

# UMY Magz

3<sup>rd</sup> Edition | November 2022

## “Improving Research and Contributing to the Advancement of the Nation

### Profile

Prof. Ir. Agus Setyo Muntohar, Ph.D.(Eng.):  
Contributions of the World's Most Influential  
Scientist and His Concern for the Quality of  
Higher Education in Indonesia

Prof. Dr. Dyah Mutiarin, S.I.P., M.Si. :  
The First Female Professor of UMY

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Devotion of a Pediatric Dentist

Rahmawati Husein: The Disaster Mitigation Activist  
and Expert In Urban Planning

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Beribahasa: From Language Class to Thriving  
Business

Helping Hands of Alif and his Company,  
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Yasir, the Winner of the Pilmapres of UMY

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UMY Aims to be Listed in QS WUR in 2030



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# EDITOR'S GREETINGS

Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Alhamdulillah, we would like to thank Allah SWT, who has blessed us with the knowledge and the time so we can publish this third edition of UMY Magz. We would also like to say our greetings to Prophet Muhammad SAW whose intercession we await at the end of days.

At the end of 2022, this edition of UMY Magz entitled "Improving Research and Contributing to the Advancement of the Nation" narrates the achievements, struggles, research, and contributions of the academic community of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY).

We constantly develop our potential and innovate to contribute to research and dedicate our services to the public. May we be able to learn from them and be inspired, so we can reach our dreams and play our roles in developing Indonesia. As always, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions for the betterment of future editions of UMY Magz.

Happy reading, stay healthy and keep your chin up.

Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

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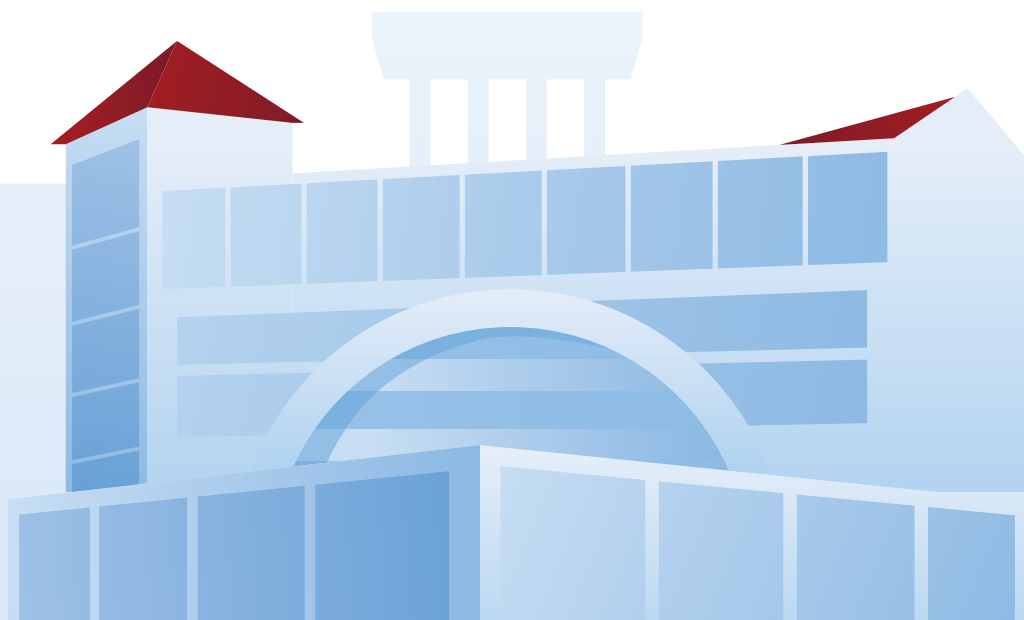
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Prof. Agus Setyo Muntohar

# Contributions of the World's Most Influential Scientist and His Concern for the Quality of Higher Education in Indonesia

By: Sofia

Prof. Dr. Agus Setyo Muntohar has been passionate about scientific writing since he was a student. He participated in a national youth writing competition when he was in high school and won a national writing competition when he was a university student. From here, his career as a young scientist began.

After completing his undergraduate study in Civil Engineering at the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM) in 1998, the man, born on August 14, 1975, served as a teaching assistant at the UGM until 1999. He, then, decided to work as a lecturer at one of the best private universities in Yogyakarta today. At the beginning of his career as a lecturer, he had difficulty with facilities and funding to conduct research. However, it did not stop him from focusing on research and journal publication, supervised by his former lecturer at the UGM, Prof. Kabul Basah Suryolelono.

"Since I was a student, I have been engaged in scientific writing, and I won a national writing championship. I have a long journey. I have begun patents on my research since I was a student and participated in the competitions. Since 1999, when I was a lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), I have focused on research and journal publication," said the graduate of the Department of Civil Engineering of the UGM.

The Geotechnical Laboratory and the Civil Engineering Computing Laboratory of UMY are important places for Agus to develop his passion for being a researcher and scientist. The two laboratories are where he got inspiration from piles of books, black-board scribbles, and photos of achievements on the walls. In that room also, he was interviewed by the UMY Public Relations team on Friday (5/11), about his inspiration and seriousness as a researcher for the last 21 years.

"My principle is to devote myself to being a lecturer and a scientist. I remember my teacher saying that I might not do anything half-heartedly if I became a lecturer. Many lecturers only taught in class, and research was not interesting because it didn't impact them, particularly their financial aspect. However, for me, research was my passion, and I did not need the money that much, so I wasn't worried. Something called passion is only when we reach success through it. It is not passion, unless we reach success through it. Passion requires hard work, sincerity, and sacrifice," he mentioned.





Photo: UMY Documents

The Geotechnical scientist actively conducts research and publishes his research results in journals. "Since my career as a lecturer began, I have published my research in international journals. In 1999, there was no author ranking through the h-index. The important thing was that people could read and refer to our research. Recently, after the h-index or citation index was created, my most read publication, which many people have cited, is my research written 20 years ago. In my opinion, nothing is instant, and everything requires a long process. To reach the top of the mountain, we must go through valleys, canyons and even rivers, dense forests, and steep slopes," he said.

Agus also emphasized that research must be conducted according to scientific and academic norms and not merely to pursue rankings or indexes. "In my opinion, if you publish journal articles to pursue rankings, your standards are too low. It becomes a reference for how good and correct publications are. I am afraid that this h-index ranking system is a magnet for researchers who justify all means, so it needs to be clarified that research is not only measured by the number of citations but also how research publications can be useful for others and provide enlightenment. I want my research to have an impact on society. That's why I still maintain the quality and ethics as a researcher. That's the most important thing," mentioned the professor who has an h-index of 11.

## Research Interest in Landslides

In 2001, Agus accomplished his master's degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Malaya, Malaysia. While pursuing his master's degree, Agus developed a land improvement study for road construction and obtained a patent. Then, while undergoing his doctoral study at the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan, Agus researched soil movement or landslides. Landslides often occurred in Indonesia, so a lot of his research and publication focused on landslide early warnings and instrumentation.

After completing his doctoral study in 2008, Agus returned to Yogyakarta to continue his service as a lecturer at the UMY. As a lecturer at UMY, Agus loves sharing his knowledge with his students. After returning from Taiwan, he started engaging students to work with him to develop research and encouraged them to pursue their master's degree abroad.

"Since 2009, I have been motivating my children and students to study abroad, and that makes me happy. I am optimistic that there will be many successful future generations in my field," he said.

In 2011 Agus conducted another research on the construction of landslide repairs. His research, then, yielded an early detection tool for landslides, which he coined with his fellow lecturers and students. According to Agus, research on early landslide warning needs to be carried out because landslides often occur in Indonesia, so the tool is expected to suppress or prevent casualties due to landslides. In 2017, his study on early landslide warning led him to have a research collaboration with the SABO Center of the Ministry of Public Works and the University of Twente, funded by the Dutch government, to develop an early landslide warning system in Indonesia.

"All the research I have done has been applied as the application of an early warning system for landslides, in collaboration with the Netherlands, the Ministry of PUPR, and the UMY. I hope to make many contributions in my field, including predictions and early warnings of landslides. I also hope that this research can be developed into a product acknowledged nationally and internationally," he said.

"It is important to research issues around Indonesia and the world. Landslides are not only a national disaster but also a global issue, so soil improvement should be a research focus," said the author of the book 'Landsor'.





