

#BerbedaTetapBersama

*Nine Inspirational
Stories about
Religious Moderation
During the Pandemic*



A Collaborative Project of:

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Translated from the original book titled “*Sembilan Kisah Inspiratif tentang Moderasi Beragama di Tengah Pandemi*,” published by Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta, 2021

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CONVEY Indonesia 2020-2021

Foreword

I am pleased to present you this storytelling publication containing personal narratives of individuals seeking to build social cohesion in multi-ethnic and multi-religious Indonesia, amid the Covid-19 pandemic. As an agile and innovative organization, UNDP Indonesia believes in the power of storytelling to advocate causes. Storytelling is one of the most potent instruments of advocacy, as it allows readers to experience contextualized setting and nuance that may not be best captured through reports and hard facts.

In particular, storytelling also allows readers to appreciate the rich complexity of Indonesia. Home to over 1,000 ethnic groups and 700 dialects, Indonesia offers a vibrant tapestry of culture, tradition and religious practices. These diverse characteristics have become the strong bond that unite its people, as enshrined in the country's motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* or Unity in Diversity.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not deter UNDP's mission to strengthen inclusive social cohesion in Indonesia. Despite mounting challenges and setback, we continued to work with our partners such as the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM), Jakarta State Islamic University to formulate and advocate evidence-based policy on anti-violent extremism. Since 2017, we have reached out to approximately 50,000 people and collaborated with 15 policy makers and 50 civil society organizations, including women's groups and youth associations across Indonesia.

This publication aims to record our rich journey where we have met inspiring individuals who have adopted innovative approaches to preventing violent extremism. From tracking down a supporter of extremist violence through an online shop, to a virtual interview with a survivor, these back stories highlight Indonesia's strength in building peace and social cohesion.

I hope these stories will inspire you to join us in action and solidarity to build a more prosperous and just Indonesia with utmost respect to peace and diversity.

Norimasa Shimomura
Resident Representative
UNDP Indonesia

PROLOGUE

What Is Lesson Learned from CONVEY?

What is CONVEY? CONVEY is a collaborative program between the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) of the State Islamic University of Jakarta and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Indonesia. This program aims to build young people's resilience to violent extremism through religious education. CONVEY stands for Countering Violent Extremism for Youth which is currently stepping to its fourth year. CONVEY consists of 3 main activities.

The first includes survey/research and policy advocacy. Survey and research activities aim to deepen, sharpen existing knowledge and examine relevant government policies. The goal is to provide input to the government. With this input, it is expected that the government will develop evidence-based policies and programs. CONVEY's second activity is institutional capacity building. The goal is for institutions that have the potential to build the resilience of young people from violent extremism. Those young people

are expected to have the capacity and play an effective role in resolving this issue. The third activity of CONVEY is to raise public awareness (public campaign) about intolerance and the potential for extremism, such as through webinars, Twitter, IG, and YouTube.

Because the CONVEY activity period April 2020-March 2021 was during the Covid-19 pandemic, almost all CONVEY activities were carried out online. Nevertheless, the CONVEY team managed to fulfill what was targeted at the beginning. From a research perspective, this year's CONVEY produced very important findings. Responding to claims by several parties about why CONVEY only researched intolerance among Muslims, CONVEY conducted a national survey of students from various religious backgrounds at various types of campuses (SHE, PHE, RHE) this year.

The findings are that Muslim students are more intolerant than those of other religions. After searching for the main factors causing it, the researchers find that intolerance is related to feeling dissatisfied with the bad economic condition. Intolerant people think that their financial condition is getting worse, and they consider that the deteriorat-

ing economic situation is threatening their lives.

One of CONVEY 4 partners, Center for the Study of Islam, Democracy, and Peace (PUSPIDEP) UIN Yogyakarta, conveyed the results of research on convicts, deportees, and returnees that many factors influence a person to be intolerant or extremist. In the context of those factors, education acts as a factor leading a person to become an extremist. However, there are other important findings from the national survey of students in Indonesia. The results show that students having no experience in socializing or learning in a heterogeneous environment or having a dialogue with different people are more intolerant than those who have experience of dialogue and live in diverse environments.

Assessments on three State Islamic Universities under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, namely Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, Syarif Hidayatullah State University Jakarta, and Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University Bandung, found that 45% of students at showed low empathy for Christians, Catholics, Hindus, and Buddhists. In addition, 30% of them also have low empathy for minorities in Islam, such as the Ahmadiyya and Shia. Fur-

thermore, regarding knowledge about Covid-19 and health protocols, the students of the three State Islamic Universities also showed low awareness and knowledge, especially students with religious education backgrounds.

This information of intolerance shocked the officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as several leaders of those higher education institutions during the socialization and publication of the survey results. They previously often claimed and said that their universities were “the guardians of religious tolerance” and emphasized that their students were more tolerant than students of the general campus. This admission may be true if it is based on anecdotal data, not a national survey. CONVEY research this year confirms that among millennials (24-40 years) and generation Z (13-23 years) is an ongoing spread of conservative Islam. This is found from qualitative research on members and activists of the *Hijrah* movement which has emerged recently. CONVEY found that their missionary strategy using K-Pop symbols and social media platforms or their delivery was very creative, although activists and members of the *Hijrah* movement have a literal understanding of Islam, and limit association with fellow Muslims who share

the same opinion. Besides, they believe that women only should take care of domestic jobs. Some of them even forbid music.

However, we do not need to worry since the authorities and the public can still do something to prevent the spread of narrow Islam. CONVEY’s findings this year reinforce research findings so far that exclusivism can actually be reduced if the authorities create encounters between society and groups of different orientations and backgrounds. The experience of CONVEY activities carried out by Peacegen proves this way could work. Peacegen carried out CONVEY activities involving young Muslims from various understandings (HTI, Salafi, NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis) in 21 days. The goal was to allow them to get along and discuss with each other. It turned out that not only were they close or familiar with each other without feeling awkward, but also their friendship can produce joint works in the form of music and cultural art.

Peacegen’s experience strengthens the thesis that friendship in pluralism until those people could be comfortable talking about anything was the initial capital to overcome prejudice, exclusivism, and intolerance. Center for the Study of Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm), Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic Uni-

versity Yogyakarta, one of CONVEY partners this year, called it an “engaging education.” This book has interesting stories from the actors involved in the 2019-2020 CONVEY activities.

Happy reading!

Didin Syafruddin, Ph.D.
Project Manager CONVEY



Cornelia Istiani



Diversity in Research



Diversity in Research

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities”

- Stephen R. Covey

The stone building stands out, tucked between green rice fields and lush bamboo forests. The breeze brings coolness, with a memory of the solidity of Mount Wilis on which to lean. Puhsarang, a village in Semen sub-district, Kediri Regency, Jawa Timur Province, is only about ten kilometers away from the downtown. This small village is popular because it has a replica of the Maria Lourdes Cave, France. Having been a place of prayer, Puhsarang is one of the icons of pride for Indonesian Catholics. A row of stones shelters a large statue; facing it are lined up benches where people can earnestly pray and complain to the Virgin Mary.

This site is located within an old church complex. The famous Dutch architect Henricus Maclaïne Pont started the construction of the church in 1936. The building adopted the philosophy of Javanese culture, starting from the location, building materials, structure, function, and beauty according to the spirit of the inculturation church. The location of this church

has its special meaning, standing between the mountains and the former glory of the Kediri kingdom, which was once a symbol of the highest civilization and culture. The mountains reflect the civilization of immortality, the place of glory, and the realm of “the gods.” Father Jan Wolters CM, the founder of this church, chose a location that seemed to be in between, reflecting the spiritual character between the human world below and the world of God above. The two are brought together in silence as an intermediary through prayer and meditation.

In this village, Cornelia Istanti, commonly called Anet, was born. Her parental family was Catholic pioneers in Puhsarang, Kediri. Her grandfather, Yosef Henrikus Slamet, was one of the figures who played an important role in constructing the church and Maria’s cave. She embraces Catholic values very much in her life. Her only son is now studying to become a Jesuit priest. Meanwhile, from her maternal family, she learned to live in a variety of beliefs, where some of her siblings are devout Muslims.

This modest woman enjoys the life she lives even though she experienced intolerance treatment several times. When conducting research in Aceh, she was obliged to wear a *hijab*

(Muslim veil) and long sleeves. It is very contradictory to her belief. However, she took it casually, and it became an interesting experience for her. She also encountered discrimination in her neighborhood, but she still gets along with her neighbors. To her,

Life, as it is, is a beautiful life

is not just words but becomes a living grip and watchword.

Anet is one of the CONVEY 4 Project researchers on the National Survey on Tolerance among Students and Lecturers in Higher Education Institutions conducted by PPIM UIN (Center for the Study of Islam and Society, State Islamic University) Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, with the support of UNDP (United Nations Development Program) Indonesia. Her involvement in research at this institution began last year in a national survey on legislators’ perceptions regarding re-

ligious education in Indonesia. Invited to represent non-Muslim researchers, she was assigned to analyze research results, refine the research dissemination presentation and participate in the results launching process.

As a woman who loves nature and mountain climbing, Anet completed her undergraduate education at the Department of Mathematics, Sanata Dharma University (USD), Yogyakarta. She further her study to Master's degree program in Psychometry at the Faculty of Psychology, University of Indonesia (UI). Her interest in measurement made her do a doctoral study with a dissertation related to individual

integrity and its measurement of adults in Indonesia. Her strength is numbers, and that is manifested in a quantitative method when generating data. With an experience of working at Mimos Berhad, a research institute in Malaysia, and teaching at Master Program in Psychology at UI, she is now serving as a lecturer at Bina Nusantara University (Binus) as well as being the Head of the Psychology Laboratory for the Binus' Bekasi campus.

Anet's involvement in the terrorism and extremism issues began a long time ago when she assisted one of her seniors in doctoral dissertation research. She admired the ability of her senior who was able to join the Abu Bakar Baasyir group and the HTI organization and at the same time managed to map out the psychological dynamics of the groups' youth. Anet also had the chance to help the national task force team make tools for understanding potential violence with prevention concerns. According to her, this research aimed to be a constructive means for individual development and was not meant for individual judgment.

The research findings aimed to map out the issue and then were used to pull



Cornelia enjoying one of her hobbies, mountain climbing

back radicalized group through deradicalization programs and then were used to pull back terrorists' victims through deradicalization programs. It is also used to develop tools for theoretical and empirical refinement. For example, in the interviews of terrorists, the focus is on how they leave the groups and return as ordinary citizens. Anet found that cases of extreme violence had something to do with integrity issues about which she has been concerned. Her dissertation study has been used as the basis for the making of the Decree of Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform No. 60 of 2020 on Civil Servants' Integrity Building.

A Strange Diversity in the Ivory Tower

“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilisation.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

The woman in black was pacing back and forth, shifting from side to side, while brandishing her weapons stiffly in all directions. Not long after, her own life was taken away, being shot by the police. This solo action was carried out by ZA, who had studied higher education as a student, although she later dropped out in the fifth semester. Various research findings state the same things – that higher education institutions, both lecturers and students, are vulnerable to being infiltrated by dangerous understandings.

The calendar had just changed; the first day of the third month was only half passed. A warm afternoon felt hot when opening the zoom to participate in the launching of the survey results entitled “Diversity in the Ivory Tower, Religious Tolerance in Higher Education.” Anet hosted the opening ceremony, escorting Ismatu Ropi (Executive Director of PPIM), who reminded that education is an important core for strengthening tolerance capacity among young people. Dr. Yunita Faela Nisa, as the research coordinator, said

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there was no national-scale research data on religious tolerance of students from various religious groups and types of higher education in Indonesia. She explained that this study measures students' tolerant attitudes and behavior, while lecturers and campus policies are seen as variables that affect students. This study is quite massive, involving thousands of students, hundreds of lecturers, and dozens of universities.

The research findings were conveyed by Sirojuddin Arif, Ph.D., a member of the research team. This survey successfully uncovers factors that influenced student religious tolerance. One of them is the social climate, namely the attitude towards minorities and the tolerance of lec-

turers. Also, experiences associating with religious groups and different views could increase tolerance. Students' religious tolerance attitudes were getting lower when they participated more and more in campus spiritual activities such as the Campus *Da'wah* Institute (LDK). Likewise, reading religious articles online was positively associated with intolerance. The existence of a perceived threat could increase intolerance. This study also found that men gen-



Cornelia with National Survey researchers, PPIM Executive Director, and Resource Persons at Launching Survey Results of Diversity on Ivory Tower, March 1, 2021

Launching Hasil Survei

"Kebinekaan di Menara Gading: Toleransi Beragama di Perguruan Tinggi"

PENYAJI

 Dr. Yunita Faeta Nisa, Psi
Sirojuddin Arif, Ph.D.

PEMBAHAS

 H. Syaiful Huda
(Ketua Komisi X DPR RI)

 Prof. Dr. H. Muhammad Ali Ramdhani, S.T.P., MT
(Direktur Pendidikan Islam Kemenag RI)

 Prof. Dr. Nizam, M.Sc., DIC., Ph.D.*
(Direktur Pendidikan tinggi Kemendikbud RI)

 Prof. Dr. I Gusti Ngurah Sudiana
(Rektor Institut Hindu Dharma Negeri (IHDN) Bali)

 Prof. Dr. Jamhari Makruf, M.A.
(Dewan Penasihat PPIM UIK Jakarta)

 Sakdijah Maruf, S.S., M.A.
(Generasi Muda dan Pengamat Kebinekaan)

MODERATOR

 Jennifer Frentasia, Ph.D (c)

WAKTU & TEMPAT

SENIN

1 MARET 2021

13.00-16.00 WIB

NARAHUBUNG

0812-8535-2968
(Meitha Dzuharia)

LINK PENDAFTARAN

<https://bit.ly/PendaftaranLaunchingSurvei>

SCAN ME





Flyer for Launching events of the Results Survey of the Diversity on Ivory Tower: Religious Tolerance in Universities March 1, 2021

erally have a greater level of religious tolerance than women. Socio-economic factors also had an effect; when the income of students' parents was high, then religious tolerance was also high, and vice versa.

