaster situation and how they applied it in their everyday life will be the focus of my research.

To fulfil my research objective, I have used a mini-ethnographic approach (elaborated on in more detail below). As Escobar suggested (1995: 22) ethnography is useful “to investigate the concrete forms that concepts and practices of development and modernity take in specific communities”. For this I have spent four weeks for participant observation in the Pasir Putih camp, in the Pemenang district. I learned that Pasir Putih as a group of artists transform themselves by contextualising their work based on what happened in society, in this case: the earthquake. As an ethnographer, my presence in the middle of the community might give nuances about how the community presents itself to “the outsider”. The exploration of the Pasir Putih artists' perspectives is not separated from the way I interacted with them.

My initial plan was to observe the artists' perspectives and responses to the post-disaster situation, with *Art Quake* as a case for four weeks. When I arrived in Pemenang village on 15 July 2019, the *Art Quake* project had already ended. However, Pasir Putih artists currently are doing more projects which not separated from post-disaster situation. For the first week of my fieldwork, I stayed in Pasir Putih camp to get know the artists better and their everyday life, include their artistic activities.

As a researcher who spent four weeks in the post disaster area, I saw that many neighborhoods are still in the recovery process, with new public buildings replacing the damaged ones, and the erection of wooden houses, since people are traumatized with concrete walls. I had everyday conversations with the artists about their aftermath experiences, and on how they got assistance from the government for rebuilding their houses. We also spoke about their own traumas a year after the disaster, since they are also the survivors of the earthquake. I even experienced some minor earthquakes myself during my four week stay.

In order to examine how Pasir Putih initiatives in the post-disaster situation are connected to other existing interventions, I used two particular methods to support the participant observation process: *firstly*, semi-structured interviews, and *secondly*, media and archival data analysis. These two methods are essential to the triangulation process in processing the emic data that I attained from participant observation. Additionally, I did not get clear information about other existing interventions from the data attained through participant observation - since Pasir Putih artists are more interested in expressing their own experiences in the post-disaster situation.

I did interviews with Mitarja and Hanani, whom I chose to interview because they have strong connections with Pasir Putih, while they are not officially members. Mitarja is an inhabitant of West Pemenang village, who often helps Pasir Putih during their activities. He gave me an overview about what happened during the aftermath and what people needed the most at that time. Meanwhile Hanani, who functioned as *pendamping desa* (village facilitator), gave me a starting point for information about different types of major interventions and who provided them until a year after the earthquake.

Starting from initial interview findings, I analyzed online news articles, articles on the *Berajah Aksara* website, and Pasir Putih social media posts on official Instagram and Facebook accounts. The media analysis review is important to get a sense of how Pasir Putih presented themselves and their ideas, to help them in providing assistance. Additionally, this method also provides essential background information about Pasir Putih's network (see Chapter 3 for further elaboration) as they interacted with each other on social media. As Hine (as cited in Postill and Pink 2012: 126) has argued, the Internet can be seen as "a discursively performed culture" and cultural archives in form of digital text. For these reasons I decided to include social media posts in the analysis.

However, the depth of media analysis data is arguable, since they only cover two types of posts that I discovered. Firstly, there are posts which inform the public of their purposes and goals in providing assistance. Secondly, there are posts which describe the positive impacts from their own interventions. Siba once addressed to me that they regularly weren't able to report everything while providing assistance, due the lack of Internet access and "a lot of things to manage in the field". Observing Pasir Putih practices in utilizing social media and the content that they produce is not separate from the offline context. This correspondence with Postill and Pink (2012: 126) argument that "the internet as a messy field-work environment that crosses online and offline worlds, and is connected and constituted through the ethnographer's narrative"

As I have mentioned above, the Pasir Putih community consists of 13 active members, of which I have met only 7 during my one month stay in the Pemenang village. All members originate from different parts of the island of Lombok. Two of them, Siba and Ijtihad, I had already met during the aforementioned *Voice* project. During my first week in the Pemenang village, however, they left to attend *Seniman Mengajar*. Thus, there were only five artists that I saw on a nearly daily basis in the Pasir Putih camp: Gazali (Pasir Putih director), Oka (curator of Bioskop Pasir Putih), Dani (video artist active in the herbal plants research project), Ana (*rudat* and theater actress), and Onyong (illustrator and *Kelas Wah* organiser).

On my second week of fieldwork, in order to answer my second research question, I decided to focus on Oka, Dani and Ana's perspectives and everyday lives. I chose them as my research participants because during my stay, they actively managed three respective programs and are closely related to the post-disaster situation. The projects are *Bioskop Pasir Putih* (Cinema Pasir Putih), a research project about herbal plants, and *rudat* performance. The

third programme, called *Aksana Tani* (Farming Knowledge), I decided not to focus on in my research. This is because, as the programme focuses on planting vegetables and encouraging people to do the same (in order to survive disaster), it does not contain an artistically significant approach.

Therefore, there were two principles that became my main guidance in the field. Firstly, I focused on “select and gather” experiences that are related to transformation of knowledge before and after the disaster situation. Secondly, my whole field process is a way to understand how Pasir Putih artists situate their art in the middle of society, in this case: the North Lombok post-disaster society. Despite the dilemma regarding how Pasir Putih define themselves (whether as artists or as *warga*), I choose to focus on their artistic activities, as their role as *artists* is a “strange in familiar” situation for the community’s activity landscape in North Lombok. Related to this, Gardner and Lewis (2015: 79) argued that the anthropology of development can be used to challenge the mainstream idea of development, by bringing alternative practices as examples. Rather than being trapped into the traditional notion of anthropology as “knowledge for understanding”, Gardner and Lewis (2015) suggest that anthropology can also be more practical.

To get a complete picture of their stories, I used participant observation methods with different experimentations, based on my considerations on the artists’ everyday activities. As Hammersley (1992) mentioned, participant observation is the core of ethnographic research. Participant observation activities helped me to understand beyond what was explicitly mentioned by the research subject, such as the reasons, rationales, and motivations that underlie their activities. However, after I left the site, I realised that the data from my immersion in the Pasir Putih camp and informal conversations with the artists need to be supported by additional data. There were several reasons to go beyond only field work data. Firstly, Pasir Putih artists themselves claimed that they are concerned with media platforms and regularly circulate their work into their own platforms. Through their official social media posts, posters, articles and video archives, I got more of a sense of how the artists use the media to benefit their projects. Secondly, the artists, especially Dani and Oka, asked me to check their video portfolios to help them better explain about the art perspectives.

Due to the fact that most of Oka’s daily activities are inside Pasir Putih, I only had conversations with him in the camp and observed his daily activities right on the site. Oka is a 25-year-old video artist from Kayangan village, North Lombok. When I was there, however, Oka’s work focused more on curating films in Bioskop Pasir Putih and manage the camp. I started having conversations with Oka on my second week and spent two different days gathering his personal perspectives about his project, experiences in Pasir Putih as an artist as well as his reasons to join. Additionally, I asked him about his experiences during and after the earthquake. I began my conversation by asking about his hobbies to relate his personal art interest before putting it into the context of Pasir Putih. I also saw his videos and film posters, and attended his film screenings twice to engage with his projects. In his everyday life, I observed Oka rebuild and decorate Pasir Putih camp infrastructures with Mitarja, such as a public toilet, a screening room, and fences.

I used a different approach to get a story from Dani, because his projects are mostly related to making video’s or short films. Dani is a 26-years-old video artist from West Pemenang village, the same place where the Pasir Putih camp is located. His videos and films are always about people’s everyday lives, as well as local development problems in North Lombok (see further elaboration in chapter 4). During the first week, I followed Dani and his research team into the forests and observed their meetings. In the second week, I asked him to bring me to places where he grew up: from his schools and neighbourhood until the

soccer field. From this journey, I could connect the idea on how Dani saw and understood what had been happening around him and put this into his artworks.