## Muhammadiyah and UMY Appreciate Agus' Contributions as a Scientist

Agus was grateful for being named one of the world's most influential scientists due to his research being beneficial for communities. "I hope I can always write, conduct research, and most importantly encourage students to do research so that they can be my future generations. I believe that there will be many future generations in my area of interest," he said.

Since becoming a lecturer, Agus has believed that a lecturer's duties involve teaching, conducting research, and serving the community. "Indeed, I also believe that the other duty of a lecturer is da'wah (preaching). I don't look for other jobs because I want to dedicate my life to being a lecturer and to disseminate da'wah to the community," said Agus, who is also one of the leaders of the Muhammadiyah Branch of South Tamantirto (PCM Kasihan) and Argorejo (PCM Sedayu). Besides devoting himself to the academic field, Agus commits himself to his religion by participating in religious activities in his community, including Masjid K.H. Ahmad Dahlan of UMY.

Muhammadiyah and the UMY appreciated his achievements. In the 2021 Muhammadiyah Award at the 109th Muhammadiyah Anniversary commemoration, Agus received an award in the Science and Technology category from the Central Board of Muhammadiyah.

## Addressing the Quality of Higher Education in Indonesia

Agus was appointed by the Minister for Education, Culture, Research and Technology as the Executive Board of BAN-PT (the National Board for Higher Education) for 2021-2026 on November 20, 2021. He highly addresses the quality of higher education in Indonesia.

Agus is currently serving as the Head of the Academic Quality Control Division and the Head of the Department of Civil Engineering of the UMY. He is optimistic that private universities will be able to compete with public universities. "I have always been an optimist and an idealist, and I believe that someday private universities will be able to outperform public universities as long as the private universities are managed properly with principles of credibility, transparency, accountability, responsibility, and fairness. Indeed, the university leadership should be far-sighted and carry out the mission to lead changes in managing resources, especially lecturers as university assets," he said in the other interview by the UMY Public Relations team on Wednesday (1/12).

According to Agus, the responsibility of the Executive Board of BAN-PT is to ensure that all universities in Indonesia can meet the standards set in the National Higher Education Standards. Agus contended that Indonesian universities must have international standards so they can compete globally. "Our duty is to invite and improve all universities. If they cannot meet the standards, we will help them. Meanwhile, for those who already have good standards, we will help them improve those universities to compete globally," he said. (Sofia)



Prof. Agus Setyo Muntohar (in white batik) received the 2021 Muhammadiyah Award at the 109<sup>th</sup> Muhammadiyah Anniversary



Photo: UMY Documents



# *Dyah Mutiarin*

## The First Female Professor of UMY

Education is a right for people of any age and background. Everyone should have the right to receive an education regardless of social status and gender. Men and women have the same right to learn. However, the current assumption is that education is not essential for women. Some people think women will end up in the kitchen, so they don't need to pursue higher education. Unfortunately, this stigma persists even amid technological advances in the modern era and often makes women lose confidence and forgo their opportunity to be educated.

One woman that has successfully dismissed this stigma is Prof. Dr. Dyah Mutiarin, S.IP., M.Sc., a professor in the field of Government Science and a lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY). Arin, as she is usually called, was the first female professor of UMY. It is a pride for her and proof that women can also have an important role in making decisions and shaping the university's future.



## *Dismissing Prejudice and Dividing Roles*

“The role of women is important in family, environment, and society. Women should demonstrate their ability to progress and be independent and equal to men. Education is a way to get out of poverty. Poverty here is not only always dealing with finance but also lack of information and knowledge,” said Arin.

She emphasized that women should have dignity and pride, which can be achieved through education. Therefore, the stigma that education is not vital for women is no longer relevant. Indeed, only if women have to end up in the kitchen as housewives, there is nothing wrong with achieving the highest possible education because they have an essential role in determining the next generation of educated people as they are the first to educate the children of their families.

In her daily routine, the lecturer of the Undergraduate Program of Government Science and the Master’s Program of Government Science at UMY also often faces stereotypes for the high level of education she has received. According to Arin, this can be classified as gender discrimination. In addition, Arin, who was assigned as Head of the UMY Research and Innovation Office (LRI), is aware that a stereotype about female leaders exists because women are considered weak and do not have the capability to lead. “Women should be able to prove that we have equal or better capabilities than men,” she said.





Besides, Arin plays roles in her family as a mother and wife. Luckily, Arin has a family who supports her academic journey and career. She feels grateful to have a husband and children who understand and give her the freedom to pursue a career and an education. With all the support, Arin tries to divide her time and role as a lecturer and a mother to take care of her family, especially her children, who need her attention.

Having the same vision and mission in the family is the key to forming independence. "The important thing is that men are aware of women's roles. In this case, I thank God my husband understands our roles. When men realize that women are not just sidekicks who can only stay at home, that will have a positive impact. The important thing is that everything is balanced, so it doesn't lead to a conflict," said Arin.

According to the Kendal-born professor, dividing roles and ensuring that everything is balanced requires a strong commitment woven into the household. When viewed from the perspective of gender equality, the division of roles in the family should be equal and complementary; the division of roles not only emphasizes equality but also complement each other. Men and women should carry out professional functions. However, when they return home, everything should be how it is.

"In the morning, I play the role of a mother and wife, and I prepare for the children's and husband's needs. Then, at seven o'clock in the morning, I will already be at the campus to carry out my role as an academic and leader of the office. After all the activities, I will return home and become a mother and wife again. The most important thing is to be smart in dividing your time and not to override any of them," said Arin.

As a mother of three, Arin believes that women have roles in various fields such as education, society, economy, religion, and family. At least, mothers should be mentors for children, educate them to understand that education is important, teach them how to appreciate and be grateful for all the blessings they have, guide children to adapt and care for the environment, and guide children to remain devout in their religious affairs.

"My only suggestion is never to do any office job at home. I will focus on my job on campus, in my office. In addition, I always try to spend quality time with my family. It keeps us close together and provides me with an opportunity to get relaxed," she said.

## *Observing Governmental Affairs and Public Policies*

Arin also conducts much research on government, public policy, and management. She researched “Digital and Evidence-Based Policy: The Challenge of Creating an Agile Governance” to be a professor. She saw that the Indonesian government and people confronted issues in digitizing evidence-based public policies that demand an agile government. It was also exacerbated by the condition of Indonesia suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic and its uncertainties.

According to Arin, the policies that the government implemented in dealing with the pandemic focused on six areas, namely institutions, health regulations, restrictions on the use of transportation for the movement of people and goods, recovery of the national economy, the increasing of participation of the broader community in handling the pandemic, and digitization of government administration. “I believed that all of the policies were reasonable, considering the government's role as a decision maker and policy maker that can influence the handling of the pandemic on a national scale. However, let's look at the government's performance in the last two years. More efforts were needed to review their policy-making regarding content digitalization and the speed and accuracy of the bureaucracy in overcoming the pandemic and achieving an agile government,” said Arin.

The main problem was the synchronization of policies issued or implemented by the central government and local governments. It happened mainly because of the complicated, slow and doubtful bureaucratic process. Policy formulation should be based on the level of urgency and essence of the policy. Stakeholder involvement is also required.

Arin's educational background underlay her research interest in the government's policies and bureaucracy. In fact, she has been focusing on agile government for ten years. In this era of the industrial revolution, she feels that the digitization process is a new challenge in government and there are still many technological stutters. The digitalization era can facilitate the achievement of government targets. Thus, she examined how the government implemented digitalization to its policies. However, her research on agile government often encountered difficulties in the research process.

“The subject of my research was the government, and dealing with bureaucracy was not easy because they already knew that the purpose of this research was to measure their speed and adaptability to technology. Sometimes it was not easy to meet subjects or stakeholders related to the issue,” she said.

Arin hoped that with the research, the government would reform the bureaucracy structurally and point of view. The reform would simplify the Indonesian bureaucracy to become more effective, efficient, and agile. Of course, the government needs an unusual innovation in the form of synchronized, efficient, and simple regulations that do not overlap. (ays)

# Devotion of a Pediatric Dentist

By: Sofia

The words 'Dharma' and 'Bakti' are mentioned in the motto and hymn of Pramuka (the national scouting organization of Indonesia), 'Satyaku kudharmakan, dharmaku kubaktikan'. The lyrics also become the life's motto of Dr. drg. Laelia Dwi Anggraini, Sp.KGA, a pediatric dentist who has been active in Pramuka since high school. She believes and commits to devoting herself to the community.

