

Shirleyana, Scott Hawken, Riza Yosia Sunindijo and David Sanderson
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Narratives of everyday resilience: lessons from an urban *kampung* community in Surabaya, Indonesia

Narratives of
everyday
resilience

Shirleyana

Faculty of Built Environment, UNSWSydney, Sydney, Australia

Scott Hawken

*School of Architecture and Built Environment, University of Adelaide,
Adelaide, Australia, and*

Riza Yosia Sunindijo and David Sanderson

Faculty of Built Environment, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to discuss what people perceive as risks and resilience factors, and how they build everyday resilience.

Design/methodology/approach – The study focuses on Kampung (literally “village”) Plampitan, a neighbourhood in the inner-city part of Surabaya. The research used field observation, in-depth interviews and workshops during community meetings to collect data.

Findings – The results show how people respond to daily risks and find the support necessary to survive. The problems and risks revealed in the study include crime and economic difficulties, such as unemployment and insufficient income. Coping strategies identified are classified into place-based adaptation, people-based network and political network. These strategies can serve as a starting point for local communities to assess their resilience and assist them in enhancing “everyday” resilience.

Originality/value – The paper argues that the concept of resilience must go beyond top-down approaches to disaster risk management and integrate bottom-up understanding from the perspective of local people, especially among marginal and disadvantaged communities. The paper develops the emerging and overlooked concept of “everyday resilience” and suggests that it is essential in surviving both “everyday” or small-scale chronic risks and large-scale disasters.

Keywords Indonesia, Bottom-up, Community resilience, Urban resilience, Surabaya, Kampung

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Efforts concerning building community resilience often focus on preparedness towards rapid-onset disasters, for example earthquakes (Bruneau *et al.*, 2003; Renschler *et al.*, 2010), tsunamis (Kafle, 2012; Khew *et al.*, 2015) and floods (Hellman, 2015; Sitko, 2016; Wilhelm, 2011). Less attention, however, is given in disaster management literature to daily risks

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which in fact can seriously affect community members' vulnerability (Satterthwaite and Bartlett, 2017; Ziervogel *et al.*, 2017). It is important to recognise that urban populations face a wide variety of challenges daily (Ziervogel *et al.*, 2017). Challenges such as poverty, balancing income and expenses, diseases, social conflict and injuries are common. The pressures of everyday life, usually observed at micro level (Andres and Round, 2015), can be a result of social and economic change or crisis and political transformation. While disaster risks deserve attention in urban planning, daily pressures should not be neglected because over time they intensify vulnerability which can worsen disasters when they strike. Everyday risks may not be "big" disasters, yet as Bull-Kamanga *et al.* (2003) note, they are "disastrous" for families without adequate coping strategies. This is especially the case for poor and marginalised communities because they are likely to lack access to means of protection and are more exposed to various risks (Hellman, 2015; Shrestha and Gaillard, 2013). Therefore, understanding risks within, and from the perspective of, local communities is significant as:

[...] risk is always best assessed at a local level because it is based on the outcome of the relationship between particular groups of people and hazards in these people's living and working environments (Bull-Kamanga *et al.*, 2003, p. 201).

Top-down and bottom-up approaches

Resilience frameworks and tools for the most part come from two approaches: top-down and bottom-up. Top-down approaches produce resilience frameworks developed largely by governments, policy makers and international organisations, and currently dominate current research on resilience (Cutter, 2016; Sharifi, 2016). This approach tends to use objective resilience measurements which examine tangible factors such as physical resources and socio-economic data that make a community resilient (Norris *et al.*, 2008; Renschler *et al.*, 2010).

While these factors are important, the intangible factors such as personal or socio-cultural values and psychological factors may be neglected in this objective assessment of community resilience (Jones and Tanner, 2017). Top-down approaches therefore need to be complemented by bottom-up approaches. Evidence shows that local knowledge helps strengthening community resilience. Social learning, for example, helps communities to share memories and experiences to cope with floods (McEwen *et al.*, 2017). Cohen *et al.* (2013) provide six factors that can enhance community resilience: leadership, collective efficacy, preparedness, place attachment, social trust and social relationship. Other research has found that structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital, such as community bonding, bridging and linking, as well as norms values and beliefs, are important to build community resilience (Kwok *et al.*, 2019). Further, Handmer and Choong (2006) and Usamah *et al.* (2014) argue that informal economic enterprises are a local infrastructure that can help communities manage external shocks. These examples show that in addition to knowledge used in most top-down approaches, local knowledge is important to enhance community resilience. The bottom-up approach uses local units of analysis at the neighbourhood scale to inform the development of local resilience frameworks (Flower *et al.*, 2018; Kwok *et al.*, 2018). While neither can work alone, bottom-up approaches are helpful for understanding problems – and opportunities – at a local scale (Hamdi, 2004).