The last story comes from Ana. I gathered her stories from daily conversations and activities that we did together. From the second week until the rest of my time in the field, I spent nights in Ana and Gazali's house. Ana is a 28-years-old *Rudat* and theater performer.<sup>9</sup> Ana spent half her day as a teacher in a playgroup and the rest of the day for *Rudat* performance exercise with some women in West Pemenang village. I also followed her and did *Rudat* exercise together with a group of women in the Pemenang district government office. Sometimes Ana also asked me to assist her to the market to buy Pasir Putih domestic necessities.

### 2.3 Reflection and further ethical discussion

I have been building my relations with Pasir Putih for almost two years, even before I did my fieldwork in Pemenang village for this research. When I started this research, I did not have any difficulties to approach them to work together again. My previous research experience with them in the *Voice* project helped me to communicate about the research intention very easily. We already had similar levels of thoughts that research as part of knowledge production and exchange processes is necessary.

I was considering to do the research as an “artist in residence”, and doing “co-creation”, where I could involve with all their activities without interference from any power relations. I planned to collaborate on some artworks with the artists for their projects, in order to learn how they think about the artworks. However, they saw me as a researcher, since I knew them back two years ago. When I explained my intentions on the second day of fieldwork (16 July 2019) to Siba and Gazali, they expected me to collaborate with them as a “researcher”. At some point they also addressed to me that my research would be important to them, to help them define and explain themselves and their work to the outside world.

On the sixth day of fieldwork, Siba asked me to attend and speak at an informal lecture to people in West Pemenang village. He asked me to choose a topic that I learnt much about during my master's programme and I decided to talk about local networks in relation to building alternative practices of development. They introduced me as an international graduate student and former researcher. From that informal lecture I learnt that most of the participants are men. Only two women among more than ten men were participating: Hanani and Rizka. During another opportunity, I also observed that women are almost invisible in community activities. Once I followed Dani and his research team to visit a community, where only the men and I were served coffee. People treated me equal with the men in the village, because I came from outside. As Pasir Putih artists told me, their (people in North Lombok) value is to respect the guest. To some extent, this situation benefited me to have many conversations with people in the village. On the other hand, I rarely got women's perspectives except from Ana and Hanani.

<sup>9</sup> Rudat is a traditional dance performance from many different parts of Indonesia. After the earthquake, Pasir Putih, through Gazali as director, initiated Rudat to become one of trauma healing tools for earthquake survivors. However, according to Gazali, since last year Rudat has been developing into more aerobic movements. Ana plays a role in inviting more women inside and outside Pemenang district to perform Rudat (see chapter 3).

Four week was a very short time for an ethnographic research project. Another challenge that I faced was that all the artists had different focuses in their projects. Therefore, I spent a week to observe which project I really needed to focus on. In some ideal cases, I was able to involve fully in their activities, such as accompanying Dani and his research team to the forest and joining Ana's *senam rudad* practices. However, sometimes Dani and Oka stopped their activities and spared time to have conversations with me.

When I had the conversations with the artists, each of their stories is really personal. At the beginning, I communicated to the artists about their consent to mention their names and personal identities such as age in this paper. They agreed to be staged. Oka and Dani even shared their portfolios to me, because their leader Gazali told them to do so. At the site, it was not hard to get the information from them except about their project plan and financial issue. I avoid the question about money (for example about financial benefit as artists in Pasir Putih) since I observed that the artists often mention that they do not receive many financial supports from external source. When Oka and Dani mentioned about the financial issue on their story, I asked them again for consent to include that as data. In the process of writing this paper

# Chapter 3

## Post-disaster relief in the Pemenang sub-district, who's doing what, why and for whom?

When I arrived in North Lombok, on Monday 15 July 2019, I saw many places had changed since my previous visit in 2017. Public buildings such as the school, the market and the mosque were still in the process of being rebuilt. Many people were still rebuilding their houses as well, later I found out that some of them relocated their houses into less crowded neighbourhoods. Pasir Putih, as my main destination, also relocated their office and centre of activities to an empty lot of land that used to be a shelter after earthquake evacuations. Based on some informal conversations around the Pasir Putih camp, I figured it out that even though people had already left the shelter camps, some assistance in especially rebuilding their houses came from different bodies and organisations, including the government.

This chapter consists of two stories which indicate how Pasir Putih responded to the earthquake situation by utilising local and external networks. The first story is about the *Pura-Pura Relawan* movement, where Pasir Putih positioned themselves as victims and volunteers at the same time to organise humanitarian assistance for the earthquake victims. In the second story, I will explore how Pasir Putih interacted with other artists or art community networks to initiate an art-after-disaster project called *Art Quake*.

### 3.1 Story about *Pura-Pura Relawan*: Organising humanitarian assistance from the shelter camps

This chapter attempts to emphasize the Pasir Putih community's experiences when organising humanitarian assistance and creating cultural (and also artistic to some extent) activities after the earthquake. Through their experiences, I want to demonstrate that Pasir Putih's motivation to organise humanitarian assistance is driven by their experience as the victims and as artists who work in the community for some years. In addition, they experimented with the way they organised the assistance due to their lack of experience in organising humanitarian assistance. On the first night after I arrived in the Pasir Putih camp (Wednesday, 15 July 2019), Siba and Gazali told me about their experiences in organising *Pura-Pura Relawan*. As Siba told me, "All of us have no experience to organise assistance after the disaster. *Kita mah sotoy aja* (we just did some trial and errors)." They held this initiative a week after the earthquake until a month later and reached out to villages in West and North Lombok that were affected by the disaster.

They were critical of the way in which other humanitarian assistance actors (government, NGOs, and international organisations) gave support, and decided to create their own initiative movement: *Pura-Pura Relawan*. "We are *pura-pura relawan* (pretend to be volunteers) and *kadang-kadang korban* (sometimes we are victims)," said Siba when he told me about their activism movement during the after-earthquake situation. I had conversations with different people in Pasir Putih to learn that they named the movement *Pura-Pura Relawan*. As they said to me, the phrase "*pura-pura relawan* and *kadang-kadang korban*" was rather befitting their situation after the earthquake. They were victims: traumatized, scared, and lost their houses, but at the same time they came from a community that had been working closely to the people in Pemenang.

This situation, as some of Pasir Putih's artists (Gazali, Siba, Dani and Oka) have told me, made them want to do something for other victims in Pemenang. "I felt scared. It was the first time I was afraid of death. I was in the Pasir Putih office when the earthquake happened. They told us to check on our families first, and after some days we were back here. We could not just sit and not do anything," Oka said to me in one informal conversation. The reason for naming their movement with *Pura-Pura Relawan* was also to make an impression that they are *warga* too and as fellow *warga* they helped each other. As Oka addressed to me, "when we visited their village to distribute the logistics, they even treated us with food. We helped each other in shelters."

Hence they tried to fill the gap with any ways they thought were different than mainstream humanitarian assistance. As Oka addressed to me, Pasir Putih artists learnt from their experiences as victims who received similar assistance. He observed that people or organisations *dari luar* (from outside Lombok) just came to the shelters, provided logistic assistance and left. Meanwhile, according to Oka's experience, he saw in shelter camps the situation was dull and people had no activities. However, the fact that different organizations and people came to the shelters and initiated activities to help people heal from disaster traumas could not be dismissed. In the West Pemenang shelter, people built a tent dedicated to trauma healing purposes.<sup>10</sup>

However, in order to act according to their own critiques on mainstream humanitarian assistance, Pasir Putih decided to stay 2 to 3 days in the shelter and create activities which focused on the children. In the villages they visited they provided assistance, and Dani told me that in the afternoon they held video workshops for children and young people. Pasir Putih invited them to engage in video-making activities with very simple gadgets such as the smartphone. Later in the evening, they organised a film screening called *Bioskop Pasir Putih*, which actually was their regular programme before the earthquake struck (see Chapter 4 for further elaboration about *Bioskop Pasir Putih*).

Furthermore, their activities were also supported by other communities. For instance, a community called *Kampoeng Edukasi* from Surabaya, East Java came to Pasir Putih *posko* (logistic shelter) in Kekeri village, Gunung Sari sub-district to offer psychological assistance for the earthquake victims.<sup>11</sup> *Kampoeng Edukasi* is a training organization whose expertise lies in giving psycho-social assistance and training. The activities included hypnotherapy exercises, games and cartoon screening for the children and sometimes music performance.<sup>12</sup> The volunteers from *Kampoeng Edukasi* joined *Pura-Pura Relawan* activities from shelter to shelter. Being earthquake victims themselves, Pasir Putih artists also joined the therapy sessions to learn how they can cope with post-disaster trauma.