This study concluded that most of the students were classified as having high or very high religious tolerance. However, religious higher education (PTA) students had a lower tolerance level than those from other types of higher education. In accordance with the hypothesis, students' religious tolerance was influenced by cross-group social interactions, campus social climate, and student religious activities. Each type of tertiary institution had its own peculiarities, according to the socio-economic characteristics of students. Religious tolerance was also influenced by other things, such as perceptions of threats and the family's economic background. Thus, a comprehensive approach is needed that involves various actors within and outside the higher education environment.

Prof. Dr. H Muhammad Ali Ramdhani S.TP, MT (Director General of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Republic of Indonesia) said that Islamic tertiary institutions were like a lighthouse where the mis-

sion was to bring blessings to all life. He admitted this research was very striking because it turns out that some people who were studying religion had a sense of threat, so that they had an intolerant attitude. He promised to follow up the results of this research operationally by, among other things, enriching the experience of diversity and social interaction, improving the campus social climate, especially lecturers and policies that respect minorities, and strengthening religious tolerance according to the uniqueness of each campus. "Tolerance has not been completely implemented; it needs to be improved," he said.

Prof. drh. Aris Junaidi, Ph.D. (Director of Learning and Student Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture) also emphasized that the goal of higher education under the law was to produce graduates who were beneficial to society. The Ministry of Education and Culture had issued a policy to include tolerance content in four compulsory courses, modules, and a list of references. According to him, it was pivotal to train students' critical thinking by building a discussion climate to minimize intolerance. The results of this study were very useful as input for improving policies.

Prof. Dr. I Gusti Ngurah Sudi-ana, Chancellor of the State Hin-

du Dharma Institute (IHDN), declared his campus as a campus of harmony. According to him, this was the first declaration from a religious-type university in Indonesia. This step by the first Hindu institute in Indonesia was a starting point to invite students and the academic community to become pioneers of peacebuilders on campus. Syaiful Huda (Chairman of the Commission X of the House) appreciated this

research. He encouraged universities to no longer be permissive to intolerance and take initiatives for prevention rather than reactive when an incident occurred. Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Religious Affairs also had to raise citizenship issues to ward off intolerance in universities. Professor Jamhari Makruf, the CONVEY team leader, closed the event by saying that

“

intolerance is an acute disease of Indonesia. One of the massive spreads of intolerance is through education. It takes a long time and expensive investment to teach tolerance through education ”

Ego Integrity and Multiple Identity to Strengthen Tolerance

“He who is different from me does not impoverish me - he enriches me. Our unity is constituted in something higher than ourselves - in Man... For no man seeks to hear his own echo, or to find his reflection in the glass.”
- Antoine de Saint

The sun was not too high yet; Pekalongan City was just starting the day. The young girl in the veil hesitated, trying to find a seatmate. A pair of narrow eyes followed her steps as if smiling offered a place next to her. That was the first meeting of Sakdiyah “Diyah” Ma’ruf with Erlina Wang, a Confucian colleague. This friend is a graduate of a Catholic elementary school while Diyah, the only veiled student in her class, had just finished school at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic Elementary School). “We both come from conservative homogeneous families, so we did not have friends at the beginning of junior high school,” she said in the online discussion of the research results dissemination.

This Smiling Girl, Diyah, grew up in a very conservative Hadrami-Arab environment. She pursued basic education in madrassas, where all were of the Hadrami-Arab ethnicity and were female. Diyah was only allowed to take part in the mandatory Scout extra-curricular. Most of her activities were staying in the house,

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accompanied by books, music, and comedy. She recalled that her family often went to cinemas to watch Warkop films. That was how she loved comedy and recognized diversity at an early age.

Diyah observed that Erlina was wearing shoes one size smaller. Something Chinese families rarely did for their daughters, unless they were very conservative. She also wore various jewelry bearing the Chinese characters that had been blessed at the temple. Little Diyah had the same desire to wear Arabic inscribed jewelry that her ustaz (spiritual leader) had prayed. Her mother just laughed at her wish and said that as a Muslim, “Insyallah (God willing), we will be safe both in this world and in the hereafter, so we do not need jewelry.” However, Diyah jokingly said that it was just her mother’s excuse because her mother did not have money to buy her jewelry.

Meeting and recognizing differences, according to Diyah, is an extraordinary experience. She furthered her study at Gadjah Mada University, majoring in English Literature, in which she met a senior student who gave a message, “Do not read the works of Westerners, or you will become infidels.” She also noted that nowadays, social interactions with different youth groups have become increasingly rare. Today’s youth life is becoming increasingly polarized. The world seems black and white; whoever is not Muslim will be labeled “kafir” (infidel). Diyah emphasized that everyone needs certain approaches to strengthen social interactions that can move beyond labeling one’s religious choice.

She reminded us that diversity does not only belong to the nation but also to every human person. She gave an example that apart from being a Mus-

lim, she also had an identity as a woman, a mother, a child, a lover of Andy Lau and so on. She proposed various practical activities for social interactions that accommodate multiple identities such as arts, storytelling, culture, etc. She



Sakdijah Makruf, on the top right corner, with five other speakers during the Launching of the Survey Results of the Diversity on the Ivory Tower: Religious Tolerance in Higher Education, March 1, 2021

himself initiated the “Our Voice Comedy Workshop” program. The program includes activities that do not just introduce comedy techniques, but also explore various self-identities and build ego integrity or self-reliance which is the ultimate goal of independence values for an individual. Its participants share personal stories with each other because Diyah believes that closeness as a friend always begins with sharing personal things. It helps individuals to be independent as human beings in togetherness regardless any differences.

One of her very recommendations was that, in addition to the data and numbers generated through measurement, research also needs to be complemented by qualitative data in the form of personal stories. She believed every student respondent must have their own stories. We need to communicate the results of the study because the target of the research was youths. According to Diyah, anecdotes and personal stories are sources that will make the results of this research more relevant, alive, and richer.

Anet conveyed the same thing. Her involvement in research since the 2019’s CONVEY until now had brought many new things and unexpected benefits for her. However, according to

her, the design and implementation of the research in CONVEY 4 can still be further deepened and refined. The multi-level analysis provided an opportunity to see the exposure to intolerance on campus for both lecturers and students. Also, the number of students was exposed to intolerance and the pattern of its exposure; impacts needed to be considered.

On a different occasion, Anet cited Prof. Oman Fathurahman’s statement saying the study results had detected symptoms only, not capturing anything deeper. In fact, when using a psychological approach, the study results can be further deepened. A similar opinion was expressed by Hendro Prasetyo, Ph.D., by providing a challenge that this research should be able to measure more precisely in distinguishing intolerance/tolerance from other attitudes. For example, someone who disagrees with electing a non-Muslim as a public leader does not necessarily indicate an intolerant attitude. That may be just approval or even ignorance. According to Anet, these two opinions were important to note and be developed in further research.

Psychological research related to attitudes and tolerance generally adopts three types of tolerance: warm tolerance (ac-

cepting different people), cold tolerance (holding back dislikes), and limit of tolerance (not tolerating intolerance). Apart from being explored through surveys, this can be enriched with qualitative methods through observation and interviews. The results of the research would find a personal story as Sakdiyah “Diyah”

Makruf hoped. Diyah emphasized that research results needed to be communicated easily through stories, with target youth groups, apart from policymakers. Diyah’s opinion was in line with the quote of Kofi Annan, a Ghanaian man who once served as UN Secretary-General, stating that youth are vital agents of development and peace:

“ Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society’s margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies. ”



Nina Mariani Noor



***Tough
Woman in
the Turbid
Whirlpool***

A Tough Woman in the Turbid Whirlpool

“Sadness gives depth. Happiness gives height. Sadness gives roots. Happiness gives branches. Happiness is like a tree going into the sky, and sadness is like the roots going down into the womb of the earth. Both are needed, and the higher a tree goes, the deeper it goes, simultaneously. The bigger the tree, the bigger will be its roots. In fact, it is always in proportion. That’s its balance.”

– Osho (1931-1990)

The interview lasted an hour and a quarter via a Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. It took thirty minutes more than the initially agreed duration because it is a shame to miss the mixed emotions and lessons learned during the discussion. The young woman’s face on the screen looked strong, even though the burdens of life had hit and colored her way of life. “So, at the time I decided to separate from my husband, my youngest child was only two years old,” she said. Parting with her husband did not prevent Nina Mariani Noor from moving forward and completing her doctoral study.

As a woman coming from Gabus District, Pati Regency, Jawa Tengah, Nina, as she is usually called, completed her bachelor’s degree at Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University (UGM), and a master’s degree in the Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies

program, concentrating on social work at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University's Postgraduate Program. In 2016, she managed to get a doctorate from Inter-Religious Studies, UGM. The Indonesian Consortium manages this program for Religious Studies (ICRS), consisting of three universities: Gajah Mada University, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, and Duta Wacana Christian University Yogyakarta.

After completing her doctoral study, Nina was registered as a lecturer at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (UIN), Yogyakarta. "When applying for the position at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, there were ten candidates; I was the only woman," she said smiling. This mother of two children finally got the offer. It was not because she was the only woman, but the panel also considered her achievements and qualities. Being involved in various activities, Nina presented her research in various international seminars and conferences, including Singapore, the United States, and Switzerland. In addition to being a lec-

turer at the UIN Sunan Kalijaga Postgraduate Program, Nina is currently a Program Executive at Globethics.net Indonesia (www.globethics.net), a global network and online library on applied ethics based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Her research interests are quite broad as a lecturer, including interfaith studies, women's studies, gender, minorities, and ethics. However, research on terror convicts, returnees, and terrorism is new to her. Previously, Nina did more research on minority groups such as Ahmadiyah, Shia, LGBT groups, etc. Her dissertation discussed how Ahmadiyah women faced violent conflicts in four locations: Manis Lor, Kuningan, Lombok, and Yogyakarta. The focus on minority groups cannot be separated from her life background. Nina



Nina having a meeting with Maulana Rakeeman, an Ahmadiyah Preacher in Ambon, during the Ulama and Nationality Research, 2018

admitted that even though her family is an intra-religious minority—out of the majority Muslim groups such as NU, Muhammadiyah, or LDII—they lived peacefully with their neighbors.

Nina is now also a researcher at the Center for the Study of Islam, Democracy, and Peace (PusPIDeP) UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Puspidep, in collaboration with PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, conducted research on the research background of ISIS returnees and those who were indicated to be connected to terrorist groups. Nina was assigned to research in Jawa Timur, while her other colleagues conducted a study in Jawa Barat and Jawa Tengah. Together with her team, Nina succeeded in interviewing seven respondents consisting of three terror convicts, one deportant, and three returnees to get an idea of how the influence and educational factors could shape a person to become an extremist.

Discovering Facts in the Middle of the Pandemic

“Experience life in all possible ways — good-bad, bitter-sweet, dark-light, summer-winter. Experience all the dualities. Don’t be afraid of experience, because the more experience you have, the more mature you become.”

– Osho (1931-1990)

The COVID-19 Pandemic has invited various obstacles for many sectors, including research activities. Nina realized the importance of creativity being developed to achieve the research data target. One of the ideas his team shared was to approach respondents through their social media. A woman named Irma, for example, once went to Syria and joined ISIS. The research team had searched and could not find her in her hometown in Tulungagung. Very surprisingly, her parents did not even know that their child had been involved in an extremist group network. What they knew was that their children were working abroad. This woman then was successfully contacted through a Muslim clothes shop account which she created on social media.

According to Nina, women in radicalization are very ideological and introverted; they are different from men. She failed to interview the two female informants she targeted. It was different from the other six male respondents, who were generally active

Nine Inspirational Stories about Religious Moderation During the Pandemic

in the deradicalization program and were willing to serve interview requests. The challenges in interviewing female returnees were experienced by Jawa Timur's researchers and those in Jawa Barat—as admitted by Nina's colleague, Ahmad Rafiq.

Rafiq said that this research involved a minimum of two researchers for each city. Nina and Rafiq were assisted by research assistants—while Najib Kailani and Munir Ikhwan did fieldwork in Jawa Tengah. This study was designed to obtain interview data for about twenty respondents in which the composition of men and women was expected to be balanced (gender balance). However, in line with the Jawa Timur's experience, the efforts of researchers to find female returnees informants in Jawa Barat were also not easy.

About seven respondents were successfully interviewed by Najib and Munir, not all of them through the BNPT channel. The researchers also used the traditional route through acquaintances who had a connection with this group. The

patterns of extremism-based violence also vary as not all of them were similar. In Solo, for example, the Aman Abdurrahman network insisted on taking distances in communicating with police officers. They agreed to be interviewed but demanded that they be kept in a secure place for safety reasons.

Nina admitted that the success in obtaining research data in Jawa Timur could not be separated from the services of her two research assistants. According to Nina, a cute girl named Haliya, who is currently taking a master's degree in Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, was a hardworking and creative person. Haliya organized an online focus group discussion for the six respondents and obtained a variety of rich data. With her friend, Luk-



Nina Interviewing Hilda Rolobessy, a Representative of Fatayat NU in Ambon.

man, she was also determined to pursue various sources to their respective homes in Lamongan, Malang, and Surabaya.