The pediatric dentist, familiarly called Dr. Lia, told how she has been performing 'Dharma Bakti'. She has dedicated herself to being a pediatric dentist, a lecturer at the Department of Dentistry of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), and a trainer as well as mainstay (a consultant) of Pramuka. All of her dedication is to the betterment of society.

When interviewed by the UMY Public Relations team on Thursday (19/5) in her office, Dr. Lia mentioned her research area of interest, namely 'Dental Caries in Children'. She said that research and counseling on caries in children, even though it may seem trivial, are crucial because almost all Indonesian children get toothache at least once.







"My main research focused on caries in children. My dissertation was about the Space Maintainer, a tool used if caries are not treated and functioning as a dental prosthesis for children. Dental caries or cavities are the main cause of toothache in children, and 91% of children worldwide, including Indonesia, suffer from cavities. The number is frequent and very difficult to reduce. While adults have 32 teeth, children have only 20 teeth, and at least one of those teeth decays," she explained.

In addition, Dr. Lia shared her experience of treating children as a dentist. She found unique cases in her patients, and some were severe cases. "I treat around 8-10 patients per day, not a lot, but usually 1-3 patients are referred to me by other dentists. For example, if a person from city A is referred from city B and the case is getting severe and difficult, they will be referred to me. These cases have driven me to learn different methods of handling dental cases and consider an appropriate treatment. I am excited to study challenging cases that are difficult to handle and manage. Sometimes, the children's or their parent's attitudes can also make the cases more difficult," she said.

One of the severe dental cases in children that she handled was dental abnormalities in babies. "For example, some babies are born with teeth, making the breastfeeding process difficult. Other times, the maxillary teeth grow upwards instead of downwards, reversing the process of teething. To fix this, I have to rotate the front teeth by 150 degrees. If I have to perform surgery on a patient, I will coordinate with the oral surgeon at the UMY Oral Dental Hospital. Once there, I will operate on the patient in a special operating room," she said.

Besides, Dr. Lia mentioned that multi-discipline specialists have to collaborate. "Severe cases were more difficult to handle if I worked alone, so the collaboration of some specialists was essential to easing the case treatment," she explained.



Dr. Lia considered the severe cases a challenge and a learning process. "I felt happy because many dentists from other cities trusted me to handle these cases, so we, the Dental and Oral Hospital (RSGM) of UMY and I, were proud of having competent personnel and adequate facilities. On the other hand, I was challenged because some cases were strenuous," she said.

Dr. Lia, seriously yet enthusiastically, told the importance of campaigning for dental care. Her research revealed that only 9-10% of children experienced free caries.

"I researched dental caries in children. The research participants were 170 students of TK Mutiara Cendekia Insani Tamansiswa (a kindergarten) and 1,350 students of SD Muhammadiyah Sapen (an elementary school). Research data showed that more than 90% of children experienced dental caries. This indicates that it is crucial to promote dental care for children from an early age," explained Dr. Lia, who is also the Chair of the OSCE Center of the RSGM of UMY.

Dr. Lia's research findings were also implemented through community service for many Aisyiyah and Pramuka members. "One of my community services is regarding dental health campaigns that I conducted training for kindergarten teachers, Aisyiyah members, and Aisyiyah leaders and other networks so that they could be dental health cadres. In addition, I also initiated the 'Dental Scouting' in 2021, a program for Pramuka members interested in the dental health campaign," said Dr. Lia, who is also the Vice Chair of the Indonesian Pediatric Dentist Association of Yogyakarta and Central Java regions.



*drg. Lia and Dentistry students did a practicum*

In the interview for this article, she showed her satisfaction and sincerity in working as a university teacher and a dentist and to be able to conduct research and perform community service. Besides, she published seven books. "The books are the results of my research, dedication, and experience of handling many cases. My writings are important for my students. I want to share my principles with students so they could become better dentists than me in the future," said Dr. Lia, the author of the book "Penatalaksanaan Perawatan Gigi pada Anak" (Management of Dental Care in Children) of Volume 1 and 2.

Dr. Lia said that she aspired to expand her campaign on children's dental care to schools and communities. "In the future, I hope that the RSGM of UMY can continue research to become a research center. It will become a center of knowledge, and hopefully the RSGM of UMY can handle cases of dental and oral diseases," said Dr. Lia, a doctoral program graduate of the University of Gadjah Mada.

## A Pramuka Activist Who Likes to Create Novelty

Dr. Lia's devotion could be seen through her initiated programs for communities and humanity in her organization, Pramuka, and in the RSGM of UMY. She has become a member of Pramuka, the national scouting organization established in 1961, since she became a student of SMA 3 Padmanaba Yogyakarta. Indeed, she was assigned to become the mainstay (consultant) of the Yogyakarta City Branch and Yogyakarta Province Regional Branch.

"I have joined Pramuka since I was a child, and when I was in high school, I became more active in Pramuka until I went to university. In 2000, when I graduated from university, I was entrusted to become a Pramuka consultant in Yogyakarta and Yogyakarta Province. What I have done in Pramuka is volunteerism and part of my social activities, so I don't expect anything in return. I dedicate myself to programs and activities of Pramuka, especially Pramuka Penegak Pandega (Pramuka for high school and university students), in order that they are following national commands," said Dr. Lia, who is also the UMY Pramuka supervisor.



Photo: Private Document

*drg. Lia and a Pramuka Team*

In Pramuka, Dr. Lia voluntarily participated in training on the Merapi eruption disaster management. "Pramuka is part of my volunteerism because I can do something for other people. I like to do things that benefit others. The activities are the way to tell my children how a mother can work, play roles as a mother, and be beneficial for her community," said Dr. Lia, the Coach of Pramuka Leaders of Yogyakarta City Branch.

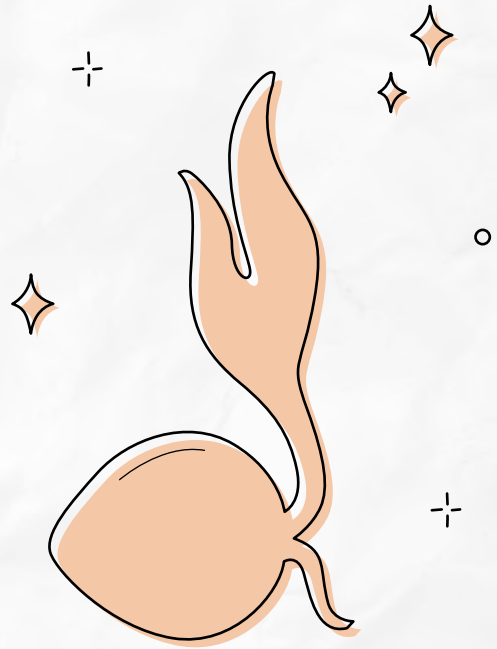




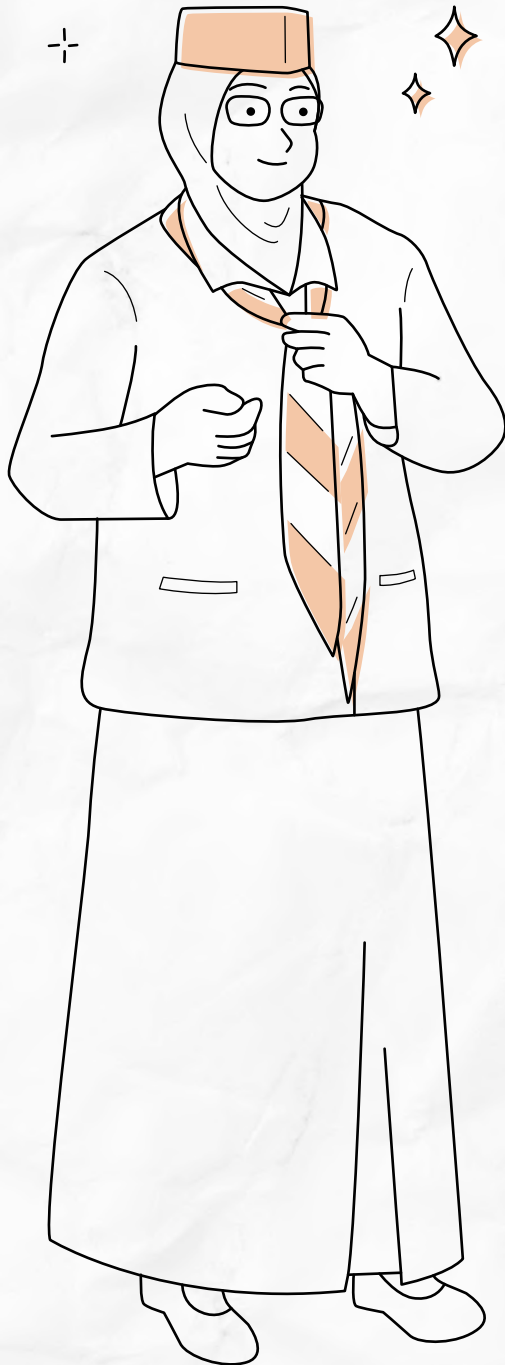


Photo: Private Document

*drg. Lia gave Pramuka training*

Dr. Lia also shared her lingering experience while serving as a Pramuka consultant. "There was an accident that I could not forget. It was when an elementary student in Turi, Sleman passed away in a Pramuka activity. It felt like a slap in the face for the Pramuka leadership of the Yogyakarta Province, especially for myself, because I was a Pramuka consultant in the province and Yogyakarta City. Then, I thought that professional development for Pramuka members is crucial. Regarding the accident, there was only one certified coach handling hundreds of students, whereas one certified coach was supposed to manage 30 students at maximum. It required about seven certified coaches to handle hundreds of students," she frowned.