As Pasir Putih tried to immerse themselves more in *warga* activities through the *Pura-Pura Relawan* movement, I learnt that they started the initiative based on network proximity. Dani has stated in one of our informal conversations that Pasir Putih firstly prioritised their networks when distributing humanitarian assistance. They contacted people they knew in particular villages before visiting and staying to help people there. In another opportunity,

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Hanani, 12 October 2019. In informal conversation with Onyong on-site, he addressed that for trauma-healing activities many people and organisations were involved.

<sup>11</sup> In an informal conversation with Oka, July 2019 he addressed that he and other Pasir Putih artists never knew *Kampoeng Edukasi* before they came to Pasir Putih posko. *Kampoeng Edukasi* is a training organisation from Surabaya, East Java, that provides learning and training services.

<sup>12</sup> <http://pasirputih.org/kelas-berbagi-hipnoterapi-pemulihan-psikologis-warga-terdampak-gempa/> accessed on 25 October 2019.

Gazali told me that one day they had to stick a paper with “Pasir Putih” written on it to the car, because before they did that many *warga* in the street stopped their car and asked for assistance. “When we put “Pasir Putih” name in front of the car, people gave us the way because they knew we would prioritize our networks first,” said Gazali to me.

Furthermore, assistance disparities among regions was influenced based on how much a village or sub-district had access to NGOs or other organisations. Similar to what Hanani mentioned, “every NGO and international organisation that was based in Lombok organised themselves to help the victims”. For example, the INOVASI (The Innovation for Indonesia’s School Children) programme from Department Foreign Affair and Trade Australia built temporary schools and gave psychosocial assistance for students and teachers in some of their work areas, including the West Pemenang village.<sup>13</sup>

From the on-site informal conversations I learnt that Pasir Putih benefited from their external networks on different levels: regional, national, and international. This had two reasons. *Firstly*, the artists used the network to gain any form of support: financial, logistics and spreading announcements. In one informal conversation, Siba mentioned that Pasir Putih artists had no clue about how to organise post-disaster assistance. “None of us had experience with that. However, what we could rely on was our network.” At that time, as Siba told me, he started to create “call for donation” announcement posters to inform people outside Lombok about the aftermath situation and what people really needed at that time. The announcement was written in English, which implied that they also reached out people from outside Indonesia. Some communities that have strong connections with Pasir Putih, such as Forum Lenteng, Gubuak Kopi, Solok Milik Warga, Yayasan Kelola, as well as a group of artists in Poland, also spread the “call for donation” poster in their social media channels.

Pasir Putih organised their *posko* (logistics shelter) in the Gunung Sari sub-district, West Lombok, which is located 17.9 kilometres from the West Pemenang village. They chose to organise the *posko* away from North Lombok because they aimed to reach more villages in providing the assistance. In addition, there was another *posko* organised by people at West Pemenang village. In the West Pemenang shelter, according to my conversations with Hanani, many organisations provided logistical assistances because of its easy geographic access.<sup>14</sup>

In a month, Pasir Putih successfully collected 800 million rupiahs (approximately 57.000 USD) and allocated most of the money to buying and distributing humanitarian assistance. After a month of running *Pura-Pura Relawan*, they decided to close the account and stopped organising the assistance. They brought all the remaining logistics back to the West Pemenang *posko* and distributed them to people in the village. On different occasions, Gazali, Oka, Siba and Dani addressed similar reasons for this decision: they did not want to be “a superhero.” This implies that they already noticed that by organising 800 million rupiahs in a short time, this could consequently bring a power relation among the *warga*. According to Gazali, Pasir Putih as a community observed the unequal *power relations* happening between people who work in communities such as NGO activists and *warga*. “The activists here (in

<sup>13</sup> <https://thepalladiumgroup.com/news/Education-in-the-Face-of-Disaster> accessed on 20 October 2019

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Hanani, 20 October 2019. She addressed that people who organised the assistance in West Pemenang posko were *tokoh masyarakat* there. Hanani said that the logistics assistance just came from various organisations and people, meanwhile infrastructural support such as water facilities were provided by the local government body: *Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah* (Regional Body for Disaster Relief).

North Lombok) often saw themselves as people who *memberdayakan* (empowering) warga. We (Pasir Putih artists) avoid that perspective. We believe that *warga* can empower themselves,” said Gazali.

Another reason why they decided to stop the assistance soon after a month, was that they felt that *warga* started becoming dependent on the assistance. “The assistance made *warga* not want to *bangkit* (relief or get out from vulnerabilities),” said Oka. Their skeptical reason was based on the great amount of available food, healthcare, and baby necessities such as milk and diapers which could be accessed freely in the shelters. “The food that people were able to access in the shelters after the disaster was actually way much more than they could usually afford,” addressed Hanani. From what Pasir Putih artists and Hanani addressed, this implies that in general, people in North Lombok before the disaster have less access to daily necessities, including food and healthcare products compared to the post-disaster situation.

Pasir Putih artists are aware that people in the disaster area actually were able to *bangkit*. Similar to this, Middleton and O’Keefe (1998) problematized the Blaikie et.al (1994) model which argued that poverty and vulnerability to disaster are strongly linked, thus saying that it discounts poor people’s ability to escape vulnerability. Middleton and O’Keefe addressed that humanitarian assistance is not neutral from political agenda (1998: 15), therefore seeing vulnerability and poverty as the result of “wider forces”.

After the *Pura-Pura Relawan* movement was halted and the *warga* in West Pemenang shelter started to go back and rebuild their homes, Pasir Putih as a community rented the empty land where the shelter camp used to be. They moved their office and when I was there in the middle of July, they had been constructing some permanent spaces for their activities. I saw and experienced that the space was still transforming, and could not be separated from the earthquake context. For instance, they chose to use mostly wood materials and the remains of destroyed buildings to build the spaces as they wanted. They built two wooden houses, a cinema room, a *berugak* (an outdoor living room), and a public kitchen. When I was there, they had built two public toilets. All these places are built in a spacious land where they also grew vegetables and some trees. Next to the space is where two big murals from *Art Quake* project were produced, a collaborative art project in order to respond to the Lombok disaster.

### **3.2 Story about *Art Quake*: creating an art intervention project from the closest network**

From the middle of August 2018 until the end of September 2018, Pasir Putih created an art intervention project called *Art Quake*. They created another poster and announced the project on social media as “call for heart”. *Art Quake*, as mentioned in the announcement, aimed to “open opportunity for artists to share feelings of happiness in the name of humanity.” The *Art Quake* announcement was also written in English, and called upon “all artists around the world”. Six artists outside of the Pasir Putih community responded to this initiative by doing art projects such as drawing, *wayang* (traditional puppet) performance, dancing, and painting murals on empty walls and emergency toilets.

Through exploring the *Art Quake* story, my aim is to examine how Pasir Putih artists worked with the idea of the project: from the ideal “open call” to utilize their closest network of artists. Siba, as the initiator of the project, mentioned that they tried to mobilise the artists inside and outside Lombok “to do something” in the form of art works for the earthquake victims. From six artists who responded to their call, five of them came from Lombok island

and were part of Pasir Putih's network already. The sixth artist, Prashasti Putri, came from Forum Lenteng, a community which also had a strong connection with Pasir Putih before.

However, the *Art Quake* project seemed a side project of Pasir Putih since artists such as Oka and Dani rarely seemed to discuss it. Sometimes they mentioned the activities which were associated with the *Art Quake* project, but not as much as the *Pura-Pura Relawan* movement. As Gazali mentioned to me, the *Art Quake* project simply aimed to re-encourage art and cultural activities in Pasir Putih after the hassle of responding to the post-disaster situation. In another conversation, Onyong addressed that the *warga* were not really aware of the *Art Quake* project - especially that it was Pasir Putih who initiated it. "It was because not only Pasir Putih artists were involved, but also many people from the outside. People here are aware of the trauma healing activities, but not as *Art Quake*," mentioned Onyong.

