

NGO AND HUMAN SECURITY: THE CASE OF HUMAN INITIATIVE IN INDONESIA'S DISASTER RESPONSE

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Abstrak: Indonesia is geographically located within the disaster-prone pacific ring of fire, making it vulnerable to recurring natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and landslides. These disasters pose significant threats to human survival and well-being. The presence of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) becomes crucial in advocating, educating, and assisting disaster victims, completing the government's efforts in ensuring human security. The concept of human security is a non-traditional approach which relies heavily on human beings or community rather than state entities. This study explores the role of Human Initiative in disaster management and the challenges it faces, with a focus on human security. David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji theoretical framework guides the analysis in this study. They identify three key roles that NGOs play: implementers, catalysts, and partners. This study adopts a qualitative method with a case study approach through field observations and interviews. The findings reveal that Human Initiative plays an active, responsive, and collaborative role in disaster management in Indonesia by addressing both individual and environmental security. Its achievement depends on a comprehensive and sustainable approach involving all stakeholders, including government entities, the private sector, and community organizations.

Keywords: Non-Governmental Organization, Human Security, Human Initiative, Disaster Response

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with significant potential for natural disasters due to its geographical location in the pacific ring of fire. This region marks the convergence of three major tectonic plates: the Indo-Australian Plate, the Eurasian Plate, and the Pacific Plate. As a result, Indonesia is highly vulnerable to a range of natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods, droughts, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis. The impact of these disasters on human life is severe, often resulting in casualties, injuries, and significant damage to homes, infrastructure, and public facilities. Given the scale of these impacts, disaster preparedness and response require serious attention from all parties, including the government, society, and

non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to reduce the number of victims through effective disaster management knowledge.

In response to this phenomenon, Indonesia has established regulations addressing disaster management. Law No. 24 of 2007, concerning Disaster Management, outlines that disaster management encompasses a series of activities before, during, and after a disaster to prevent, reduce, mitigate, and recover from its impacts. This law aims to protect communities from disaster threats and ensure that disaster management is implemented in a planned, integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive manner.¹ Normatively, disaster management is the responsibility of the government and local governments, with the technical implementation carried out by the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) and Regional Disaster Management Agencies (BPBD). The law also provides opportunities for business institutions, NGOs, and international agencies to participate in disaster management efforts. Practically, disaster management must ensure that the rights of affected communities are respected, which includes meeting their basic needs, providing social protection, offering education and skills development in disaster management, and involving them in decision-making processes.²

Data from the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) highlights the frequency and variety of natural disasters in Indonesia. Between January 1 and December 4, 2023, a total of 4,940 natural disasters occurred. Flooding was the most prevalent, with 1170 incidents, around 28.34% of the total. Other significant natural disasters included extreme weather (1155 incidents), forest and land fires (1802 incidents), and landslides (579 incidents). Additionally, there were 26 earthquakes, 24 tidal waves or abrasions, and two volcanic eruptions. Notably, there were no tsunami disasters recorded in Indonesia in 2023. Of the total natural disasters, 7.52 million people were affected and displaced, 5,713 people sustained injuries, 222 people lost their lives, and 15 people went missing. The disasters also caused significant damage to property, with 29,241 houses affected. Specifically, 3,706 houses were severely damaged, 4,487 were moderately damaged, and 21,048 sustained minor damage. Additionally, 755 public facilities were damaged, including 367 educational facilities, 333 worship centers, and 55 health facilities.

¹ Y. P. Sibuea, "Implementation of Law No. 24 of 2007 on Flood Disaster Management," *Leg Info* 6, no. 2/II/P3DI (2014).

