

FRAGMENTS

from
a

Changing Publishing Landscape

Zine-Report
from Indonesian
Delegates
of



International
Literature
Exchange

2025

Developed by:

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Design by EorG



Jakarta
City of Literature



Member of
the Creative Cities Network

Why this is not merely a report

This publication gathers fragments, conversations, experiments, and unfinished thoughts from three programmes led by Indonesian delegates during the International Literature Exchange (ILX) 2025. It is not a report in the conventional sense. Instead of conclusions, it offers reflections. Instead of polished outcomes, it shares moments in process.

Across the programmes, we chose to work through dialogue, participation, and making. From collective discussions to zine-making workshops, these sessions were designed as spaces to think together about publishing in a time of cultural, technological, and structural change. The form of this publication follows that approach: modular, open, and intentionally non-linear.

The Indonesian delegation approaches publishing not only as an industry, but as a relationship between writers and readers, stories and cities, local contexts and global conversations. What emerged were not definitive answers, but recurring questions: “How publishing can remain relevant without losing care”; “How access can expand without sacrificing responsibility”; and “How literary practices can stay rooted while moving across borders”.

This document does not attempt to capture everything that happened. What it presents are selected fragments, notes, voices, and impressions that reflect how these conversations unfolded. Some ideas are fully formed, others are still taking shape. All of them are offered as an invitation rather than a statement.

We hope this publication is read not as a closing summary, but as a starting point for further dialogue, future collaboration, and continued exchange beyond ILX 2025.

Namira Daufina

The Editorial Team

The International Literature Exchange (ILX) is a collaborative programme between the British Council and the National Centre for Writing that connects literature professionals from around the world. The programme aims to encourage knowledge exchange, foster international collaboration, and strengthen global literary networks through a series of biennial seminars and discussions.

In its latest edition, ILX expanded its scope by involving institutional partnerships through the UNESCO City of Literature network. Jakarta participated as a partner city alongside Bucheon (South Korea), Lviv and Odesa (Ukraine), and Norwich (United Kingdom). This approach positioned ILX as a platform for dialogue that bridges local literary contexts with international perspectives.

Through an open call conducted in June 2025, seven delegates were selected to represent Indonesia via Jakarta UNESCO City of Literature.

- Andika Budiman, PannaFoto Institute
- Dhianita Kusuma Pertiwi, Footnote Press
- Farah Rizki, Gramedia International
- Farid Hamka, Bookhive Indonesia
- Namira Daufina, PT Simpul Aksara Group (Pear Press)
- Ni Made Dwi Ermayanthi, Mudra Swari Saraswati Foundation (UWRF)
- Prihandini Nur Rahmah, Marjin Kiri

The delegates come from diverse professional backgrounds across the literary ecosystem, including publishing, translation, literary initiatives, and cultural organisations. Their participation reflects the breadth and depth of Indonesia’s contemporary literary landscape within an international exchange framework.



The Programme

Programme Overview

1st Programme:

Publishing in a Changing World

The first programme took the form of a hands-on zine-making workshop that invited participants to reflect on how publishing is evolving amid cultural, technological, and structural shifts. Through collective discussion and making, participants explored publishing as an accessible, low-cost, and experimental practice—one that responds to change while staying grounded in shared values.

2nd Programme:

Roots & Routes

This discussion opened by setting a shared context: every literary work is shaped by its roots, culture, language, and lived experience while also moving through routes, from creative processes to publication and circulation. The session explored how literature grows when these two forces meet, allowing stories to remain deeply local while travelling across borders and contributing to a more inclusive, globally connected literary ecosystem.

3rd Programme:

Literature in the Time of Crisis

The last programme created space to reflect on the role of literature in moments of uncertainty and disruption. Through conversation and shared experiences, participants discussed how writing, reading, and publishing can offer both shelter and resilience, helping individuals and communities survive, remember, and imagine possibilities in times of crisis.

KATA

28 September 2025

Publishing in a Changing World



1st Programme

Publishing in a Changing World

facilitated by Namira Daufina and Andika Budiman

What We Tried

During the Publishing in a Changing World zine workshop, participants were divided into six groups. Each group focused on one specific theme related to the evolving publishing landscape, which was collectively discussed, interpreted, and ultimately presented in the form of a zine. This format allowed ideas to be expressed not only through conversation, but also through visual and editorial experimentation.

• What Does It Mean to Be a City of Literature?

This theme invited participants to reflect on the idea of Jakarta as a City of Literature beyond its formal designation, exploring how the title translates into lived experiences, access, and responsibility within everyday cultural life.

• Publishing as a Tool for Social Advocacy

The discussion examined how publishing can function as a medium for amplifying marginalised voices, shaping public discourse, and responding to social issues without losing editorial integrity.

PERAN SASTRA
& BUKU
di Keseharian
lifestyle
INDONESIA

• The State and Books: Where Does Policy Stand?

Participants questioned the role of public policy in supporting the book ecosystem, addressing gaps between cultural aspirations and institutional frameworks that affect publishing, distribution, and access.

• Reading Culture in Jakarta and Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities

This theme explored reading habits within urban and national contexts, highlighting structural barriers, emerging communities, and alternative spaces that sustain literary engagement.

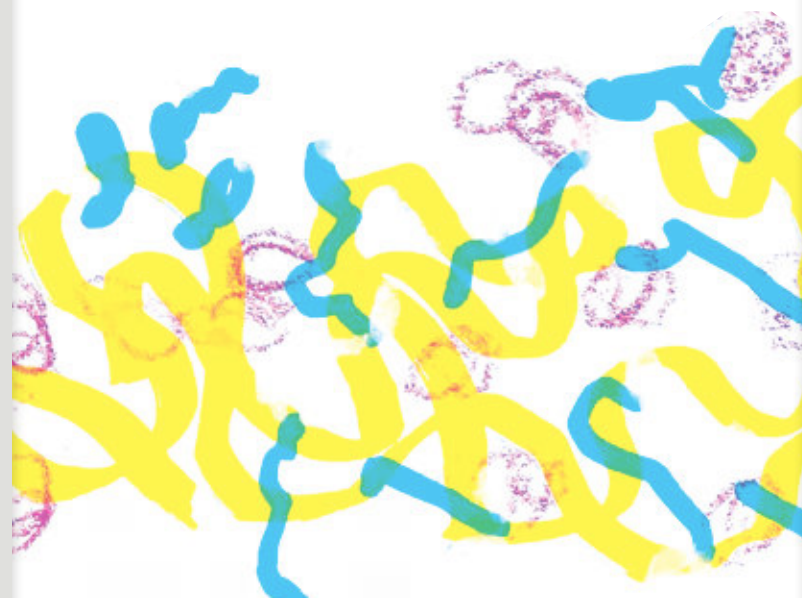
• The Role of Literature and Books in Everyday Indonesian Lifestyles

The conversation considered how literature intersects with daily life, from formal education to informal cultural consumption, and how books can remain relevant amid competing forms of media.

