

Interview by Jemma Purdey and Ahmad Suaedy with Nabiela Naily, Surabaya, 31 May 2014

MA, Asian Studies, ANU, 2006-2008

[00:00:03]	Studied a Master of Asian Studies at the Australian National University (ANU) from 2006 to 2008, by coursework and a mini thesis on gender and law. Did field work in East Java for three months in a pesantren community of female religious scholars (nyai). She came from a pesantren family in East Java so she had the networks already and, at the suggestion of her supervisor, Greg Fealy, she started her fieldwork earlier in the master's while she was still doing coursework.	Scholarship experience; Studying in Australia; Childhood; Family background; Early education
[00:02:41]	Born in Jember, but her mother was from Surabaya and her father from Central Java. When she was twelve the family moved to Jakarta for her father's work. She went to a pesantren in Jakarta but not in East Java. After school she did a degree in Islamic studies at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta (UIN) then did sociology at Gajah Mada University (UGM) because her mum thought she should do secular studies as well as religious studies. Her mother was not from a pesantren background and studied biology. She applied to go to the University of Indonesia but didn't get in. Was at UIN in 1999 and UGM in 2000. She travelled between the two universities for three years and finished her Islamic Studies degree but didn't finish the Sociology degree because she got married in 2003 and moved to Surabaya then had a baby. Regrets not finishing it now.	Childhood; Family background; Early education; Undergraduate education; Family
[00:06:58]	Her father was a lecturer and then became a member of parliament for the PPP (United Development Party). Her uncle was a PKB (National Awakening Party) parliamentarian. [Comments about connection between santri, pesantren and politics, and story about her father refusing to be a civil servant because it required belonging to one particular political party.] There's quite a long tradition of political activism in her family, her grandfather and uncle as well as her father.	Family background; Political connections
[00:11:02]	At school she was interested in Islamic Studies, even though her mother was encouraging her to do science. From a young age she questioned the gender politics of Islamic teachings. In 2005, she taught at UIN Sunan Ampel and then the vice-rector asked her to apply for an AusAID scholarship. She was hesitant because lecturing was new and she had a young baby but her husband was very supportive of her studying	Early education; Early career; Scholarship opportunities; Family; Motive to study overseas; Alumni network

	overseas. Her husband is a doctor and specialises in neurological intervention.	
[00:17:47]	Her husband and mother were encouraging her and she had a good friend who was an Australian alumnus and said it wasn't so hard. She hadn't been overseas before, had been offered a scholarship to study in Egypt when she finished school but wasn't brave enough to go. By the time she went to the interview she was sure she wanted to go to Australia. She had a relative who was also studying at ANU when she arrived which was reassuring for her and her father. She didn't consider going to any other universities.	Existing connections with Australia; Scholarship opportunities; Selection of university in Australia
[00:22:30]	She's very thankful that UIN were so supportive of her application, especially since she was so new. They facilitated English classes and a forum with previous alumni. She went alone and after three months her husband and son came. Her husband's superiors were supportive so he could take leave. They were there for seven months then her husband and son went back to Indonesia. She consulted with colleagues and relatives about what to study and decided on gender issues. She'd always been curious about it and it related to her specialty, Islamic law and family law.	Early career; Alumni network; Arriving in Australia; Family; Living in Australia; Studying in Australia
[00:26:41]	She arrived in June and Canberra was very cold. Her relative met her and also the AusAID liaison officer and a PPIA (Indonesian Students Association of Australia) representative. The information she got from alumni really helped her settle in. She travelled alone to Sydney then joined five other Indonesians going to Canberra. She's still good friends with some of them.	Arriving in Australia; Alumni network; Family; Indonesian community in Canberra
[00:30:50]	When they arrived they had another introductory and orientation course for two weeks. Pre-departure training in Bali was about Australia and culture shock. In Canberra it was more specific and was really helpful. She had applied for accommodation at Toad Hall while in Indonesia but when she arrived there wasn't a room. Luckily she could stay with her relative for two weeks until a room became available. Toad Hall is good for master's students, more serious, fewer parties. It is co-ed, which was confronting at first, but the stories she'd heard about it from friends and colleagues helped her adjust quickly.	Arriving in Canberra; Pre-departure training; Accommodation in Australia; Living in Australia
[00:36:12]	Didn't want to live in a share house, people had advised her that it's easier to live on campus and in a study-focused environment. When her family came they had to find somewhere else to live and that was hard, the liaison officer helped	Living in Australia; Family; Scholarship experience; Indonesian community in Canberra