² BNPB. Disaster Information Data in Indonesia. Retrieved January 19, 2024, from: <https://dibi.bnpb.go.id/>

Regionally, the highest number of natural disasters occurred in West Java, with 645 incidents, followed by Central Java (494 incidents), South Sulawesi (214 incidents), East Java (206 incidents), and Aceh (202 incidents).³

Given Indonesia's vulnerability to disasters, the government has created sufficient space for institutions and organizations that focus on humanitarian issues and disaster relief. This study examines the role of the non-governmental organization (NGO), Human Initiative. Established on December 10, 1999, Human Initiative is a global humanitarian organization that strives to bring about positive, meaningful change through collaboration with various stakeholders. The organization implements a theory of change (TOC) strategy that emphasizes the positive impacts of its programs on society, integrating the Humanitarian-Development Connection within its work.⁴

Human Initiative's approach is built around four main programs:

1. Initiative for Empowerment: This includes empowerment programs at the individual, family, and community levels aimed at improving quality of life and self-sufficiency. The program utilizes a community facilitation process, helping local populations harness their potential to solve problems independently and sustainably.
2. Initiative for Children: Focused on improving the knowledge and skills of orphans and underprivileged children, this program provides educational scholarships, school supplies, worship equipment, psychological support, and life skills training, enabling them to become self-reliant.
3. Initiative for Disaster Risk Management: This program aims to reduce disaster impacts by empowering communities to recognize risks and prepare for future disasters. It also trains and organizes teams to be deployed during emergencies to enhance community readiness.
4. Initiative for Infrastructure: This program focuses on rebuilding public facilities and infrastructure in disaster-stricken areas, such as mosques, bridges, and schools, allowing communities to return to normal activities quickly.

Human Initiative's work is deeply associated with the concept of human security, which emphasizes the safety and well-being of individuals rather than

³ BNPB. Disaster Information Data in Indonesia. Retrieved January 19, 2024, from: <https://dibi.bnppb.go.id/>

⁴ About Us [Human Initiative Profile]. Retrieved January 25, 2024, from: <https://human-initiative.org/tentang-kami/>

focusing solely on state-centered security. Human security emerged as a response to global humanitarian issues such as conflict-induced displacement, trafficking, food insecurity, natural disasters, terrorism, and human rights violations. According to UNDP report on human development, human security encompasses seven key characteristics (UNDP, 1994).⁵

The first feature is economic security, which stresses the importance of ensuring that people have reliable access to income and resources to meet their basic needs. Without stable livelihoods or employment opportunities, individuals are vulnerable to poverty and exploitation. Closely related to this is food security, which goes beyond the mere availability of food. It emphasizes consistent access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food so that people do not suffer from hunger or malnutrition.

Another critical aspect is health security, which focuses on protecting individuals from disease, inadequate healthcare, and unhealthy living conditions. This includes both the prevention of widespread epidemics and ensuring access to basic health services. Equally important is environmental security, which addresses threats from environmental degradation, natural disasters, and climate change. Protecting the environment is essential, as environmental instability often leads to displacement, loss of livelihoods, and greater vulnerability to crises.

Personal security is also a core component, aimed at safeguarding individuals from physical violence, whether it comes from the state, external actors, or within families and communities. Beyond personal safety, community security emphasizes the need to protect cultural identities and ensure harmony within and between communities. It seeks to prevent ethnic, religious, or sectarian conflicts that can threaten social cohesion. Finally, political security ensures that people live in a society where their fundamental human rights are respected. This includes freedom from political repression, torture, and discrimination, as well as the ability to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

This broader view of security has gained traction, moving beyond traditional military-focused paradigms to include protection from chronic threats like poverty, disease, and oppression, as well as sudden disruptions such as natural disasters. In the context of international relations, human security has become a key area of focus, shifting away from state-centric models. The end of the Cold War in 1991 allowed for the rethinking of security, with new concerns about

⁵ UNDP. (1994). Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security.

human rights, environmental protection, and humanitarian crises taking center stage.

