

Empowering Women through Their Own Strength

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Aniendya Christianna or usually called as Niendy is a lecturer at the Faculty of Visual Communication of Petra University in Surabaya, East Java. She is now 30 years old and graduated from Airlangga University majoring in Media and Communication. Her daily activities are mostly teaching and deal with many academic assignments that relate to her position as a lecturer.

As a woman, Niendy realized that traditionally, Indonesian women are still marginalized in terms of empowerment. Based on the data released by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2016 in regard to the Survey on Women's Life Experiences, more than 30% of Indonesian women are suffering from abuse either economically, socially or sexually.

While Niendy herself is very keen on empowering women, her position in academia also gives her a broad view and knowledge on how to deal with such situations. In her opinion, empowering women means strengthening the society and the nation as well. Therefore, Niendy started her activities for empowerment with the help of many people and institutions. The program initiated by Niendy is mostly related to the empowerment and development of women and children's creativity, and most activities are conducted in nearby highly populated neighborhood and most women that participated do not have a high level of education.

When it comes to the realization of women's empowerment, another issue that needs to be addressed at the same is children's issue, especially issues that women with kids have. Niendy gives an example about the condition of women and children in the coastal area of Surabaya (North Surabaya). The knowledge about nutrition and child health is still lacking, and they tend to believe to myth that can cause sickness or even disability.

Niendy is empowering society in the ex red light district, Dolly, by empowering UKM Batik (Small Scale Enterprises). She trains Batik workers, who are mostly women, to explore the unique local motif. The knowledge in art and design of Batik eventually will increase the income of Batik workers.

As an art and design worker, Niendy wants to enlighten the neighborhood activists in childcare and services about the importance of art and creativity in child development without neglecting cognitive needs. Therefore, Niendy gave the training to the neighborhood activists in childcare and services in Surabaya city, to produce learning tool for socialization of health care and education. As part of this activity, Niendy taught them how to recycle items such as old newspaper and bottles.

Meanwhile, as activities aimed at kids and teenagers, together with her husband, Niendy established Kampung Ramah Anak in Sidodadi, Surabaya (the friendly neighborhood for kids). In this project, again Niendy was involved in art by making painting and the establishment of dancing center. And then, Niendy urges teenagers to create Murals in school building, church, etc. According to the research conducted, implicit messages are communicated by those Murals.

From Niendy's activities, we learn that the issue of women's empowerment and gender equality is something that we all should always care about seriously. The marginalization

of women due to cultural belief will not add vigor to a society or even a nation, considering the importance of women's role in contributing the economy and social situations. Historically, Indonesia has experienced so-called women's empowerment since more than one hundred years ago. The modern era saw many Indonesian heroines fighting for the independence. They fought not only in terms of using weapons like guns, but also through empowering women from within by teaching them to read, organize and make themselves heard. We have RA Kartini, Dewi Sartika, Cut Nyak Dien, Christina Martha Tiahahu and many other heroines in our history.

Niendy made use of her time and skills to get involved in women's empowerment. Her ability to manage the issue of women's empowerment while also actively performing her academic job shows us how woman are good at multitasking. In fact, most women are multitaskers.

Empowering women can only be achieved if women themselves dare and strive to make use of their strength. To be empowered, women must believe that they can improve their capacity since they are strong enough to do so.



Niendy giving a training on how to make educational tool – Niendy's facebook page