

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Internship programs are an important component of Communication Studies, because they relate the theory with the realities of the professional communication practice. In the classroom, students learn concepts such as Public Relations, Strategic Communication, Organizational Communication, Media Relations, Writing for Public Relations and Audience Analysis. But in a work environment, these ideas have to translate into concrete outputs that serve organizational goals while responding to practical constraints such as time, institutional culture, stakeholder expectations and media routines. For that reason, an internship is a requirement for graduation as well as a learning process that enables students to test the relevance of communication theory in real settings.

Then the author chose Gugus Mitigasi Lebak Selatan (GMLS) because it is the meaning of the intersection of communication practice and social responsibility. GMLS is a community-based disaster mitigation organization that works on preparedness, resilience and public education in Lebak Selatan, Banten. Its communication activities are not cosmetic or promotional in the narrow sense; rather they support the transmission of life-saving information, the maintenance of public trust and the strengthening of collaboration among local communities, academic institutions and wider stakeholders. This makes GMLS a particularly relevant site for a Strategic Communication / Public Relations internship because media relations here functions as a tool of public service and reputation management.

In disaster mitigation, urgency of Strategic Communication in Disaster Mitigation is defined by issues related to the welfare of citizens. The area of Lebak Selatan poses substantial risks of natural hazards due to the possibility of

megathrust earthquakes and tsunamis. With digital platforms shaping the present era, it is necessary that people are made digitally literate along with having the ability to understand risks instantly so that lives can be saved.

In disaster mitigation work, the importance of communication is even more evident. Disaster communication is not just about issuing warnings after the event. It also involves pre-disaster education, risk awareness, stakeholder coordination and development of a collective culture of preparedness stakeholder (Aakhus & Bzdak, 2015). In a coastal area such as Lebak Selatan, where the social memory of risk is still relevant, communication can facilitate the translation of technical mitigation knowledge into forms that are intelligible, credible and actionable for residents. Community-based disaster risk reduction is considered an effective approach because it actively involves local communities in identifying risks and developing preparedness strategies (Kamstra et al., 2026). Thus GMLS requires communication practices that are strategic, community-oriented and context-sensitive.

The position of Media Relations Manager was selected to support these communications needs. Media relations serve a dual purpose for a nonprofit organization working in disaster mitigation. First, it improves visibility of the programs and accomplishments so the public, partners and media get accurate information. Second, it helps legitimate the organization's work by framing mitigation initiatives as collective efforts, rather than isolated events. From this perspective, media relations is a vital part of organizational sustainability in linking field activities with public awareness and institutional support (Dewi, 2012).

Media relations in the case does not only refer to the creation of corporate publicity and press releases but a tool used in crafting stories and creating interesting content. The use of media relations in putting GMLS's field efforts into stories makes the public interested and prompts media organizations, local leaders, and the community to ask questions in a discussion with GMLS.

In addition, effective communication entails strategic narration rather than mere message dissemination. The transmission of unfiltered information regarding

disaster risks may lead to indifference or overload. Strategic narration is used as a tool to bring into play the humanity element in disaster risks reduction through incorporation of learning points in cultural context, such as Sundanese wisdom, youth workshops, and media. As a result of clear and relatable stories, complicated ideas of disaster risk mitigation become easily understood, memorable, and applicable for the community.

As a consequence, the position of Media Relations Manager at GMLS allowed using strategic narrations and digital publication management in order to engage stakeholders. Through writing press releases, management of owned media and media visibility evaluation, the author used the principles of strategic communication.

The internship was also chosen because it provides a practical setting where communication outputs have immediate social value. The press releases that were written were not just for administrative purposes each one told a story of activities that were promoting literacy, preparedness, collaboration or organizational recognition. Such an experience enabled an author to understand how public relations writing affects public interpretation of a community program and how message framing influences the valuation of disaster mitigation initiatives by audiences. The internship thus became an opportunity to develop both professional writing skill and civic awareness.

1.2 Purpose and Objective

The internship had several inter-related goals. First, it aimed to use knowledge from Communication Studies, such as strategic communication and public relations in an organizational setting, including professional writing and an understanding of the coordination behind communication outputs. Secondly, it aimed at strengthening the author's capacity to produce media-ready content, particularly press releases that meet journalistic standards but also reflect the priorities of the organization.

Another goal was to learn about how GMLS communicates with different stakeholder groups including local residents, schools, academic institutions, media outlets, government bodies, and community partners. These publics have different information needs and different levels of existing knowledge. The internship aimed to develop the author's skills in analyzing audiences and to show how the public's understanding and participation are enhanced through messages that are tailored to them.