Haliya's knowledge of religion was sufficient as the assistant, and she had designed a strategic research approach while interviewing even though this was her first experience as a research assistant. For example, in asking questions, according to Nina, Haliya was not just fixated on the interview guide but instead developed various questions that were not cornering but were right on target. The two re-

search assistants also managed to hold FGDs, which, according to Nina, contributed a lot of valuable data to their research. One of the important things that emerged in the FGD was that when one intended to learn religious knowledge, they had to have "sanad" (clear knowledge genealogy); they could not be self-taught. Thanks to the hard work of this team, the map and pattern of extremist groups, both traditional and new generations, were identified and interpreted in relation to the respondents' educational backgrounds.

Knowledge Construction and Potential Violence

*“Knowledge will forever rule ignorance,
and those who intend to be their own regulators
must arm themselves with the power that knowledge imparts.”*

—James Madison (1751-1836)

This study found two radical groups: the old (traditional) and the young (new generation). The senior group was those aged forty and over, who are generally brought up by the education and ideology of the *Salafi pesantren* (traditional conservative Islamic boarding school). They were categorized as the early generation affiliated with Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) and Al Qaeda. Traditional terrorist patterns depend very much on educational background, as found in the Bali bombers, who came from the Trenggulun Islamic boarding school, Lamongan.

The New Generation is a group affiliated with ISIS ideology. This relatively young group was not indoctrinated with teachings from *pesantren*. This group mainly acquired the doctrine from social media channels through YouTube, as admitted by respondents from Jawa Barat. For example, a respondent in Jawa Timur, Wildan, was exposed to extremist narratives during junior high school. When the Bali bombing terror occurred, he observed and absorbed information

from live television broadcasts. Later, he searched and studied the meaning of jihad from the Internet. Wildan has been collecting jihadist videos and articles since he was a high school student when he understood better Arabic and the teachings of Umar bin Khattab. He even liked wearing military clothes since high school, until then studying at a Muhammadiyah university. Through an exclusive group dedicated to learning certain ideological teaching, he was recruited and sent to join ISIS under the pretext of a humanitarian aid mission.

Humanitarian aid was used as an excuse and justification for the Jawa Timur group to leave and join ISIS. Some believed that what they did was right because it was for the purpose of humanity services. Syahrul, for example, after being arrested he emphasized that as a law scholar, he believed that what he was doing was not breaking the law. In this group, the concept of patriarchy was still firmly rooted. Syahrul, for example, believed that men were leaders so they could make their own decisions without considering his children and wife's permission. His family did not know that he was part of a terrorist group.

Likewise, the case also applied to Arif, the respondent in charge of weapons possession. Arif, a fugitive for some periods, believed that his family, especially his wife, knew nothing about his activities. He did not want his family to be involved in jihadist acts that risk imprisonment, even death. According to Nina, those convicted of terrorist acts in the Abu Jandal network, who did not invite their families, were also disconnected cells, lone wolves. When discussing through chat rooms, they used pseudonyms.

The construction of religious knowledge for returnees in Jawa Timur, according to Nina, was relatively open. It was marked by the existence of a knowledge network of Islamist groups wherein this group has the names of certain figures who become role models and certain literature that become references. These two things affected the way the individuals behave because they live off the network of Islamist groups.

In contrast to the Jawa Barat returnees, the Jawa Timur group originated from the family cluster and generally came from wealthy families. Their ideology was animated by limited family recitation activities, which were carried out once per several

months. The stimulation of ideas also came from the Internet, especially the sites and social media run by ISIS. According to Rafiq and Nina, this group did not know and follow certain literature and role models. The social media exposure accessed was random. The jihadist family is an open market, where the construction of religion is directly at the source, not equipped with adequate secondary sources. Their search on social media is based on the algorithm and expectations.

In the family network (family linked), it always seems to follow a reformist pattern. According to Nina, their arguments for any issue normally referred to the primary source, namely in the Quran verses. They did not refer to a particular book or character but directly to the holy book. Ironically, they did not really know Arabic very well. That may be one thing that encouraged them to find references on cyberspace. In this group, the pattern is very open, very soft, or even very hard.

It does not only apply to radical Islamic groups. The history of the religions of the fifteenth century on the Protestant and Catholic churches; this reformist pattern formed a radical group.

In all religions, the response of radical groups in argumentation is to always point to verses in the holy book directly. It is different from terrorist networks that are not from family clusters. Since the very beginning, it has been locked in the presence of characters and books that emphasize certain ideas. Rafiq added that the pattern was almost the same in all the research locations in contrast to the returnees. Knowledge patterns have been constructed where there are literature, figures, and certain important issues in each of their meetings. The distinctive feature of this group is that the group members always refer to key figures.

This study concludes that educational background does not necessarily influence a person to become a terrorist. For instance, Rafiq gave an example that people who went to Gontor Islamic Boarding School did not automatically become terrorists. According to Rafiq, formal and informal religious education is generally mediated by many things. Religious knowledge becomes significant if, for example, there is a relationship with marginalized structures, the need for knowledge of self-identity, and seeking meaning that their

presence is truly valuable. It is consistent with Kruglansky's theory of "the quest of significance." People do various things, including getting involved in extreme violence and terrorism to be admitted. That is how they think their lives have the meaning as Socrates,

**“Science is like
air. It is so much
around us.
You can get it
anywhere and
anytime”**



Ashma Nur Afifah



***Dream, Hope,
Keep Going,
Keep Going***



Dream, Hope, Keep Going, Keep Going

*“Is this all you dreamed of?
Whose image do you see in the mirror?
I have to say, move on!
Even though today is your last day.
Do something, get rid of your weakness!”*
- BTS

This young, smiling girl was very energetic, and it feels that her spirit was overflowing. Her tone was fast, and her intonation and words were clear. *“when I was at the University of Indonesia’s (UI) Psychology Department, I wanted to be like a doctor. But, in the fifth semester, I just realized that I couldn’t hold listening to people’s stories; I couldn’t hold my empathy,”* she said. This girl was born in Jakarta on January 30, 1992. She finally decided to abandon the work in the clinical scope and chose to complete a master’s degree in Social Intervention at UI. She is a real Korean K-POP admirer who loves the BTS group (Bangtan Sonyeondan), commonly called Bangtan Boys. Their songs were always an encouragement to overcome all difficulties, especially when she wrote the thesis.

Ashma Nur Afifah, commonly called Ashma, is a descendant of “sumbang,” an acronym for Sundanese and Palembang. As the first child of four siblings and the only woman in the family, she grew

up in the Cibubur-Jakarta area. Sometimes, she feels that she is not strongly attached to her Sundanese and Palembang culture. She admitted that she did not understand the local languages, certain customs, and traditional food. However, unlike ethnicity, Islamic values are deeply embedded in her family.

Her mother graduated from an Islamic boarding school in Garut. Since childhood, she has been the one who has taught her how to pray, read Quran, memorize daily prayers, and learn the Prophet's story. Little Ashma often received praise when she managed to remember daily prayers or short verses in the Quran. She even often won certain religious competitions. This experience led her to associate religious practice with positive and pleasant things. Moreover, the environment where she lives upholds Islamic religious values and practices very much. She recalled that her childhood was full of positive things and pride.

When she was just a junior high school student, she determined to wear a *hijab* (veil). However, as her menstruation came early (at the end of fifth grade in elementary school), her extended family immediately forced her to wear a veil. At first, they taught her to do so quietly but then insinuated her by scolding her in

public. Ashma felt disappointed, sad, angry, and hurt at that time. She finally started wearing the *hijab* in the sixth grade of elementary school. She did not regret the decision to wear a veil earlier, but deep down in her heart, she felt less comfortable with forcing someone to do a certain religious compulsion. According to her, believing should be with the choice of freedom and awareness from the bottom of one's heart.

Ashma then grew up surrounded by predominantly Muslim friends; only a few of them at school were non-Muslims. She recalled having only one close friend whose religion was different from her during middle and high school. She was actively involved in the Youth Mosque extracurricular activity (Remas). When becoming a member, several obligations had to be obeyed, such as dressing and interacting with the opposite sex. If an individual whose behavior was judged to have crossed the line, such as wearing tight clothes or dating, they will be "punished" or shunned by other members (ostracism). Ashma admitted that she had once been a person who avoided friends who were considered to have "crossed the line." After self-inspection, she realized that her fear of being shunned drove her to do what other youth mosques

did. Now she realized that was also a form of coercion. She again stressed that faith must be accompanied by freedom and be carried out with full awareness, without pressure and uniformity in interpreting and implementing religious teachings.

Psychology Cultivates Moderation

“Where there is love, there is life.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Ashma realized that studying Psychology made her thoughts on practicing religious teachings more open. In the department, she met people with more diverse Islamic views. She met and made friends with many people of different religions and with those who were atheists. Higher education has made her exposed to diversity in that she could interact with different people and see that religion did not necessarily guarantee the goodness of one’s behavior.

She said psychology had opened her perspective on human behavior with which she uses to understand herself. She began to realize that human behavior is very much influenced not only by internal factors (traits, beliefs, values, cognitive abilities, and so on) and by external factors (social, economic, ethnic, cultural, and so on). She also realizes religion can be one factor that influences human behavior, although it is not the only one. Understanding psychology makes her instill values to humanize other people because,

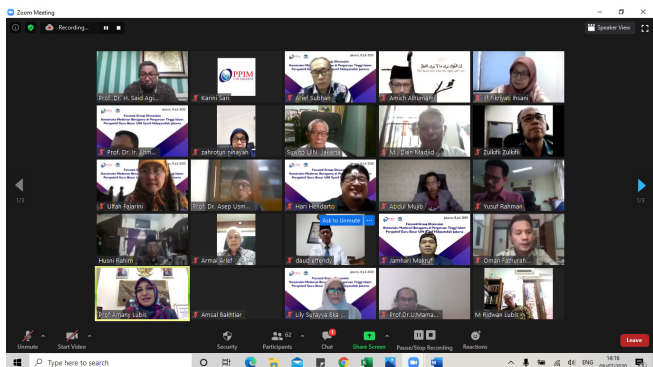
according to her, it is part of religious teachings.

When in university, she got involved in student union activities in which she met many people from different backgrounds. She also joined in community service activities to engage with those with low socioeconomic conditions. Her curiosity about human behavior led her to participate in research activities; this field was then taken as her career path. The research experience brought Ashma to get much exposure to new things. She stays hungry and foolish of any knowledge.

As an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi, she decided to be a research partner at Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta. The research focus lies on religious moderation and violent extremism issues. In 2019, she assisted in research and intervention entitled “Training of Teachers for Early Warning and Early Response System to Prevent Violent Extremism within Schools.” She was a co-facilitator for train-

ing for teachers on the topics of tolerance as well as an early warning and early response system for violent extremism.

This year (2020), she rejoined the center and assisted in research on “Portraits of Religious Moderation among Muslim Students: The Case of Three Islamic Colleges in Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta.” In this study, the research team explored various behaviors that fall into the derivatives of religious moderation through surveys and FGDs, which were then developed into interventions. Religious moderation is a new policy that is a flagship of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) to prevent violent extremism. This research was conducted on students at the three State Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIN). As well as developing theoretical concepts and research designs, Ashma



Online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with professors of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, July 8, 2020

was also responsible for the research's overall management and technical implementation. She was also involved in organizing capacity-building designs based on the research results.

She admitted that her experience of joining the PPIM UIN Jakarta's CONVEY program with the support of UNDP Indonesia had further expanded her knowledge and perspective on religion. It turns out that Islam is an open religion, and there is much diversity in it. She is increasingly

open to accepting various types, both intra and inter-religious and even non-religious sects. She is also increasingly accepting of various ethnic and gender differences. According to the psychological discipline she is engaged in, her experience proves that every human being is unique and cannot be equated. Diversity is a treasure that enriches the community. Being a moderate, it takes not only acceptance but also deep understanding and empathy.

Empathy: The Keyword for Moderation

Early in the morning, the day was at its highest temperature. The sunlight streamed through the open window, illuminating one side of Ashma's hooded face. Ashma was ready to open the launch event of her research results under the title "Portraits of Religious Moderation among Muslim Students" through the zoom feature. This research took cases in three Islamic State Universities in Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta. Thursday, February 25, 2021, that morning, various representatives from ministries, development partners, CSOs, academics, and the general public were ready to wait in front of their own screens.

Ashma, in her brown veil, smoothly moderated the event; her tone and intonation were clear. The first speech came from Professor Jamhari Makruf, CONVEY Team Leader. He revealed that research on religious moderation is significant for advancing Indonesia and developing tolerance among university academics, especially the Islamic State Higher Edu-

cation. CONVEY has contributed tons of theoretical and practical perspectives on religious moderation, which has now become a policy in Indonesia.

According to the Director of PPIM, Ismatu Ropi Ph.D., the background of the study was the anxiety about the emergence of social relations and diversity models leading to intolerance, segregation, and anti-diversity among youth, including students. The image of Indonesia as a heterogeneous and plural country is gradually being eroded. According to him, it is important to develop a model of religious moderation to ward off these threats. The Minister of Religious Affairs, Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, was unable to attend the discussion, but he sent a video for his keynote speech. The Minister appreciated the research project. The trend is increasing where many religious groups have an exclusive and discriminatory perspective. This group is increasingly developing in society. Islamic Education (PAI) is mostly carried out by student organizations and community organizations, not by PAI students themselves. Thus, mainstreaming religious moderation for religious education institutions is important.

Dr. Arief Subhan, M.Ag, the research coordinator, explained that the study aimed to see a

portrait of religious moderation among Muslim students. A pilot study on Muslim students at the three UINs in Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta. As a recently appointed Deputy Chancellor for Student Affairs at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, he said that this research also recommended specific solutions to the problems. One of the recommendations was to implement religious moderation at UIN campuses in more effective ways because, according to him, Islamic-based universities were vulnerable to violent extremism.