Dr. Lia truly loves her volunteer activities in the Pramuka organization. In the interview, she emphasized that her skills in time management, discipline and firmness were picked up in Pramuka. "In Pramuka, I was taught to manage my time well because I did not have much free time. Thus, I became more assertive, disciplined, and thorough."



Her volunteerism also has impacts that she frequently does 'babat alas' or takes initiatives to carry out social activities. "I love doing 'babat alas' or creating something new. I started the Dental Rescue of the RSGM of UMY in 2006 when I first worked at the RSGM of UMY. The Dental Rescue is a fast-moving team of the RSGM of UMY working as KOPASSUS (the Indonesia Special Forces Command). When a patient needs help, the Dental Rescue team will immediately take care of the patient. In Pramuka of the Yogyakarta Province, I established Dental Scouting, a team consisting of Pramuka members to be volunteers to handle dental health cases during the Mt. Merapi Eruption and the COVID-19 Pandemic. I also founded a 'Dental Emergency' team that is a fast-moving team from the undergraduate program of dentistry of UMY to conduct social services," she mentioned. (Sofia)



*drg. Lia gave training and prepared Pramuka members*

# RAHMAWATI HUSEIN: THE DISASTER MITIGATION ACTIVIST AND EXPERT IN URBAN PLANNING

By: Naila Salma Nurkhalida

One Sunday at the end of December, a 9.3-magnitude earthquake shook the bottom of the Indian Ocean. Unexpectedly, the earthquake's strength affected the waves and rolled to the coast of Aceh, devastating the region. The sad incident left a mark on the world. The United Nations (UN) declared that the natural disaster was the largest humanitarian disaster that had ever occurred. International organizations and countries came in droves to help the refugees. International aid poured in to help the people of Aceh.

Rahmawati Husein, also known as Ama, told us a story about when she came to Aceh after the terrible disaster. While leaning on the brown sofa in the Communication Science laboratory of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), the woman, born in Yogyakarta on August 27, 1965, recounted her experiences and activities in disaster relief.

Photo: UMY Documents



"The 2004 Aceh tsunami was a huge disaster that united the international community. It was my first time at a disaster site, and I was appointed as a field coordinator without knowledge of disasters. That was when I realized I couldn't do anything without the necessary knowledge, skills, or resources," said Ama.

As she stood amid the chaos brought by massive amounts of international aid, Ama became a liaison for foreign aid which later brought her to get involved in humanitarian actions and motivated her to become an expert on disaster mitigation.



## Humanitarian Work and Learning from Experiences

Long before Ama was known as a disaster mitigation activist, she was an English Literature student at the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM). However, being a student of English Literature was not Ama's first and only choice. She mentioned various programs she was interested in. She started from the Astronomy department in Bandung, Geography, Geology, and International Relations until finally Ama decided to take English Literature at the UGM.

Ama is known as an interactive and active person. During her undergraduate program, she was a part of eight organizations at once, including a member of the Central Board of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah and a member of a nature lover club. She knew that her non-academic activities made her spend a bit longer to accomplish her study. "It took ten years to finish my undergraduate study because I joined eight organizations," said Ama with a boisterous laugh.

After completing her undergraduate study, Ama's career as a lecturer began in 1995, when she succeeded in holding a position as a candidate for a permanent lecturer at the UMY. With her English skills, she and several other UMY lecturers started the Language Training Center (PBB) at the UMY.

In 1998 when Indonesia was experiencing a monetary crisis, Ama accepted an offer to study for a master's degree in Urban Management at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. The offer came from a professor in the United States (U.S.) who also promised Ama that she would get 90 percent of her tuition fee waived. This offer convinced Ama to study abroad in the midst of her financial condition also affected by the monetary crisis.

**“  
THIEVES ARE LEFT ALONE.  
A PERSON WHO SEEKS  
KNOWLEDGE WILL GET  
GOD’S HELP, WON’T SHE?”**

said the UMY Government Study lecturer.

She started her study in the U.S., focusing on urban regional planning for the third world and developing countries. "When I was in the U.S., I studied community development, so I could apply what I learned in Indonesia. Community development is important because Indonesia is a developing country with a different social system from developed countries," she said.

Ama finished her master's degree in 2 years. Afterward, she returned to devote her life to UMY with a different mandate. In 2000, she worked as a lecturer at the UMY and at the Language Training Center of UMY. In 2002, she was assigned to pioneer and lead the Public Relations and Cooperation Office of UMY. In 2003, she was also elected as a Commissioner of the National Commission for Women (Komnas).



The condition of Aceh after Tsunami hit on 26 December 2004

Photo: ABC.net

At the end of 2004, the sad news came from the westernmost part of Nusantara (the archipelago). The Aceh tsunami occurred, and Ama was involved in humanitarian work there. She was appointed the coordinator of the Muhammadiyah Committee for the Recovery of Aceh (KMPA). That, in early December 2004, Ama ended her position as the Secretary General of Nasyiaul Aisyiyah and had great ability in English became the reason for her appointment as the coordinator of the KMPA. She was responsible for linking international organizations interested in collaborating with Muhammadiyah in disaster responses.

When working in the disaster area, Ama used her previous experiences in the nature love club and her understanding of community development. With her experiences and knowledge, she managed emergency responses and recovery programs. "When I joined the nature lover club, I helped in logistics, searched for missing people in the mountains, and involved a SAR (search and rescue) team. What to do in the disaster area was not quite different from my experiences in the nature lover club," said Ama, who has climbed 15 mountains in Indonesia.

It didn't take long that another natural disaster struck Indonesia. On May 27, 2006, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake devastated Yogyakarta. Her experience in the Aceh tsunami disaster recovery urged Ama to be involved in the Yogyakarta disaster responses.

A year after getting engaged in disaster recovery in Aceh, Yogyakarta, and Padang, Ama expected to pursue her doctoral degree in disaster mitigation. She believed her experiences would be more effective if she gained qualified knowledge. She thought disaster management was vital and could not be done by amateurs. "In Aceh, Jogja, and Padang, I had to handle their recovery without knowledge of disaster management. Even though I received a manual for humanitarian efforts, it would have been different if I knew beforehand," said Ama, the awardee of the Fulbright scholarship.

Ama pursued her doctoral degree at Texas A&M University, known as a center for disaster mitigation studies and having competent professors. She took urban and regional planning with a focus on disaster mitigation. She planned on implementing what she learned in her doctoral study in Indonesia.



## Exploring Issues of Disaster-Based Regional Planning

Ama began concentrating on community development issues by taking non-degree programs, master's degree, and doctoral degree. She no longer concentrated on English Literature. "I first studied urban and regional planning issues in my master's degree program, and then my doctoral program focused on disaster mitigation. Regional planning issues have become my area of interest," Ama added.

According to Ama, in spatial planning and spatial use, many components must be met to reduce urban destruction that leads to unsustainability. The threat of disaster also threatens the security of the population. In addition, thousands of disasters hit Indonesia every year. This later became Ama's specialty.

In her dissertation, she discussed spatial planning based on disaster mitigation in coastal areas and took Hazard Certification to strengthen her mitigation insight. First, she would like to compare disaster mitigation in Java and Texas. However, due to time constraints, she decided to focus on disaster risk reduction through Regional Regulations or legislation. She measured the effectiveness of government regulations in disaster risk reduction. Ama contended that the conditions on the coast of Texas are similar to those in Indonesia. Thus her research findings could be applied in Indonesia.