From the video and article archives in the Pasir Putih website and social media channels, I found out that there were two main types of activities in *Art Quake* initiative. *Firstly*, activities that aimed to engage with people in the shelters and entertain them directly. For instance, Hijjatul Islam, an illustrator from North Lombok, did a project called *Gerilya Rupa* in respondse to the *Art Quake* call. The target audience of the *Gerilya Rupa* project was children in the shelter camps. Hijjatul visited five *dusun* (hamlets), namely Dusun Kakot, Tebango Balot, Tanaq Ampar, Bilok Guna and Kandang Kaok, with Pasir Putih artists. As Ijtihad reported in Berajah Aksara website, Hijjatul invited the children "to draw the landscape around them and tell their interest behind the drawing."<sup>15</sup> By inviting children to draw the natural landscape together, Hijjatul aimed to encourage them to be more attentive to the nature surrounding them. After the drawing workshop, they made a small exhibition in the shelters for drawings made by the children. Hijjatul was part of Pasir Putih artist group, but currently works independently.

Meanwhile, Emi, a *wayang* performer (in Indonesia called a *dalang*) from West Lombok showed *wayang* performances on the subject of "independency at shelter camps". Emi performed the *wayang* show at the West Pemenang shelter. He played the colourful wooden puppets with traditional music played musical accompaniment. In their video archive on social media, the target audience was mostly children. Emi had also been part of the Pasir Putih network before, since he performed at the Bangsal Menggawe festival in 2016 as a dancer.

The last example of these activities was dancing practice by Prashasti Putri, an artist from the Forum Lenteng community based in Jakarta. Prashasti taught the *Ratoeh Jaroe*<sup>16</sup> dance to the children at the Pemenang shelter for some time, and performed it together with the children at the West Pemenang shelter. The reason why Prashasti taught *Ratoeh Jaroe*, according to Ijtihad's report in *Berajah Aksara*, is that Prashasti initially came to the shelter to prepare *Bangsal Menggawe 2019*, but, as Siba addressed to me, she initiated the organisation of *Ratoeh Jaroe* practices for the children. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Pasir Putih has a very strong connection with Forum Lenteng, since Pasir Putih was born from the *akumassa* programme by the Forum Lenteng community.

*Art Quake* was not only creating activities in the shelters, however, as *secondly*, they also tried to make one of the shelters in Pemenang into a more pleasant environment for the people who lived there.. They did a collaboration with two mural artists from Lombok, Reva and David Emet, to fill an empty wall with murals. Reva is a mural artist based in Mataram, a capital of West Nusa Tenggara, and he is part of the Lombok Street Art Community. His

<sup>15</sup> <http://berajahaksara.org/2018/09/28/artquake-menumbang-rasa-berbagi-bahagia-call-for-heart/> accessed on 20 October 2019

<sup>16</sup> *Ratoeh jaroe* is a traditional dance from Aceh, Indonesia which was performed by women

mural project for *Art Quake* is *Hope Behind The Wall*. He painted a girl looking into the ocean through an unzipped wall. The mural was painted on a sports hall building next to the Pasir Putih camps. I did not get to meet Reva during my stay in Lombok, so I asked Dani about the interpretation of the mural. He said to me, “people are getting scared of concrete walls after the earthquake, and Reva wanted to turn that feeling into something hopeful. There is nothing to be scared about.” Next to Reva’s mural, David Emet responded with a mural of his own, by creating a graffiti painting named *The Giant Mural Hope Behind The Wall 2*. David Emet is a street artist who was also involved in the Bangsal Menggawe festival in 2017, through the *Cidomo* (a traditional mode of transportation) project. The graffiti spelled out a sentence in the Sasak language “*Silaq Ta Ponggoq Bareng-bareng*”, meaning *let's get through this together*. From my perspective, David’s graffiti explicitly expressed that, in order for the earthquake survivors to be able to feel relief from their worries, people in the shelters have to help each other.

As Gazali told me, Art Quake also built and painted an emergency toilet in order to make the experience in the shelter camps more enjoyable. Pasir Putih artists also had a collaboration with Dacko, a street artist who also hails from the Lombok Street Art community. Dacko painted 9 emergency toilets in four shelters with colorful graffiti. In one conversation with Gazali, he addressed to me that Pasir Putih provided emergency toilets with the support from the donors, because in some shelters, there were too many people for the amount of toilets available. From their social media posts, I saw that they made another poster announcement with a sketch of an emergency toilet and the budget specifications to organise funding. When I helped them build two new public toilets in the Pasir Putih camp, he addressed to me that “after the earthquake, we made public toilets to become more attractive like these two. We wanted to reduce the shabby atmosphere in the shelters.”

People and organisations from outside also organised trauma healing activities and made *Art Quake* hard to recognise as a Pasir Putih initiative. This begs the question: to what extent does *Art Quake* need to be emphasized as a Pasir Putih initiative? From their stories about *Art Quake*, I learnt that the artists started the initiative from the way they experienced life in the shelters and their background as artists who work in the middle of community. They felt the urge to refocus on art activities after *Pura-Pura Relawan* and utilizing their art networks. Siba claimed that they announced an *open call*, and most of the artists responded by their own initiatives. However, all of these artists are people who were already involved in Pasir Putih networks for some time. The fact that they already knew each other, made the artists from outside Pasir Putih community easier to work with for the people in shelters.

In addition, even though the *Art Quake* project was primarily aimed to help people out from dull and mundane situations in shelter camps, it was actually a platform for people of similar artistic backgrounds to organise activities and share experiences with the earthquake survivors. Doing collaborations with other artists was also a practical decision, since they were also busy organising and distributing logistics for many different villages. However, aside from the *Pura-Pura Relawan* initiative, the *Art Quake* activities were more focused on the children as the target audience. As Oka told me, the reason behind it was because the adults were busy renovating the houses. “They were happy because we came and played with the children,” said Oka.

### 3.3 Two stories in a nutshell

Pasir Putih artists initiated *Pura-Pura Relawan* and *Art Quake* as a critical response to the interventions that were happening in the North Lombok post-disaster situation. They at-

tempted to challenge the ‘mainstream’ way of organising assistance for the earthquake victims, namely dropping the logistics and leaving. Their approach differed in the fact that they positioned themselves as fellow victims, and as volunteers who organised assistance after the disaster at the same time. Pasir Putih artists believe that initiating cultural and art activities during the post-disaster situation is as important as organising logistic assistance. Those activities helped Pasir Putih become closer to the victims as fellow *warga* and brought a sense of togetherness in the shelters. As the artist who work close to the society, Pasir Putih brought art and cultural activities accessible for people in the villages.

From their stories, I learnt that as ‘victims’, they were able to make those initiatives happen because of their access to their external network. In *Pura-Pura Relawan* activities, Pasir Putih artists maximized their external network to help them in providing assistance. Meanwhile, with the *Art Quake* project, they provided a medium for their network of artists to “contribute and share” art activities for the earthquake victims. I learnt that both initiatives cause different effects from existing interventions in post-disaster areas, since they arose from the shelters by the earthquake victims themselves.

Furthermore, the experiences gained by Pasir Putih during the *Pura-Pura Relawan* and *Art Quake* projects to some extent demonstrate that people who live in vulnerable circumstances (in this case the earthquake victims) are able to provide some alternative relief efforts. These alternative efforts attempt to fill the gaps which major interventions fail to cover. Meanwhile, as volunteers, Pasir Putih artists avoided the possibility of unequal power relations between *warga* and themselves. Pasir Putih stopped the relief efforts after a month after the earthquake, because they felt that the *warga* had a tendency to become dependent on the assistance.

# Chapter 4

## Stories from three artists: transforming art projects into post-disaster action purposes

This chapter consists of three personal stories from Pasir Putih artists: Oka, Dani and Ana. From their stories, I want to demonstrate that the community art works in the post-disaster context are done based on the continuity of the activities which they had already done in the past. However, when the disaster happened, these art activities were transformed to fulfil their purposes in responding to the post-disaster situation.

Through informal conversations and daily observation with the three artists (see further Chapter 2), I gathered the knowledge, *firstly*, about how they reinstate and *remake* the film screening project (*Bioskop Pasir Putih*) to suit the post-disaster situation. *Secondly*, about how they initiated a new project (research with artistic approach about herbal plants) as a response to survival problems after the earthquake. *Thirdly*, about how they transformed a traditional performance from a form of trauma coping after disaster into a mission to preserve local culture.

Oka, Dani and Ana believe that their works are important for the post-disaster situation in North Lombok, particularly Pemenang village. Through their artistic projects, they used their existing knowledge and practices in community art for responding to the post-disaster situation in North Lombok. Oka with his *Bioskop Pasir Putih* project aims to reconnect people and channel their energy into positive cultural activity. Dani, as a video artist, is involved in a research project about herbal plants by using an artistic approach to recollect knowledge artefacts for survival. Ana, as the only one female artist in Pasir Putih community, is developing *rudat performance* from art therapy activity into empowerment action.

### 4.1 Story from Oka: reconnecting people and rebuilding space

In this subchapter I want to demonstrate that what the art community is doing post-disaster, is a continuation of what they have been doing in the past. Furthermore, I learnt that the artists were already familiar with doing art projects in the middle of a village community. This helped the artists to organise the activities with ease, since they are also part of the community. Furthermore, the artists believe that their existing projects are proven relevant for the *warga* along this time. By continuing the projects during the hard times after the disaster would be still a relevant endeavor, although they now serve a different purpose.

Pasir Putih as an art community, continued one of their long lasting programmes, *Bioskop Pasir Putih*, just a week after the earthquake struck as a part of their activism in helping the earthquake survivors. Oka, a 25-year-old artist from Pasir Putih, is the one behind the projector of *Bioskop Pasir Putih* every Saturday night in the Pasir Putih camp. This project was already initiated long before the earthquake in July 2018 occurred, carrying a different name, *Pekan Sinema* (Cinema in the Weekend).<sup>17</sup> During my stay in Pasir Putih, I experienced two film screenings: *Musuh Bebuyutan* (Long Lasting Enemy) on 20 July 2019 and *Sama Juga Bobong* (*It is just nonsense*, 1989) on 27 July 2019.

<sup>17</sup> <https://akumassa.org/en/malin-kundang-at-the-bioskop-pasirputih/> accessed on 19 September 2019

I got to know Oka on the very first evening (15 July 2019) of my arrival at the Pasir Putih camp. I had never noticed him during my previous visits to Pasir Putih two years ago. Starting that night until a week later, I stayed in a wooden house in the Pasir Putih camp area. Then I discovered that Oka also stays in the camp area, in the other small wooden house next to me, almost every day. He stays there because his parents' house is located in a different village, Kayangan village, 45 minutes from Pemenang village by motorbike.

To learn Oka's perspectives on art after the earthquake, I tried to get to know him first by asking about his hobby. We had this conversation on 29 July 2019 in the morning, when I sat in *berugak* as usual. "My hobby is watching movies," said Oka. "I've liked watching movies since I was in high school in Central Lombok. I like watch *FTV* (film of television, usually targeted towards), the experiences of watching started gave me ideas about how films were made. When I was a communication bachelor's student in Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, which I didn't finish, I joined a student association. There I could discuss more about film, and that was the first time I found out about the Pasir Putih community. Siba and Gazali came into my organisation and gave us insight about film making."

Before I talked with Oka, I knew from other members (Dani and Gazali) that Oka quit his bachelor's study because of his family's financial situation. Then Oka told me that, after he quit his bachelor's study, he joined Pasir Putih for a full-time activity.<sup>18</sup> "I can watch more movies in Pasir Putih. The first film I watched in Pasir Putih was an Italian movie, *Bicycle Thieves*."<sup>19</sup> *Bicycle Thieves* inspired Oka about how a good movie should be made. Oka told me that *Bicycle Thieves* became one of his favourite movie "because the movie illustrates post-war Italy in a very real way, and the actors were people who lived around the set." The reason why Oka likes this movie, as he told me, is also because of the technique of filming: the position of the camera was linear to the audience. Oka's strong interest in film got him appointed as programme manager for *Bioskop Pasir Putih* by the other members.

What I can conclude from Oka's personal story, is that his perspective about film is that a good film realistically displays social realities. "A good film should be close and relevant to realities," addressed Oka. Oka adapted the idea into his own video project about land conflicts between farmers and companies. Oka used *lego* blocks as medium and some children in the village as main characters. The reason why he employed this approach because, according to Oka, "I want to discuss serious topic in easy and interesting way, so people can understand it." Similar ideas appear in other films or videos made by Pasir Putih artists<sup>20</sup>, and as Oka conveyed to me, they also screened their own films or videos in *Bioskop Pasir Putih* before screening film from the outside. Oka's perspectives on film are similar to Clammer's (2015), who argued that film can visualise the knowledge of *development* by representing as

<sup>18</sup> In another conversation, Dani explained to me that he and other artists joined Pasir Putih as full-time work, meaning that they do not take side jobs besides Pasir Putih activities. Dani implicitly said that Pasir Putih as a community gives salary to the artist, as he said, "Working in Pasir Putih maybe won't make you rich, but it is enough for (daily) survival". Dani also addressed that being an artist in Pasir Putih is a full-time activity through this statement: "I realised that Pasir Putih has serious prospects in the future, when Siba and Gazali quit their job as full-time teachers to focus on Pasir Putih." In my conversation with Oka, he addressed that his parents at first did not really agree when he chose to work in Pasir Putih. "They wanted me to do 'real job' and got more money. I keep telling them that I can earn more in Pasir Putih. Like right now, I joined Gerakan Seniman Masuk Sekolah (Artists' Movement to Go to School) and I said to my father, "uangnya bisa buat beli motor (I can buy a motorbike with the money."

<sup>19</sup> *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) is an Italian film directed by Vittorio de Sicca.

<sup>20</sup> See Sub Chapter 4.2 for more examples.

well as critiquing the development discourse. Film, according to Klammer, is useful for development studies because it “shape[s] perceptions of what is happening around us.” (Clammer 2015: 83)

Later I learned from conversations with Oka that *Bioskop Pasir Putih* has two different types of screenings: *Bioskop Kajian* (Film Studies Screening) and *Bioskop Misbar* (Outdoor Screening). On *Bioskop Kajian*, Oka screens the film as response of particular social issues. As Oka addressed to me, there were some weeks when he screened films directed by Kenji Mizoguchi in response to gender issues. He mentioned that Mizoguchi’s movies are “*dekat dengan perempuan* (close to women’s realities), like *The Life of Oharu* (1952), which addresses the issues of a woman who struggles for her family’s lives, and herself.” The *Bioskop Kajian* screenings were always followed by curatorial writing about the film and discussions afterwards.

With *Bioskop Misbar*, Oka screens the film, as he said to me, “to bring back the people of North Lombok’s collective memory about *layar tancap* (outdoor screening tradition).” He reminisced about the era when having a television was still a luxury and people in North Lombok accessed entertainment through *layar tancap*. For Oka, *layar tancap* or *Bioskop Misbar* can also be a medium for people in the village to have more social interactions with each other. For *Bioskop Misbar*, Oka selected old Indonesian films from the 1980s to the 1990s, mostly films starring Benyamin Sueb, *Warkop DKI* group, and Rhoma Irama. “They often ask me to screen old Indonesian movies,” mentioned Oka to me. In one Saturday afternoon at the site, I heard a woman who lives next to Pasir Putih camp say to Oka, “a Rhoma film, please.”

The reason why Oka selected these films, as he mentioned to me, is because *warga* are familiar with the films from the *layar tancap* era. Oka thought that screening the old Indonesian movies would be an action to reminisce about “people’s collective memory about film screening.” Furthermore, he added that *Bioskop Misbar* activity is part of “*mengembalikan budaya menonton film di Lombok Utara* (to bring back film watching culture in North Lombok).” Before bringing the film into *Bioskop Misbar*, Oka always watches the film first by himself, to check whether is suitable for all ages or not. “I always watch the movie before it screens (before the audience) in order to check whether or not the movie suits all ages. No sexual and violent content.”