One of the researchers, Anas Jiwa Pratama, M.Sc, said that the study faced many challenges as online-based research. Although the challenges could be overcome, the research results might be richer if conducted offline. He said the research was aimed at getting a picture of religious moderation at PTKIN campuses. The study was also supplemented by capacity-building activities needed and how they could effectively increase religious moderation. Religious moderation has four distinct indicators, namely tolerance, non-violence, nationalism, and local tradition acceptance. Most moderating religious variables predict pro-violent extremism (radicalization). The study then found out that, among these variables, the most vulnerable were exter-

nal and internal empathy. Thus, the following interventions need to target the issues specifically.

Professor Azyumardi Azra CBE, Advisory Board Member for PPIM UIN Jakarta, criticized that the project was only conducted in Java island. He suggested that it is necessary to look at representations outside Java, such as UIN Makassar, Riau, Mataram, Padang, and Aceh. The professor also mentioned that it is important to research religious moderation in public “more secular” universities such as the University of Indonesia, Hasanuddin University, and Sumatera Utara University. According to him, LDKs in those universities are more susceptible to infiltration than those in PTKINs. Dr. Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, M.A, the Chief Expert of the Indonesian National Committee of the Republic of Indonesia, said that religious moderation aligns with the President’s vision to develop quality human beings. These namely moderate individuals are tolerant, inclusive, and responsive. The essence of moderation is sharing in terms of public interests.

Professor Ahmad Najib Burhani, Acting Head of the Center for Community and Cultural Research at LIPI, appreciated the finding showing the importance of external empathy and internal empathy. Those can be the main substances in capacity-building activities. He emphasized that anti-religious-moderation groups penetrated their ideology through three doors, i.e., student orientation, Islamic lecturers, and institutions or activities related to mosques and university prayer rooms. In short, the three routes were targeted through *da’wah*, politics, and scientific groups. These three things can be the entry points for intervention.

Professor Oman Fathurrahman, Chairperson of the Religious Moderation Working Group at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, emphasized that religious moderation is not the antithesis of radicalism. The oppo-



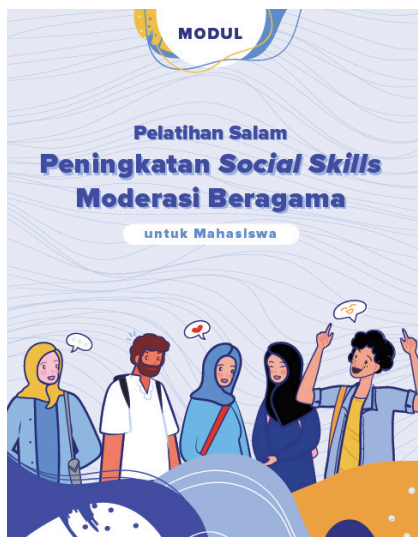
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nents of moderation are tatharruf (excessive), both the extreme left and the extreme right. He admitted that he was pleased because there had been awareness in various fields related to the moderation of understanding and practice of religious communities. This research is important for strengthening religious moderation, even though the first target is only the state Islamic universities. He hopes that in the future, more universities can be involved.

Ashma explained that the stage after the research was training for the administrators of the Religious Moderation House. The first religious moderation house was established at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati in

Bandung. Now, there were 38 moderation houses. Interactive capacity building will be focused on moderation directors and housekeepers, where the research team contributes protocols and modules to increase religious moderation through three approaches “SAPA, SALAM, RANGKUL.” These three things are acronyms that describe the activities in each approach (for details, check the protocols and modules related to religious moderation on the CONVEY website). In the SALAM approach, the training module is designed for the Religious Moderation House administrators to provide training for the management of student organizations at PT-KIN. This training module answers the findings of this research which focuses on the moderation approach of religion as social skills by emphasizing the importance of the ability to empathize. The management of the student organization at PT-KIN was chosen because they play a pivotal role in promoting religious moderation among other students.

Having been involved in the CONVEY 4 research project, Ashma was a grateful and happy researcher. Various obstacles during the COVID-19 Pandemic made her learn to adapt quickly to situations. Online coordination, developing online capaci-



SALAM Training Module:
Improving Religious Moderation
Social Skills

ty-building methods, and maintaining data validity were new things for her. According to her, the urgency of religious moderation was increasingly realized when the Ministry of Religious Affairs issued a circular to establish a moderation house. Ashma and friends' works in helping PT-KIN instill religious moderation and tolerance values reinforce the presumption that the world now belongs to young people. Soekarno, the nation's founder, once said,

“Give me 1,000 old men, and I will certainly remove Semeru Mount from its place. Give me ten youths, and I will indeed shake the world”



Dita Kirana



***Harmony in
Diversity***

Harmony in Diversity

*“We are different in all,
except in love.”*

- Soe Hok Gie

Her beautiful eyes widened, staring at the crucifix hanging rigidly. Her young body stiffened even more when she was invited to go inside and ran into the religious statue. Her heart was beating fast; her mouth was chirping. She chanted various prayers, remembering the message of her childhood religious teacher like a mantra ringing in her head. “Muslims are prohibited from making friends with non-Muslims. It is *haram*, unlawful. They are infidels. The infidels live in hell, and are burned by fire. Do not ever go to non-Muslim houses, let alone their places of worship, unless we can become part of the infidels whose hell is the reward.” It was the story of Dita Kirana at the online CONVEY Day 2021.

Dita is the youngest among the four children in the family. Her father has a Sulawesi-Javanese ethnicity and her mother was an Arab-Javanese-Sundanese descent. Although her blood comes from various races and ethnicities, Dita, nevertheless, grew up in a relatively homogeneous environment. She is

surrounded by family, relatives and neighbors who are all Muslim. The most influential figure for her, apart from her parents, was his religious teacher during elementary school. With clear eyes and soft voice, this girl said that religious teachers were role models; all his orders were obligatory. However, in the end, she was forced to violate her teacher's message. She lived with fellow Muslims homogenously because all of her friends in elementary and junior high schools close to her home were muslim. When in high school, she still tried to make friends with fellow Muslims.

One day, Dita's teacher assigned her a random assignment group; she was in a group containing a non-Muslim member. She was forced to go to her non-Muslim friend's house because she needed a laptop to do the assignment. She tried to overcome the worry and fear of

breaking her religious teacher's message. All what she needed was getting a good grade for the subject. This visit actually gave her new enlightenment and meaning. She noticed that everyone was

the same regardless their religions. "They are polite and fun to chat with. Whenever I am in trouble, they always be there to help," she said. It turned out that visiting the friend's house did not automatically make her a *kafir* (infidel). She remains faithful in exercising her faith convictions. Since that moment, Dita's perspective was increasingly widened and open to diversity. Especially, when in 2015, she had the opportunity to visit Japan. According to her, this trip taught her the importance of tolerance and respect for differences.

Before travelling to Japan, she felt anxious about how she could do daily prayers, whether the people's stigma of her wearing a *hijab*, how she could find halal food and so on. Her concerns turned out to be unfounded, she was respected even in small things. Food, for example, was always marked with what she could eat and which could



Dita with her Japanese friends at the Farewell Party
Training for Facilitator Sing Out Asia, Tokyo, 2017

not. When Japanese people went outside to eat, they always found her a halal food restaurant. Likewise, they also prepared an exclusive bathroom just for her. Even though Dita was the only Muslim, just did it for her. “They really treated me well as a human being,” she said flatteringly.

That experience made Dita aware of two important things. First, there are still figures who teach hatred in Indonesia against those who are different, like her religious teacher. There are still people who create walls, barriers and boundaries that eventually force individuals to live with prejudice, suspicion, allergies and hatred. Second, Dita realized that differences are beautiful when celebrated.

“Even though we are different, we can be together, respect each other, be peaceful, safe, comfortable, serene”

she said. Dialogue is the key. To her, by meeting people, we can get to know each other. With dialogues, humans can break down walls of prejudice and suspicion. “We can live together even though we are different,” said Dita ending the story.



Dita as a host at CONVEY DAY 2021

Celebrating the Beauty of Diversity

“The garden looks beautiful when filled with flowers of various kinds. The rainbow is extraordinary because it is decorated with various colors.”

- Yaqut Cholil Qoumas (Menteri Agama)

This year’s CONVEY Day was held on Friday afternoon, March 5, 2021. The afternoon was cloudy, reminiscent of the beginning of the year when rain often fell. The COVID-19 Pandemic has forced people to carry out every activity online, including the 2021’s CONVEY Day. But, thanks God, this situation has allowed us to not worry about rain and traffic jams on the streets. The festival took place lively, even though it was carried out online. The host was on standby in the studio, and the speakers of the event remotely participated in the event. The 2021’s CONVEY effectively disseminated the message of peace, love, and respect for diversity through personal stories on tolerance from government official, public figure, and CONVEY beneficiaries.

The festival was opened with Dita’s story. She amazed the audience with her interesting and cheerful style, but full of meaning. Dita’s story was followed by remarks from Norimasa Shimomura, Resident Repre-

sentative of UNDP Indonesia. He said that he has worked at UNDP for more than twenty years in various countries. Indonesia for him is a rich country, colored with various ethnicities, cultures, languages and religions. He argued CONVEY Day is an important celebration to realize the richness of the Indonesian people, diversity, and efforts in realizing cohesion and strengthening the voices of women and young people who have been probably silenced. The CONVEY program is conveying an awareness that women and youth are key actors in enhancing peace, mutual respect and understanding of religious differences. Though run by a state Islamic university, CONVEY has a strategic network with

various sectors, both at the community and government levels.

Nadiem Makarim, the Minister of Education and Culture, also attended the festival. He appreciated PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia for providing space for the younger generation to strengthen tolerance and a sense of togetherness through various creative CONVEY programs. That idea is actually in line with the founding parents of Indonesia is contained in the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

“Keeping the torch of tolerance alive is our common duty. We are indeed different, but we can still be together”

Nadiem Anwar Makarim

The Minister of Religious Affairs, Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, also gave his remarks by reminding the threat on the increase of exclusivity among religious adherents. Plurality exists in all religions and so do different in-



The Speakers of CONVEY Day 2021, March 5, 2021

terpretations. The minister stated that a vision and solution for harmony is needed, both for all religious adherents and government officials. He reminded us not to abandon freedom to practice worship for every believer. Religious moderation is a balanced middle way between conservatism and liberalism, to find common ground between the two. It can be the glue that sticks together and balances life in the midst of such a rich diversity of the nation. He quoted Gus Dur's words, "What is the same, do not differentiate. What is different, don't be confused." This nation needs a religious paradigm that promotes tolerance, considering Indonesia is a multi-racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic country. Peace is not only eliminating violence but also building constructive cooperation for a pluralistic society that is rich in differences.

In addition to ministry officials, this year's CONVEY Day also presented Srikandi Lintas Iman (Srili), a women's organization in Yogyakarta that encourages interfaith peace dialogues. Wiwin Siti Aminah, the co-founder of Srili, who has also worked as a peace activist for a long time, represented this organization to deliver testimonies. She argues that dialogues among religious adherents cultivate new insights. Wiwin, who grew up in Ciamis, West Java, has the same expe-

rience as Dita, who grew up in a homogeneous Muslim environment. According to her, Srili's presence has successfully encouraged women to be actors of peace, grow together, and give positive impacts, new knowledge, and networks for every interfaith actor.

In addition, Peace Generation (Peace Gen), which this year held a socio-preneur workshop for intra-faith groups, also participated in this event. According to Peace Gen's experience, among fellow religious believers, there are still differences in interpretation and method of worship. Through meeting and working together, the workshop participants could understand and accept diversity. These stories were reinforced by the testimony of Najwa Sihab and other speakers.

The 2021's CONVEY Day on "Harmony in Diversity" finally came to an end. Before the closing statement, the organizer announced several winners of online competitions, ranging from photos, comics, blogs, posters, and animations held by PPIM UIN Jakarta. The chant of the Indonesian Pusaka song, which was sung alternately by the various actors involved in the CONVEY program, blew a sense of emotion and pride in every audience's heart. The highlight of the CONVEY Day event was

filled with the beat of the drums, the sound of the piano and the bass drum one by one, alternating as if to tell the story that each instrument had a different beautiful tone. The whole was then combined into one harmonious music, where each instrument complements each other. A beautiful song was delivered by Tompi, a late Glenn Fredly's best friend. Glenn died last year, not long after he attended CONVEY Day in 2020. Glenn was a peace and tolerance activist, who along with Tompi, performed this song:

**For you, your religion;
for me, my religion**

**God creates a variety of
differences,
Your wits will not be able
to sense them
We are not ordered
to be the same
Your religion (and)
my religion are alive**

Together



Tompi's singing performance "Your Religion, My Religion"
at the CONVEY DAY 2021 event

Diversity is a Treasure

“Seeing is believing. Al Insanu A’dau Jahilu. (Verily, stupidity is human’s foe)”

- Professor Jamhari Makruf

Dita admitted that the experience of being involved in CONVEY made her more aware of religious moderation and tolerance for the community, especially youth. It also open her horizons. She admired Professor Jamhari Makruf, the Team Leader of the CONVEY program and the Advisory Board for PPIM UIN Jakarta. He has a similar story with Dita, and it was revealed at the 2021 CONVEY Day event. In 2008, Jamhari was invited to Tokyo University, Japan, to give lecture on Islam in Southeast Asia. All information about how to reach the university was sent to his email. He landed at Narita airport, then, from there, he was supposed to take a bus bound for Chofu, about an hour and a half away. It turned out that he took the wrong bus to Kofu (with “K,” not “C”); it was a city in a far different province, and it took three hours to travel. In the midst of confusion, Jamhari sought information by approaching an old lady who also seemed to be looking for something. The lady spoke no English. They communicated via mobile phones. She seemed to understand where Jamhari was supposed to be

and suddenly withdrew his hand to find a ticket. They took three different subways to get to Cofu. The old lady made sure Jamhari got to his destination safely. After arriving at the university, she just smiled and saluted by bowing her head three times, then left Jamhari in silence.