Everyday resilience

Everyday resilience has an important role to play in reducing vulnerability to both large and small disasters. It achieves such positive outcomes through helping vulnerable communities manage daily risks and challenges (Andres and Round, 2015; Betteridge and Webber, 2019). The formulation of resilience as an everyday practise is diverse, from individual to collective actions, and may not be formally planned (Betteridge and Webber, 2019). The “microphenomenon” of everyday resilience is thus best observed using bottom-up research approaches (Kwok *et al.*, 2018; Andres and Round, 2015). Here, we define everyday resilience as the capacity to cope with daily risks and adapt to manage everyday life challenges.

Research in urban communities has identified the importance of social-economic networks for residents to cope with daily challenges (Hellman, 2015; Wilhelm, 2011). Hellman (2015) identified a network of friends, neighbours and relatives as a coping mechanism for people in *kampung* (literally “village”) in Jakarta. Wilhelm (2011) argued that *kampung* build resilience based on collective action that allows its members to build social networks. Such linkages in *kampung* have been shown to support the survival of the residents (Tunas, 2008). Previous literature also identified nine factors that form a local resilience framework for urban communities: social ties, adaptation, community initiatives, place attachment, place identity, security, economic stability, environmental protection and government support (Shirleyana *et al.*, 2018).

This paper highlights another notion of resilience underpinned by everyday risks and micro-economic phenomena, which has not been well recognised in resilience research. The focus is resilience towards daily risks, which refer to pressures in everyday life that may affect households like financial loss, crime, housing damage, injuries and also the community as a whole, such as flooding, fire, drugs and disease outbreak. It seeks to present a new perspective on resilience based on a “people-centred approach” (Sanderson, 2019). One of the methods to search for subjective and symbolic meaning of resilience is using narratives (Goldstein *et al.*, 2015). It is acknowledged as a way to “engage multiple voices and enable self-organising processes to decide what should be made resilient and for whose benefit” (Goldstein *et al.*, 2015, p. 1285).

In Indonesia, the *kampung* is an urban traditional settlement type and houses the majority of the population in the country. The case study in this paper takes place in an urban *kampung* in Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia, which is experiencing rapid urbanisation and economic development. In Surabaya, *kampung* are distributed throughout the city from the inner-city to the city fringe and the coastal areas, making up more than 60% of the area. Residents in *kampung* are mixed and include both very poor and middle-income families. Although they are continually evolving, *kampung* are a traditional indigenous type of South East Asian urban settlement (Hawken, 2017; Reid, 1988, 1993). The residents have thrived and survived through generations, and display resiliency. This paper presents how the communities which live in *kampung* perceive risks and build resilience to manage daily risks. The findings provide insights for planners and policy makers to re-think the essence of community resilience.

Methodology

The study takes an example of an urban *kampung* in the inner-city part of Surabaya, Kampung Plampitan in Peneleh, which is part of the Genteng Sub-district. Various research methods were used: field observation, in-depth interviews with household members, and workshops during community meetings. The field observation took into account the physical characteristics, social-economic activities and visible risks and resilience factors of the *kampung*. In-depth interviews were conducted with 28 participants. Of these, 7 were men

and 21 were women. Most of them have been living in the *kampung* for more than 40 years. A snowball sampling method was used to identify potential participants, spread across all eight neighbourhoods in the study. The interviews consisted of five main themes: length of stay in the *kampung*, what they like or dislike in the *kampung*, risks and resilience factors and changes and hopes for the *kampung* in the future. The data were analysed to find themes for developing a resilience framework. Workshops were used to validate the interview results and conducted during three community meetings. There was also a wrap-up meeting with community members and leaders to validate all the results. The workshops participants were women because the community meetings were organised by the women's group.

Study area: Kampung Plampitan, Surabaya

Kampung Plampitan is known for its historical structures and traditions. This *kampung* comprises approximately 500 households in the registry and covers 11 neighbourhoods (RT or *Rukun Tetangga* or Resident Associations) within approximately a five-hectare area. Of these, only eight neighbourhoods are considered as *kampung* settlements. Among the eight neighbourhoods, RT 01, is known as a Maduranese block in gg [1] I and II, and has the largest number of residents and households in the *kampung*. In contrast, RT 06 has the least number of residents, with many vacant houses for sale. The alleyway in RT 06 (Plampitan gg XI) is wider, and cars can enter. RT 04, in gg VIII, is the most well-established part of the *kampung*, where the community hall, a badminton court, a kindergarten and Plampitan mosque are located.

Spatially, the *kampung* is divided by the Plampitan Kalimir Street (Figure 1). The east part covers RT 01 (Plampitan gg I and gg II) and the West part covers the remaining *kampung* neighbourhoods. Because of this separation, Kampung Plampitan does not appear to be well integrated. Kampung Plampitan is located north of a secondary street, Achmad Jaiz Street, next to the Kalimas River. The north part of the *kampung* is attached to Kampung Peneleh, Dutch cemetery and Kampung Polak Wonorejo (including the Polak Market).

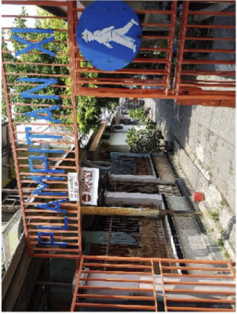
Community facilities

Kampung Plampitan has some public facilities, such as a badminton court, a community hall and mosques. The community hall (*Balai RW*) is the place where the community holds monthly women's group meetings and Posyandu [2] or Posbindu [3] (health care) events. The mosque in gg VIII is famous and used by many people from the outside of the *kampung*. The badminton court was recently painted, funded by the Municipality. It is used for morning exercises for the elderly every Saturday morning and for playing badminton every Sunday morning. A security post is located at the intersection of the Megawati Street and Plampitan Kalimir Street. There are also a communal toilet and kitchen owned by the Maduranese in gg II.

Kampung gate and alleyways

Almost all access to the *kampung* is marked by gates, which are closed after 10 p.m. and opened again in the morning. The purpose of *kampung* gates is to increase the security in the *kampung*. However, as there are other ways to access the neighbourhood from the main street, the community leaders added CCTV cameras to prevent theft. Alleyways in the *kampung* vary in width. The narrow ones are approximately 1.5–2 meters wide, while the wider ones can reach up to 5 metres wide. The alleyways also act as an extension of the houses and are used for sitting benches, *warung* or kiosks, hanging laundry, and parking motorcycles. They also

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Kampung gate



Warung in the kampung



Communal toilet



Badminton court

Source: Traced from Google Earth and field work (2019)

Figure 1. Map of Kampung Plampitan

function as informal interaction places for *kampung* residents. Residents often stop for a while at alleys' intersections or in front of their neighbours' houses and terraces to have a chat with their neighbours. Despite these functions, *kampung* alleyways are quiet most of the time. The intensity and frequency of the interactions are not as high as those experienced in the past. According to some residents, the alleyways at night are now very quiet, "like a graveyard" (NY, community-member).

Social-economic activities

Many residents in the *kampung* open a *warung* or kiosk in their houses. *Warung* are small shops selling food, usually located outside the house as the house is small and does not have a space to accommodate customers. Social activities can be observed at the intersections of *kampung* alleyways, near a gazebo in front of the badminton court, in front of open space at gg VII or at each terrace. Some residents put benches in front of their houses for sitting or chatting with their neighbours. Tombs exist in some parts of the *kampung* and are visited by outsiders.

Discussion – risks and resilience

The analyses of in-depth interviews and workshops generated diverse perspectives on risks and resilience strategies for coping with daily risks. This discussion section is structured into three subsections: place attachment in the *kampung*, perceived risks based on people's perspectives and coping strategies, to build everyday resilience.

Place attachment in the Kampung

Place attachment, a sense of belonging among community members, is key to the level of resilience that exists in the *kampung*. All *kampung* residents enjoy living in the *kampung*. Many residents were born in the *kampung* and have lived there for more than 40 years. This matter was also confirmed during workshops when all participants concurred that they like their *kampung*. They have a high sense of belonging because they have been living there for decades.

The *kampung* residents chose to stay in the *kampung* because of several reasons. First, they chose *kampung* because of its location. The city centre is easily accessible; thus, they are able to conveniently and economically access all the facilities in the city. Second, the peacefulness in the *kampung* attracts the residents. Despite its location in the city centre, the *kampung* offers a different atmosphere from the vibrant, busy city. Third, the environment in the *kampung* was perceived as clean and convenient to live in. The *kampung* was also recognised as a safe neighbourhood by *kampung* residents. Interview participants stated:

I like to stay in the *kampung*, it is peaceful, close to everywhere. Tunjungan Plaza, Pasar Turi (local market) are near. (RM, community-leader)

Motorcycles cannot get in, so it is safer for kids *Kampung* is in the city centre but still looks like a village, and the houses are not like a slum. (DM, community-member)

Other aspects of the *kampung* that they like include the harmony among *kampung* residents. *Kampung* residents were described as "*guyub*", "*rukun*", which mean they are united and living in harmony despite their diverse backgrounds:

"*Kampung* residents are also not '*resek*' (bothering).[but] '*guyub*' (living harmoniously). (EN, community-member).

Coping strategies to risk in Kampung

Several types of risks were discussed during workshops and in-depth interviews: social risks (crimes such as theft, mugging, motorcycle stolen, drugs), economic risks (losing job, lack of income), physical risks (fire, housing damage) and environmental risks (flooding and disease outbreak).

In the in-depth interviews, most participants perceived losing job or lack of income and disease outbreaks as the most significant risks in the *kampung*. Jobs, as a source of the household income, are of central importance and losing a job will affect the well-being of the family. When the household does not have sufficient income, the options are either looking to borrow or making do with what they have. As told by one of the interviewees:

I had to think of how to find the money sometimes I have a headache I am also hesitant to ask my brother. Now my husband is old, where can he work? I want to open up something, but I don't have the capital sometimes I pray, when can I stop having debts? I hope that when my son works, I don't have to borrow money. (RN, community-member)

Another important issue in the *kampung* that emerged during workshops is related to security risks. For example, many cases of motorcycles being stolen were reported in the *kampung*:

Next to the mosque, there is no mosque keeper, so it is easy for strangers to come in. That's why we want CCTV to be installed, so that there is no theft. That's why there are fences in the *kampung*. The motorcycles were already locked but still stolen. (ER, community-member)

Other crimes happening in the *kampung* include theft by mugging. The victims are usually women, wearing jewellery, carrying a bag or holding a mobile phone. According to the participants in the workshop, women are singled out as targets and more prone to be crime victims. The inner city *kampung* location allows strangers to easily access the neighbourhood:

Previously, there was a *kampung* resident who was followed until the open area. The thief carried a big knife and then robbed her of her bag. The security guard was there but did not dare to help. (ER, community-member)

Besides crimes, disease outbreak was an environmental risk mentioned frequently during the interviews. In the rainy season, dengue outbreak is common. There are also many rats because many houses are vacant.

Another common environmental risk is flooding. "Flooding will happen after the rain, but floodwater drains fast. So, it won't be flooded for long. Only the lowland part gets flooded. But yes, flooding still happens in this *kampung*." A resident mentioned that floods occur because the drains are rarely cleaned.

Other concerns unfolded during the interviews were related to housing conditions. Residents were anxious about fire because it can easily spread and destroy their houses and belongings. Furthermore, the houses are old and not maintained adequately, making the neighbourhood appear unkept. Many houses also do not have proper land certificates because they were inherited when the city was colonised by the Dutch. As a result, some interviewees felt anxious because they could be evicted from their homes. Other risks mentioned by the participants are drugs, terrorist attacks and conflict with neighbours.

Despite these everyday disasters and risks, *kampung* residents have demonstrated great resilience. One interviewee described her harsh life experiences as follows:

Now I don't work anymore. I go around churches, mosques to see whether they distribute rice. I will go there by foot. Sometimes my son takes me there. I cannot use the public transport, where will I get the money from?

[...] Every day I eat from the food distribution for the elderly group [from the Municipality], sometimes I sell it, sometimes I eat it. Sometimes I sell the rice from the church. If I don't have enough [money], I won't eat, or I just simply eat rice and crackers. (LBL, community-member)

To cope with the risks, some residents simply accepted their conditions. Statements like "I tried to enjoy life" or "just be grateful with what I have" are common. The residents make do with whatever they have. Furthermore, there are many social supports available in the *kampung*. Having a good relationship with neighbours is perceived as a highly important factor for survival in the *kampung*. Neighbours can help them take care of houses and prevent theft. They know the neighbours, even the stories and struggles in the neighbourhood. Even when they have relatives who stay within the same *kampung*, the community still believes that neighbours are the first point of contact:

If anything happens, our siblings are far, our neighbours are number one. If we don't have money, our neighbours will have pity on us. (MT, community-member)

Another important network in the *kampung* is the women's group. Almost all community activities in the *kampung* are planned and executed by the women's group. They organise *Posyandu* and *Posbindu* (health care) events, monthly meetings, "*arisan*" (money saving for women) and distribute information from the higher governance level to households within the community. They often conduct recreational activities supported by the community leader.

Support from the elderly and religious groups also helps the residents to face daily challenges. The elderly can no longer work, and depend on the other support systems available. The elderly group (*Karang Werdha*) distributes food for the members every day. They are very happy about this and sometimes they use one portion for both lunch and dinner. They also receive basic daily needs, for instance rice, cooking oil, sugar from surrounding religious institutions like churches or mosques.

Informal economies support *kampung* residents when formal means are lacking. Many "*warung*" or kiosks are opened to add income for the households. This not only benefits the individual household but also benefits other community members. One resident mentioned how easy it is to find food within the *kampung*. The *kampung* also has different types of home-based economic activities, such as laundry and barber shop. Some houses also rent rooms for workers or students.

To cope with the potential of flooding and damage to the *kampung*, residents raise the floor level in the houses. Communal works can prevent flooding and maintain cleanliness. Housing improvements were easily observable. For example, one resident changed the roof material to avoid collapse.

Relationships with higher governance levels, such as community leaders and the local government, are also important. *Kampung* residents rely on community leaders, especially when they cannot solve problems themselves. Monetary support from the government is also important because it provides extra income for the residents. This can be in the form of a Direct Cash Aid, *education fund* for students, and free health insurance for the elderly.

Identifying strategies for building resilience to daily risks

Research on similar urban communities has identified comparable resilience networks for coping with daily challenges. Such research supports our findings (Hellman, 2015; Tunas,

2008; Wilhelm, 2011). For example, Norris *et al.* (2008) identified a set of networked resources including social capital, community competence, information and communication and economic development as necessary to build community resilience. Our study further developed concepts of daily risk and micro-economic phenomena in relation to community resilience. The results from interviews and workshops identify three themes to develop community resilience to such daily microphenomena: people-based network, place-based adaptation and political networks (Figure 2).

First, the community builds resilience by having people-based (social) networks. This includes all social networks connected to the community: neighbours, relatives, friends, the women's group, the elderly group and the religious group. Adger (2005, p. 1039) observed that "multilevel social networks are crucial for developing social capital and for supporting the legal, political, and financial frameworks that enhance sources of social and ecological resilience." Similarly, Hellman (2015, p. 479) emphasised that:

[...] people are dependent on specific networks (and their skills to establish networks) and a specific place (in which they can use their home as a production unit) to produce a livelihood.

They create a sense of community which enables them to collect, share stories and learn from different experiences. This is supported by the physical characteristics of the *kampung* which consist of small alleyways, which in turn provide chances for informal interactions between neighbours. The *kampung* community is a social network that has been built over time and generations. The importance of social capital based on existing social networks

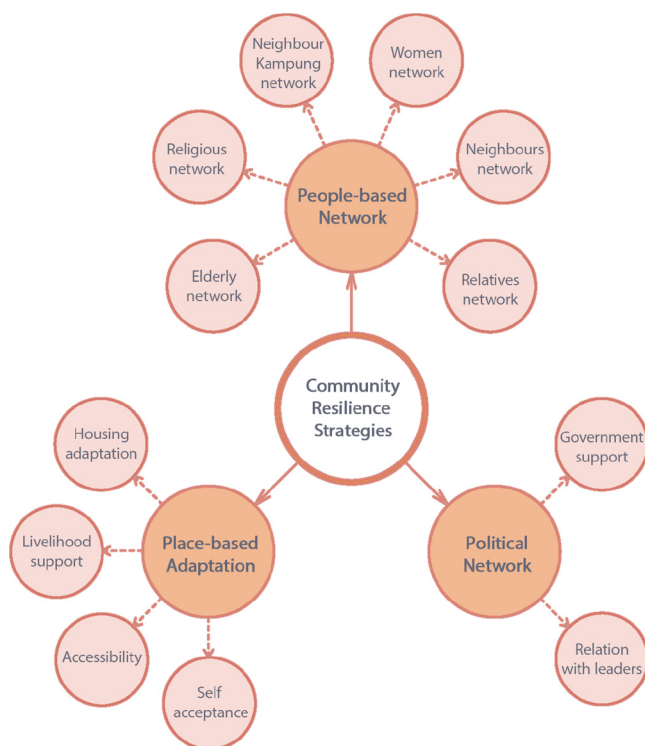


Figure 2. Community strategies based on the resilience narratives

(bonding, bridging and linking) has been noted as important in the continuity of the informal economy (Tunas, 2008), particularly when economic struggle is a part of daily challenges. Other possible links examined include cultural and ethnic links as *kampung* also have diverse ethnicity among inhabitants.

Second, community members in the *kampung* develop place-based adaptation. The term “I like this place because this is my own *kampung*” was repeatedly expressed by community members. Because of this strong place attachment, physical improvements and investments are valued. Housing adaptation, livelihood support and access to basic facilities and identification with their living place were the most significant dimensions of place-based adaptation. “Character of place is central to resilience” (Jones and Mean, 2010, p. 65). Livelihood adaptation is another prominent aspect in the *kampung*, where residents have diverse income generating activities. Usually men are the household heads and work outside the *kampung* whether in a formal or informal sector. Women support their families by opening kiosks, salon, laundry or other type of home-based enterprises embedded within the everyday urban fabric of the *kampung* (Figure 1). The location of the *kampung* in the inner-city helps the residents access public facilities such as education facilities, health facilities, markets, townhalls and entertainment facilities.

Third, having political networks between local government and *kampung* communities also supports resilience. In the case study, *kampung* members rely on community leaders and the local government to provide support. The role of urban governance has been recognised as crucial to reduce risks and convert them into resilience strategies (Bull-Kamanga et al., 2003).

The way the community cope with everyday risks and control the everyday urban life confirms the everyday resilience in the *kampung* community. It is not surprising that social networks are vital to build the community resilience, apart from other forms of informality exists in the micro level (households). The bottom-up approach helps capturing what considered as resilience at the micro level and can be a starting point to promote local responsibility to further their own resilience (Coafee et al., 2009). Challenges remain in the government’s capacity to understand the micro-level phenomena and the everyday risks of life within *kampung*.

Conclusions

In building resilience, it is vital to ask, “resilience to what?” and “resilience for whom?” While many resilience tools and approaches have been directed towards rapid onset disasters such as floods and earthquakes, daily risks often face by urban populations should not be neglected. As a type of local urbanism, *kampung* has endured as a resilient and long-lasting heritage. Key to this longevity is the notion of ‘everyday resilience’ which is concerned with chronic risks and micro-economic phenomena. This study proposes three strategies in building urban community resilience to guide future resilience frameworks and help urban communities cope with daily risks.

First, community resilience relies on strengthening people-based (social) networks. People-based networks in *kampung* extends from neighbours, relatives, women’s groups, elderly groups to neighbouring *kampung* networks. Second, community resilience builds on place-based adaptation. *Kampung* residents are creative and adapt to the place where they live. Diversification of livelihood and informal economies are finely tuned to the urban system. Third, community resilience relies upon linkages between communities and local government. Supports from community leaders and government is crucial for building a stronger community.

This study serves as a foundation to further investigate resilience networks that exist in local urban communities. It demonstrates the necessity to consider social, political and place-based strategies for enhancing such networks. Considering the bottom-up approach used in the paper, the result may be specifically applied to a local community or a similar urban vulnerable community context in enhancing “everyday resilience”. This study reiterates the importance of thinking beyond a top-down approach and looking at a bottom-up approach to understand community’s perspectives.

Notes

1. gg- read as gang, is a name to call small alleyways in the *kampung*, such as gang I, gang II, etc.
2. Posyandu is a community-based health-care service for women and toddlers.
3. Posbindu is a community-based health-care service for adults and elderly to detect noncommunicable diseases.

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Corresponding author

Shirleyana can be contacted at: s.shirleyana@unsw.edu.au

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