

Disaster Mitigation Becomes a Source of Knowledge

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Natural disasters that often occur in most parts of Indonesia can actually be a source of experience and new knowledge for the public and policy-makers. However, the disasters have not impacted the disaster management to be better, but instead, the opposite. "In terms of management, policy and leadership, as well as the public reaction to the disaster, we have not gone to a better direction," said expert on Social Psychology, Dr. Rahmat Hidayat, in a multidisciplinary workshop entitled *Disaster-Reduction, Resilience, Well-Being, and Culture* at the Faculty of Psychology UGM, Monday (15/2).

Rahmat affirmed that disaster management nowadays is lacking of research studies, documentation, and even publication. In fact, if these experiences are documented and publicized through research, these will increase society's knowledge and skills to face possible future disasters. In addition, he is assured that the government will not hesitate to build a marker or a reminder in the form of a monument in areas that have been affected. "It could be in the form of monuments, works of installation, placed in an area that was once affected as markers and reminders," he said.

He gave an example of what the Japanese government did by creating a marker in the form of a monument in the area where it has been affected by the tsunami. The marker contains information board that can remind citizens of the risk of tsunami. "The monument also contains a range of tsunami hazard information and information telling people what risk to expect when they still occupy the impacted area," he explained.

According to Rahmat, this can be replicated by the local government to build a monument in



Yogyakarta around the area of Mount Merapi as a marker of forbidden and dangerous region. With the marker, the public is learning the risks that they will get when the Merapi eruption reoccurs.

Head of Information and Evaluation of Center for Health Crisis in the Ministry of Health, M. Kamaruzzaman, said that 80 percent of disasters can be predicted. However, the success of any disaster response depends on the readiness of government and society. He acknowledged that coordination among agencies in charge of Disaster Management in the area is still very weak. "Sometimes, the local governments are not prepared, not locating any fund for disaster management, for example, the case of forest fire disaster last year, there was an area where the people had even to ask for masks from the central government," he said.

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