



## *Research Summary*

### **“I Do The Best I Can”: Coping With Crisis Indonesian Migrant Workers in Japan**

*Paulus Rüdólf Yuniarto*

Research Center for Regional Resources,  
Indonesia Institute of Science  
Email: *rudolfyuniarto@gmail.com*

This study traces the ways an Indonesian migrant workers in manage their lives in Japan (Tokyo) during the current economic downturn. This study describes the significant role of social networks, religion and social organization that enables the Indonesian migrant workers to self-govern their dire economic plight. The data are drawn from in-depth interviews and participant observation from June to August 2010 of Indonesian migrant at different research locations in around Tokyo. This study finds that in the context of study of migrant in the host country, a migrant subjective experiences such as, religiosity, affective relation, friendships, and pragmatic thinking play a crucial roles for migrant workers manage to cope during difficult times.

The Indonesian migrant workers managed the Japan economic crisis situation in complex ways. Salaries saved carefully, and spend it only when they considered being necessary. Economic crisis hit Japan in 2008/2009 forced them to curtail the remittances they should be sent to their families in their home. For the illegal migrant, they should thinking hard to increased efforts to find job information in the city so they can quick got prospective work when the old job is not profitable or because of lack of job, beside they should hide from possibly risk police arrestment. In this context, social networks become an important role in enabling a migrant to cope economically, socially, and morally. They avoid the option returning to home countries (or to find jobs in other's countries), in addition to long time work in Japan, because depended on their economic and social capital if they decide move home or to another countries. So, they were more likely to migrate internally find better job and live.

In the other side, the role of religion institution or other social institution was significant helped migrant cope psychologically problem. Japan economic crisis seemed very uncertain and none foresaw that the economy situation will be quick turnaround at that time. The main function of these organizations is to provide a venue or forum for religious activities, building social relationships, share information on the job opportunities, learning forums, counseling on employment issues, as well as temporary shelter for newly arrived migrants and who have finished their work. Indonesian migrant workers in Japan generally forming a social networks or associations, both formal and non formal, which is based personal networks, religion, hometown in Indonesia, or base on the city where they work. Meanwhile,

non-religious association based on place of employment which was founded by Indonesian migrant workers in Japan. Furthermore, many migrant workers associations that emerged from the same ethnic or hometown.

As conclusion, Indonesian migrant worker is surviving in the Japan crisis. But, as Kyoto Tanno (2010) wrote on Japanese perspective on migrant, the Japan society still continued to see migrant as outsiders, and thus they continued to remain marginal members of the society—this holds true to this day. Given such difficult conditions, support and dynamic struggles of minority migrant, such as Indonesian Migrant in Japan, who formed part of this study, are indeed important.

### **Publication of the Results of Research Project:**

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

1. Paulus Rudolf Yuniarto on September 15, 2010. Center for Social Analysis, Bandung-West Java. Workshop on Transnational Migration and Impact on Development Migrant. Present paper entitle: “Coping With Crisis Indonesian Migrant Workers in Japan”,

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

1. Paulus Rudolf. Y, “*Global Crisis and Migration: Impact and Respond Indonesia to Crisis in Japan*”, Journal Masyarakat Indonesia. LIPI Jakarta, Vol. XXX No. 1, 2011 (Forthcoming).

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)