	but friends were more helpful in the end. A friend found her a share house with a single mother and her three-year-old son, six or seven months older than Nabiela's son.	
[00:40:21]	[Story about her son being upset when he started childcare and how the carers learned key Indonesian words.] He was two when he arrived and after seven months he could speak English. The carers were Australian but the children were from many different countries. Her son and the boy they lived with went to childcare together.	Family; Living in Australia; Socialising in Australia
[00:46:07]	How did you choose your thesis topic? They were asked at the interview about that. Nabiela read the theses of other alumni and colleagues from a similar background and noticed most of the fieldwork was done in Indonesia. Her colleagues suggested that a study about nyai is unusual. Kyai have been studied but sometimes it is the nyai who run the pesantren and she doesn't agree with defining nyai as the wife of the kyai. She got in touch with Greg Fealy before. Actually wanted to have Virginia Hooker but she was too busy.	Ongoing connections with Australia; Studying in Australia; Previous connections with Australia; Supervisor-student relationship
[00:51:54]	The thesis is called 'Gender awareness in pesantren community: Nyai and their responses to gender issues'. She concentrated on nyais' position and whether they can be agents for gender awareness or not, focusing on gender issues in positive law applied in Indonesia – marriage law (1974), Islamic family law and the recent law to eliminate domestic violence (2004). She wanted to find out nyais' opinions and whether they take action. She concluded that they do play a significant role but the kyai still has status and the bloodline is male. There are a few nyai who stand on their own, within their own community, but not with a public role like the kyai. Nabiela's grandmother was one of these. [Further comments and examples.]	Studying in Australia
[00:57:46]	She also explored nyai responses to gender issues like polygamy and divorce. Greg encouraged her not to make it too big because the topic could be a PhD. [Comments about her experience of publishing her thesis through LAP rather than ANU press, which she regrets, questions about an Indonesian translation and what she can publish in journals.]	Studying in Australia
[01:02:06]	Writing for Indonesian press/audience? Has given seminars and presented her thesis at a couple of the pesantren she visited for her thesis. [Comments about her family's pesantren tradition of building new pesantren compared to the more usual tradition of making the existing pesantren bigger and how her thesis was	Post-scholarship career; Professional networks

	received at the pesantren where she presented her thesis.]	
[01:04:59]	In 2008 she went to an Asian Studies Association of Australia at Monash and a group in the Netherlands was also interested in her thesis.	Professional networks
[01:07:33]	Was she part of the Indonesian students association? Yes, got involved in activities but not part of the structure. They organised trips to other places but she felt guilty if she travelled without her child so she only went to Sydney several times and to Melbourne for a conference. She likes quiet places, like Canberra, because Indonesia is very busy. Going back to Indonesia was difficult, it made her weep. She felt guilty for leaving her son, he was in kindergarten when she got back. People warned her about the difference in resources when she came back so she was prepared for that, could finish her study.	Indonesian community in Australia; Travelling in Australia; Living in Australia; Returning to Indonesia; Family
[01:10:55]	Getting back to work was OK, she was grateful that her superiors were supportive and appreciative, and she'd already tried to see how her research could fit in with her work. The gender studies centre welcomed her and she's helping to map previous studies on gender studies and Islam. In the faculty itself she was given the family law course and asked to teach English. [Comments about English in her faculty and it being specific to family law and academic writing.]	Returning to Indonesia; Post-scholarship career
[01:14:03]	Connections with ANU? She still has contact with Greg and there was a conference in Jakarta. [Anecdote about meeting her lecturer from UGM.] She's the secretary of the SILE/LLD (Supporting Islamic Leadership/Local Leadership Development) project, funded 80 per cent by the Canadian government and 20 per cent from Indonesia, collaborating with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Alauddin State Islamic University, in Makassar, and UIN Sunan Ampel, in Surabaya. After that she was asked to help as coordinator for English in the faculty. SILE is aimed at improving UIN's capacity to perform community service. Recently the term's been changed to community engagement. Nabiela went to the CU Expo in Canada and did an internship in community-based research at the University of Guelph-Humber, near Toronto. It was about trying to connect the campus with the university under the theme of good democratic governance.	Ongoing connections with Australia; Leadership; Professional networks; Community service; International mobility
[01:17:42]	Before SILE she also went to Canberra twice, to Canberra University, in December 2010 as a	Returning to Australia; Ongoing connections

	<p>translator and tour guide for curriculum development and in 2011 or 2012 for a month of TESOL training, because she's the coordinator of English. They also send people to Canberra uni for sandwich courses, funded by IDP and DFAT. It's about people who can speak English. Nabiela studied English at the pesantren. [Talks about trying to inspire her students and teach them how important English is.]</p>	<p>with Australia; Professional networks</p>
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