Another aim was to deepen the author's understanding of communication as a strategic process, rather than a technical one. In organizational settings, communication choices are linked to relationship management, credibility and long-term reputation. Communication also influences the community's trust in the organization, the memorability of the message, and the motivation to act within the context of disaster mitigation. The aim of this internship was to help the author to understand these broader implications and to think about the social consequences of communication work.

Finally, the internship aimed to build professional discipline, responsibility and collaborative skills. The author was supposed to meet the deadlines, follow the organizational procedures, revise the texts based on the feedback and coordinate with other members of the team. For communication professionals, these skills are indispensable, because successful communication depends not only on creativity, but also on consistency, accuracy and responsiveness.

1.3 Description of Time & Work Implementation Procedures

The internship at Gugus Mitigasi Lebak Selatan (GMLS) was a part of the Career Acceleration Program at Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, majoring in Strategic Communication, specifically media relations and communication management for disaster mitigation. It enabled students to apply academic theories to practical communication problems. Experience in media relations, publication management, stakeholder communication, and press release development provided an understanding of communication's role in disaster mitigation and community

resilience. The internship was carried out in stages, starting with the application process and ending with the completion of tasks in the company.

1.3.1 Work Implementation Time

The internship was held at Gugus Mitigasi Lebak Selatan (GMLS) from 30 January 2026 until 15 July 2026. The student worked as a Media Relations Manager during this time under the supervision of the designated field supervisor.

The working schedule was generally based on the operational needs of the organization. The internship activities were conducted at 640 working hours Western Indonesian Time (WIB). As a community-based disaster mitigation organization, GMLS adopted a flexible working system with a blend of online and offline working arrangements. Thus, the internship activities were carried out in a hybrid model of Work From Home (WFH) and Work From Office (WFO).

The WFH arrangement was mainly used for communication planning, media monitoring, content development, press release writing, publication preparation and coordination via digital communication platforms. Meanwhile, WFO activities were conducted through organizational meetings, field observations, community outreach programs, educational events, disaster mitigation campaigns and documentation of organizational activities.

During the internship period, the student actively participated in different communication-related activities organized by GMLS. These activities have included writing and distributing press releases, documenting organizational programs, supporting publicity, coordinating communication materials, and assisting in media exposure efforts. By carrying out these activities, the student gained practical experience in managing communication processes in a non-profit organization that works in the field of disaster risk reduction and community empowerment.

Beyond routine communication duties, the student participated in a number of strategic communication initiatives aimed at increasing public awareness of disaster preparedness and resilience. These experiences helped to understand the important role of communication in disaster mitigation efforts, particularly in information dissemination, public confidence building and stakeholder collaboration.

1.3.2 Work Implementation Procedure

The internship process started with the student identifying an organization that aligned with the academic concentration of Strategic Communication and provided opportunities to develop practical competencies in public relations and media relations. Then the student could find out that the most suitable organization to carry out the research was Gugus Mitigasi Lebak Selatan (GMLS) which is active in implementing community-based disaster mitigation, public education, and stakeholder engagement.

After choosing the organization, the student prepared the necessary administrative documents such as curriculum vitae, academic transcript and internship application letter. These documents were provided to GMLS as part of the internship application process. The application was to showcase the student's academic background, communication skills, and interest in contributing to disaster mitigation communication activities.

The student submitted the application documents and received a response from the organization about the recruitment process. The student and GMLS spoke online about the internship possibility and potential roles within the organization. Subsequently the student participated in an interview session conducted by representatives of GMLS. The interview was to find out how good the student was at communicating, writing, media relations, and why the student wanted to join the organization.

After successfully completing the interview process, the student was officially accepted as an intern for Media Relations Manager at GMLS. At the beginning of the work, the student was oriented with the vision, mission, communication objectives, organizational structure and existing programs of the organization. The purpose of this orientation was to introduce the student to the organizational environment, to ease adaptation to the assigned task.

During the internship period, the student regularly liaised with the field supervisor and other organisational members regarding work assignments and project implementation. Depending on the nature of the activities communication was done through online and face-to-face meetings. The allocation of each task was driven by the organizational needs and communication priorities.

The student's main duties included writing press releases, documenting the activities of the organization, assisting with publication activities, maintaining communication with relevant stakeholders, and assisting with media exposure initiatives. While executing the responsibilities, the student adhered to the organizational protocols. These included collecting the necessary information, verifying the data, preparing the communication materials, obtaining the internal approval, and disseminating the final content through the appropriate communication channels.

At the end of the internship period, the student completed all assigned projects and submitted the required documentation to both the organization and the university. The internship experience was a hands-on experience of managing media relations in a nonprofit disaster mitigation organization and enhanced the student's understanding of how strategic communication can help in building community resilience, public education, and disaster risk reduction efforts.