• Bite-Sized Literature: Integrating Literature into Urban Life

Participants discussed short-form and experimental literary formats as opportunities to embed literature into fast-paced urban routines, making reading more accessible and adaptable to contemporary lifestyles.

Zines
from
1st session



In Their Words

What Does It Mean to Be a City of Literature?

Lead by: Farah Rizki

Our group received a theme that invited us to think about Jakarta as a City of Literature beyond its official label, and to look instead at how this idea is felt in everyday life. We were asked to reflect on access, lived experiences, and the shared responsibility of keeping literary culture alive. From this perspective, Jakarta offers a meaningful example of how literature can exist not only in institutions, but also in public and communal spaces.

Jakarta shows its potential through various literary activities held in open spaces and the steady growth of reading communities. With support from the government, places like the library at Taman Ismail Marzuki and several small, privately run libraries have become important meeting points for readers and writers. These spaces help make literature feel present and approachable, woven into the rhythm of the city.

However, there is still much that could be improved. Most literary access remains centered in central Jakarta, leaving those who live farther away with fewer opportunities. If Jakarta truly embraces its role, it could expand access more evenly and encourage similar movements in other cities. With stronger initiatives and wider support, Jakarta could become not just a City of Literature for itself, but a reference point for other regions to grow their own literary cultures.

Publishing as a Tool for Social Advocacy

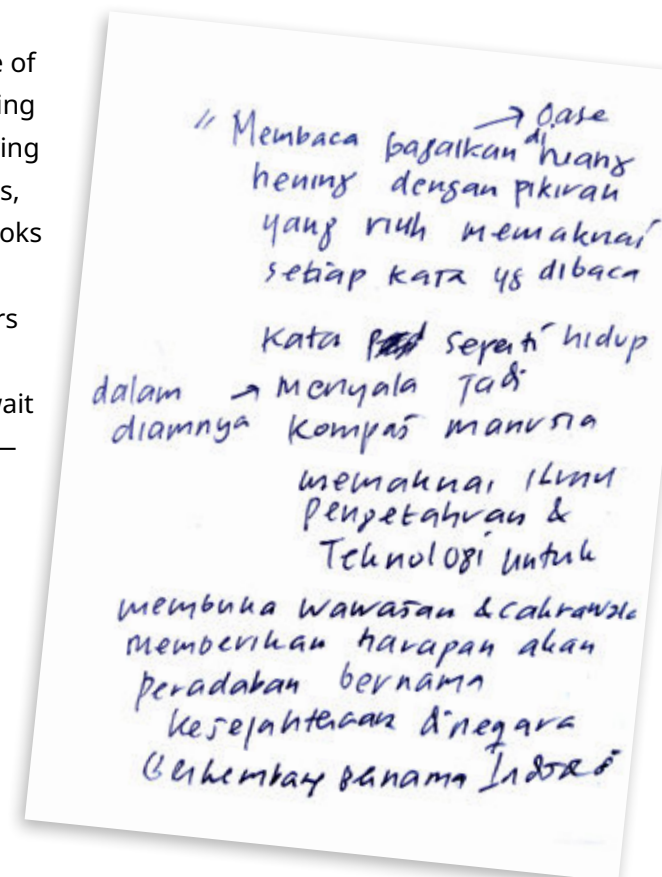
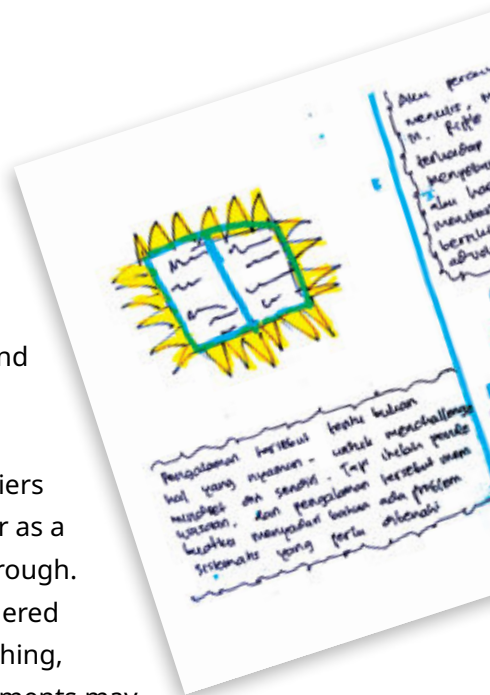
Lead by: Andika Budiman

At the meeting, we held a zine-making workshop about literature in everyday life. Each participant facilitated a different theme; I led a session on literature as a form of advocacy. Zines are perfect for this kind of discussion: fluid, unbound by rules, and capable of carrying uncertainty, doubt, and hope together.

In my group, we talked about how publishing often creates barriers that make advocacy difficult. To publish a piece in mass media or as a book, you must pass through gates—and not every idea gets through.

Even writing that is relevant, clear, or beautiful may be considered too sensitive, too risky, or potentially controversial. Publishing, after all, exists within larger systems of power. Governments may support cultural expression—or actively silence it if it challenges the status quo. Advocacy, by definition, fights for the voices at the margins, which can put it in tension not only with those in power but also with the comfort of the majority. These pressures shape every publisher's decision about what gets printed.

One participant shared how growing up in a homogeneous environment had shaped her sense of the world. Visiting bookstores at home felt like facing endless choices—but they were all familiar. Studying abroad, meeting people with very different lives, she realized how varied reality really is. The books on shelves reflected that diversity, and she wondered why more ideas never reach readers through publishing. It struck me that today, thanks to technology, writers don't need to wait for the industry's approval to circulate ideas—they can publish directly, reaching readers without passing through traditional gates.



In Their Words

The State and Books: Where Does Policy Stand?

Lead by: Prihandini Nur Rahmah

Through the zine, my group discussed the vital role of the government in supporting the book ecosystem in Indonesia. We discussed what has been done and appreciated, as well as what needs to be improved and evaluated.