Building on the human security paradigm and Lewis and Kanji's typology of NGO roles (implementer, catalyst, and partner), this article asks: how does Human Initiative contribute to disaster-related human security in Indonesia, and what constraints shape its capacity to do so? Rather than treating "human security" as a broad slogan, the analysis focuses on the concrete insecurities that disasters create, especially threats to personal safety, health, food access, livelihoods, and environmental resilience and examines how Human Initiative addresses these across the disaster-management cycle (response, recovery, and risk reduction). Empirically, the paper maps specific organizational activities and collaborations to Lewis and Kanji's three NGO roles, making explicit how Human Initiative operates simultaneously as a service provider, an agent of behavioral and institutional change, and a coordinating partner within Indonesia's multi-actor disaster governance.

METHOD

There is a small body of literature and articles dealing with disaster response in Indonesia. However, most of the existing literature studied disaster management unrelated to human security concepts. Bakkour et al. (2015) present an important contribution to the study of disaster governance by applying the concept of adaptive governance to the 2010 Mount Merapi eruption in Indonesia. The authors argue that disaster governance systems require adaptive capacities, defined as the ability of institutions and communities to learn, coordinate, and respond effectively under conditions of uncertainty. To evaluate this, they propose six analytical parameters: system description, technology, infrastructure, institutions, information and skills, and economic and financial resources. This multidimensional framework provides a comprehensive tool for assessing governance performance, moving beyond conventional approaches that tend to focus narrowly on technical or infrastructural aspects of disaster management.⁶

This study highlights the importance of integrating social and institutional dimensions into disaster governance. Its analytical framework offers a transferable model for evaluating adaptive capacity in other hazard-prone contexts, both within Indonesia and globally. It also resonates with comparative

⁶ D. Bakkour et al., "The Adaptive Governance of Natural Disaster Systems: Insights from the 2010 Mount Merapi Eruption in Indonesia," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 13 (September 2015).

studies on Indonesian disaster response such as those examining the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Aceh and the 2018 Palu earthquake and tsunami which similarly emphasize the need for multi-actor collaboration, clear institutional mandates, and resilient infrastructure. Bakkour et al.'s contribution, therefore, enriches the literature by operationalizing adaptive governance and demonstrating its practical utility in analyzing disaster systems in developing country contexts.

Fatah, Ulum, and Bowo (2023) investigate the role of local NGOs in responding to drought in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta, with a specific focus on the Yayasan Wahana Mandiri Indonesia (YWMI). Their study highlights how the geographical characteristics of Gunungkidul dominated by karst and limestone formations create continuing water shortage that threatens both livelihoods and regional resilience. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, the authors examine YWMI's interventions through field observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. They reinforce the argument that NGOs play a critical role in disaster risk reduction in Indonesia by addressing both the physical and social dimensions of vulnerability. Their findings contribute to a growing body of scholarship that situates NGOs not merely as service providers but as partners in strengthening regional resilience.⁷

Furthermore, Kusuma (2008) provides an early comparative perspective on the role of local NGOs in disaster management, drawing insights from both Indonesia and Japan. The study highlights the structural and institutional challenges that local NGOs face in disaster contexts, particularly in Indonesia, where limited governmental support and unclear institutional mandates often reduce NGO effectiveness. In contrast, the Japanese experience demonstrates how stronger coordination frameworks, pre-disaster planning, and government recognition of NGOs can enhance community participation and disaster response outcomes.⁸

The research emphasizes that effective disaster management requires strong networks and sustained coordination between NGOs, government agencies, and local communities. Kusuma notes that NGOs function most effectively when supported by local governments that provide legitimacy, resources, and clear roles

⁷A. Fatah, M. Ulum, and T. A. Bowo, "Peran LSM dalam Penanggulangan Kekeringan dan Implikasinya bagi Ketahanan Wilayah di Kapanewon Nglipar Gunungkidul, Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (Studi pada Yayasan Wahana Mandiri Indonesia)," *Jurnal Ketahanan Nasional* 29, no. 1 (April 2023).