She also continued her research plan in the Java areas and presented the findings in many forums in Indonesia. Like her dissertation, the research assessed how local governments in Indonesia applied regulations to reduce disaster risk in their respective regions.

Disaster mitigation is divided into two groups, structural and non-structural disaster mitigation. However, Ama investigated non-structural mitigation, referring to mitigation that does not involve the development of physical infrastructures such as zoning and building standards, but the formation of regulations by the government and other relevant bodies.

More specifically, non-structural mitigation is described through awareness education, counseling, and training. In addition, this research was also conducted due to the absence of the implementation of the disaster management law at that time, as the law was only enacted in 2008.

In response to the government's current disaster risk management regulations, Ama stated that the regulation had to undergo several changes in the development plan. So far, it has improved by the issuance of Permendagri (Government Regulation) 101 of 2018 that disasters are a duty. "The Permendagri mentioned that every region must support disaster risk reduction. Of course, this will also support sustainable areas in Indonesia," said Ama.

## Being Famous because of Disaster Mitigation

Rahmawati Husein's track record in disaster mitigation has commenced since her first involvement in humanitarian missions in the Aceh tsunami disaster recovery. She also reinforced her comprehension in disaster mitigation during her doctoral study at Texas A&M University.

Due to her track record, Ama achieved myriad achievements at her alma mater, Texas A&M University. She became the best student in her department by gaining a perfect GPA, was nominated to be the best student of Texas A&M University, and became the second Indonesian being the best international alumnae.

Ama, then, initiated the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC). She believed the establishment was essential since thousands of disasters strike Indonesia yearly. She was appointed as Deputy Chair of the MDMC for 2010-2020. The knowledge she had gained from her doctoral study is valuable to carry out humanitarian programs at the MDMC.

Besides, Ama's performance in disaster management and humanitarian work contributed to the realm of diplomacy. She was appointed to be a member of the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Advisory Group for 2018-2021, managing the global humanitarian fund of 2018-2021 in New York, the United States. She was also part of the Steering Element for the National Disaster Management Agency (2016-2021) and the Advisory Team for the Presidential Staff Office (2017-2019 and until now). In addition, 41 organizations on five continents have invited her to speak on disaster and humanitarian issues.



**MUHAMMADIYAH Aid**

Rahmawati Husein's disaster mitigation activity with the MDMC and the UN

Photo: MDMC Documents





Ama, the recipient of the Tokoh Inspiratif Tangguh Award (Inspiring Tough Figure Award 2015, recalled her happy memory when she got an opportunity to speak at the highest UN panel, the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) in Geneva, Switzerland. She thought national organizations needed to change their perspective on providing humanitarian aid. It includes looking at mechanisms used in the targeted country, as they should not come without understanding the architecture of humanity. In that forum, Ama shared her experience regarding the Palu earthquake and tsunami with delegates from more than 100 countries and international organizations.

“At that time, Indonesia received international aid, but it should be distributed through local or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Therefore, international organizations need to cooperate with local organizations,” said Ama.

Ama had wished to be an astronomer, diplomat, or journalist, so she could travel the world. However, her 10-year disaster management experience and the nature lover club have led her to reach her dream. Through her knowledge and contribution, Ama made Indonesia proud. “I once dreamed of becoming an astronomer, and I changed my mind that I wanted to be a diplomat. It came true although it’s not the official one. I think it is sort of a diplomat that I represented Indonesia in humanitarian actions and international forums,” said Ama, who achieved the Human Initiative Lifetime Achievement Award (2019) for her service and contribution to humanity. (NSN)

Photo: Private Document



Rahmawati Husein received the outstanding alumni award from Texas A&M University

# Beribahasa: From Language Class to Thriving Business

By: Naila Salma Nurkhalida



Photo: UMY Documents

## Indi Dwi Lutfitriani

Chief Operating Officer (COO) BeriBahasa

Rapid digital development has led to various innovations, and the COVID-19 outbreak kickstarted the digitalization process in Indonesia. Luckily, many start-up-based companies in Indonesia have also been developing alongside the digitalization process. Currently, Indonesia has more than 2000 startups driving Indonesia the country with the fifth most startups in the world. These startups aim to develop goods or services and experience high demand amid digital advances to meet consumer needs.

Anyone can innovate and build their startup in this modern era regardless of their background. One of the most prominent startup companies was made by a group of students from Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), contributing to the advancement of the digital era through the "BeriBahasa" startup.

Indi Dwi Lutfitriani, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of BeriBahasa, stated that they named their platform BeriBahasa so it will be easier for prospective users to know what the platform stands for. "Beribahasa is a simple name, so people will immediately know who we are. Through this platform, we want to provide language lessons to anyone who needs it, including language learners or teachers. We aim to support not only the students but also the teachers." explained Indi,





Initially, Indi and her team were a part of a language center under UMY, the Self Access Center (SAC). They were foreign language facilitators. The SAC was received favorably by its members, both facilitators and students. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching activities at SAC stopped, making the students restless because they wanted to return to learn foreign languages facilitated by the university for free. From these worries, Indi and her team adapted to the situation by innovating an independent course without charging a penny.

Indi wanted to develop her course into a business, and not just offer foreign language classes. Unfortunately, no one in her team had any basic knowledge of entrepreneurship. In addition, her free class had a vacuum period for half a year due to various obstacles. Finally, Indi met with the Startup and Business Incubator (SEBI), a forum for creativity and innovation for students interested in entrepreneurship at UMY.

However, although Beribahasa was established for language learning, it needed more than language experts to develop as a startup. In Beribahasa, every team needed at least one member for marketing, one for IT, and a field team to test and use a prototype.

“At first, the SEBI began as a group of students teaching foreign languages in the SAC. Then, SEBI advised us to develop an Edutech platform. We started brainstorming until we decided to add additional personnel from IT, marketing, and field study backgrounds to create and realize a prototype,” Indi said.

## Overview of Beribahasa

Beribahasa is a technology-based education startup known as Educational Technology (EduTech). Beribahasa itself focuses on foreign languages. The language teachers who founded Beribahasa intended it as a platform to teach foreign languages. So far, five languages offered on the platform are English, German, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. These five languages were chosen because of the demand of the market and their language competence. However, Beribahasa is currently exploring options to expand to other languages such as Arabic and French.

Beribahasa also has a certain uniqueness that sets it apart from other platforms. It has a customizable contextual curriculum that allows users to select which material and curriculum to study. The feature makes the platform very flexible as users can adjust when, where, and how to learn the languages at a meager price. However, Beribahasa does have a recommended curriculum for those who want to learn according to its methods.





## A Trip Back to the Start of the StartUp.

The founding of Beribahasa has a long story such as searching for funds and meeting the SEBI. The SEBI taught the fledgling entrepreneurs many things such as design thinking, canvas-based business, market validation, and interview technique.

In addition, Indi and her team searched for opportunities to support the development of their startup through their involvement in various business plan competitions. They did not always win these competitions but were encouraged to create greater brand awareness.

“We participated in all the material debriefings from the SEBI and competed in many business plan competitions that further encouraged us to create greater brand awareness. We previously lost a lot of competitions, but we finally won one,” said Indi.

Starting a business doesn't always go smoothly, as the establishment of Beribahasa confronted many obstacles. Customers and prospective partners rejected the team, and the team also had problems with market validation.



“We had many problems, including rejection from customers, prospective partners, and market validation. We once tried to propose a partnership with the Yogyakarta Tourism Office, and they said they didn't need our service. I admit that rejection almost dragged us down, but we reevaluated and reconsidered the right partners and stakeholders for our business,” Indi stated.

Meanwhile, in terms of funding, the Beribahasa team did not face many financial constraints unlike other startups, usually known for their high operational costs and low income. According to Indi, the team had many opportunities to get funds, especially in this fast-paced and advanced era. They received funds to develop their business from winning the business plan competition. For the team, none of the financial obstacles could prevent them from developing brilliant ideas.

“Many people say they had financial issues, but we got the funds from winning the business plan competition. When we competed, we didn't even have a business yet. We competed by proposing our idea and used our winnings to build our startup,” she stated.

Another crucial element of a startup is its legality. Every startup needs a good legal basis for its entity. It was a very new aspect for the team, and they needed to learn from the basics.

Some team members were pursuing their master's degrees overseas while others were working, but they continued to power on. Indi said that the Beribahasa team had a solid foundation to remain united in their ups and downs.