During the group discussion session, my group discussed the topic from two perspectives. I discussed it from the perspective of a book publisher, while my group mate discussed it as a book lover who already has critical awareness.

From the discussion that we later wrote in the zine, we agreed that the government has so far supported book-related activities through several programs, such as those supported by the Ministry of Culture, including promoting literature internationally and translation initiatives. Some things that we think the government needs to evaluate and improve include the need to make books more accessible and inclusive, such as providing subsidies to make books cheaper and subsidizing shipping costs for deliveries outside Java. We also discussed the need to guarantee freedom for communities to hold book discussions, and the need for training for people who want to become book content creators so they do not only focus on viewers but can also provide critical education.

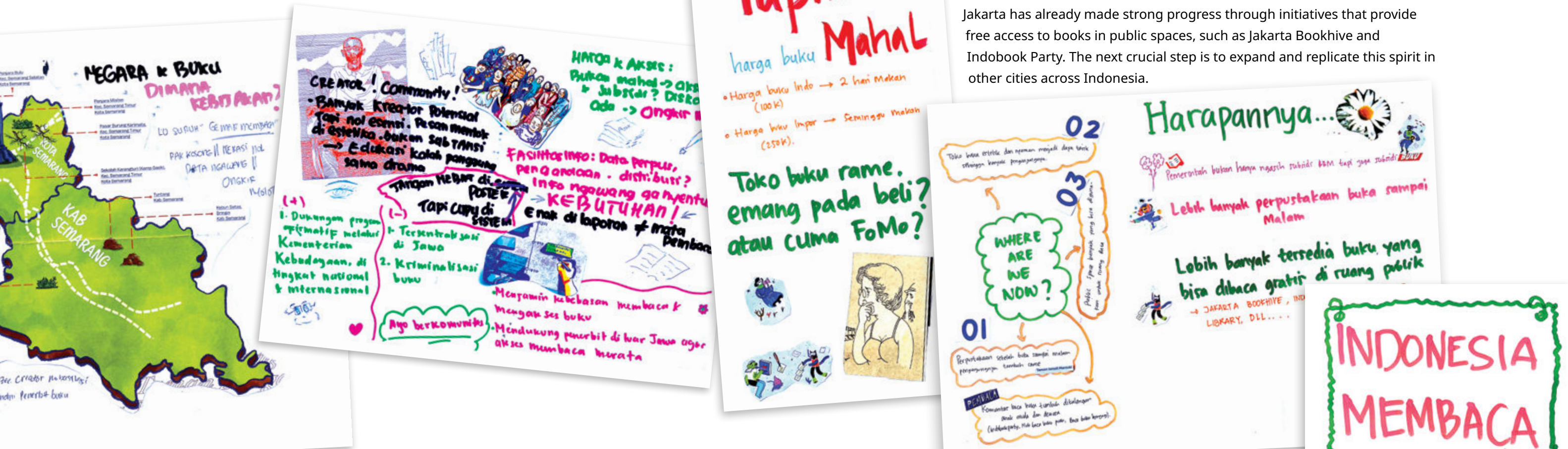
Reading Culture in Jakarta and Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities

Lead by: Ni Made Dwi Ermayanthi

Our group has been observing reading habits and literary lifestyles in Jakarta. Despite the positive developments — such as the advancement of reading facilities, encouraging signs of growing literary awareness within the community, and reading communities growing organically through initiatives such as the Indobook Party, Klub Baca Buku Puan, and Baca Buku Bareng— we recognise that a major challenge remains in fostering reading habits across Indonesia, especially outside Jakarta: access to affordable books. Book prices in Indonesia are relatively high when compared to average income. With such costs, an important question arises: even as bookstore visits increase, are book sales actually growing, or are people visiting primarily for the experience and social appeal?

Despite these challenges, we remain optimistic that Indonesia's reading culture is moving in a positive direction, provided current efforts are nurtured and supported. In the near future, we hope to see meaningful changes, including stronger government support to lower book prices nationwide and giving more access to books, such as more libraries operating longer hours during evenings and weekends, as lack of interest is often not the issue, the demand clearly exists—what remains is finding ways to accommodate it.

Jakarta has already made strong progress through initiatives that provide free access to books in public spaces, such as Jakarta Bookhive and Indobook Party. The next crucial step is to expand and replicate this spirit in other cities across Indonesia.



In Their Words

The Role of Literature and Books in Everyday Indonesian Lifestyles

Lead by: Namira Daufina

Through the zine, the group observed that literacy-friendly lifestyle trends are clearly on the rise. Book clubs, literary events, and cafés with in-house bookstores are becoming increasingly popular, especially among young people. Reading in public spaces is now seen as something cool and aspirational, with books taking on a new role, not just as sources of knowledge, but as part of personal style and everyday life.

At the same time, the group also flagged a few things worth paying attention to. With so many voices and narratives circulating freely, not everything is curated or reliable. The growing trend of digital books sold cheaply through social media platforms like TikTok, often created by content creators, raises questions about authorship, originality, and responsibility. It becomes important to ask: Is the work original? Is the content accountable? Does it go through an editorial process? Does it have an ISBN?

Overall, this shift was seen as a positive movement that needs to be taken care of, not treated as a passing trend. Keeping it alive requires collective effort from everyone in the literary ecosystem—publishers, writers, communities, and readers. As part of the younger generation, participants highlighted the need to be actively involved in creating spaces, supporting good work, and making sure this growing reading culture can last and reach wider audiences.

Bite-Sized Literature: Integrating Literature into Urban Life

Lead by: Farid Hamka

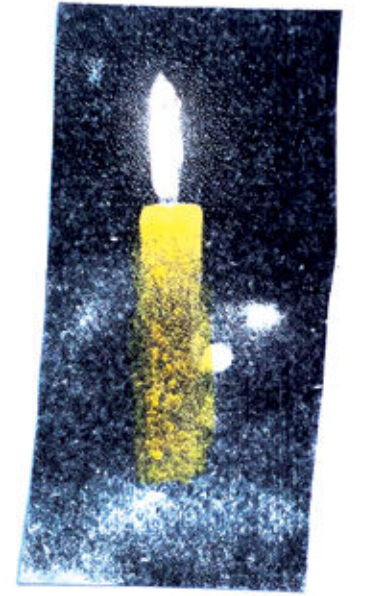
The first session is done in breakout groups in an attempt to discuss and ideate a few areas of literary movements and how they relate to the citizens. We tried to create a small presentation in the form of a zine.