As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, *Bioskop Pasir Putih* (both *Bioskop Kajian* and *Bioskop Misbar*) had been initiated long before the earthquake. When Pasir Putih organised assistance for the earthquake victims, they brought the *Bioskop Pasir Putih* activities to the shelters. In the shelters they also did another activity which they already familiar with: a video making workshop with the victims. The film selections after earthquake, according to Oka, were films which could motivate people “to have the optimism to recover after the earthquake, for example *Laskar Pelangi*,” said Oka to me. From Oka’s story, I learnt that he brought the same *Bioskop Pasir Putih* to the shelters, but the function is different. As Oka addressed to me, after the earthquake *Bioskop Pasir Putih* aimed to “make *warga* forget about the grief. We also wanted to entertain *warga* with films, because they no longer have TV. Their TV’s are broken because of the earthquake.”

After the earthquake, inherently this program has an additional function as community engagement opportunity in the evacuation shelters. “When we became *Pura-Pura Relawan* (see chapter 3 for further explanation about *Pura-Pura Relawan*), we stayed in the village one or two nights. We saw that people in the evacuation camp had no activities, therefore we screened films to make them happier.” Oka said to me. Oka believes that film screenings could be one of the medium to bring togetherness among the *warga*, which is essential in

post-disaster situations. In another conversation, Gazali mentioned to me that the sense of togetherness is necessary, because in the evacuation shelters *warga* live really close to each other and have to share everything.

A month after the earthquake, Pasir Putih community stopped *Pura-Pura Relawan* activities and went back to the West Pemenang shelter. Now the evacuation camp turned into a Pasir Putih basecamp, where they held all of their activities, including *Bioskop Mishar* every Saturday night. At least for now, according to Oka, they did not visit different villages to do the screening. Their decision to screen in a permanent place was motivated because “we also still focus on rebuilding our office and basecamp,” mentioned Oka to me.

I, as a researcher who observed the screening, saw that *Bioskop Pasir Misbar* made the people who live around Pasir Putih (approximately 20 people were there) came to the Pasir Putih camp, sat on the wooden chairs to watch the film and talk with each other. On a different occasion, Onyong (another artist in Pasir Putih) addressed to me that “*Bioskop Pasir Putih* is the most popular program among *warga* here.” When I was on the site for a month, Oka did not screen *Bioskop Kajian* at all due their programme priorities. In the post-disaster context, their decision to hold the screening in a permanent place and the choice of movies implies “a form of engagement that helps build collective and individual trust” (Puelo 2014: 577), and “enhance positive social activities in disengaged youth” (Huss et. al 2016). During the two screenings that I attended, I observed that some parents also brought their children into *Bioskop Pasir Putih* to enjoy the film.

Based on my observations from Oka’s story, I conclude that *Bioskop Pasir Putih*, as a project that already existed before the earthquake, helped Oka and other Pasir Putih artists to organise activities for re-engaging with people after the disaster. They did movie screenings in shelter camps because they were already familiar with organising movie screenings, and seeing that people would need entertainment during the aftermath.

There exists a tension between Oka’s ideas about how a film should be close to *warga*’s realities and how he executed the ideas into the *Bioskop Pasir Putih* programme. Although Oka and his fellow artists have ideals and preferences about film, in practice Oka more often screens old Indonesian films because of their popularity among *warga*. They also rarely screen their own video or film project, according to Oka, because only one of their films became *warga*’s favourite. Nonetheless, Dani, as a video maker, has a different story on how his art project is linked into local knowledge production and distribution within their community.

## 4.2 Story from Dani: “In the future we do not need doctors anymore”

The second story comes from Muhamad Hamdani or Dani, a 26-years-old video maker. He lives with his mother and brother in the West Pemenang village, but sometimes stays in Pasir Putih camp with Oka. Through Dani’s story, I claim that the new narratives of development after disaster can be generated by recollecting old knowledge for survival from inside the community. Dani believes that these kinds of knowledge are almost extinct overtime, and in this case he saw that art and research can be used to archive the knowledge.

As video maker, Dani uses an artistic approach by filming and creating an herbarium archive, in a research project about herbal plants usable for disaster survival in North Lombok. He, along with the research team, aims to create a new narrative where people can survive from injury and illness with herbal plants that can be found anywhere. Besides the research project, Dani also has a plan to continue his own project: mapping people’s everyday

lives and spaces in the Pemenang district. Similar to this, Puelo (2014) claimed that in a post-disaster context, new narratives are needed in order to create imagination about future places (Puelo 2014) and re-evaluate post-disaster interventions.

The first night I came into Pasir Putih, Dani and his crewmates had a meeting to discuss their plan about the herbal research project. Besides Dani, the team consists of Rizka, Ina and Yadi – who came from the West Pemenang village but are not part of the Pasir Putih community. At that night, Siba and Gazali told me briefly that Pasir Putih had been selected by the Ministry of Education and Culture as a participant in *Kemah Muda Budaya* in Yogyakarta, and they had prepared their research proposal and presentations. “We had to go through a selection process by sending in the initial proposal two months ago,” Siba said to me. From the proposal presentation in the program, the committee would select proposal winners to be supported financially for the project.

I started to understand more about Dani’s involvement in the project when the research team and I went to two forests in North Lombok to trace and document the herbal plants. We went there with Bang Ciki from the *Pawang Rinjani* community, since the Pasir Putih artists claimed that he has sufficient knowledge about herbal plants and its function. Dani, using a DSLR camera that he brought from Pasir Putih, did documentation for plants they found. He planned to make a series of videos that explain general information about the plant, its function, where it could be found in Pemenang and how to process it as medicine. When they practiced for the presentation later in the evening of that day, Rizka, Ina and Yadi explained themselves as bachelor graduates from Mataram University in Mataram, the capital city of West Nusa Tenggara. Meanwhile, Dani introduced himself as “*seniman video dari Komunitas Pasir Putih* (video artist from the Pasir Putih community)”. Other artists in Pasir Putih also always said to me that Dani would give artistic perspective in this project.

As a person who grew up in the West Pemenang village, Dani believes that Pemenang people already have *potensi lokal* (local potential) in the form of knowledge and natural resources. In the disaster context, as Dani addressed to me, the older generation around him had knowledge to survive in the emergency situation, but did not reproduce that knowledge. “My parents and my grandparents know how to use plants around them as medicine. However, no one articulates the knowledge in a comprehensive way.” From Dani’s perspective, the knowledge about survival in the post-disaster situation is important enough to be archived through film, photographs, and an herbarium.

Dani and his fellows already mapped more than one hundred plants and its functions. Their aim is to present the descriptions of 100 herbal plants in North Lombok in a book and videos. The book would be written in a pocket book format, which explain the plants and its functions. Meanwhile, the videos would explain how to process the plants into medicines.

I followed their research process and figured out that they searched the functions of the plants from the Internet or consulted Bang Ciki’s knowledge. However, as Dani claimed, before that they learnt from older people in West Pemenang how to discover the herbal plants and their functions. “When I was a kid, the older generations, including my parents and grandparents, used herbal plants to heal,” Dani said to me. He gave me examples; some plants can be used as external medicines, for example *chromolaena odolata* leaves as antibacterial for wounds and castor leaves which can be useful as paracetamol.

From Dani’s story I learnt that the knowledge about herbal medicines becomes important in the emergency situation during the earthquake, because he experienced and saw people in need of medicines immediately. Meanwhile, the victims have a lack of stock of medicines. Dani experienced as an earthquake victim, he and his family had to stay in shelter

camps an extended period of time. The shelter camp's infrastructure was not sufficient to handle the weather: it would be very hot in the afternoon and very cold in the evening. This situation caused, as Dani mentioned to me, "people (are) easily getting sick, but no medicines around."