⁸Linda E. Kusuma and K. Kimura, "Peran LSM Lokal dalam Manajemen Bencana: Studi Kasus LSM Lokal Indonesia dan Jepang" (tesis MPKD UGM, 2008).

in the disaster management framework. Without such support, NGOs in Indonesia often struggle with institutional ambiguity, resource scarcity, and a lack of integration into pre-disaster planning.

This study employs a qualitative single-case study design to examine how a humanitarian NGO operationalizes human security in Indonesia's disaster governance. Human Initiative is selected as an information-rich case because it has operated since 1999 and has been involved in major disaster responses and recovery initiatives across multiple periods, enabling analysis of organizational learning, program evolution, and partnership-building.⁹

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants from Human Initiative's Disaster Risk Management unit and through field observation of relevant organizational practices. To strengthen validity through triangulation, the analysis also draws on documentary sources (e.g., BNPB disaster data, the disaster-management legal framework, organizational SOPs, public program documentation, and partnership records such as capacity-building cooperation with Catholic Relief Services).¹⁰ Data were analyzed using theory-guided coding: empirical evidence was categorized according to (1) Lewis and Kanji's NGO roles (implementer, catalyst, partner) and (2) the human security dimensions most directly affected (e.g., health, food, personal, economic, and environmental security). This procedure makes the link between evidence and theory explicit and transparent.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In *Non-Governmental Organizations and Development*, David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji (2009)¹¹ This typology is particularly useful for disaster studies because it distinguishes between (a) direct service delivery and relief (implementer), (b) efforts to change behavior, awareness, or institutional practices through advocacy and innovation (catalyst), and (c) collaboration with governments and other organizations to coordinate resources, share risks, and build capacity (partner). In this article, the Lewis–Kanji framework functions as

⁹ Luthfiyah, *Research Methodology: Qualitative Research, Classroom Action and Case Studies* (Sukabumi: CV Jejak, 2017).

¹⁰ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif dan Mixed*, ed. 4 (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016).

¹¹ E. Hidayah, "The Role of Non-Government Organizations in Fulfilling the Right to Formal Education for Children of Overseas Refugees in DKI Jakarta Province," *Journal of International Relations Studies* 3, no. 1 (2024).

the main lens for interpreting Human Initiative's activities across response, recovery, and risk reduction.¹²

Firstly, as implementers, NGOs play a crucial role in managing natural resources and providing essential goods and services to those in need. These goods and services may include healthcare, microfinance, emergency relief, agricultural support, and human rights initiatives. Secondly, NGOs act as catalysts. In this capacity, they inspire and encourage changes in the mindset of other actors. NGOs can drive change through advocacy and innovation, presenting new solutions to existing issues.

Lastly, NGOs serve as partners in collaborative efforts. In this role, they work closely with a variety of actors, including governments, donors, and the private sector. These partnerships involve shared benefits and risks. Cooperation between NGOs and the government, for example, can address challenges when certain government programs or policies are not effectively implemented. Partnerships can also take the form of capacity-building programs, aimed at strengthening the capabilities of NGOs or target communities, thereby enhancing their ability to address and solve issues independently.

Disaster governance can be situated within the broader "widening" of security studies in international relations. The Copenhagen School's securitization theory explains how issues become treated as security matters when influential actors successfully frame them as existential threats that require urgent attention and resource mobilization. In Indonesia's context, recurring hazards can be understood as security-relevant not only because they disrupt infrastructure and governance, but because they threaten human survival and dignity, making disaster response analytically compatible with a human security approach that prioritizes individuals rather than the state.

Related "broadening" arguments similarly justify treating non-military disruptions as security threats. Ullman defines threats to national security as sudden developments that significantly degrade citizens' quality of life or severely constrain a state's policy options. Read alongside human security, this redefinition clarifies why disaster impacts loss of life, disease, displacement, livelihood collapse, and environmental stress, should be analyzed as security problems. Importantly, once security is understood in this way, the set of relevant security providers expands beyond governments and militaries to include humanitarian

¹² David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji, **Non-Governmental Organizations and Development** (New York: Routledge, 2009).