"We have our schedule. We hold regular meetings on Mondays or Tuesdays, evaluation, and emergency meetings. We have a priority for any problems, but our teamwork makes us strong. If one person has troubles, other members can back them up. It builds a sense of belonging and bonding without bothering the members' feelings," Indi said.

Currently, Beribahasa is on an upward trend. Since its founding, the EduTech platform has managed to win some awards, including funding from the Higher Education Service Institution (LLDIKTI) of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY) of Region V, 2021/2022 'Muda Maslahat' Indonesian Student Entrepreneurs Expo Award for Best Business Growth Plan in Unilever Entrepreneur Bootcamp, and getting an opportunity to have open discussions with Sandiaga Uno in the Kick Off Muhammadiyah Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubator (MCEBI) and Business Clinic with Sandiaga Uno.



The UMY Beribahasa team got an opportunity to discuss with the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno

# **“Stop Thinking, and Do It!**

**If we only think about it, it will  
always linger on our mind, and  
other people will never know  
what we are planning”**

In addition to developing the EduTech website, the Beribahasa team will partner with several stakeholders and reanalyze their market plan to fit the public's current needs, specifically regarding tourism.

“We are currently analyzing the market to fit their needs. When we had an open discussion on foreign languages with Mr. Sandiaga Uno, he told us that the government does not have a permanent stakeholder regarding foreign languages in the tourism sector. We are currently deliberating to partner with the government to supply tour guides,” Indi mentioned.

Besides, Indi stated her hopes for other students to start innovating. "Stop thinking, and do it. Indonesia has a lot of thinkers, but don't stop at thinking, and do it. We sometimes have a brilliant idea, but it requires several factors to succeed. If we only think about it, it will always linger on our mind, and other people will never know what we are planning," she said. (nsn)



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Yogyakarta, taken during the golden hour of sunset. The sky is a mix of soft orange, pink, and blue. The city below is densely packed with buildings, mostly with dark roofs, and some greenery is visible. The overall mood is peaceful and inspiring.

# Helping Hands of Alif and his Company, PT Wesclic

By: Aisyah Wahdania Mulyaningsih

Allah will hear every prayer. If He does not grant your prayer immediately, it will be granted at the right time or replaced with something better. This belief motivates Alif Fatullah, an Electrical Engineering student of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), to chase his dreams. Alif, as his friends call him, believes his dreams represent his prayers.

Photo by reezky11 - [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

Alif is an awardee of Beasiswa Kader Unggulan, a scholarship for underprivileged Muhammadiyah members who excel in their fields. The student from Wonosobo, Central Java, received the scholarship because he actively joined Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah (the Muhammadiyah Student Association) and got a recommendation from the Wonosobo Muhammadiyah Orphanage, where he lived before he became a student of UMY.

## Alif Fatullah

Executive Director  
PT Wesclit Indonesia Neotech



Photo: Private Document

## Wesclit: It Fits!

In addition to being an active student with various academic and organizational activities, Alif is the Executive Director of PT Wesclit Indonesia Neotech, a startup-based company in the technology sector that he and his colleagues founded in September 2019. The name Wesclit is derived from Javanese words, namely "Wes" and "Click" meaning "already" and "suitable," respectively. All products the company makes are expected to suit all their clients. According to Alif, good values underlay the establishment of PT Wesclit. He and his colleagues were concerned about their fellow scholarship participants after seeing that they got confused about housing and food when they first came to Yogyakarta.

# wesclit<sup>Q</sup>

"We just wanted to perform a good deed. Wesclit's first project was a cafe. If the students didn't have a place to live, they could stay and eat at our cafe for free. In fact, a friend of mine came to Yogyakarta by bringing one suitcase only, so we would like to help him," he said. In addition, he thought that he should comply with his living expenses during his study in Yogyakarta.

## From Zero to Ten Million Dollars

When it began, Wescllc focused on technology and management consulting by duplicating best management systems through appropriate technology solutions. "We had a cafe management app for cashiers and online sales. We also carried out financial and operational business management. We opened the cafe with our own funds to prove that we could use technology for our management, and we had clients on a small, medium and large scale," he said. Alif and his colleague first had their funding and joined various startup competitions to get financing.

When they first formed Wescllc, Alif and his colleagues did not understand startups. They only wanted to run a business so that they could survive. Then, they learned to understand startups, and began to implement their learning in PT Wescllc.

"It turns out that startups have different business models and ways to make profits. In conventional business, what's important is having a lot of assets and teams to generate a lot of profit, but in a startup, it's about having as few teams as possible while having biggest possible impact," said Alif, who was the Vice President of the 2021-2022 Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta Student Organization.



**Wescllc's Old Office**

By implementing the new business model, PT Wescllc added its business focus to a software and service provider. It also expanded its business into education by developing the PPDB, e-learning, academic, and alumni tracer systems. The latest product from PT Wescllc was a single identity product, Connect, which converts and professionally presents data.

In the first three years of the establishment, PT Wescllc's clients mostly came from Yogyakarta and Central Java. The most significant contracts with their clients were worth hundreds of millions of rupiah. Now, PT Wescllc is a startup that provides job vacancies and internships. This year, PT Wescllc's target is to enlist one hundred apprentices from various Indonesian universities in Indonesia. PT Wescllc aspires to become the number one company and reach 10 million dollars. "Thank God, PT Wescllc's reach is wider and has its own office. We previously worked in a rented house, so we sometimes got embarrassed to meet clients. We even used the Selimbi cafe as our address," said Alif.



# “ WHEREVER YOU GO, WHATEVER YOU WANT TO MAKE, WE’RE WITH YOU.”

However, the company’s journey wasn’t all sunshine and rainbows. The pandemic that struck the world at the beginning of 2020 ruined PT Wesclik. Alif and his colleagues’ optimism toward the rapid development of their business vanished because of their unpreparedness to face the pandemic.

“We spent all of our funds opening the cafe and creating applications, and we still had to hire employees and pay rent. Months of lockdown rendered our income dropped. We were broke and had tens of millions in debt. Before the pandemic we had dozens of teams, but after it struck there were only four left,” said Alif, the founder of PT Wesclik. “Indeed, a relationship among the founders turned bad due to debates and disappointments,” he said.

Because of the pandemic, PT Wesclik was doomed. It became Alif’s turning point, and he thought to focus on his education again. Nevertheless, Alif remained to get support from the other founders of PT Wesclik.



“They said wherever I wanted to do for PT Wesclik, they would always be there for me and PT Wesclik. I was touched, and I thought that I needed to rise up. Without them, PT Wesclik would have been out of business a long time ago. We sold the cafe, and our focus shifted to working on the digital area. We also registered PT Wesclik's legality so we could participate in big projects and turned the profits into capital for our operations so that we could survive during the pandemic. Our principle is that PT Wesclik will never die as long as one founder is still alive,” added Alif.

One of his motivations for developing the startup was that someone questioned PT Wesclik's development. It seemed like a promise to keep. Besides, he mentioned that his greatest motivation was the people close to him.

“They were my team at the company. Sometimes I felt jealous when I saw my friends calling their parents when they fell down while I only go to sleep if that happened to me because I seemed having no one to tell. In fact, I had a team who has become my second family. Their support is essential,” said Alif.



Photo: UMY Documents

Alif Fatullah became a guest in the UMY Talks Podcast and shared a story of how Wesclis was founded

## Becoming an Ideal Student

Having the hustle and bustle of daily life, Alif could manage his study. As a scholarship awardee, he had an obligation to maintain his grades each semester. He admitted that it was pretty difficult for him to balance study and work balance. However, he considered it a consequence of his own choice to develop PT Wesclis amid his study and organizational activities.

“While I had to meet a GPA requirement, I attempted to have good achievement and be active in my organization. We only have 24 hours in one day, and my activities in the organization were quite time-consuming, especially since I started PT Wesclis at the beginning of my study. Indeed, I could leave both, and that was my consequence,” he said.

Alif viewed that an ideal student has five indicators: academic value, achievement, organization, social empowerment, and entrepreneurship. These five indicators must be balanced to become a perfect student. However, Alif's study didn't run quite smoothly. He faced several obstacles, especially when the pandemic hit and classes had to be conducted online.

## Many Helping Hands

Alif was grateful because many of his friends lent a helping hand when he was in trouble. During his study at Vocational High School (SMK), he got a lot of help. He could not have come to this point if he was not accepted at UMY and the university had provided funding and introduced him to various competitions, especially those related to PT Wesclis. In particular, Alif also said that the UMY Startup and Business Incubator (SEBI) opened the door for the development of PT Wesclis.