When Dani and his team presented their initial findings and further plans at *Klub Baca Perempuan* (18 July 2019), they emphasized that people in Pemenang are really dependent on drug store medicines. They wanted to re-introduce herbal medicines to people in Pemenang, and North Lombok in general, as an alternative solution for survival. I also got similar expressions from other artists in Pasir Putih and Bang Ciki regarding their aim to create the alternative solution in the post-disaster context. For instance, Siba expressed, "in the future we do not need doctors anymore. Anyone can be a doctor for themselves."

Furthermore, from their presentation discussion I learnt that Dani and other Pasir Putih artists believe that they would be able to execute their project independently, even without the governmental financial support. As Gazali expressed in the presentation session, "even though this research needs improvement in many aspects, we have the network to support us." Pasir Putih artists believe that this project is part of an action to achieve *ke-mandirian* (autonomy) as *warga* in North Lombok. Similar to this, Bang Ciki also addressed, "each household can have medicines from nature, in front of their house to be free from this capitalistic system."

In the attempt of making an artwork, Dani attempted to make it as relevant as possible to the North Lombok locality context. He saw his artworks, in this case his videos, as a way to create new narratives from people's everyday lives in Pemenang. Starting from this objective, in 2017 Dani made an art installation called *30 Hari Pemenang Dalam Bingkai Kamera* (30 days of Pemenang through camera lenses) in the Bangsal harbour. He put some small screens such as smartphones and tablets that showed several short videos. These videos capture the daily lives of Pemenang people and some places in Pemenang.

However, from my observation on Dani's videos and supported by his further explanations, I can conclude that his artworks contain a critique of the development plan by the local government in Pemenang. In his video *Guntur Muda Pemenang* (Young Storm in Pemenang) he was filming some teenagers playing soccer in a Pemenang field, while he also joined their game. He interviewed the teenagers about the government plan to turn the soccer field into a market, and the teenagers showed disagreements. "The soccer field was important for *warga*. Many stars were born here. But suddenly *pembangunan* (development) happened here." Dani, as an artist who also had a personal memory to the soccer field, wanted to show his disagreement with the development plans through his video. From his perspective, people should have free access to a place where they can spend leisure time. However, he seemed hesitant to answer when I asked how other *warga* really think about the development. At the end he admitted, "yah, *warga* also need market here actually."

A similar critique appeared in the *Tempat Evakuasi Tsunami* (Tsunami Evacuation Building) video. The building is a place for evacuation if a tsunami occurs, but now it is empty and abandoned. Dani told me the story behind this building, which is that the local government decided to build an evacuation shelter, but in an unusual location. "They built the building really close to the harbour, really close to the seashore. An evacuation place should be far away from coastal line, right?" He also added that the construction process of this building made the soil in the neighbourhood surroundings broken, because they dug too deep for the foundation of the building.

Dani filmed the building by climbing the its stairs and shooting the panorama from the top. The interesting part of this video is that the video looks shaky, because Dani was purposely shaking the camera when he filmed the building. This technique is used to illustrate the protest from the people who disagree with the development of this building. “People refused the development of this building, but they (the government) built it anyway. That was why I recorded this video in this way, to illustrate the pain of people there. If you watched this on a big screen or zoom mode, it can make your eyes hurt.”

As an artist who also comes from Pemenang, Dani is fully aware that the post-earthquake situation in Pemenang is changing. He plans on revisiting some places from videos in *30 Hari Pemenang Dalam Bingkai Kamera* to make some “after earthquake” videos. The “after earthquake” videos have not yet been shot, however Dani’s intention is to recreate narratives about the Pemenang people’s experiences toward places in the post-disaster situation. In correspondence to this recreation of narratives as Puelo (2014) addressed, it is important to facilitate the creation of new spaces after the disaster.

### 4.3 Story from Ana: Doing *senam rudat* to raise women’s participation in art performance

The last story came from Martini Supiana, or Ana (28 years old), a performer from West Pemenang village. Before getting married to Gazali (director Pasir Putih), Ana stayed with her parents in the Bayan district, a one-hour drive from Pemenang. I mentioned her as ‘a performer’ in this story to make a simplification, solely because Ana does many other things in Pasir Putih rather than just artistic work. “I am a theater performer, *rudat* instructor, farmer, crafter, and play-group teacher.” She spends the first half of the day in school and teaches *rudat* in different places afterwards. Ana was involved in a lot of *rudat* rehearsals, where she prepared several teams to attend a competition when I was in Pasir Putih. Once a week, she also organised a routine class for *rudat*. Through Ana’s story, I will demonstrate how *rudat* as a collective art performance can be molded into different functions: from trauma healing activities post-earthquake into raising women’s participation in art performance.

*Rudat* is a traditional dance that is well known in many different parts of Indonesia, including Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, West Java, and Lampung (Mashino 2016; Harnish 2007; Hidayatullah 2017; Shervina and Nugrahaeni 2018). *Rudat* is adapted from a *komidi-rudat* theatrical performance, “featuring Arabian and Persian soldiers,” (Harnish 2007: 71) and a male group martial arts from Muslim tradition (Mashino in Paetzold and Mason 2019: 127). As Harnish (2007) further elaborated, in Lombok, *rudat* transformed into a more secular form, while the Muslim theatrical aspect disappeared from the performance.

When I was in the field, some of Pasir Putih’s artists, including Ana, claimed that *rudat* is strongly related with Dutch and Japanese colonial history in Indonesia. However, Pasir Putih, as an art community in Lombok, adapted *rudat* into more contemporary form, called *senam rudat* (rudat aerobics). As Ana told me, Pasir Putih tried to “make *rudat* viral again,” since the earthquake a year before. Gazali, as the director of Pasir Putih (and also Ana’s husband), was invited to join a trauma healing project meeting by the Ministry of Education and he suggested *rudat* to be a collective performance activity for earthquake victims. “My husband suggested it to the forum, and he asked someone from a dance community here to help us in modifying the movements.” Ana said that *senam rudat* became a regular activity in Pemenang since February 2019, and the activity became a part of the *Artquake* programme, which was held after the earthquake in August 2018 and a month after.

To get to know Ana's perspectives and experiences on *senam rudat* as female artist, I joined her to some *senam rudat* exercises and one competition. I found out that *senam rudat* as a contemporary performance contributes to the reproduction of gendered social relations. The first time I tried to get involved with *senam rudat* was on my second day in the Pasir Putih community, and I learnt that most of the participants are women from Pemenang district. Some male Pasir Putih artists encouraged me to join the *senam rudat* exercise in the evening, but they did not get involved with the exercise themselves - they just sat around and chit-chatted with each other. Ana was the instructor of the *senam rudat* class, and she would be for as long as I was there. She stood in front of the group and gave instructions on how the movements should be done.

Later I found out that *senam rudat*, or *senam* in general, is associated with *ibu-ibu* (middle-aged women) activities, because in the many *rudat* exercises that I observed, the participants were always women. Most of the women are part of *Perempuan Pemenang* group, a small community for women in West Pemenang village that is also part of Pasir Putih community. Ana also has a role as a leader of *Perempuan Pemenang*. Meanwhile, Pasir Putih artists usually mention that Jaka, a leader of dance community in the Pemenang sub-district, is the person who shaped *rudat* into a more contemporary form.

*Rudat* as traditional performance is usually performed by male artists (Mashino 2016). Ana also told me that the first time (February 2019) the Pasir Putih community commodified *rudat* performance in *Bangsal Menggawe* festival<sup>21</sup>, the participants were male and she invited *ibu-ibu* in Pemenang to join the performance. "They (women in Pemenang) were shy and hesitant to join the performance at that time in the harbour. I joined the performance and invited them. Knowing that more women were joining the performance, other women in the village also wanted to join." Ana is really active in teaching *rudat* performance, and when I was in Pemenang, she did it almost every day of the week. As she said to me when we had lunch together in her house, she went every day for *rudat* practice because she taught different groups of women, not only in Pemenang village, but also on a district level (North Lombok).

Ana also noticed that women in Pemenang like to do aerobics in their leisure time, and some of them were involved in common aerobic activities from other countries such as *zumba* aerobics. She used this as a chance to introduce an alternative performance from their local culture. For Ana, the most important thing is that *rudat* becomes popular and women are proud to be in the performance. As she said, "I want that people here can also be proud that they have *senam rudat*, not only *senam dari luar* (aerobics from other countries) and teach it to their children. Because who else can do it?". Because of the commodification of *rudat* into its contemporary version, *senam rudat*, from Ana's perspective it opens opportunities for women in the village to participate.