My group talked about the potentials of how literature can be embedded into a citizen's daily life in forms such as poems in the public space, the existence of public bookracks in offices, parks, and stations, and how literary elements can be part of Jakarta's events rosters.

Other groups raised questions regarding the access of books, how books can be a resistance tool, etc. It also asks an underlying question: what does it mean for Jakarta to be a city of literature? In this meeting also, I had the chance to talk with the diverse group of ILX participants.



09 December 2025



Roots & Routes



2nd Programme

Roots & Routes

facilitated by Ni Made Dwi Ermayanthi

What We Tried

The selected works discussed in this session are:

Dhianita Kusuma Pertiwi brings *Ali Akbar Navis (A.A Navis): Robohnya Surau Kami*

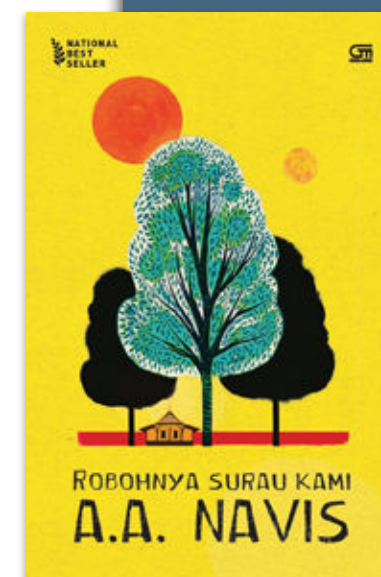
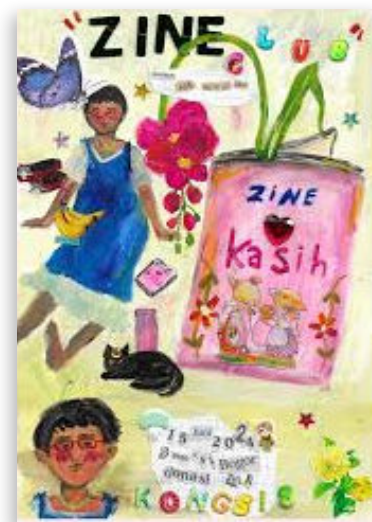
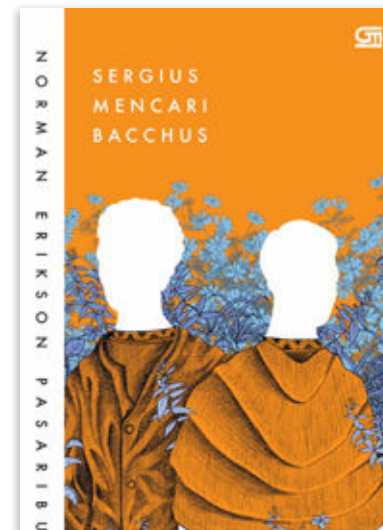
This short story was written by a West Sumatran writer in 1956. Even though A.A. Navis never left his homeland, West Sumatra; his work is acknowledged globally by UNESCO. The story is based on the Muslim community, yet it is also relevant to other religions, and the issue remains applicable today. This makes his work long-lasting.

Farid Hamka brings *Norman Erikson Pasaribu: Buku Puisi Sergius Seeks Bacchus*

Through his poem, Norman invites us to understand the repression and limited privacy space faced by gay people in Jakarta. The poem has strong roots by addressing issues that resonate with the global context and depicting how marginalized communities in third-world countries still face repression. These roots and their resonance with the global context have made this work widely recognized and translated into English.

Andika Budiman brings *Hai Rembulan: Zine collection*

Hai Rembulan and zine maker from Bandung became an example of this discussion; that **roots and routes** for literature works have no limit. Zine and independent publishing made it possible for everyone to publish their ideas, story and voices without any limitation. Success as a writer or success for the literature work is not merely based on how many books published, how many copies sold or translated into different languages. Beyond that, zines are interesting because writers can share ideas and voices anonymously, without naming or claiming their work. The goal is to make literature feel more grounded and reach a wider audience by making it fun and straightforward.

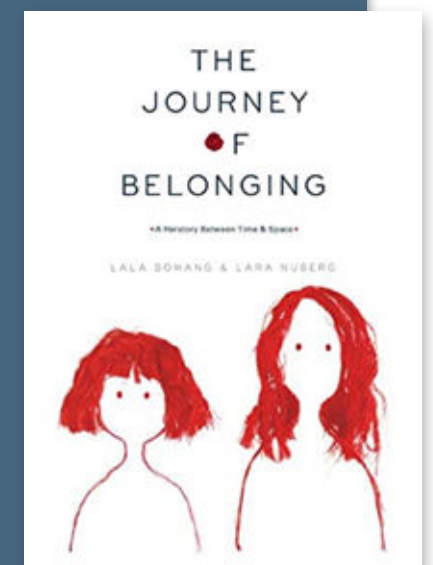


Prihandini Nur Rahmah brings *Ida Fitri: Paya Nie*

This novel, set in Aceh, tells the story of Acehnese women during the Free Aceh Movement. Because of this book, the author often receives many questions about Aceh and her experiences as a woman living through the conflict, rather than about her work itself. A similar tendency is also found in other literary works set during wars in other countries, such as Vietnam. Readers, especially among global readers, tend to be drawn to stories set in war or other Third World tragedies.