"I have got much kindness so far, so I want the business that I am running to also be useful and extend a hand of kindness for others," he said. He added that the difficult moments he had experienced so far made him return to his starting point. However, that did not dampen his enthusiasm. He also advised other student entrepreneurs not to be afraid to dream as high as possible because Allah will embrace those dreams. (ays)

“

**I WANT THE BUSINESS THAT I AM RUNNING TO ALSO BE USEFUL AND EXTEND A HAND OF KINDNESS FOR OTHERS**





# Yasir, the Winner of the Pilmapres of UMY

By: Moh. Itaqullah RMM

**“For me, community service means a lot. It is my contribution to society as an academic. I wish to share and use my knowledge with the community**

That is the belief of Muhammad Yasir Abdad, an undergraduate student of the International Relations Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY). Yasir, as he is usually called, is a humble student interested in political and defense analysis. He is also very driven to chase his dreams and achievements. He was named the 1st winner of the 2022 UMY Pilmapres (Outstanding Student Selection) by bringing the idea of Students' Digital Transformation in Politics and Democracy. Besides, he is actively involved in organizations on and off campus.

Yasir's academic and non-academic activities have piqued our curiosity about how he was chosen as the winner in the Pilmapres of UMY. The following are interview results between the UMY Public Relations team and Yasir.

## Muhammad Yasir Abdad

the first winner of the  
2022 UMY Student Awards



## Why are you interested in bringing the idea of students' digital transformation of politics and democracy for students in the Pilmapres?

The main idea raised in this Pilmapres was a digital transformation in politics and democracy in the realm of students. In general, students and millennials have very concrete potential and roles. The success of politics and democracy should be supported by technological advances and competent human resources. This is what we need to prepare, and that urgency motivated me to develop this idea. This program is also a political and democratic education through community-based non-formal education

## Why did you choose students as the target of this political education?

Political and democracy education should start from junior high school. I hope this program can help students and millennials become politically literate and democratic. Many of our millennials tend to be indifferent to politics and democracy even though as millennials we have an important role as the pillar of the nation. I hope this program can educate our friends to be politically literate and democratic.



## Apart from participating in the Pilmapres, what other factors drove you to do this project?

I aspire to share my knowledge and skills, so they are useful for the community. A student to devote himself to the community and multiple stakeholders by doing valuable activities, not necessarily big but sustainable. I hope that what I do can have a big beneficial impact on society. I believe that we, as millennials, are able to make such a significant impact around us.

## What is your biggest goal?

I want to be a public policy analyst in politics, academics, and the military. This field aligns with my passion, and I am currently working on it. In addition, I also want to devote my knowledge to society.

## Who is your role model?

My role model is B.J. Habibie. He was an inspiring person, and I have learned a lot from him. He had an academic-life balance, and he respected his parents. He was a virtuous person and has a good character and extraordinary integrity towards the nation. I really admire him.



## Besides studying, what have you been doing with your life?

I join several organizations such as student research and IPM (Muhammadiyah Student Organization) of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. In the organizations, I have learned a lot of skills that I didn't get in formal education, and they have shaped who I am, my character, and my way of thinking.

## How do you manage your time as a student and members of the organizations?

I do not have a special way to manage time to study and join organizations. I only aim to finish something important, especially urgent, because I'm not someone capable of multitasking. My study is my top priority, and organizations are number two, but both should remain balanced.

Yasir when participating in the 2022 UMY Student Awards



Photo: Private Document



Photo: Private Document



Yasir after presenting in the 2022 Student Award Selection for Undergraduate and Diploma Programs of the LLDIKTI of Region V

### How was your academic life during the pandemic?

At the beginning of the pandemic, my grades somewhat dropped. I also experienced culture shock because I had to have online classes. However, the pandemic has also triggered me to excel that I took part in various competitions and honed my other skills, namely writing. I have also learned to value time more.

### Since when do you like writing?

I have been fond of writing since 2017. I became interested in writing when I firstly won 1st place in a national writing competition. I got a lot of benefits from writing, and since then I really like to write. I am currently writing my third book.

**What we can learn from Yasir is that he is always responsible for something he has started, can turn challenges to improve himself, always learns to hone his abilities, and benefits people around him. (RM)**



## Nanda Blestri Jasuma

Nanda Blestri Jasuma hold a bachelor degree from UMY by publishing journal articles

Myriad Benefits of Student Journal Publication:

# Blestri's Graduation Journey

By: Naila Salma Nurkhalida

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) aspires to be an excellent research university by creating an atmosphere of high-quality research and scientific publications. To achieve the goal, UMY no longer limits research to lecturers. The opportunity to publish articles in national and international journals is also wide open for students. Nanda Blestri Jasuma, an International Relations student of batch 2018, took the chance.

In an interview through a WhatsApp video call on Thursday (24/03) precisely one hour after sunset, Blestari, the girl from Pemalang, said that she had been interested in writing before she studied at university. She wrote a variety of writing projects such as advertisements, content, and journal articles.

When she enrolled at university, she started making her plan. From semester 1 to semester 4, she participated in many regional and national writing competitions. In her second semester, she became a member of the Student Executive Board (BEM). This multitasking girl also worked part-time at a coffee shop while studying at university.

## From Doing Assignments to Publishing Journals

Blestri, the winner of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud) scholarship, chose not to be trapped in her passion. Her journey started from an internship in writing to publishing papers and nonfiction books.

In the interview, her voice vividly sounded that what she gained during her study was not in vain.

She got used to doing her paper assignments and considered them inputs for her. She believed the assignments were media to develop her writing skills and improve her systematic and critical thinking. She gradually enjoyed doing the assignments and finally decided to publish her writing.

When facing a writer's block, she often chose to relax her mind for a moment by reading references. "If I get a writer's block, I usually stop writing for one to three days. I cannot force myself to write. I usually read references while resting to refresh my mind," she said.

Her interest in writing and publishing papers began from her friend's encouragement that she shared the same interest. She and her friend considered writing a medium to share their thoughts.

"A friend of mine loved writing, and she had an experience of publishing journal articles. Then, she invited me to do a writing collaboration and published the writing," said Blestry, who was also the IISMA scholarship winner of Michigan State University.

Her journey was not easy. Her first paper was rejected. "I sent my paper to the University of Gadjah Mada, and I got a rejection. That was my first try, and it quite dragged me down," Blestri said.

Nevertheless, it did not stop her from publishing her writing. At the end of 2020, she tried to send her first paper to another publisher. She recounted cheerfully how a journal publisher accepted her paper over the phone. She revealed that her first work was published in a Sinta 3 journal.

"My paper was accepted in a Sinta 3 journal, which had a higher level than the first journal I applied to. After that, I decided to keep writing, so I could publish my writing again," she said.



## The Activist of Political Economy Issues, Critics of China's Hegemony in Indonesia

Blestri decided to become an activist on economic and political issues. It seemed to make it easier for her to produce scientific works. For Blestri, writing is easier if she has mastered and been interested in an issue. Her interest in issues in the political economy commenced from her interest in participating in the International Political Economy course. Perseverance in listening to everything the lecturer said turned out to be useful to determine her writing focus. When she began writing a new project, she usually read relevant books such as attitudes between countries in dealing with financial matters, international organizations in the economy, and how politics plays roles in the economy.

Through 'Nation State' volume 4, number 1 2021, Amikom's international study journal, Blestri wrote her ideas in a journal article entitled "China's Digital Silk Road: The Loss for Indonesia". She poured her opinion on China's hegemony in Indonesia through the big China One Belt One Road (OBOR) project focusing on the digital field, namely the Digital Silk Road (DSR) project. "This includes the development of fintech, 5G, and so on," added Blestri when explaining examples of DSR.

She examined the phenomenon from the Gramscian point of view. Unlike liberals who talk a lot about how this project can benefit partner countries, she found another perspective from Gramsci's thinking which mentions how this project can provide unexpected losses for partner countries.

According to Blestri, as the largest market in Southeast Asia, Indonesia deserves attention regarding this issue because the country has become one of China's DSR strategic partners. However, DSR simultaneously offers economic benefits and disadvantages in various aspects for Indonesia. Therefore, she argues that the DSR project, in Gramsci's perspective, encourages China to spread its hegemony and take over Indonesia's economic dominance.