NGOs. This provides the conceptual bridge to the paper's main analytical framework: Lewis and Kanji's NGO-role typology, which specifies how an organization like Human Initiative acts as an implementer, catalyst, and partner in advancing disaster-related human security.¹³

Thus, the Copenhagen School's approach extends the concept of security by integrating both traditional security concerns (state security) and non-traditional elements (human security). This broader understanding has also led to an expansion of the actors involved in addressing security issues. Security is no longer solely the domain of state leaders and military forces, but now requires the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, community leaders, NGOs, and humanitarian activists¹⁴.

Human Initiative, one of Indonesia's leading NGOs focused on humanitarian issues, plays a significant role in disaster management efforts. According to interviews conducted with staff from the Disaster Risk Management section, the organization's approach to disaster response has evolved over three phases: 1999-2004, 2004-2014, and 2014-2024.

The first phase, from 1999 to 2004, was a period of organizational development, during which the Human Initiative focused on defining its structure, acquiring resources, and establishing management systems. The second phase was marked by the 2004 Aceh tsunami disaster, which dramatically reshaped Indonesia's disaster management landscape and heightened national awareness, prompting the creation of disaster-related laws and regulations.

Post-2004, Human Initiative gained substantial disaster response experience, learning from international organizations that collaborated with them. This experience was applied during significant events such as the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake and the 2010 Mount Merapi eruption. In 2015, Human Initiative, along with Muhammadiyah Disaster Response Center (MDRC), participated in a program initiated by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), a U.S.-based organization. The program, focused on excellence in disaster response and capacity-building for local institutions, helped refine disaster response procedures and standard safety protocols.

¹³ Hadiwinata, B.S. *Studi dan Teori Hubungan Internasional: Arus Utama, Alternatif, dan Reflektifis*. (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2017).

¹⁴ B. W. Buzan, **Security: A New Framework for Analysis** (Jakarta: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 1998).

The partnership between Human Initiative and CRS continues today and has strengthened the organization's capacity in disaster management. A key outcome of this collaboration was the creation of guidelines for providing temporary housing to disaster survivors. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, both organizations supported MSME training programs aimed at providing short-term income assistance and livelihood recovery. They also conducted joint recovery educator training to help communities rebuild their economies during the pandemic. This ongoing cooperation reflects the core values of Human Initiative, which include empowerment, collaboration, and a deep commitment to human dignity.

To connect the empirical narrative to the theoretical framework, the remainder of this discussion organizes Human Initiative's activities explicitly through Lewis and Kanji's three NGO roles. The implementer role captures direct service delivery during emergency response and recovery; the catalyst role captures mitigation training, disaster education, and public advocacy that mobilize resources and shift community behavior; and the partner role captures coordination with BNPB/BPBD and collaboration with other NGOs and international actors. Structuring the evidence this way clarifies how Human Initiative contributes to multiple dimensions of human security across the disaster-management cycle.

From these experiences, Human Initiative has grown more capable and mature in disaster management. The organization follows several key stages in its response to disasters. First, when a disaster strikes, Human Initiative's disaster management team moves swiftly and strategically. Their approach not only addresses immediate emergency situations but also ensures the long-term recovery and empowerment of affected communities. The organization dispatches an emergency response team made up of medical personnel, trained volunteers, and essential logistics to assist with victim evacuation, aid distribution, and the establishment of emergency posts. In this phase, Human Initiative frequently collaborates with local governments and agencies to ensure that aid is delivered promptly and effectively to those who need it most.