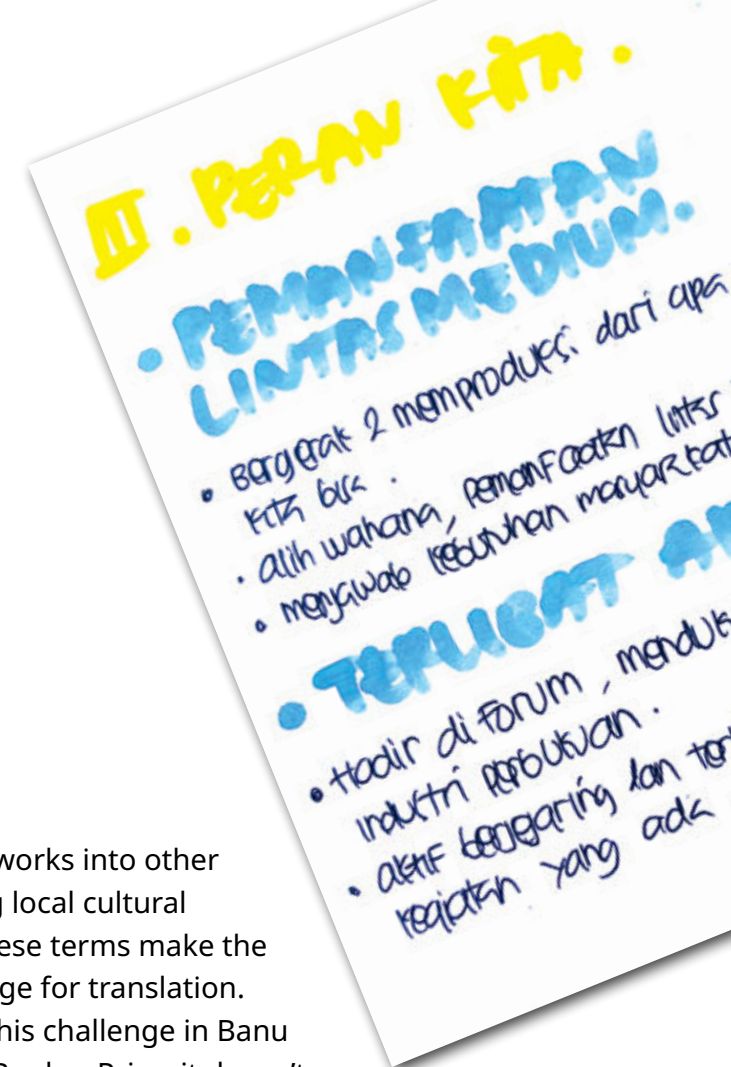
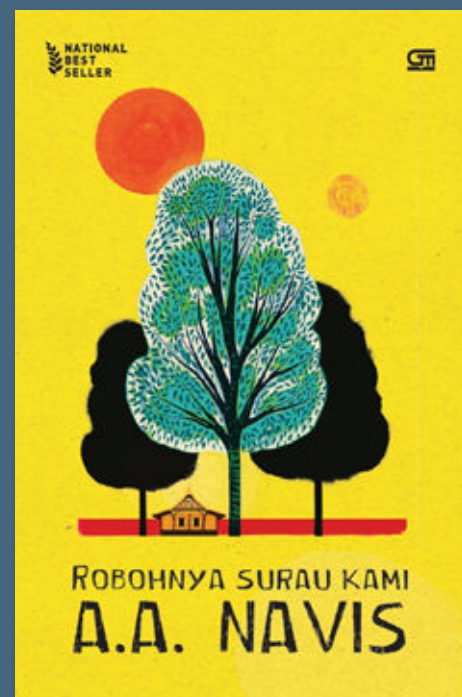
Namira Daufina brings *Lara Nuberg, Lala Bohang: The Journey of Belonging*

Lara Nuberg and Lala Bohang explore the need for a place to call home. This book tells the story of the search for identity (home) through cooking and family cultures, presented in both written and visual form. It also recounts trauma and the discovery of each person's identity. Although the two authors come from different countries with distinct backgrounds, they discovered many similarities in their cultures, food, and stories during the writing process. Interestingly, the book was originally written in English and then translated into Indonesian.



“Aku beri kau negeri yang kaya raya,
tapi kau malas. Kau lebih suka beribadat saja,
karena beribadat tidak mengeluarkan peluh,
tidak membanting tulang”.

— A.A. Navis



The challenge of translating Indonesian works into other languages, especially those with a strong local cultural background, is the use of local terms. These terms make the story interesting, but they pose a challenge for translation. However, we can find a success story of this challenge in Banu Mustaq's *Hearth Lamp*. If Banu won the Booker Prize, it doesn't mean other works, such as *Paya Nie*, are impossible either.

The cultural value inherent in literary works cannot be easily dismissed in the translation process. How can translators avoid eliminating cultural context while also avoiding excessive cultural exploitation? If more Indonesian writers can write directly in English, this can be a breakthrough for Indonesian literature.

In the Indonesian translation ecosystem, it remains challenging to determine which works are worthy and suitable for translation and which are not. This will determine the next step – publishing.

The publisher, especially the independent publishing company, is also trying its best to maintain the balance between market demand (what sells) and idealism (what topics are essential). To keep the company's sustainability, the publisher considers not only what will sell more but also makes space for essential voices and minimizes exploitation by operating in a fair-trade ecosystem.

In Their Words

Andika Budiman

Listening to others, I thought about how every work has its own path to readers. A piece of writing is often called “literature” only after it is reviewed, read widely, awarded, taught, translated, and circulated internationally. But these processes are political and shaped by institutions and agendas. There is rarely an equal chance for every work to be recognized.

A translated foreign book on an Indonesian shelf may not be there simply because it is good. Government programs or international cultural institutions often support it, promoting works that align with specific values. A work may travel a long, complicated road before being recognized as “literature,” and yet, even then, it can feel distant from its readers.

In Indonesia, I sometimes feel that literacy and literature have been separated from their original purpose. Before independence, reading and publishing raised awareness and encouraged critical thinking. Later, the colonial government created Balai Pustaka to publish works deemed “appropriate,” labeling others “wild reading” (Bacaan Liar). When I was in school, most required literature came from Balai Pustaka, now a state-owned enterprise. If literature is imagined only as officially recognized “books,” it’s no wonder many people find it irrelevant to their lives.

This is why I believe publishers—and, ideally, governments—have a bigger responsibility than simply producing recognized “literature.” They need to create frameworks that allow writers to share their thoughts and readers to access them, to sustain both publishing and authors’ livelihoods, and to reach audiences from all walks of life. At the same time, communities can act independently, publishing works they find important and using technology to distribute them.