Photo: Private Document

## The Importance of Publication and Graduating Quickly through Publication

Each student has different passions, especially when it comes to International Relations students. Some students explore roles of practitioners, organizations, and corporations. However, Blestri believed that journal publications are also important. She was aware of her weakness, namely her speaking skills, so she decided to share her ideas and views by writing journal articles.

"Successfully publishing a journal has many benefits for me. First, I could share my thoughts, especially if someone criticizes contradictory theories, events, or understandings, so there are new materials that can be written again," said Blestri.

She could also attach her works in her portfolio so that it brings benefits if later she wants to be involved in a relevant career in the academic field. Indeed, in pursuing her master's and doctoral programs, her works can benefit her.

Because of her publication, Blestri, who received the XL Future Leader scholarship, also felt anti-mainstream as she graduated without having to write tens or hundreds of pages of research.

"Journal articles support my graduation. My undergraduate research was written on a few pages only, and I was able to graduate faster. I had already published my paper in semester 6 so that at the beginning of semester 7, I only had to undergo my thesis defense," said Blestri, who had her thesis trial in the United States.

Furthermore, Arie Kusuma Paksi, S.IP., M.A. Ph. D., Blestri's supervisor and editor-in-chief of the Journal of International Relations of UMY mentioned the benefits of writing journal articles and how it eases students to graduate. He frequently told his students the advantages of

writing journal articles, how it helps them to graduate faster, and how it is useful for their portfolio.

"The policy of graduating through journal publication is an innovation which also encourages study programs to provide facilities to support these achievements. Those include holding academic writing training and providing an understanding of referencing tools such as Mendeley for citations, NVivo, and VOSviewer for analyzing and obtaining data. All of these efforts encourage students to publish journal articles so that they can graduate without undergraduate research writing," said Arie in the interview on Saturday (23/7).

**"Journal articles support my graduation. My undergraduate research was written on a few pages only, and I was able to graduate faster. I had already published my paper in semester 6 so that at the beginning of semester 7, I only had to undergo my thesis defense,"**

Innovations are continuously undertaken by involving students in journal publications. For instance, the Department of International Relations has a journal publication managed by students. The department also offers incentives as appreciation to encourage other

students to publish journal articles and do research collaboration with their lecturers through conferences.

"Students are also taught to manage a journal, but they are of course under the lecturer's supervision. Hence, students can publish their own writing. We targeted our annual publication for Scopus by ten collaborations of lecturers and students and Sinta by as many as possible through umbrella research between lecturers and students," said Arie in the interview via a WhatsApp call. (nsn)





■ UMY Dasron Hamid Research and Innovation Center (DHRIC)

# UMY Aims to be Listed in QS WUR in 2030

In accordance with the credo 'Young and Global', Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) in its tender age continues to strive for achievements at both the national and international levels. One of the endeavors is to be listed in the QS World University Ranking (WUR) in the year 2030.



The QS World University Ranking (QS WUR) is a publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds, which is a global higher education institution assessment company headquartered in London, United Kingdom. Currently, UMY has gained QS recognitions, namely QS Stars (3 Overall Stars) in the periods of 2019 - 2022 and QS Asia University Rankings (QS AUR) (451-500) in 2021 and 2022.





Prof. Dr. Ir. Gunawan Budiyanto, MP, IPM, the Rector of UMY, stated that UMY is always committed to developing knowledge and technology based upon Islamic values for the benefit of the people, as stipulated in its vision. These development efforts are done by applying strategic measures in education, research, and community service coupled by Islamic and Muhammadiyah values as a unique feature of Muhammadiyah-Aisyiyah Higher Education Institutions. “The achievements of UMY’s strategic measures are assessed by using standards of national ranking and accreditation institutions such as BAN PT, LAM, and Clusterization of the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as international institutions such as FIBAA, ACEN, IABEE and QS WUR”, added Prof. Dr. Achmad Nurmandi, Vice Rector for Cooperation and International Affairs of UMY.

Ir. Slamet Riyadi, ST, MSc, PhD, Head of the Planning and Development Agency (BPP) of UMY, further commented that UMY has established the milestones of QS WUR achievements in the 2015 – 2040 Development Masterplan.

“UMY has established its milestone as an Academic Entrepreneurial University (Top 500 WCU) in 2030-2035,” he clarified. In the 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan (Renstra), UMY has set the target of being listed in the Top 1000 of QS WUR.

Dr. Mega Hidayati, S.Ag., S.S., M.A., Head of Organizational Development BPP UMY, during an audience with the Public Relations team on Monday (29/8) mentioned that UMY has been making efforts to gain QS recognition since 2015. UMY has established QS WUR criteria as Strategic Performance Indicators (IKS). She further went on to say that, “In the IKS, we can find indicators that are specified based on indicators of QS WUR and QS Stars. These indicators have various targets that continue to develop each year. In order to achieve these indicators, the university has assigned certain work units as the leading and supporting units responsible for achieving the set targets.”

Mega also explained that QS applies 8 indicators for setting higher education institution ranking, i.e., Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty Student Ratio, Citations per Faculty, International Faculty Ratio, International Student Ratio, International Research Network, and Employment Outcomes. “According to the self-assessment made, UMY needs to focus in improving the university’s reputation at the global level. We have prepared several strategic efforts by involving relevant Work Units to achieve our QS WUR target,” she expounded.

## UMY's Strategic Preparation

A number of strategic preparations UMY has planned are being implemented by several units, of which among them are the Research and Innovation Institute (LRI), which deals with improving Scopus publications, and the Cooperation and International Affairs Institute (LKI), which deals with matters relating to campus collaborations and foreign students.

Prof. Dr. Dyah Mutiarin, S.I.P., M.Si, Head of the Research and Innovation Institute (LRI) UMY, mentioned that among the efforts LRI has made to be listed in QS WUR are holding science camps for writing scientific articles, citations, enhancing faculty members' literacy, workshop on the use of tools for analyzing data and reading literary sources. "UMY encourages its faculty members to be able to attain QS World, because one of the indicators is a good number of Scopus indexed journal articles. This year, UMY has set a target of having 725 Scopus indexed articles. Based on the current assessment, the results are quite good. In each activity, there is usually a rate of around 90 percent success. Last year, we set a target as many as 600 Scopus indexed articles and we were able to achieve that target," explained the UMY Professor of Government Studies when we met her on Monday (29/8).

In the same light, Fitri Arofiati, S.Kep., Ns., M.A.N., Ph.D., Head of the Cooperation and International Affairs Institute (LKI) UMY also stated several efforts LKI has made to support the target of being listed in the QS WUR. "The collaborative implementation efforts that have been done, one of them is by increasing the number of publications in Scopus indexed journals. Additionally, we also bring in professors from abroad and invite them to collaborate and engage in co-publications," she explained when the Public Relations team met her on Monday (29/8).



Fitri also described other efforts included inviting foreign students. "So, it's not only us sending UMY students to other countries, but we also bring in foreign students. There are many programs that we can carry out if we cooperate with universities that have or are members of a consortium," she stated further.

In 2022, foreign student application increased well over 100 percent, i.e., 1,411 international student candidates from 59 countries applying to UMY. The interest of foreign students sharply increased compared to previous year, wherein in 2021 about 601 students applied from 49 countries.

"The rising interest of foreign students applying to UMY is also part of UMY's efforts to become listed in the QS World ranking. This is also a part of UMY's internationalization effort to increase the number of foreign students. Given the many international students from various countries coming to study at UMY, we try to get students from developed countries to feel the atmosphere of studying at UMY," said Fitri.

## Targeting the 451-500 Ranking in QS WUR

Several efforts are constantly made in accordance with the university's Strategic Plan and Development Master-plan to be listed in the QS WUR. The types of strategies applied are also communicated to UMY's academic community in preparing to be listed in the QS WUR.

"This is always mentioned in official forums, such as Annual Work Meeting, Mid-Year Work Meeting, and Drafting of Budget and Work Plan. Furthermore, BPP continues to disseminate information to the university's academic community about the significance of QS WUR for the university's development at the global level," explained Mega.

In 2030, UMY has set a target of being listed in the 451-500 ranking of the QS WUR with optimal preparations that are in line with the university's capacity. To reach this target, LRI UMY also encourages faculty members to engage in collaborative research with their colleagues from universities that are listed in the QS 1-100 ranking by subject. By doing so, they would be publishing high quality articles that meet the publication standards of Scopus indexed and reputable international journals. In parallel, LKI UMY is preparing for the QS WUR by increasing the number of self-funded (non-scholarship) foreign students enrolling in full time courses at UMY. (Sofia)







**UMY**

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