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that Human Initiative follows provide the foundation for its disaster response. A core component of their work is the distribution of essential aid. Human Initiative focuses on providing basic needs, including food, clean water, clothing, and medicines, to disaster victims. They also set up public kitchens to ensure that affected communities have access

to nutritious food and proper sanitation. This approach is critical in mitigating the impact of disasters on health and well-being.

Once the emergency phase has passed, Human Initiative shifts to long-term recovery efforts, which include infrastructure repair, the construction of temporary housing, and the rebuilding of public facilities such as schools and clinics. These rehabilitation programs are designed to restore the social and economic conditions of affected communities and help prepare them for future challenges. Human Initiative also seeks to involve local communities in the recovery process, ensuring that it is both sustainable and aligned with local needs.

In addition to responding to disasters, Human Initiative is actively engaged in disaster mitigation training and education. They organize training programs for residents in disaster-prone areas to improve their preparedness for future disasters. These programs help strengthen community resilience, enabling people to respond more effectively when disasters occur. Through these efforts, Human Initiative aims to create a disaster-resilient society that can sustainably manage its own recovery efforts. Importantly, these programs emphasize community empowerment, helping people to become less dependent on government assistance and more self-reliant in times of crisis.

Finally, as part of its advocacy and fundraising strategy, Human Initiative controls social media and its international networks to encourage broader community involvement. By sharing information about the conditions of affected communities, the organization fosters social solidarity and invites the public to donate or volunteer. This initiative not only supports disaster relief operations but also raises awareness about the importance of disaster response efforts in Indonesia.

Human security in disaster contexts also applies to responders themselves. In UNDP's human security framework, personal and health security require protection from physical harm, unsafe conditions, and preventable injury risks faced not only by survivors but also by humanitarian staff and volunteers operating in unstable environments. Human Initiative therefore treats responder safety as part of its operational doctrine, emphasizing standardized procedures, training, and continuous capacity building to reduce security risks in the field. This "human-centered" orientation reinforces the paper's core argument: disaster governance that prioritizes individuals must protect both those receiving assistance and those delivering it.

Overall, Human Initiative's disaster-management approach is proactive, responsive, and collaborative with key stakeholders, including the National

Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) and Regional Disaster Management Agencies (BPBD) at central and local levels. Interpreted through Lewis and Kanji’s framework, Human Initiative performs all three NGO roles. As an implementer, it delivers direct emergency relief and recovery services—conducting rapid assessments, distributing food, clean water, hygiene kits, clothing, and medicines, operating public kitchens, and supporting temporary or transitional shelter for affected families (as reflected in the 2023 assistance cases summarized in the table). As a catalyst, it strengthens preparedness and community resilience through disaster mitigation training, public education, and advocacy that mobilizes volunteers and donations via social media and its international networks. As a partner, it coordinates with government agencies and collaborates with other organizations—such as its capacity-building and recovery cooperation with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and shelter-related collaboration with Habitat for Humanity Indonesia—to improve procedures, scale assistance, and reduce operational gaps. This multi-role engagement demonstrates how a humanitarian NGO can translate the human security paradigm into practice by simultaneously providing protection, enabling recovery, and building longer-term community capacities.

No	Disaster Location	Type of Assistance Provided by HI	Description
1	Lumajang, East Java – Cold Lava Flood & Landslide (Pronojiwo, Candipuro Subdistrict)	18,000 liters of clean water for 153+ families, 3 water tanks (550 liters each), Hygiene kits (10 packages & 25 packages)	For residents of Karangrejo Hamlet, Jugosari Village, and several other locations (including Jarit Village). HI has been involved in the emergency response phase since July 7, 2023.
2	Bengkulu – Floods and Landslides in Several Districts/Cities	Rapid assessment, establishment of a “Water Kitchen” (clean water supply), and coordination with BPBD and other stakeholders	Occurred in five districts/cities of Bengkulu Province due to heavy rainfall, with some public roads buried by landslides.
3	Demak, Central Java – Tidal Flood in Sriwulan Village (Outer Village Area)	Distribution of 110 aid packages: 80 iftar meal packages and 30 Ramadan gift packages	The area was affected by tidal flooding with difficult access due to inundation.