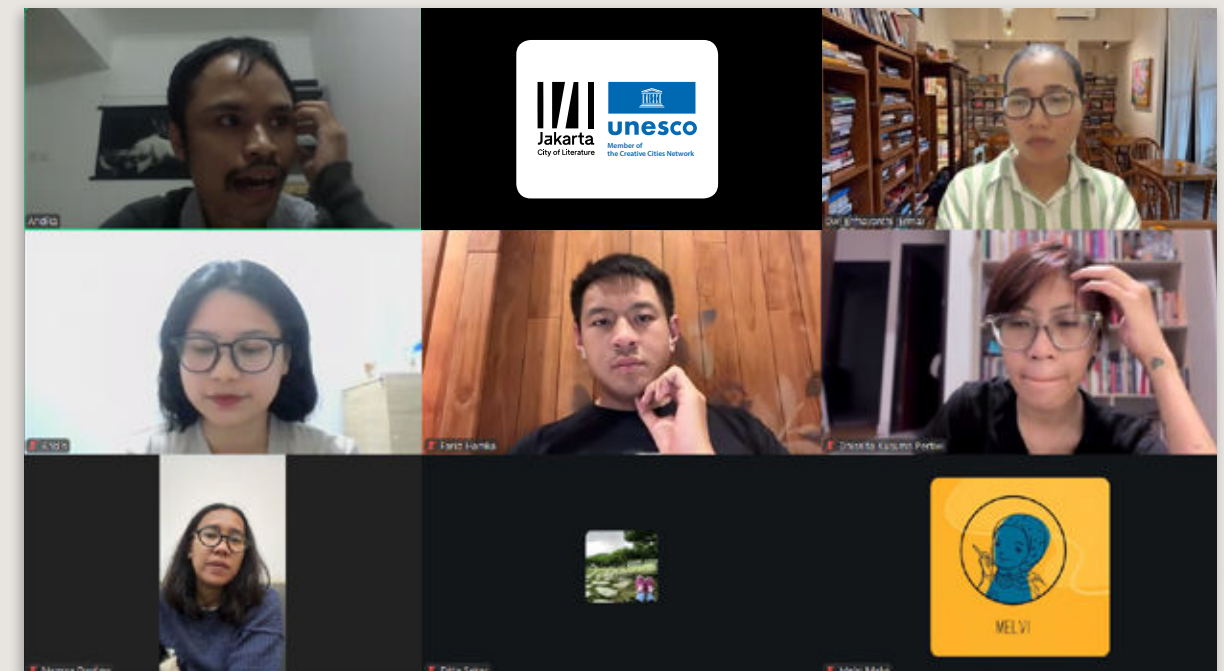
Farid Hamka

Session two was an interesting 2-hour discussion on the topics of Roots and Routes. A lot of our discussion touches upon the duality of the individual and the market. We took turns talking about the specificity of a writer’s identity and background in creating a work of literature that are authentically and originally theirs and how it then becomes a unique selling point for their work.

I personally used the case of Norman Erikson Pasaribu’s Indonesian queer lens and how it then could provide the material to propel him into global recognition when his writing is noticed by supportive parties like the British Council.

An interesting area of contention is cultural appreciation versus fetishization, in which sometimes both the writer and the market fall into the trap of being attracted to an insular cliché (example Indonesia and communism, Vietnam and the war) and then getting stuck on that portrayal.

Recording
of
2nd session



14 December 2025

Literature in the Time of Crisis



3rd Programme

Literature in the Time of Crisis

facilitated by Dhianita Kusuma Pertiwi

What We Tried

In attempt to define crisis.

As a writer, I have always found it empowering to interact with new people and learn about their life stories. During our brief introduction at the beginning of the session, I was glad to learn that we are all working towards a similar goal: to create an inclusive space that provides opportunities for underrepresented voices through literature. Namira and Andini (both Jakarta), Marta (Kyiv) and Zhui Ning (London) manage independent publishing houses that focus on publishing niche books and magazines on topics such as progressive ideas and science fiction. At the same time, they support local and diaspora writers as literary agents. Meanwhile, Andika (Jakarta) is interested in literary zines as an alternative to expensive books, and Erna (Bali) plays an important role in managing one of Indonesia's biggest literary festivals, the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival. I find myself with common ground with Sarah (Korea) in that we both work in the realm of production, writing and translating literary works, with a particular interest in personal and family history, as well as women's experiences.

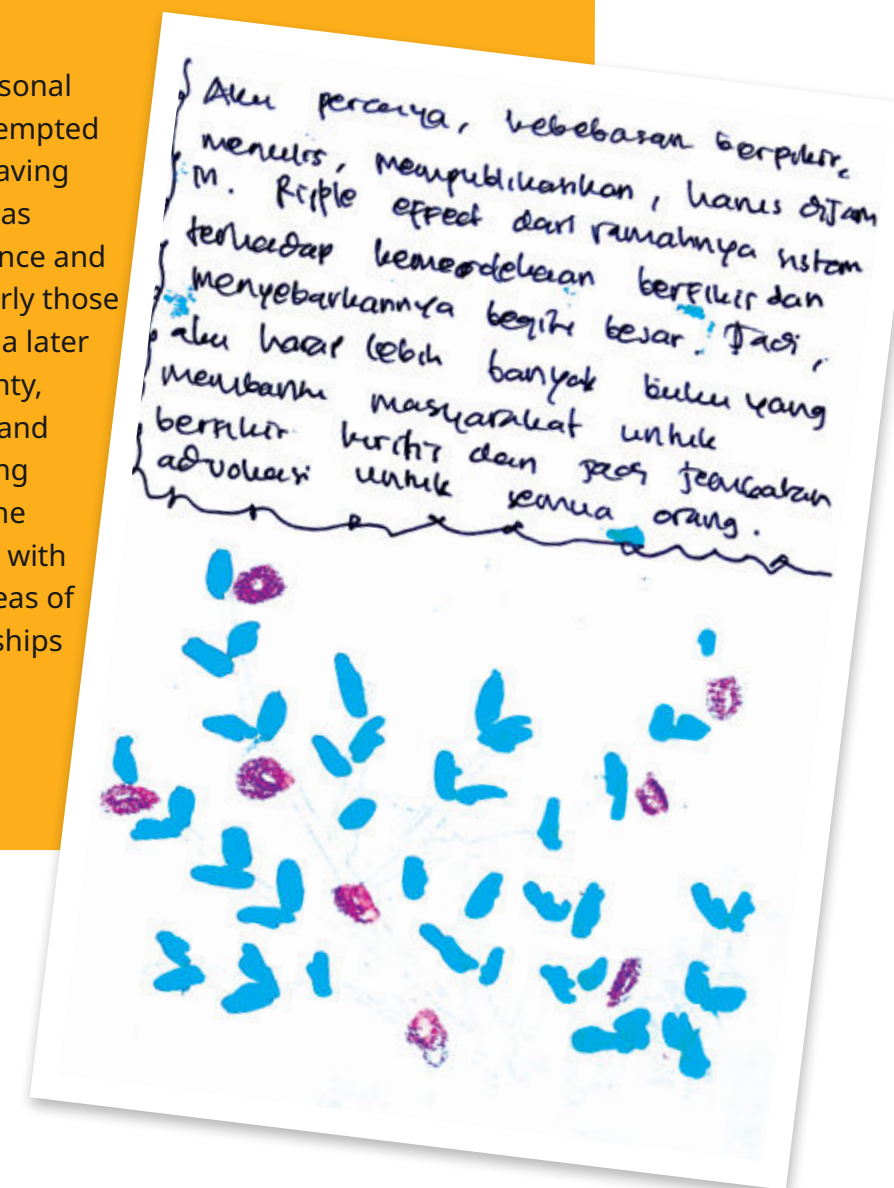
Throughout history, crises have created a certain degree of silence, depriving victims, particularly those from marginalised communities, of their right to express their feelings and thoughts. Meanwhile, those in authority seek to impose their own narratives in order to maintain the status quo. It was exhilarating to discover that the seven of us believe in the power of literature to break the silence and uncover the truth. A promising start, I thought.