That experience gave Jamhari a very good impression of how a completely unknown person had helped a stranger. He then took the initiative to provide direct experience to different groups to interact with each other. Jamhari invited fifteen students of the Faculty of Law, Melbourne University, to participate in various activities in Indonesia. One of them offered the experience of staying two weeks at Pabelan Islamic Boarding School in Magelang, a school that he was graduated from.

A week before the Australian students came to Magelang, Indonesia, Jamhari's email was flooded with questions concerning proper dresses and ways of interaction with Muslims. Jamhari replied the email saying that they needed two things, namely open hearts and open minds. Despite their limited English abilities, the boarding students (*santri*) tried to be friendly with the visiting Australians by inviting them to discussions and playing sports such as football, basketball, and many

else. The Australian visitors really enjoyed the *pesantren's* modesty. According to them, the visit was an extraordinary experience because they enjoyed it for the first time because of getting to know and having direct contact with students and Islam.

"Seeing is believing," said Jamhari. Participants who interacted directly with the Muslim community brought understanding and experience that Muslims are good people and have fundamental values of goodness. The Arabic proverb "Al Insanu A'dau Jahilu" was quoted by Jamhari by which he meant that ignorance is the enemy of mankind. Ignorance will raise prejudice and suspicion. Making friends with others cultivates understanding that there is always goodness in all human beings.

Dita admitted that she admired Prof. Jamhari so much due to his extensive network, friends, and experience in many countries. The friendship brings benefits, not only for himself but also for his institutions and many individuals. Prof. Jamhari, according to her, was an extraordinary person who was able to connect the CONVEY project to PPIM UIN Jakarta. Dita also idolized Irfan Amalee, the founder of Peace Generation Bandung. "Kang Irfan always has bright ideas and can manage something ordinary

beautiful. He is interesting and creative. The idea of the board game for peace is fascinating is to establish a compassionate Islamic boarding school,” she said.

Born in Kuningan, West Java, on March 17, 1993, Dita aspires to become a researcher. But, at first, she planned to take chemistry. Unfortunately, her parents did not permit her. They worried that taking such a study program would lead her to difficulties finding a job. So, after high school, she learned English and micro-teaching for six months in Pare, Kediri. After the course, she voluntarily did teaching activities in remote areas in Lombok, Bali, and Semarang. Two years after graduating from high school, she was accepted into International Relations (HI) Program at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. This fan of Chinese dramas now speaks English, Japanese and Korean. Dita hopes that she can continue her studies abroad in the following year, following in the footsteps of her idol to expand knowledge and networks. After finishing his master’s degree, the plan is that she can contribute as a lecturer and researcher.

According to her, CONVEY Project has changed her a lot, including her views on interpreting religion. Dita had been active in Campus *Da’wah* Institute (LDK)

in the first years of her university life. Since joining PPIM UIN Jakarta, especially participating in the CONVEY program, she realized that Muslims are diverse; some are conservatives, and some are liberals. She even had time to wear a long hijab and had experienced reluctance to shake hands with the opposite sex. She admitted that she was acquainted with the diversity of Islam through PPIM seniors who had various interests and backgrounds. “That I learn about Islam that accommodates tolerance is from here,” she said. Tolerance is not just about respect but also empathy. Through CONVEY, Dita learns to understand religion not only textually but also contextually. She learns how religion and hadith are developed and how they are applied in society until now. Dita said that she used to understand religion literally. Now, she can explain to her friends that saying Merry Christmas or helping to decorate Easter eggs is not a problem.

Dita loves reading. One of her favorite books is *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. One of the quotes she remembers from this reading is “dare to dream big.” Dita has the belief that “if we have a big desire, the world will help us make it happen.” She has proven the dream to be a researcher; she has even had

the opportunity to travel to Korea and Japan. At this point, she believes that the universe will help her make her dream come true. Dita's experience is in line with what Zhella Apriesta, PSA Coordinator for CONVEY 4, wrote on her blog:

**“Open your eyes,
run outside
your comfort
zone, and you
will find new
things that are
more beautiful
than diamonds,
namely the
meaning of life”**



Aziz Awaludin



Education in Limitations

Education in Limitations

*Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world*
- Nelson Mandela



The classrooms of the Ummul Quro Al-Islami Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, when Aziz studied at High School (MTs - MA) for six years

The building in the middle of a farm area in Leuwiliang, Bogor, was in really poor condition. With a floor made of soil, the building called a classroom was built with plywood for its walls; it was shaded by asbestos full of holes everywhere. The students could peek at the sun when the weather is sunny, and they would cheer happily when it rained because the school would be automatically closed. However, the classroom was like a rice field during the rain because its floor turned into red mud. *Ummul Quro Al-Islami* is the name of that Islamic Boarding School whose classroom is ironic; it has junior high and high school levels.

Aziz Awaludin, more known as Aziz, is one of the alumni from that Islamic boarding school. He comes from Pingku, a village in Parung Panjang, Bogor Regency. His village was not reached by public trans-

portation, and it had one public primary school. The elementary school had only three teachers who taught in six different classes at once. The school had only five classrooms. The walls and roof also had lots of holes, so it flooded when it was raining. In that kind of school, Aziz received primary and secondary education. His life at both home and school was an irony.

Aziz's father has only an elementary school certificate. He was the first generation of his village to migrate. He worked as an immigrant worker in Saudi Arabia for a long time, even before Aziz was born. Aziz's mother, who graduated from high school, supported the family economy by selling *lontong*, *nasi uduk*, and household utilities; she travelled from one village to another since early morning. Aziz's father worked as a driver for a meager salary, only returning home every three or five years. Yet, despite all the hardships, Aziz's mother always supported his desire to further his education.

Born on October 2, 1989, Aziz decided to work as a teacher (*ustaz*) at Al-Anshor Islamic boarding school in Sumatera Utara for one year, right after completing his secondary school. He served as a language coordinator at the pesantren to

improve the quality of Arabic and English for its students. In his view, the quality of pesantren education in Java and Sumatra is very unequal with a vast gap. So, he tried to help the students' language abilities by compiling a "*Kamus Santri*", a student dictionary. This dictionary was created to make it easier for the students to enrich their Arabic, English, and Indonesian vocabulary. Aziz's work has been sold commercially and is used in various Islamic boarding schools in Jambi, Lampung, Kalimantan, and Bogor. Royalties from this dictionary, he admitted, helped him realize his dream of studying in higher education.

Despite being trapped in poverty, Aziz continued his study to English Education Department at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN), Jakarta. The economic barriers did not stop him to excel. In the first year of college, he managed to get a scholarship abroad to take a short course in Turkey for one month. Aziz studied the education system and visited several model schools in the country. He was also successfully selected as an outstanding student, the best graduate and a participant in the distinguished future lecturer training on campus.

Aziz's intelligence led him to obtain a scholarship from the

Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) for continuing his studies in a master's degree in General Education Studies at Monash University, Australia. That study experience has introduced him to courses in various specializations, one of which is about leadership and policy in the educational contexts. Aziz also took digital learning courses, primarily on policies related to online education in Australian universities. This thin, bespectacled man is currently preparing to continue his doctoral studies at

the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, with a Fulbright scholarship. The research proposal he submitted was entitled, "Discovering Digital Technology Implementation in Indonesia's Education: A Critical Analysis of Policy and Pedagogy." It is indeed an incredible achievement, considering that he has grown up with all limitations and disadvantages. Aziz's achievement is an inspiration that poverty is not an obstacle to thrive for education.

“Public Policy”

Santri

Science and policy-making thrive on challenge and questioning, they are vital to the health of inquiry and democracy

– Nicholas Stern

Aziz also published a novel, entitled “April.” This work was written in April 2015 to approach his future wife, Tiara Aprilia. Tiara is a fellow UIN alumnus majoring in pharmacy. They got married in 2017 and have a beautiful one-year old daughter. Aziz chose to stay close to his extended family in Parung Panjang because in September 2021 he will stay in the United States for a long time.

Aziz idolized Dr. Fuad Jabali because he said Dr. Fuad always opened his horizons with various views and perspectives that sometimes differed from public opinion. Dr. Fuad is an enjoyable person, and his ideas tend to be “eccentric” and funny. Even so, Aziz acknowledged that his ideas were always brilliant. Dr. Fuad advised him not to choose to be a “generalist” but be a specialist. This message has always been recorded in Aziz’s memory until now. He also always supports Aziz to continue his further studies, from masters to doctoral degrees.

His work experience further strengthens aziz's education journey as a policy analyst. Upon returning to Indonesia, he assisted PPIM UIN Jakarta for the CONVEY program by overseeing policy engagement activities with ministries and government agencies. Through CONVEY Project, he has assisted in drafting policies, arranging meetings with Ministries, and many other activities since 2019. Aziz's main task is to communicate the results of CONVEY 3 research and activities to government ministries and agencies.

CONVEY Project, according to Aziz, has successfully assisted key stakeholders to develop policies on religious moderation to foster mutual respect and tolerance in Indonesia. The project benefited from the support of the Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, for advancing religious moderation.

The support made it easier to reach the consensus of conceptual aspects on religious moderation, which was difficult to reconcile due to various opinions for the beginning. PPIM UIN Jakarta through CONVEY Project has been among

those involved in writing a Religious Moderation book with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. That religious moderation idea then has been transmitted to other government ministries and agencies. Nowadays, religious moderation has been incorporated in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN).

Since the beginning, Aziz has developed the concept of religious moderation by organizing focus group discussions (FGDs), creating a book, and advocating for the 2020-2024 RPJMN. His work starts from the upstream, namely making policy papers, to the downstream, namely highlighting the main ideas. According to him, the concept of religious moderation in the RPJMN is still incomplete because the process was too fast. There is a reduction in the ideas initiated earlier in the implementation of



Reflection on the CONVEY 2020-2021 Policy Engagement Program with partners of Ministries and Government Agencies at Royal Tulip Gunung Geulis Resort, Golf Bogor, March 22-24, 2021

Moderasi beragama adalah **cara pandang, sikap,** dan **praktik beragama** dalam **kehidupan bersama** dengan mengamalkan **esensi ajaran agama**—yang melindungi **martabat manusia** dan membangun **kemaslahatan umum**—berdasarkan prinsip **adil, berimbang,** dan **menaati konstitusi** sebagai kesepakatan berbangsa.

and obedience of the constitution as the nation's agreement.

Definition of Religious Moderation developed by
the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

the current RPJMN. For example, the indicator of religious moderation in the 2020-2024 RPJMN uses the Religious Harmony Index (KUB); the KUB Index existed before religious moderation existed. This work makes the indicator less valid because it does not measure what it should be measured. Aziz suggested the need to create an exclusive index that reliably measures religious moderation programs.

The new Minister of Religious Affairs, Yaquut Cholil Qoumas, in accordance with President Jokowi's direction, asked his staff to immediately accelerate the implementation of religious moderation in various programs of the Ministry of Religious Affairs; the goal is to accelerate the issuance of a presidential regulation

(Perpres) on religious moderation. Supported by various parties, including PPIM UIN Jakarta, the Working Group for Religious Moderation at the Ministry of Religious Affairs has completed the roadmap for religious moderation. Professor Oman Fathurahman, who was previously appointed as Chair of the Religious Moderation Working Group, worked hard to create a road map for religious moderation by adding more relevant indicators for religious moderation, such as the Social Piety Index and adding a new index plan related to religious and cultural relations.

Aziz said he was involved in various processes on religious moderation, including documentation. In July 2020, he also attended a meeting with Professor

Oman and Bappenas regarding a road map discussion with changes in these indicators. According to Aziz, the CONVEY 3 in which he was involved had produced five policy papers based on various previous researches, which were then advocated to the ministries with predetermined titles. According to Aziz, this year, at CONVEY 4, the strategy is more flexible because there was a need for ministries' dynamics.

Aziz said that being involved in CONVEY gave him more experience and perspective on how the government makes policies. PPIM UIN Jakarta as a civil society organization plays an important role in the formulation of policies. In making policies, it turns out that many play a role; policy-making requires government ideas and contributions from civil societies. The process of influencing policy is also not an easy matter because it takes a long time. The process requires much engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Aziz found that a policy plan can be hindered by institutional egocentrism, where a particular group of people has partisan agenda for their own interests. On the other hand, personal relationships also play a pivotal role in influencing policy-making processes. For example, involving middle-level officials in the

CONVEY program will facilitate future relations with the ministry when they rise to a high official position.

“So, we collaborate with ministries/agencies to produce guidelines on *Strengthening Religious Moderation at Mosque*. This has a clearer impact,” said Aziz, who was appointed as the program coordinator. Initiatives and funds for writing the guidelines are from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while PPIM UIN Jakarta turns those initiatives into procedures. The program had a considerable impact; the guidelines are also supplemented with infographics and animated videos. Interestingly, in addition to conveying religious moderation agendas, this book also includes gender perspectives in its own chapter. Mosques, according to Aziz, are very masculine in which women are usually placed on the back, even though they should be positioned more parallel. The reward of women for doing good deeds should not be counted much less than men.