No	Disaster Location	Type of Assistance Provided by HI	Description
4	Cianjur, West Java – Earthquake	Construction of temporary shelters for 50 families, transitional shelters, damage assessment, and collaboration with Habitat for Humanity Indonesia	Shelter program for Cianjur earthquake survivors in Sukamulya Village, Cugenang Subdistrict.
5	Makassar, South Sulawesi – Flood and Fire Risk Mitigation in Tello Baru Subdistrict	Handover of disaster response equipment: inflatable boat and 11 portable fire extinguishers	Aimed at strengthening community preparedness for annual floods and potential fires.

Source: Data compiled by researcher

At the same time, the evidence also illustrates the limits of NGO-based security provision in a large archipelagic country: even an experienced organization cannot cover all hazard events simultaneously, and its reach depends on access, logistics, trained personnel, and available funding. These constraints make the partner role especially consequential—coordination with BNPB/BPBD and collaboration with other NGOs help reduce duplication, prioritize urgent human-security needs (water, food, shelter, and health services), and extend coverage when disasters occur in multiple provinces or in hard-to-reach locations. Recognizing these limits does not diminish Human Initiative’s contribution; rather, it clarifies that disaster-related human security is produced through shared governance in which NGOs complement—but cannot replace the state’s primary responsibility to protect the population.

Challenges of Disaster Management in Indonesia

According to data released by the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), there have been four new types of disasters in Indonesia, one of which is Typhoon Seroja in East Nusa Tenggara. Another challenge is the shifting patterns of disasters, with certain areas experiencing types of disasters that were previously uncommon or unrecorded. This shift is largely attributed to climate change, which has become a significant concern for organizations like Human Initiative and other entities working in disaster management.

The Indonesian government has responded appropriately by transitioning from an emergency management doctrine to a stronger focus on disaster risk reduction. BNPB publishes an annual report every October related to disaster risk

reduction, aimed at educating and raising awareness across various sectors, fostering a more collaborative and informed approach to disaster management. As a country located in the pacific ring of fire, Indonesia faces significant challenges in disaster management. With thousands of islands and diverse topography, responding to disasters is increasingly complex. Remote areas, often difficult to access, hinder rapid response efforts. Furthermore, damaged infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, exacerbates the situation and complicates the distribution of aid during emergencies.

Given Indonesia's vulnerability to disasters, ranging from earthquakes and tsunamis to floods and volcanic eruptions, the country needs to maintain high levels of preparedness and ensure adequate resources. In practice, however, the budgets and human resources available for disaster management are often limited. When multiple disasters occur simultaneously or in close succession, managing funds, logistics, and resources becomes even more difficult. Governments and humanitarian organizations must work tirelessly to meet the overwhelming needs of disaster victims, which often far exceed the available capacity.

Cross-sector coordination presents another significant challenge in disaster management. Many actors are involved, including central and regional governments, the Indonesian National Army (TNI), the National Police, NGOs, and international institutions. Although BNPB and Regional Disaster Management Agencies (BPBD) serve as the primary coordinators, inter-agency synchronization can be ineffective, especially in emergency situations. This inefficiency often leads to delays in aid distribution, and disaster victims may have to wait longer for assistance.

Not only are there challenges related to organization, but also the level of community preparedness in disaster-prone areas also varies significantly. In some regions, awareness and understanding of disaster mitigation remain minimal. As a result, many communities are unprepared, leading to a higher number of victims when disasters strike. Expanding education and socialization programs on disaster preparedness is crucial to ensure communities are better equipped to respond and minimize the impacts of disasters.