As the conversation continued, we agreed that we are currently living in a time of crisis, although our definitions of crisis vary. I was deeply touched by Marta's story of her experience as a refugee from the Ukraine–Russia armed conflict. Four years have passed since the war first erupted, and while she is thankful to have survived, she finds it difficult to accept the stagnation. 'Surviving but not advancing,' she said, her voice shaking. I could feel her frustration at being stuck in one place, unable to do anything while the world around us moves at an incredible speed.

Andika later emphasised the idea of 'survival mode', examining how we have been living in a time of continuing crisis. This situation puts us in a difficult position, as we want to act, yet it often seems impossible to do anything. Sarah picked up on a similar point from a different perspective, asserting that knowing about the past but doing nothing about it—or at least trying to do something—is the kind of crisis we are facing right now.

Having recently finished reading *Suara Mereka yang Kembali dan Dikembalikan*, a compilation of life accounts of Indonesian New Order political prisoners, Namira realised that the devastating effects of a crisis are not only felt by the victims during the events, but can also last in the form of trauma. This trauma can linger for years afterwards and even throughout lifetimes. Similarly, Andini highlighted the ongoing political crises that the country has been experiencing, which have put the lives of ordinary people on the brink of destruction. She recounted the demonstration last August, which resulted in the deaths of innocent people and the imprisonment of activists. To make matters worse, the Indonesian government confiscated books as evidence in an attempt to criminalise the protesters.

Zhui and Erma reflected on their personal experiences in the sector as they attempted to define what constitutes a crisis. Having worked with diaspora writers, Zhui has observed an increase in border violence and its impact on people's lives, particularly those separated from their homeland. Erma later defined a crisis as a time of uncertainty, reflecting the biggest challenge she and her team at the UWRF face in ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the festival. Every year, they have to deal with uncertainty and changes in many areas of event organizing, including sponsorships and location availability.

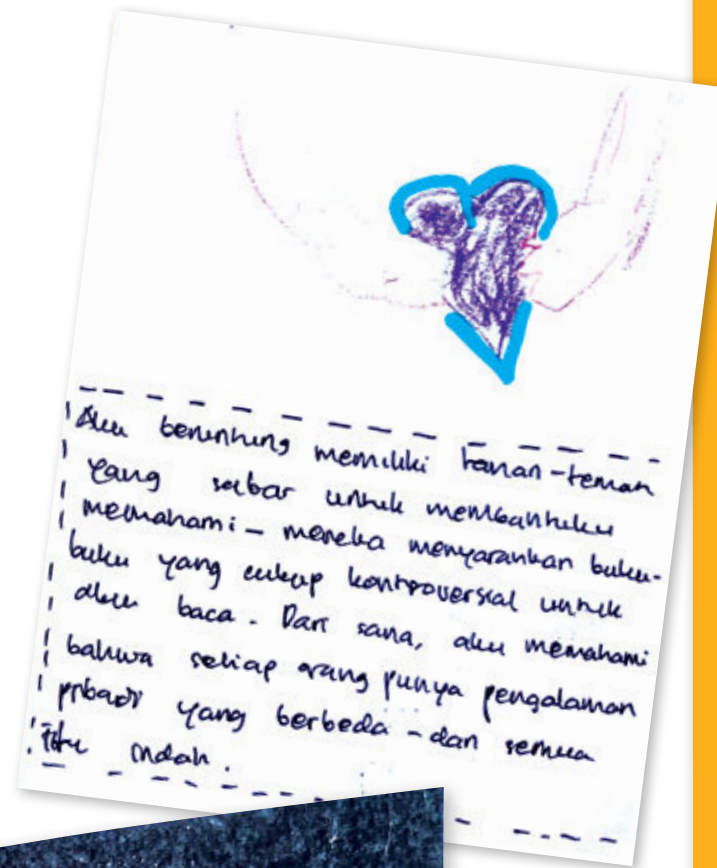


In Their Words

Although our views on what constitutes a crisis differ, we are all united in our belief in the power of literature to help people deal with crises. Literature gives a voice to marginalised people. It opens up channels of dialogue and understanding. It plays a substantial role in creating an inclusive society. However, as a co-founder of an independent publisher, I have also been pondering how to ensure the sustainability of the ecosystem in times of crisis. Without a specific strategy to support the ecosystem and its components, it will be difficult to achieve our objectives. I proposed this question as a topic for our next discussion to learn how various stakeholders respond to this issue.

- In this regard, **Namira and Andini** emphasised the role of publishers in providing wider opportunities for unrepresented voices to be heard. Major publishers in particular need to move away from focusing solely on profit by publishing works that satisfy the market, and start participating in the collective attempt to build inclusivity. Conversely, they also believe in the power of public solidarity as a support system for independent publishing houses, particularly in cases of censorship by the authorities. Zhui expressed her agreement, then showing us an Instagram post created by a coalition of independent publishers in the UK regarding the future of small press publishing in the region.

- **Marta and Sarah** further elaborated on the discussion by offering intriguing reflections from their perspective as translators. In their view, translators are not just transferring words from one language to another, especially in times of crisis. They need to recognise their role in disseminating ideas and creating meaning for new audiences. Sarah asserted that translators could use their influence to recommend to publishers what they should translate and publish, thereby making alternative voices available.