This Guideline on Strengthening Religious Moderation at Mosque was published in 2020 to guide mosque *takmirs* in managing mosques more ideally. 14 guidelines are tailored to existing Ministry of Religious Affairs' policies. One of them, for example, is on how to choose a board,

how to choose an imam who has good reading, how to develop a mosque that is friendly to children and the elderly, and so on. This book tries to disseminate various government policies regarding mosque affairs that previously existed. Rigid regulations are spoken more flexibly, complemented by the addition of normative substances derived from Quranic verses, the Prophet's hadiths, and wisdom from the companions of the Prophet and pious people. Thus, the book can be more easily understood and accepted by the wider community. This guide was developed into a video, which is illustrated below.

Semangat Moderasi di Masjid Nabawi

It was still far from the morning, but the mosque had started making calls for Muslims. It was three o'clock in the morning; the cassette recording broadcast through the microphones seemed to wake people up from their deep sleep. Even during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the call to invite people to pray together at dawn has not stopped. Throughout the day, this call was there; old ladies or children alternately made the mosque full of hype. The mosque has kept its people with its calls not only during the fasting period but also throughout the year. The mosque, according to Aziz, is one of the places that must be the center of religious moderation.

The video created with the Ministry of Religious Affairs support and the CONVEY team tells the story of religious moderation in mosques during the Prophet's time. The video opens with an explanation that religious moderation is a perspective, attitude, and practice of religion in living together by practicing the essence of religious teachings to protect human dig-

nity, to build the common good, based on the principles of fairness, balance, and to obey the constitution as a national agreement. Furthermore, it is an important definition to understand that a mosque should be a place of public benefit, not only for Muslims, but also for all citizens, including non-Muslims.

The narrator of the video explains that history records that mosques at the time of the Prophet were once the center of the advancement of civilization. At that time, the mosque was used for worship and as a center for activities and guidance for Muslims. Thus, a mosque should reflect a moderate religious attitude. It is crucial to develop the spirit of commitment to the nationality, tolerance, nonviolence and accommodation to the local culture at the mosque. Religious messages conveyed in mosques should contain messages to

strengthen the tolerance and commitment of people to the nation. The Prophet himself linked religious and ethnic differences in Yathrib (Medina) through the Medina Charter as a formal collective agreement.

The non-violent attitude, according to the narrator, was also exemplified by the Prophet. At that time, there was a Bedouin Arab who urinated in a mosque. When the Prophet's companions were angry and about to throw him out, the Prophet prevented them and only asked the companions to clean the dirt. Mosques also need to accommodate local culture as what the Prophet, his *muhajirin* and Anshor friends did when building a mosque in Medina. The building materials and shapes were adapted to the social conditions of the people of that era, such as poles and roofs made of date palms. The floor of the mosque



Masjid dan Moderasi Beragama

- ☑ Masjid sebagai pusat kegiatan peribadatan, sosial dan pendidikan umat.
- ☑ Pesan keagamaan harus memperkuat **toleransi dan komitmen kebangsaan.**
- ☑ **Antikekerasan** sesuai yang diajarkan Rasulullah.
- ☑ Masjid juga harus bisa **mengakomodasi budaya setempat.**
- ☑ Menyediakan ruang ibadah dan sarana yang **nyaman untuk perempuan.**
- ☑ Masjid semestinya **ramah dengan kaum rentan.**

One of the videography snippets of Religious Moderation in Mosques taken from the Guidebook of Improving Religious Moderation in Mosques, 2020

was a stretch of desert and walls of drained soil. A mosque is not a place built in pomp and luxury, but on the side of people who are in poverty.

During the time of the Prophet, women also had many activities at the mosque. The narrator gave an example of Fatimah Binti Qais, who always came early to the mosque to pray in congregation and other activities. Therefore, mosques should provide a prayer room and support facilities comfortable for women and be friendly to vulnerable groups. In this video, it is also told, when *Muhajirin* friends arrived in the city of Medina and had no place to live, the Prophet placed them in the Prophet's Mosque. They were then called *Ashabus Sufah*. In this mosque, they learned to read, understand and study Al-Qur'an and hadith. Thus, it means that the function of the mosque can also be optimized as a social and educational facility.

In closing, the narrator provided the current context of the pandemic, resulting in restrictions on activities in many places, including places of worship such as mosques. The companion of the prophet, Amr bin Ash, once appealed, "O people, this disease (plague) is spreading like wildfire. Keep your distance and scatter by placing yourself in the mountains." Thus, the mosque

should be a place for awareness of the dangers of COVID-19. The implementation of health protocols in mosques, according to the narrator, must be carried out in order to save the generation of Muslims themselves.

This video is made with simple animation, but it is significant and easy to comprehend. The context of the Prophet's era, however, remains relevant today. The book on *Strengthening Religious Moderation at Mosque* and its videos remind us about Jalaluddin Muhammad Rumi's words,

“ *The place that Solomon made to worship in, called the Far Mosque, is not built of earth and water and stone, but of intention and wisdom and mystical conversation and compassionate action* ”



Laifa Annisa Hendarmin



***Moderation
in the Time
of Pandemic***



Moderation in the Time of Pandemic

“Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

The hot wind was slowly blowing the white building with a pyramid roof. That afternoon feels so gloomy; guests came and got together at the parking lot and large courtyard. They made prayers to let the priests rest in peace. The irony was that several priests got sick and even died, all at once. Just few a year ago, these GBIB priests attended a meeting at a hotel in Bogor. The Mayor of Bogor, Bima Arya, who also attended the event in February 2020, contracted Covid-19 afterward.

Then, the media was in the hype, reporting news about *Ijtima Ulama Dunia* (International Muslim Scholar Gathering) 2020. A meeting of various cross-country ulama was planned to be held on March 19-22 in Pakkatto Village, Gowa Regency, Sulawesi Selatan. Fortunately, the event was successfully canceled. However, another big religious event on the ordination of the Bishop of Ruteng, NTT, Monsignor Siprianus Hordat, was realized. The event was still held in mass on Thursday morning, March 19, 2020, at the

Nine Inspirational Stories about Religious Moderation During the Pandemic

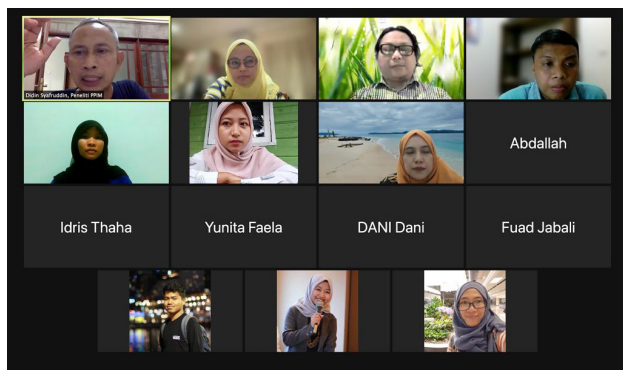
Ruteng Cathedral, Manggarai, Nusa Tenggara Timur, attended by thousands of people. Religious rituals are an excuse to ignore the dangers of CoronaVirus infecting religious leaders and their followers.

PPIM UIN Jakarta, with the support of UNDP Indonesia, conducted research on religious moderation during the pandemic. Professor Jamhari Makruf, PPIM Advisory Board, said that this research aimed to investigate the relationship between religion and culture regarding people's health behavior and how to respond to the pandemic. Laifa Annisa Hendarmin, the research coordinator, added that the study was designed to discover how knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and behavior of the Indonesian people, in this case, the academicians in Islamic universities, were related to pandemics, both in terms of

health and religion. Knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of a person greatly influence health behavior. The hypothesis was that the more religious, the freer someone from stress. Therefore, that condition will lead to better health.

The research used quantitative and qualitative methods. The sampling technique was non-probability in that samples are respondents from three State Islamic Universities (SIHE). Several theories were used for this research: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) and the Health Belief Model. In addition, this study also discovered social cohesion during the pandemic in those universities. There are three elements of social cohesion: connection with the community, social relations, and a focus on the common good. According to Laifa, it was fascinating to see how social cohesion

was strengthened during the pandemic, including digital cohesion. Some questions to keep in mind: How do people become more intensively connected virtually? How do religious communities respond to fake news during the new standard peri-



Project Management Unit (PMU) CONVEY with the research team on religious research when discussing research results during the pandemic, March 31, 2021

od? How is compliance with the Covid-19 pandemic protocol and response to vaccines based on information people acquire digitally?

Father Martin Lukito Sinaga, in an online discussion, stated that the threat of populism and the pandemic was a big challenge for the religious moderation agenda. According to him, moderation should cultivate practical benefits. Therefore, religious moderation does require not only inner-spiritual efforts but also more practical economic. Aminuddin Yakub, the MUI Sharia IKNB committee, also said that Muslim responses and attitudes were diverse, especially towards vaccines. He said that the level of religiosity greatly determines the reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic. Religious

attitudes, of course, significantly affect how a person reacts.

Laifa also stated that Indonesia is in twenty countries with the highest number of Covid-19 infections. However, a survey by the Ministry of Religious Affairs conducted in 34 provinces with 18 thousand respondents in 2020 found that 20.89% of people still went to places of worship and 12% of them stated that they often went to places of worship even though they were in red zones. Many people still neglect the values of religious moderation when it comes to religious activities in times of the pandemic.

Gems and the Search for the Containers

*Make your life a masterpiece,
imagine no limitations on what you can be,
have or do*

-Brian Tracy)

Laifa Annisa Hendarmin or commonly called Laifa is an extraordinary woman. She pursued her undergraduate education in Dentistry at the University of Indonesia. Just one year after graduation, she had the opportunity to immediately further her doctoral studies at the Graduate School of Dental School at Kyushu University in Japan with scholarship support from Monbukagakusho. Laifa completed a dissertation on apoptotic signaling pathways and survival in oral tumor cells, at a fairly young age, twenty-nine years to be precise. Now, she is a dentist and lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta. However, she chooses to focus on conducting research than being a dentist.

As the first child, Laifa grew up in a family of doctors. Her mother is a medical rehabilitation specialist while his father is a cardiologist. They served in the city of Siantar, North Sumatra. As for Laifa, since childhood, her parents sent her to school in Jakarta. While studying, she lived with her grandmother. Growing

up in plural Jakarta, Laifa has understood diversity from a young age. Her understanding of religious teachings has been strengthened as she completed her elementary and secondary school at Al Azhar in Kemang Islamic College. Laifa took some lessons on studying basic books of jurisprudence that were commonly taught in Islamic boarding schools. Her teacher was a student of the great Muslim scholar Habib Lutfi bin Ali bin Yahya. Habib Lutfi has been her role model since then.

In her family, Laifa is the only one who followed her parents' footsteps to be a doctor; her younger siblings chose to pursue economics. However, working on cells in the laboratory while in Japan, Laifa finds it very hard to keep working on that area because research on cells in Indonesia is costly. Besides, the need for reagents is hard to be fulfilled.

As a perfectionist woman, Laifa's hobbies in sports range from walking, swimming, softball, yoga to cycling. However, her time to write is limited due to many activities she has as a lecturer and a mother of three. Laifa's research interests have recently shifted to social sciences but are still related to health behavior. She was introduced to that area when Professor Amelia

Fauziah invited her to participate in the Research and Publishing Center (Puslitpen) UIN Jakarta. She admitted that research related to religion was of interest to her.

Furthermore, Laifa joined PPIM UIN Jakarta in 2014, and her first research was on *da'wah* radio, especially about "The spread of *Da'wah* on Air in East Lombok." Based on that study, she wrote a book chapter entitled "The Voice of Salafism: Radio *Da'wah* in Indonesia." Laifa ever had an idea to go back to school and take anthropology classes. However, her mentor, Din Wahid, suggested that she better-learned anthropology and other social sciences independently because she has already had a doctoral degree. Therefore, Laifa now chooses to write and pursue various research topics. She is grateful to join PPIM UIN Jakarta because the institution has a strong sense of kinship. According to her, the integration between religion and science carried out by PPIM UIN Jakarta has manifested in its people's daily interactions and when running programs.

Hijrah is not always Good

*“Hijrah not only requires ‘process’,
but also needs ‘progress.’”*

- Nurul Aulia

In CONVEY 4 Project, Laifa was involved in the research activity on *hijrah*. The research project aimed to investigate the phenomenon of *hijrah* movement among her friends, especially those living in Ciputat and Bintaro areas. According to Laifa, this movement is increasingly popular, especially among the younger millennial generation. Winda Triana, the research coordinator, said in an online discussion that the term *hijrah* was reintroduced in late 2015 or early 2016 and is suspected of being part of ISIS politics. The *hijrah* movement became exclusive in several provinces in Indonesia in line with increasingly strong populism and religious desires.

Ismatu Ropi, the Executive Director of PPIM UIN Jakarta, said that *hijrah* is now religious normality among young people. This phenomenon is almost the same as in the 1980s where *hijrah* aimed at demolishing state establishment. The term *hijrah* refers to Muslim Brotherhood Party, Jamaah Islamiah, and the likes, which seek to Islamize all life affairs; it is also

commonly referred to as political Islam. The proponents of *hijrah* argued that Islam is not just a religion; it needs to influence and cover all systems and aspects of life. In the 1990s, exclusive study groups were participated mainly by many people. According to Ismatu, *hijrah* is one of religious, psychological behavior with internal conversion. This research is interesting because it discovered some types of religious understanding being developed and their narratives.

The pandemic has forced us to give up traditional face-to-face activities, flipping them online. On the other hand, this event has actually strengthened the *hijrah* groups. Like mushrooms in the rainy season, various *hijrah* communities flourish and have a place in the hearts

of the millennials. The study by Laifa then targeted many different communities. There are five *hijrah* communities studied; they are *Pemuda Hijrah SHIFT Bandung*, *Kajiah Musawarah Jakarta*, *Yuk Ngaji Jakarta*, *The Strangers Al-Ghuroba Jakarta* and *Terang Jakarta*.