Along this year, Ana and the Pasir Putih community have been trying to seek support from the local government to make *senam rudat* a part of commodified local culture in North

<sup>21</sup> Bangsal Menggawe is an annual festival initiated by Pasir Putih in collaboration with community artists and individual artists. Bangsal Menggawe is usually held in Bangsal Harbour, which Pasir Putih artists have told me is a centre of culture for people in Pemenang. Besides that, another reason why they held Bangsal Menggawe in Bangsal Harbour is because they want to deliver the message to people that North Lombok is not only about popular tourist spots (as the three Gili islands are just 30 minutes away from North Lombok, making them one of the most popular tourist areas), but other places and its peoples also have other stories to offer. This year (February 2019) the theme is Museum Dongeng (Museum of Tales), showing that earthquake can destroy everything but not local narratives or tales in Pemenang.

Lombok. In one informal conversation with Gazali, he addressed that the local government always said that they wanted to support *senam rudat*, but never followed with concrete actions. Therefore, a group of Pemenang villagers performed *senam rudat* in an aerobics competition at district level and they won. In another opportunity, Ana said to me after they won the competition on district level, people, including the local government, started to become interested in *senam rudat*.

The local government showed interest in *senam rudat* by holding a *senam rudat* competition as part of North Lombok *dies natalis* and Indonesia Independence Day celebrations, in the first and second week of August. Ana is involved in teaching three different groups: a group from the Pemenang village, a local women's organisation on sub-district level, and a group of local women in district level. Ana herself was also a part of a group of performers from the Pemenang village. Ana, as she addressed to me, is happy for this achievement, and she is even tempted to insert *senam rudat* movements into the march parade for Independence Day.

From Ana's story, I learnt that Ana is not just focused on developing *rudat* to become a more popular local performance, but she also involved women in the village in the *senam rudat* performances. As I observed, Ana, as part of Pasir Putih community, tried to address women's concerns to other members. For example, when Ana and other artists, including Jaka, tried some experiments for *rudat* music, some women did not agree because it made them unable to focus onto the choreography. Ana took this as one consideration and addressed to Gazali and Jaka to change the music back.

Ana, as a female artist who also has many responsibilities in the household as well as her job in kindergarten school, related to women in Pemenang whenever she invited them to join *rudat* and was faced with challenges or objections. Ana usually said, “*Biasalah, ibu-ibu sibuk* (I understand the situation, they are busy)”, whenever the groups cancelled the exercise schedule or came late. On one side, *senam rudat* appears as a very gendered activity, since none of the male artists of Pasir Putih participated in *rudat*. On the other side, developing *rudat* into an aerobics form gained attention of women groups in Pemenang village and encouraged them to participate.

During my four weeks stay, without *senam rudat*, women are invisible in some Pasir Putih activities. Ana is the only female artist, and is never included in artists meetings unless the meeting is about *senam rudat*. As the person who carries the responsibility of *senam rudat*, Ana was to some extent unable to join other activities in Pasir Putih, as she was too busy teaching *rudat* to different women's groups. For instance, after I held an informal class (part of the *Kelas Wah* programme) about alternative development, Ana expressed to me that she really wanted to join. “Actually I wanted to join your discussion, but I taught *senam rudat* at the same time,” she mentioned to me.

Even though Pasir Putih artists often mentioned that Jaka plays a big role in inventing *senam rudat*, in practice it was Ana who mobilized women to perform *senam rudat*. They practiced at least two times a week, at the Pasir Putih camp or a field in front of Pemenang sub-district government office. Not only doing *senam rudat* for leisure, Ana and a group of women in Pemenang sub-district also prepared themselves to follow the competition on district level.

#### 4.4 Three stories in a nutshell

By following Oka, Dani, and Ana's daily lives and listening to their stories, I am led to conclude that the persistent small actions in the form of art projects can serve different function in vulnerable situations, notably as post-disaster. Oka, Dani, and Ana were already familiar with aspects of their projects before the disaster happened. Hence, they adjusted and changed some aspects of their projects as responses towards the post-disaster situation. These three stories show that art can be relevant to society if it starts from *warga* perspectives, experiences and needs. These stories also challenged the view that art and cultural activities can only be attained once basic necessities are attained.

Oka brought *Bioskop Pasir Putih*, which had already existed since 2011, in the middle of evacuation shelters to fill *warga* needs of entertainment. He also portrays some messages about *bangkit* (be able to relief) and a sense of togetherness through his film selections for *Bioskop Pasir Putih* after the earthquake. Meanwhile, Dani tried to re-introduce old knowledge about herbal plants as an alternative tool of survival in the post-disaster situation. He aimed to produce a hand-book, how-to videos and an herbarium exhibition to make the knowledge more accessible for *warga*.

Lastly, through *senam rudat* practice, Ana played a significant role in transforming *rudat* performance into a more contemporary form. *Senam rudat* as a contemporary art performance initially functioned as trauma healing after the earthquake. However, Ana successfully invited more women to participate in *senam rudat* performances despite the fact that *senam* (aerobic movements) been seen as a very gendered activity in North Lombok. From Ana's perspective, inviting more women to participate in *senam rudat* is, firstly, an achievement because before, *rudat* in its traditional form was only performed by men. Secondly, she believes that women who are also mothers have an essential role in preserving culture, because women, as Ana addressed, "can teach their children."

## Chapter 5

# In a nutshell: transforming community art into alternative development practices

I left the Pasir Putih camp on 7 August 2019 mid-day, after I watched Ana and her female performers perform *senam rudat* in a competition held by the North Lombok government district. Having four weeks immersion was overwhelming me, because during my research I needed to divide my focus between different artists with their different projects. However, the mini-ethnography method that I employed fulfilled my objective, and by adopting an ethnographic mindset I was able to explore the Pasir Putih artists' perspectives and experiences in a particular context: the Pemenang sub-district post-disaster situation. With the narratives I have presented here, I can reflect that community art can fill the gap between people and development in post-disaster situations by positioning the art as more accessible and relevant for people in the community.

I started two narratives from broader perspectives, by questioning *what other interventions exist besides community art in a post-disaster situation? In which situations can art projects come as an alternative solution for post-disaster problems?* From the story that I learnt from the site, I emphasize the other interventions interacted with Pasir Putih artists to help them provide assistance for the earthquake victims. They responded to the other interventions by critiquing them from their experiences as victims and offered their own initiative: *Pura-Pura Relawan* (pretend to be volunteers). On the other hand, I found out that the government, NGOs, and international organizations provided a huge amount of assistance until now. However, unequal distribution has always been an issue, since the external organizations would prioritize their based region area.

After a month of providing relief assistance, Pasir Putih artists initiated the *Art Quake* project in order to refocus on their art activities. As artists who work in the middle of the community, they felt the urge to make an art project which was relevant to the current situation. They initiated *Art Quake* as a platform for artists to share activities with the earthquake victims. The *Art Quake* project appeared to tackle the problem that Pasir Putih also experienced in the shelters: it was dull and there were no activities. While providing both logistic (*Pura-Pura Relawan*) and cultural (*Art Quake*) assistance, Pasir Putih positioned themselves as victims as well as volunteers. I argue that their experiences are an alternative way to provide assistance, since both initiatives came from the shelters and are organised by the victims themselves.

I was in West Pemenang village exactly a year after the earthquake happened. Hence, what I observed during my fieldwork was the transformation of the community art in a post-disaster situation. I came up with a more specific question: *how do local artists understand community art in a post-disaster situation?* With stories from Oka, Dani, and Ana - I argue that the local artists' perspectives about their art projects hold onto two characteristics: continuity and change. They continued the projects that they had already done before the disaster, while the function and effect of those projects are different in a post-disaster situation. Their artwork became relevant to *warga* in the sense that it serves a purpose as community engagement, recollecting knowledge for survival and raising women's participation in culture preservation.

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