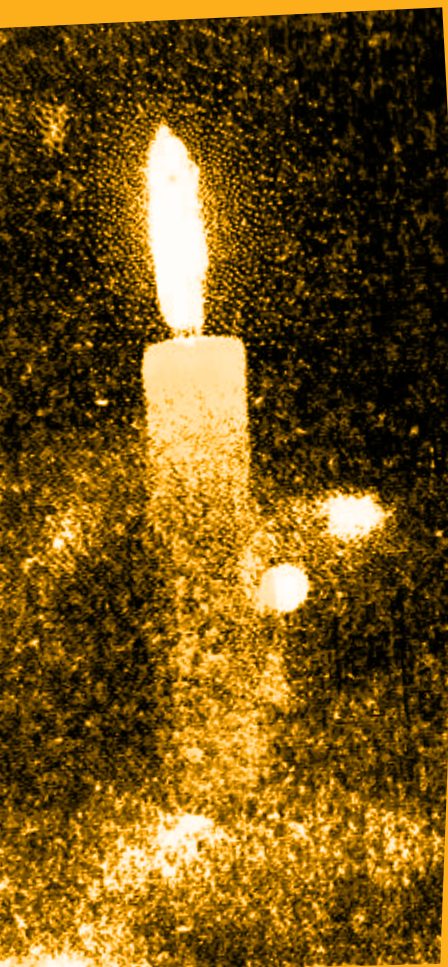
- **Andika** brought up another aspect regarding resource management as a strategy to ensure the sustainability of the ecosystem. Small and independent publishers should start identifying the available resources and organising them as a tool to sustain their operations. Erma later added that she and her team at UWRF have been trying to create a safe and inclusive space for healthy dialogue between writers, readers, and members of the literary community.

The third meeting focused on literature in times of crisis. There's no denying it—the world is not in a good place. In Indonesia, too, crises leave deep wounds, and life often feels heavier with each passing day.

In these moments, one question comes to mind: what is literature's role? One participant noted how crises shift human perspective. *Beauty becomes unbearable. Relationships change.* Survival mode dominates, leaving little time for reading or writing.

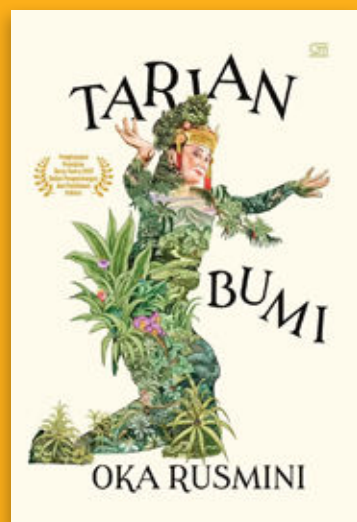
But literacy and literature are not only about producing books. Crises reflect life itself, and literature can help us understand the *what, why, and how* of those moments. It can show us how to be resilient, how to cope both in the short and long term, and how knowledge can be shared and made meaningful for others.

I agree that camaraderie and solidarity are important forces that have enabled the literary sector to thrive. However, I also believe that robust policies are required to ensure its long-term sustainability, particularly during times of crisis. This was supposed to be our next topic, but time constraints limited our conversation. I invited my fellow delegates to share and read the works they had chosen.



“Jangan pernah menikah hanya karena kebutuhan atau dipaksa oleh sistem. Menikahlah kau dengan laki-laki yang mampu memberimu ketenangan, cinta, dan kasih. Yakinkan dirimu bahwa kau memang memerlukan laki-laki itu dalam hidupmu. Kalau kau tak yakin, jangan coba-coba mengambil risiko.”

“Never marry simply out of necessity or because you’re forced into it. Marry a man who can provide you with peace, love, and affection. Convince yourself that you truly need that man in your life. If you’re not sure, don’t even take the risk.”



Erma recited her favourite line from *Tarian Bumi*, a notable work by the Balinese female writer Oka Rusmini.

Erma found that the novel, and that specific line in particular, reflected the crisis faced by her and many other Balinese women. Her story reminds me of my conversation with Oka a couple of years ago, when she told me how she had been ‘socially punished’ in her hometown for exposing the dark truth behind the caste system, which is still widely practised in Hindu communities in Bali.

Recording
of
3rd session





Reflection

Things That Kept Coming Back



- **Publishing as Relationship, Not Product**

Across the programmes, publishing repeatedly surfaced as a set of relationships rather than a finished object. Between writers and readers, editors and communities, local stories and global contexts, publishing revealed itself as a process of care, trust, and ongoing exchange.

- **Cities as Living Literary Spaces**

Cities appeared not only as backdrops, but as active literary actors. From festivals and residencies to cafés, book fairs, and informal reading spaces, the city became a place where stories circulate, collide, and find new audiences beyond traditional institutions.

- **Young Readers as Cultural Agents**

Young people were consistently present not just as audiences, but as initiators. Through book clubs, independent publishing, digital platforms, and alternative formats, young readers are shaping how literature is consumed, shared, and reimagined in everyday life.

- **Small Formats, Big Impact**

Zines, short texts, discussions, and intimate gatherings proved that scale is not the only measure of impact. Small, low-cost formats created space for experimentation, accessibility, and honesty allowing ideas to travel in ways that are flexible, immediate, and human.

What This Opened Up

1st Programme:

Publishing in a Changing World

- Gained new perspectives on how publishing challenges and opportunities are shared across cities, even when contexts and scales differ.
- Identified possibilities for future collaboration, from cross-city exchanges and collective publishing projects to informal networks that continue beyond the programme.
- Highlighted the need to keep talking about publishing in a changing world, as the questions around relevance, responsibility, and access are ongoing and far from settled.



2nd Programme:

Roots & Routes

- A deeper awareness that literary works carry both strong local roots and the potential to travel widely through diverse routes of publication, translation, and readership.
- A shared language for talking about how literature can move globally without flattening cultural specificity.
- Recognition of independent presses, self-publishing, and small formats as crucial pathways, not alternatives, for reaching new and overlooked readers.

An ongoing reflection on how translation, access, and infrastructure can be strengthened to support Indonesian literature's journey beyond its point of origin.

3rd Programme:

Literature in the Time of Crisis

- Literature, in its own way, provides shelter for those looking for a safe, warm place during tumultuous times.
- On the other hand, the current polycrisis situation should serve as a reminder to consider how this ecosystem survives despite all the challenges it faces.
- I believe that our dialogue as ILX delegates is a promising start in building a more robust literary ecosystem for the future.

An invitation to continue the dialogue on how writers, publishers, and communities can support one another, and ensure literature can keep doing its work, even in difficult times.



An Opening, Not An Ending

*What do we hold on to as everything keeps shifting?
Which stories are still waiting for the right moment, the right listener?*

*To stay with the process.
To keep crossing borders of cities, languages, formats, and certainty.*

*That some work only begins once the programme ends.
That care, curiosity, and connection are practices, not outcomes.*

*This document does not conclude.
It opens.*

*Toward more conversations and collaborations ahead,
in the shared effort to nurture stronger literary scenes across the world.*

Indonesian Delegates — ILX 2025



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