The six researchers, assisted by one research assistant of the project, managed to collect and analyze data from the twenty-four members of *hijrah* communities. This qualitative study obtained data from YouTube and Instagram videos, by analyzing their subtitles (texts) and visual contents. The research was also supplemented with in-depth interviews, which were then analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and



Laifa interviewing Iman (Kajiah Musawarah), September 23, 2020

content analysis. This research was conducted for a year and resulted in a report, policy brief, and an intervention training module.

The research project posed four research questions. The first is about the typology and spectrum of the *hijrah* movement in Indonesia. Researchers consider

some elements; they were agendas, norms, values, religious affiliations, religious references, and practices between different groups. Second, the group's understanding of contemporary issues covers democracy, statehood, pluralism, and the fight against religious extremism. Interestingly, this study also explored the understanding of *hijrah* groups about the roles and issues related to women. The last research question is about the strategies used by this group to attract followers of young millennial groups.

The main finding of this research, according to Windy, was that *hijrah* is a part of religious conversion, which was the intensification of beliefs shifting from individual experiences or practices to communal movements. This movement is developing among the urban middle class, especially among the youth. There are two typologies of contemporary *hijrah* communities in Indonesia, namely conservative and Islamist. The conservative group consists of Salafi and non-Salafi. The Salafi community consists of pure Salafi and accommodating Salafi, which adopts modern values. Various previous studies on Salafism have not accommodated this characteristic.

The typology was based on an in-depth study of community

responses to nationality, tolerance, and gender. The conservatism shown by the five communities was very diverse so that it could not be equated from one community to another. In general, the *hijrah* communities studied had a typology of religious understanding that tended to be conservative in various levels and only one community showed support for Islamism. The diversity of levels of conservatism could be seen from a closed attitude in responding to certain issues but open to other problems. Conservatism in this case led to salafi and non-salafi. Although the *hijrah* communities had diversity in religious understanding, they were united in the ties of Muslim United as a manifestation of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* and one ummah.

The *hijrah* communities, according to Windy, were considered successful in attracting followers from young millennials from various social classes. This phenomenon was due to the community activator's ability to use non-conventional methods of *da'wah* through social media. The communication strategy was crafted to adjust to young people in which they responded to trends, both lifestyle and emerging issues spread through various online platforms like Instagram. In conveying messages, they used words easy to under-

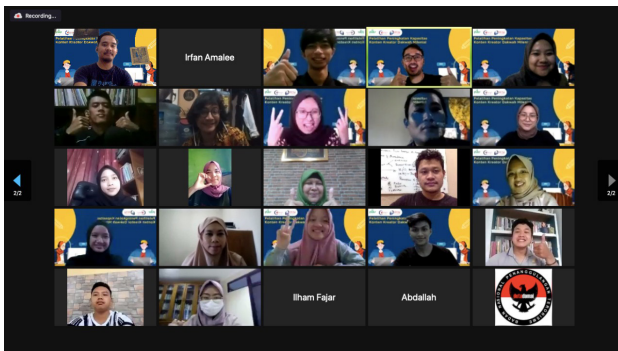
stand, pop culture, including the Korean lifestyle. Also, they used social activities such as futsal, skateboarding, *ta'aruf*, or camping. The study groups were generally held in a café or hotel in which the participants were not obliged to wear sarongs; they could wear casual clothes. Additionally, most of the time, their messages were delivered through motivational training activities popular with today's youth.

The fragmentation of religious authority, according to Windy, makes the *hijrah* communities more popular than the mainstream Muslim communities, which establish religious traditions and authority. This research provides valuable inputs and recommendations for the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and civil society organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, Mathla'ul Anwar, Nahdat-

ul Wathan, and others to echo moderate religious narratives in the public space. This needs to be done to develop religious narratives by considering the spirit of young people. In particular, the meaning of religion, including the phenomenon of *hijrah*, challenges religious counselors to transform more actively and creatively for preaching media, using more modern methods through technology and pop culture.

Young people, including millennials, are a generation who are often confused and feel lost in technology and globalization. Religion is a foundation for seeking answers to turmoil, as well as an oasis to release burdens. Interestingly, Windy mentioned *hijrah* as “Dilan” (the abbreviation of the end-time dilemma). There are lessons learned from this *hijrah* movement (“born again,” “conversion”) for the younger generation in the era

of technology and pandemics so that they can get guidance and answers that can moderate diversity. However, it must not be a movement to ignite the flames of hatred.



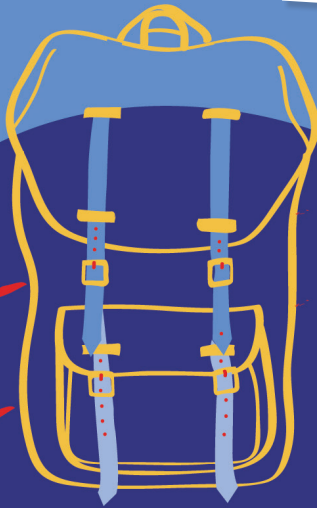
The Online Capacity Building Training of Millennial *Da'wah* Content Creators, March 3, 2021

“But, what is missing? There is something more terrible about loss than even death. Loss is bottomless emptiness. It is emptiness without any certainty. You have no one to lean on. And hope persecutes you. You’re just guessing”

(Ayu Utama-Maya)



Pipit Aidul Fitriyana



*The Immigrant
from
Kadungora*

The Immigrant from Kadungora

*“Life is about choices. Some we regret,
some we’re proud of. Some will haunt us forever.
The message: we are what we chose to be.”*

—Graham Brown

The night was getting late. I called him “*kang*” (big brother in Sundanese), but sometimes I slipped my tongue, calling him “*mas*” (big brother in Javanese) several times. At the end of the conversation, I just realized my bad and texted him via WhatsApp to apologize. Suddenly, I thought that if I were him, I would reply to the chat, answering, “No worries calling me “*mas*.” Many who have never met me will definitely call me “*mbak*” (sister). I chuckled in my head. He was Pipit Aidul Fitriyana whose name in Indonesia is commonly for female. He is usually called “Kang Pipit” and is one of the main researchers at MAARIF Institute for Culture and Humanity, one of PPIM UIN Jakarta’s partners in implementing the CONVEY 4 Project.

“Pipit” is derived from Sundanese language, a small bird that eats seeds and lives in a tropical environment. However, the meaning of this “Pipit” is different. Pipit was born on December 7, 1988, a few days before Lebaran or Idulfitri (the holy day when

Muslims celebrate the end of the fasting period of Ramadan). That is the origin he got the name Aidul Fitriyana. According to Sundanese tradition, names can be rhymed; so, Pipit Aidul Fitriyana has its own rhyme. This cheerful and lighthearted figure is the youngest of seven children, born in Kadungora Village, Garut, Jawa Barat Province. Both of his parents joined and were active in the Muhammadiyah organization.

As a child, Pipit attended Aisyiyah a kindergarten in Cisaat, Bangbayang, Kadungora and a public elementary school in Kadungora, Garut, Jawa Barat. Also, every afternoon Pipit was obliged to recite the Quran at the Madrasah Diniyah which NU teachers ran. He learned intrareligious tolerance from childhood through the village tradition. Pipit's father, a Muhammadiyah cleric, teaches women from various organizations, including those from the Muslimat (NU), every morning. On the other hand, Pipit was entrusted with studying religion with Ustad Mamat, an NU cleric in his village.

Pipit then continued his studies at Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah Darul Arqam Garut and was awarded the scholarship to study and live in the dormitories of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang

(UMM). However, studying at UMM was not his plan; it was his parents'. At that time, he was close to Ustad Ahmad Syaoqie, the son of KH. Moh. Miskun, the first homecoming of the Darul Arqam Islamic Boarding School Garut. Ustad Ahmad Syaoqie completed his undergraduate degree at the Sharia Faculty of IAIN (now UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and his master's degree in Sociology, University of Indonesia. At Syaoqie's house, Pipit found various interesting books such as Ahmad Wahib's Islamic Thought, The World of Sophie, The History of God, and many else, which he did not meet in his Pesantren library. Ustad Syaoqie also suggested that if Pipit wanted to be a thinker and fighter, he needed to study on campus and be active in more colorful organizations.

Having six hundred thousand rupiahs from his savings and one million rupiah donations from his brother, Pipit then enrolled in the Ushuluddin Faculty of UIN Jakarta. His first choice was Tafsir Hadith and the second was Aqidah Filsafat. Pipit then was accepted in the major as his first choice. While studying, he worked as a dishwasher at a Padang food stall across from UIN Jakarta's Campus I to survive. It is the path that he chose, and he never regrets it. Soon after that, one of his seniors offered him a job to

Nine Inspirational Stories about Religious Moderation During the Pandemic

be a research assistant at a survey institute.

Pipit was also active in the Muhammadiyah Student Association, the Islamic Student Association, and the Ciputat Student Forum (Formaci). He enjoyed studying in Jakarta because he could be an activist and read various books. Pipit read many books such as Fazlur Rahman's "Islam." Mohammed Arkoun's "Various Readings of the Quran," Roland Barthes' "Mythologies." and Farag Fouda's "The Lost Truth." Even when Pipit was just a university student, he was offered to join the MAARIF Institute for Culture and Humanity.



Pipit having a visit to the Indonesian Embassy in Tokyo during the JENESYS program, 2019

Pipit married Nimatul Azizah, his classmate working as a teacher of Islamic Education at Bantargebang Public Elementary School VI. As a father of three children, he admired several figures; they were the Prophet Muhammad, Eiichiro Oda (One Piece mangaka), Mohammed Arkoun, Fazlur Rahman, and Buya Syafii Maarif. In specific, the figure of Buya Syafii reminded him of his late father, who was firm and straightforward. He always remembers Buya Syafii's message,

“The young people must really understand the problems of a data-based nation. So they must read a lot and get involved in fixing the country. As long as the sun continues to exist, that hope will continue to exist”

Religious Moderation on Gamalama Volcano

*Adat matoto agama. Agama matoto Kitabullah.
Kitabullah matoto Jou Allah Ta'ala*

This is the philosophy of the Ternate people, which means that culture and religion must go hand in hand.

Ternate city is located near Gamalama volcano, with a beautiful view overlooking the ocean. The green of the mountain forest, combined with the ocean's deep blue, leaves an impression of unspeakable beauty. This sultanate city was Pipit's direction for carrying out research, with the support of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' (Kemenag) Research and Development Center for Religious Community Guidance and Religious Service. The study was on religious moderation issues from the perspective of local wisdom. Apart from Ternate, Pipit also visited Tual, Makassar, Bangka Island, Bekasi and Denpasar. Two research assistants assisted pipit for thirteen days in October 2019. He got involved in the overall process of the research, from preparation, data collection, analysis to publishing a book.

Based on the Religious Moderation Book published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious moderation is defined as a balanced religious attitude between the practices of one religious commu-

nity and respect for the rules of another religious community to avoid extreme attitudes and excessive exclusivity by actively doing active tolerance. However, this definition he thinks is still not sufficient because it only includes active and passive tolerance. Pipit believes that religious moderation should be emphasized more on building empathy.

Many interesting discoveries and experiences were obtained from Pipit's experience in the Gamalama volcano. The results of his research found that the Ternate people currently live in two realms; they are the modern world and the preserved Sultanate. On the one hand, there is also segregation of areas in Ternate, where groups of immigrants inhabit the coast or the south from Java, Bugis, Tidore, etc. On the other hand, people living in the north of the volcano still closely follow the sultanate tradition. Pipit's impression on that fieldwork was that Ternate was the safest place he had ever visited in Indonesia. Given that, he did not hesitate to go out in the middle of the night or early in the morning alone.

Ternate's culture originated from the sultanate tradition is still well preserved today, in synergy with various other values, including religion, that penetrated later on. The integration of

religion and culture in Ternate's social life, according to Pipit, is reflected in the *segulaha* tradition, which regulates the life procedures of the Ternate people. It is then adopted into basic rules, guidelines, and arrangements as the community's shared values. The commitment to the nationality of the Ternate people to Indonesia is unquestionable. The Sultanate's integration into Indonesia as one nation has faced no rejection from the people. They even have limited the HTI group's activities after issuing the decree on banning HTI; it is one of the indicators that Ternate's people behold national commitment very steadily. Before the ban, HTI was free to do activities in Ternate. The Sultanate agreed with the central policy for the ban, even though HTI is still quite strong at the grassroots.

Pipit argued that tolerance among religious adherents in Ternate is generally well preserved. It results from the embodiment of *bobaso sirasai* and *bala kusu sekano-kano*; the two philosophies of life embraced by the Ternate people. *Bobaso sirasai* can be interpreted as tolerance and mutual respect. *Bala kusu sekano-kano* is the sovereignty in the hands of the people. Therefore, the Sultan should consider the people's voice in deciding any rules.

The religious tolerance score in Ternate was in the “good” category based on the Tolerant City Index published by Setara Institute. Tolerance in Ternate has started since the Dutch era when the Sultan of Baabulah was in power. He approved the *zending* mission to penetrate Papua Island. The evidence of the Sultan’s approval on the *zending* mission trip was written on the inscription in the old church on Masinam Island in Papua Barat. The tolerance taught by Sultan Baabulah also left its mark in Tabanga, Ternate Utara, where the church is only about a hundred meters away. The Sultan also entrusted Christians to be his bodyguards and even guides.