The impact of climate change has added a new layer of complexity to disaster management in Indonesia. Hydrometeorological disasters such as floods and droughts are becoming more frequent and severe due to changing weather patterns. This shift necessitates continuous adaptation and updating of disaster mitigation strategies by the government and relevant institutions to effectively handle increasingly unpredictable and extreme events.

While early warning systems such as tsunami detectors and earthquake sirens have been improved, the distribution of this technology remains uneven across the country. In some remote or isolated areas, early warning systems are either absent or not functioning optimally, leaving communities with limited time to take protective action when disasters occur.

Furthermore, post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes are often slow and cumbersome. Once the emergency response phase ends, public attention and external support typically decrease, yet affected communities still face immense challenges in rebuilding their lives. Limited funding for recovery and rehabilitation extends the timeline for rebuilding, and many areas may take years to fully recover from the devastation.

In disaster management efforts, Indonesia also faces spatial challenges that are not always beneficial to effective disaster response. Development that does not account for disaster risks, such as settlements in flood- and landslide-prone areas, often exacerbates the impact of disasters. Additionally, spatial regulations are not always consistently enforced, leading to the development of areas that should remain free from settlements, thereby increasing vulnerability to natural hazards.

Moreover, the socio-economic conditions of communities in many regions further contribute to their vulnerability. Low-income households tend to reside in unsafe areas or use non-durable building materials, which are more susceptible to damage during disasters. As a result, these communities are often the hardest hit and take the longest to recover, particularly in terms of economic recovery.

Overall, these challenges highlight the need for a holistic and sustainable approach to disaster management in Indonesia. The government, community organizations, and the broader public must collaborate to strengthen disaster management systems, improve preparedness, and ensure that Indonesia's people are resilient in the face of future disasters.

CONCLUSION

The discourse of human security is deeply intertwined with state entities, yet the shift from a traditional state security perspective to a human security model which focusing on individuals becomes increasingly urgent and relevant, especially in the context of disasters. This shift emphasizes the vulnerability and concerns that individuals experience when confronted with existential threats such as those caused by disasters. This framework is crucial for understanding the

perspectives of both the victims of disasters and the humanitarian activists who dedicate themselves to providing aid.

In this context, the presence of the NGO Human Initiative has had a significant impact on human security in Indonesia. Through its humanitarian work, Human Initiative contributes to disaster response and recovery, helping to address vulnerabilities and providing vital assistance in the wake of disasters. Despite the various challenges that arise in disaster management, the ability to collaborate across sectors between government agencies like BNPB, NGOs, and the broader community proves essential. Effective cross-sectoral collaboration, with a focus on building collective awareness of Indonesia's vulnerability to disasters, is key to reducing the number of casualties and making human security a shared national priority.

Empirically, the case of Human Initiative shows how human security can be operationalized through disaster response practices that prioritize the safety and dignity of individuals. In the emergency phase, Human Initiative's provision of essential assistance, such as clean water, food support, hygiene supplies, basic medical support, public kitchens, and temporary shelter directly addresses food, health, and personal security. In the recovery phase, rehabilitation support and livelihood-oriented initiatives (including recovery-related training conducted with partners during the COVID-19 period) contribute to restoring economic and community security. Beyond response and recovery, mitigation training and preparedness activities reduce future vulnerability, reflecting the human security principle that protection must be combined with empowerment.

Viewed through Lewis and Kanji's NGO-role framework, Human Initiative's contribution is strongest when implementer functions are reinforced by catalyst and partner roles. Service delivery produces immediate human-security gains, but durable impact depends on the organization's ability to catalyze preparedness and civic participation, and to partner effectively with BNPB/BPBD, local authorities, and other organizations to align priorities, share information, and scale assistance. The implication is clear: NGOs can meaningfully complement Indonesia's disaster-management mandate, yet they cannot substitute for it. Strengthening disaster-related human security therefore requires institutionalized cross-sector coordination, predictable support for local NGO capacity building, and mechanisms that integrate community needs into planning across the full disaster-management cycle.

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