Tackling gender-based violence through safe transit for women travelling at night

“Volunteering is a vocation; all we need is to be passionate and determined to help build a better and more equal world for everyone. This is what resonated with me: that one day I will be able to make a contribution in tackling Gender-Based Violence against women and girls.” These are the words of Bintang Aulia, national UN Volunteer Specialist Communications and Social Media Support Officer with UN Women in Indonesia.

Bintang Aulia began her volunteering work in 2016 during her last year of university, when she joined a climate movement in Bandung. She participated for a year learning not only about the environment and what she can do to help the earth but also about how volunteering works.
After graduation, she worked as a teacher for a while before continuing her Master's degree, majoring in Japanese Area Studies. "I learned more about social and political issues, particularly on the issue surrounding women. These resonated with my own experience, and I became interested in knowing more."

During this time in 2019, Bintang joined UN Women Indonesia as a Communications and Social Media Intern. Her primary role was to support the Communications unit with advocacy works and maintain online presence on social media. The assignment made her learn about gender equality, and she participated in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

"We launched our joint publication with Pulse Lab Jakarta, 'After Dark', about the challenges, strategies, and impact of traveling at night for women in Indonesia. ‘After Dark’ revealed that women are vulnerable to harassment in public spaces, and the risk tends to increase during the evening hours. This greatly impacts their mobility and travel choices, as well as limits their participation in public spaces. During the launch event, we exhibited part of the publication and discussed creating a safe public space and city for women and girls. --Bintang Aulia, UN Volunteer Communications and Social Media Intern with UN Women, Indonesia"

The event left a great impact on Bintang, as she saw people learning about women’s challenges of traveling at night from the exhibition, she realized that communication and advocacy work helps people understand things they won’t understand otherwise, and that relevant information could lead to better conditions for women and girls all over the world. It was then that Bintang decided this is what she wanted to do, and this is how she can contribute towards a better future.

"With that knowledge and newfound determination, I continued on my path and stumbled upon UN Volunteer."

As Bintang got to know the UN program and its people, she realized how important volunteers are for the UN. Be it their expertise or time or be it their effort, the UN Volunteers are passionate about what they do. These values resonated with her passion and in 2021, she started her journey as a UN Volunteer serving with UN Women Indonesia. "Volunteering is a vocation," Bintang says. "All we need is to be passionate and determined to help build a better and more equal world for everyone."

Unfortunately, Bintang’s assignment coincided with the pandemic and like all others, she
was forced to change her way of communication. During this period, she supported the UN Joint Campaign on social media for the 16 Days of Activism 2021.

“We recognize the immense value of volunteers who are at the forefront of action for change. They bring diverse experiences, skills, and new perspectives to find solutions to the persisting issues of our times. Bintang’s knowledge on social media messaging and content production, combined with her passion to communicate for gender equality, have made an immense contribution to our work, especially during COVID-19.” -- Ms Radhiska Anggiana, Advocacy and Communications Analyst, UN Women Indonesia and Bintang’s supervisor.

Together with UN in Indonesia, UNFPA, UNDP and the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), Bintang and her colleagues started '#OrangeChallenge' on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, calling everyone to share their perspective on gender-based violence and/or gender equality, and the changes they want to see in society.
This article was prepared with the kind support of Online Volunteer Kathakali Das Bhaumik.

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Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals