

Enhancing the Role of Religious Education in Countering Violent Extremism in Indonesia – **CONVEY Indonesia**

# Policy Brief Series

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CONVEY Indonesia aims to build peace in Indonesia and to prevent violent extremism and radicalism through a series of research-survey, policy advocacy, and public interaction based on the potential of religious education. CONVEY Indonesia project covers on the issues of tolerance, diversity, and non-violence among youth.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME AND RADICALISM IN BORDER AREA**

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## Key Findings

1. Socio-economic empowerment programmes to prevent radicalism in border areas are still very scant.
2. Radicalism and terrorism prevention programmes are only focus on arresting the perpetrators from another area and supervision of deviant religious teachings.
3. Socio-economic empowerment programmes for society in the border area are highly important to create economic justice for the people in the border area.

## Background

Border area has been used as a passage by radical and terrorist groups for a long time. According to the report of Sangihe police resort, Anthony Salim used the border route in 2002 to smuggle cadres and weapons from and to the Philippines. In Nunukan, Reza Nurjamil, a member of Ansharut Daulah group from Tasikmalaya, was arrested in 2017 due to his activities with the ISIS movement. In Batam, the police arrested several perpetrators of terrorism acts from West Sumatra in 2017.

Radical and terrorist groups take advantage of demographic and geographic situation of a large border area. Border areas have many inland and sea routes from and to the neighbouring countries. Those routes serve as traffic routes for people and goods which have existed for a long time and spread at various points thus hard to be monitored.

LP2M IAIN Manado sees the urgency for a socio-economic program in countering radicalism and terrorism in border areas. Socio-economic empowerment program involves capacity building activities in increasing socio-economic skills and local economic independence.

Presidential Regulation No. 44 of 2017 regarding the Amendment to Presidential Regulation No. 12 of 2010 concerning National Agency on Border Management (BNPP) has dissolved BNPP and determined that the technical implementation for the development of State Border and Border Area is conducted by the Ministry, Non-Ministerial Government Institution, Provincial Government as well as Regency and City Government. Therefore, socio-economic empowerment programme in border area requires cooperation between technical implementers of State Border and Border Area development conducted by Ministry, Non-Ministerial Government Institution, Provincial Government as well as Regency and City Government with the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT)/ Coordination Forum for the Prevention of Terrorism (FKPT) in border areas.

## Socio-Economic Empowerment Programme

Border areas often have different socio-economic problems from other areas. Illegal business, human trafficking, isolated

communities, weak law enforcement, low education level, and poor health condition are common phenomenons among border societies. In terms of illegal business cases, firearms trade from Philippines often occur in Sangihe, as well as the circulation of untaxed electronic devices from Singapore in Batam, and crystal meth from Malaysia in Nunukan, including the sales of secondhand clothings from neighbouring countries in those three border areas. In terms of human trafficking, illegal traffic of Indonesian migrant workers (TKI) becomes a daily scene in Batam and Nunukan. Resident communities in Sangihe outer islands and Nunukan are isolated from the capitol with such limited transportation from and to the outermost islands. In terms of education, there is no public nor private university in Sangihe while there is only one private university in Nunukan.

Since his election, Jokowi's administration has been committed in developing Indonesia from the outskirts areas. With priorities programs to strengthen remote areas and villages, Jokowi-JK administration will create a new discourse on the importance of strengthening socio-economic empowerment in border areas. With a new perspective that see border areas as the forefront and the gateway into the country, the determination to develop the border areas will soon be realized.

However, as seen from the three years of Jokowi-JK administration, policies for the development of border areas still focus on the development of national infrastructure as the main priority, not on the economic empowerment of the people. Some activities for the quality improvement of small and medium industry (IKM) products are conducted by Regency/City Government through Department of Trade and Industry, just like the activities for social and medium enterprises (SME) economic improvement which are conducted through Department of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). Programmes from other ministries such as activities to increase

tourism awareness by Ministry of Tourism, activities to create new entrepreneurs by the Ministry of Manpower and business group activities along with Ministry of Social Affairs. Incidental programmes are also developed such as restoration of fish processing factory in Sangihe and local market construction in Sebatik.

Limited implementation of socio-economic empowerment programmes above are often not in accordance with the needs of IKM and UKM. Marketing trainings are often given to entrepreneurs who need capital and increase in production. Some IKM and UKM entrepreneurs who participate in the programmes are usually from close family members, people of one place of origin or race, and the recipients of the programmes are generally the campaign team members of ruling local government. Last but not least, the economic empowerment so far has not been linked with the prevention of radicalism and terrorism.

Participation of the societies in border areas in giving information and their involvement in counter-radicalism and counter-terrorism activities are very important. The wide borderline shall be guarded by local communities. Socio-economic empowerment programme for people in the border area is an effort to counter radicalism and terrorism in border areas.

## Methodology

This Policy Brief is based on the assessment of socio-economic empowerment programme in border areas using a qualitative method. The field research was conducted for 20 days each in three regions: (1) Sangihe Islands, North Sulawesi; (2) Nunukan, North Kalimantan; and (3) Batam, Riau Islands.

This research was conducted by collecting documents, conducting focus group discussion (FGD) and interviewing the stakeholders in the three regions. In the research, policies and implementation of community socio-economic empowerment

programmes that are conducted by other institutions, both government as well as community institutions, are analysed in order to find out the programmes' effectiveness.

## Research Findings and Policy Recommendations

### 1 Depoliticisation of Programme

The results of development are still varied. It is widely known among the people in border areas that the socio-economic programmes implemented by agencies under the leadership of elected regional head are often given to campaign team personnel of elected regional head as well as to the people who openly expressed their support for the elected regional head during the election campaign.

The elected regional head is the regional head who is appointed by president for all members of society, not for a particular group. Therefore, he or she must work for all citizens regardless their political affiliation. Yet many times, elected regional head only works for their circle, and this happens in the border areas.

#### ■ Policy Recommendation

Every socio-economic empowerment programme must be intended for all societies. The programme must aim for the right target. The provision of fishing equipments, for example, should be given to the local fishermen who live on the shore, not to the farmers who live on the mountains. In contrast, agricultural equipments should be given to farmers instead of fishermen. Once the objectives of the programme are in line with the needs of programme's beneficiaries, the next step is to map the society and make a priority. This is done so that all fishermen or farmers receive the benefits of the programme. Using this method, politicisation of programmes can be prevented.

### 2 Representation of Ethnic Group, Religion, and Community Organisations

Indonesia is a plural country. Indonesian society consists of diverse ethnic groups, religions and community organisations. Some of the major ethnic groups in Indonesia are Javanese, Bugis, Minangkabau, Madurese, Arabic and Sundanese. Major religions of the world are also exist in almost every region of Indonesia such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. In addition, there are also local religions of local communities.

Diversity of cultures and religions as explained above rarely becomes a consideration in determining the participants of community socio-economic empowerment programmes even though diversity is a main asset of Indonesian society.

#### ■ Policy Recommendation

The above aspects in every region must be well-mapped. One region can consist of some majority ethnic groups. Some regions are extremely plural in terms of religious diversity. With the spirit of religious and cultural unity, the policy makers of community socio-economic empowerment programmes must reflect on that diversity in planning and implementing the existing programmes.

### 3 Solving Community's Main Problem

Community in one region has a different problem from other regions. The communities in border areas and islands, for example, always need vegetables supply from other regions. Industrial regions have manpower problems, and so on.

The government is mandated by the Constitution to make the people prosperous. Community empowerment programmes will give more benefits massively if they are aimed to respond the existing problems in society.

## ■ Policy Recommendation

Local governments actually have held quite many empowerment programmes. If border areas and islands as explained above have problems concerning vegetables supply, then Agricultural Agency, in collaboration with other agencies, can utilize empty lands to plant various types of required vegetables. The existing agencies can also initiate hydroponic vegetables processing and develop it as a regional superior programme. That is a mere example of how the government issues a policy that correspond to the needs.

## 4 Independence of Programme's Participants

Participants of socio-economic programmes tend to expect continuous assistance from the programme implementers both in terms of advanced training and funding. This can be seen as a programme failure. Lack of independency of the participants happened due to many factors such as participants are not persistent in doing their economic activities, materials of the programme are too general (not advanced) as well as the unfavorable business environment, and so on. On the other hand, independency or self-empowerment of the participants can be achieved easily if the participants are those who have started and persistently developed economic activities before participating in the programme.

## ■ Policy Recommendation

Socio-economic empowerment programme implementers must conduct the selection of participants. This phase is very important in order to choose participants who are persistent in running their current economic activities. It is necessary to prevent those who are not committed in participating in the programme or just taking the programme for fun.

In other words, the implementers shall not merely run the programme as a routine activity. Empowerment programme must be based on the research in order to achieve

satisfying result. The government needs to map all local business people in tiers starting from beginners, intermediate and advanced entrepreneurs. Beginner entrepreneurs can be guided to participate in production capacity training and industrial management training programmes. Intermediate level can be focused on the packaging and labelling training while the advanced entrepreneurs can be focused on training of marketing activities for both inside the country and abroad.

## 5 Impersonalisation of Programme

Community socio-economic empowerment programmes in border areas are often perceived as an absolute authority of programme implementers without aspect of control. Programme implementers seem to assume the programmes as their own personal or group.

## ■ Policy Recommendation

Programme implementing agencies and units must involve external parties in programme planning and implementation. External parties are including the smallest local government such as local government. In addition, programme implementers must sign integrity pact in planning, implementing, and evaluating the programme. Integrity pact encompasses an agreement to be transparent, open and cooperative in implementing the programmes.

## 6 Programme Orientation

Community socio-economic empowerment programmes are often aimed to improve the local income. This happens because local income can directly increase the incentive for the local government. However, orientation to increase the regional income must be followed by the orientation to empower local communities. This orientation of community empowerment means that the benefits of the programmes must be distributed to all



layers of society.

Assistance given to the society aims to increase their business products. If needed, they can even export their products abroad. This kind is necessary to increase the welfare of people in border areas. It is very reasonable because communities at the border live very close to the neighbouring countries.

### ■ Policy Recommendation

To implement the orientation above, in-depth studies must be conducted in every region. There are some examples that can be done according to our perspective. Local government of Batam, for example, that has many industrial companies, needs to provide cheap housing and transportation for people who work in industrial companies of that region. Local government of Nunukan that is directly adjacent to Malaysia needs to facilitate socio-economic relationship with Malaysia that is beneficial for the communities. Meanwhile, in Sangihe, the same recommendation as the one for Nunukan can also be applied, whereas beneficial socio-economic relationship with Philippines must be developed.

## 7 Socio-economic Programme and Eradication of Radicalism

Radicalism is a latent threat in the border areas. Border routes have been utilized by radical and terrorist groups for a long time. Meanwhile, community socio-economic empowerment programmes are rarely prioritise the people in the border routes. Involving communities of the border areas will make it easier for the government to involve them directly in counter-radicalism movement.

### ■ Policy Recommendation

People in the border areas are extremely important to be involved in counter-radicalism movement. They can contribute in preventing radicalism by coordinating community socio-economic empowerment programmes conducted by government and non-government institutions. In other words,

community socio-economic empowerment programmes must be developed in the border areas and integrated into radicalism prevention activities.

Provision of socio-economic empowerment programmes for people in the border areas will increase the awareness of state roles and functions for the people. Mutually beneficial relationship between the state and the people will increase not only people's trust to the government but also help in achieving economic justice in the border areas as well as prevent radicalism.

Other than the provision of socio-economic empowerment programmes, involving the people in radicalism prevention activities can also be carried out by giving incentive, provision of educational scholarship, house renovation assistance and or granting civil servant status to the people who directly assist in radicalism prevention activities.

## 8 Local Approach in Countering Terrorism

Radicalism prevention by government apparatus is dominantly influenced by strategies used abroad. In some places, brochures distributed in hotels concerning the suspects of radicalism who is being sought after by the government while also using English. Wanted brochures in English shows that the pamphlets are addressed to foreigners, so the local residents do not understand. These pamphlets also show the strong foreign influence in radicalism prevention efforts. Other than pamphlets, command to shoot on the spot for those who are involved in ISIS movement abroad also indicates the same thing.

### ■ Policy Recommendation

Local approach in the prevention of radical movements must be emphasized. At the moment, the society is expected to know the importance of information concerning radicalism suspects. However, invitation to be alert and vigilant to those radicalism suspects is not enough. Government

apparatus must be able to communicate in local language with the community and perform social approach in radicalism

prevention by involving religious figures to give continuous warning concerning the dangers of radicalism.



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