In the 1998 Maluku conflict, the people of Ternate Utara were protected by the Sultan. Some of the Sultan’s bodyguards were appointed from the Christian community. The Sultan even built the land and a church in Tabanga for the community. The collective impact of conflicts occurred in Ternate Selatan only. In 2019, there was a threat for people celebrating Christmas Harmony; that they disbanded. However, according to Pipit, actually the Ternate people are accustomed to discussing various problems, so they rarely use violence, especially since there is

still strong trust and legitimacy in the Sultanate.

Pipit asserts that tyrannies of the majority are one form of intolerance for certain fellow religious believers. Violent attacks, for example, are still quite frequent on the Shia Ja’fariyah group of Nawawi Husni (Ong) group. Shia groups are not transparently declared heretical in Ternate, but the teachings of Nawawi Husni (Ong) are firmly rejected and are seen as not part of Islamic teachings.

Christian groups in Ternate also experienced Intra-religious conflicts. There was a dualism of leadership in the Protestant Church of GPdI El-Shaddai, resulting in one party leaving this congregation and joining other Christian sects. Everyone makes mistakes. Religious moderation in Ternate needs to be strived to continue to be developed, especially within or between religions.

Ternate people have their own motto: “*Adat matoto agama. Agama matoto Kitabullah. Kitabullah matoto Jou Allah Ta’ala.*” This statement means that custom (society) comes from religion, religion comes from the Book of Allah, and the Book of Allah comes from Allah, The Almighty. It shows that the Ternate people believe in a philosophy

Nine Inspirational Stories about Religious Moderation During the Pandemic

of life, which means that culture and religion must go hand in hand, so that religious moderation can continue to be upheld.

Inspirational Experience from the Visit to Japan

I found Islam in the Land of the Rising Sun

“**I** feel that I found Islam in Japan” (Ahmad Dzaky from Hayatan Thayyibah Islamic Boarding School in Sukabumi, Jawa Barat—The 2006 Alumni Program).

“Japan is more Islamic than even Muslim-majority countries” (Masruraini from Pembangunan Ushuludin Islamic Boarding School in Singkawang, Jawa Barat—The 2011 Alumni Program).

“. . . if you want to learn high human civilization, order, tidiness, cleanliness, punctuality, discipline and so on, visit Japan” (Ahmad Sulaiman from Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan Jawa Tengah—The 2006 Alumni Program).

MAARIF Institute participated in the CONVEY 4 Project to carry out research on Impact Studies and Support of Best Practices on Pesantren’s Religious Moderation with the Pesantren Leaders Visit Program. As a result, in collaboration with Center for the Study

Nine Inspirational Stories about Religious Moderation During the Pandemic

of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Jakarta from 2004 to 2009-2019, the Japanese government organized a program called “Pesantren Leaders Visit to Japan.” The program, which has been temporarily postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation, aims at strengthening understanding and relations between the two countries, Indonesia and Japan.

Through the visit program, Pesantren leaders admitted that they can learn many positive values such as mutual respect and tolerance from Japanese community. The Pesantren leaders visited Japan as a non-Muslim majority country to directly experience their lifestyle. They were also obliged to present Islamic values and their understanding of Japan for better mutual acceptance of the two countries. The visitors also visited various historical places, cultural sites, and buildings of the Japanese government. In Japan, they also lived as a minority with a different environment culturally and religiously from that in Indonesia.

That experience has given the visitors a good deep impression. For example, Ahmad Dzaky, a 2006 Alumni Program 2006 and the head of Hayatan Thayyibah Islamic Board-

ing School in Sukabumi, Jawa Barat, said that he found Islam in Japan. The same impression was expressed by Masruraini, a participant of the 2011 Alumni Program 2011 and the head of Pembangunan Ushuluddin Islamic Boarding School in Singkawang, Kalimantan Barat, said, “Japan is more Islamic than even a Muslim majority country.” This impression was obtained from the results of their observations and interactions with the Japanese government and society.

The program entitled “Moderate and Inspirational Islamic Boarding School (MOTIP) from Japan: A Lesson from Japan” had some challenges. MOTIP aims to explore learning, positive values, and creativity carried out by the leaders of the boarding schools and the community after they have finished participating in the program. The main challenge lied on finding data online



A Portrait of the Darul Istiqomah Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School area and facilities from above



Santri (students) of Darul Istiqomah Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School having an outdoor learning activity

during the pandemic. It was also tough to recall the participants' memories on their visits, especially when they were elderly who participated the journey a long time ago. However, all those challenges could be overcome. Interesting things were coming from the participants.

Upon returning to Indonesia, several participants have made various innovations, including preventing violent extremism and terrorism. The fourteen-day visit program has been a place of cultural exchange. It was participated by one hundred and sixty *kyai*, *nyai*, *ustadz* and *ustadzah* from various Pesantren in Indonesia, either the modern, the traditional and the salafi. The alumni representatives filled in questionnaires and were interviewed to find meaning and reflection on their visits.

The result of the evaluation is ten inspirational stories (anthology essays) in the form of

book. Ten of the best and inspiring alumni then received funding support to continue their program, especially in developing activities in peaceful Islamic boarding schools to prevent and overcome the violence that leads to terrorism. Those interesting stories (10+7 essays) were also available in En-

glish translation. The seventeen stories represent the deep feelings of the alumni in receiving valuable experiences and the benefits of their visit, as the Japanese saying goes:

人生は贈り物であり、人生はより良い人間になるための特権、機会、責任を私たちに与えてくれます

*Jinsei wa okurimonodeari,
jinsei wa yoriyoi ningen ni naru
tame no tokken, kikai, sekinin o
watashitachi ni ataete
kuremasu*

Life is a gift, and life gives us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to become better people

That was also what Ahmad Sulaiman felt. He was a participant of the 2006 Alumni Program from Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan, Jawa Barat. Ahmad said,

“...if you want to learn quality human civilization, order, tidiness, cleanliness, punctuality, discipline, and so on, just visit Japan”



Fatimah Husein



***Hadhrami
Women's
Inclusion***

Hadhrami Women's Inclusion

*“What makes you different or weird,
that’s your strength.”*

- Meryl Streep

The evening call to prayer was just about echoed, when dozens of people with fierce faces started to come. While chanting Allahu Akbar (Allah the Greatest), they threw stones and beat the people who had gathered there. A number of people were injured and rushed to the hospital. Several cars were also damaged; their sideboards and front glasses were crushed. On Saturday evening, August 8, 2020, the riot was triggered by the *midodareni* event. Before wedding celebrations, the collective prayer tradition was held by the family of the late Assegaf bin Jufri in Mertodranan Village, Pasar Kliwon, Surakarta.

Kliwon Market is located in the southeast of Surakarta City, where the Keraton is located. Some of the Arab Hadhrami communities who live there depend on selling textiles at Klewer Market. This market is one of Indonesia’s largest batik trading centers and has become an icon of tourist destinations in the area. In this Hadhrami community, Fatimah “Irma” Husein was raised. As the youngest of three siblings, she born

November 14, 1965 said that the community in the area is now more diverse, although most of them are of Hadhrami descendants. Irma recently published an article entitled “Preserving and Transmitting the Teachings of the Thariqah ‘Alawiyyah: Diasporic Ba’ Alawi Female Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia” on the Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies, McGill University. This publication tells about the Hadhrami diaspora, including her experience of being a woman of Arab descent in Surakarta.

*“Encik gogik madukoro sil-it pitik dilatono (Fu*k you, you*

Arab!),” shouted the racist singing in Javanese. That song sounded cruel to Irma’s ears. She then felt that being an Arab descendant was not a blessing but a curse. Irma pursued twelve years of primary to secondary education in a school full of Hadhrami girls. Although she was a brilliant student ranked number 2 at least in the class, she is not allowed by her parents to further to the best secondary school in Surakarta. “It is not what a Hadrami does,” said her father and mother. Irma felt that her social interactions then became very limited. As an Arab descendant, she wondered whether she had such distinctive features and identities that separated her from her community even though Irma’s ancestors who brought Islamic teachings to Indonesia were noble and respected religious educators in society.

Irma continued her education at the Department of Aqidah and Philosophy at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, and then took a master’s degree on the same topic at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. She completed her doctorate at the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies (MIALS), Australia, with a dissertation on Islam and inter-religious dialogue. Through education, she was able to see many places, something she



Fatimah with her colleagues at the Hadhrami Diaspora Workshop in Halle Germany, 2019

rarely did in her childhood. She was also granted Endeavor Executive Award from the Australian government to conduct research at the Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, for two and a half months. Living and mingling in foreign countries with people of different languages, cultures and even religions have made her rich of experience and social interaction.

Acting on Finding

*“No research without action,
no action without research”*

-Kurt Lewin

Irma is a strong woman with a long track record of leadership in higher education. After completing her doctorate, she was appointed as the Head of the Master’s Program in Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies at UIN Sunan Kalijaga. This program has been a place where newly-graduated doctors work together. One of them was Professor Noorhaidi, MA, M.Phil., PhD, who led the process of establishing the Center for the Study of Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm). She also served as Academic Coordinator at the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) and a Master’s Program at Gadjah Mada University (UGM). Irma’s leadership experience was also expanded when placing a position as Assistant Director of the Postgraduate Program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, the Director of the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) at UIN Sunan Kalijaga. Currently, Irma is listed as an Associate Professor at the University. Her involvement in the CONVEY program started when conducting research of eighteen State Islamic Universities (PTKIN) on the production system

of Islamic religious teachers two years ago.

In the CONVEY 4 Project, Irma carried out research and capacity building on the early childhood education system. She designed and administered the survey to potential participants. A limited FGD was also held prior to writing the training module. The module dedicated to early childhood levels, such as PAUD (preschool), RA (Islamic Kindergarten), and TK (Kindergarten) teachers, was piloted in three regions; they were Surakarta, Salatiga, and Yogyakarta. Irma was the research and training coordinator for Surakarta or Solo Raya areas. She argued that the program was extraordinarily interesting because the one-day training could unexpectedly change the mindset of early childhood education teachers related to diversity.

Gender sensitivity issues were incorporated into the program as mainstreaming or cross-cutting issues and were introduced to the training participants in a special session. Gender substances were delivered by Irma's colleague, Prof. Dr. Alimatul "Alim" Qibtiyah, S.Ag, M.Si, MA, the Commissioner of National Women Commission and a CISForm researcher. As a Professor at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Alim gave a lecture on religious

purification, which is the starting point for the participants to understand gender issues. She further discussed the indoctrination of power relations with women. The participants enthusiastically posed questions on genders and religious issues, and Alim tried to answer them by quoting verses, hadiths and interpretations that were easy to understand. Thanks are to Alim; the participants' understanding of gender had dramatically raised based on the pre-and post-test results.

Being an expert in religious studies, Irma presented lessons on religious diversity with a discussion approach. According to her, the participants were very enthusiastic and curious for new knowledge. She just realized that they had very limited access to information. Given that, Irma reflected that CONVEY Project had been so beneficial that she could contribute to society personally and institutionally. As a lecturer, she has an obligation to implement Higher Education Tridharma. It means that every academic needs to conduct three compulsory activities: teaching, research, and community service. Normally, the implementation of the three obligations is separated, but through CONVEY Project, she can do all at once.

According to Irma, the research carried out by CISForm with the support of PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia really helped to integrate the Tridharma. The results of the research are now used as teaching materials, not only for bachelor's and master's students, but also for doctoral students. For example, the book "Planting Seeds in Barren Fields" published in collaboration between PPIM Jakarta and CISForm was used by her to teach Islamic Philosophy and Education at the Islamic education department at the University.

The teaching and learning processes had also been carried out more interactively because she enriched the discussion with the research results in the classroom. The research on early education was also one of Irma's references to introduce students with intolerance issues in Indonesia. Thus, the CONVEY Project has contributed to community service, not necessarily to the research area. The research results were not just used as a theoretical contribution for academic but also used to inform practical capacity building for PAUD (pre-education), RA (Islamic Kindergarten) and TK (Kindergarten) teachers. Irma asserts that such a model is needed to design concrete programs for community service activities.

The capacity building of teachers was considered to affect the surrounding community as a whole. For instance, online teaching and learning activities during the program were also directed to students' parents, especially mothers. In addition, this piloting program has opened the possibility of being developed by universities. Irma once again stressed that "Tridharma is perfectly conveyed by CONVEY Project."

Indeed, the study carried out by CISForm has both theoretical and practical benefits. According to Irma, the research results on Islamic education; the study's recommendations have been actually used by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Evidence on that can be traced by, for instance, that several universities now have an agreement that if they are to open a new Islamic education program, they are required to make sure that they can produce moderate Islamic teachers through the program.



Playgroup Teacher Training in Yogyakarta, on February 12, 2021

When it comes to disseminating the research on pre-education (PAUD) issues, it turns out that preschool teachers played critical roles in influencing their students in the classroom. Thus, it is essential that the curriculum is designed to accommodate tolerance teachings so that the teachers can have an intolerant view. Also, the teachers' paradigm needs to be changed. The research funding component in this intervention was added due to the pandemic. Therefore, the scope of the results was also enlarged and was close to picture the reality. With a rich database, the research was then developed into practical and valuable modules, following the idea of acting on finding.

Dignified Teachers Create Great Disciples

The hotel meeting room with brown walls and floors was filled with chairs arranged in a circle. The faces of the participants, who were all women, seemed to be decorated with smiles. It was clear that the participants were enthusiastically eager to learn new knowledge. Four early childhood education teachers were standing at the front, playing a game. Others laughed on several occasions. The day when “Workshop on Early Childhood Education Teachers’ Religious Value Cultivation” was held for Great Solo regions and was organized by Irma. The activity was recorded in a video by CISForm with the title “Sowing Passion, Mainstreaming Religious Moderation for Early Childhood Education Teachers.”

The prayer call echoed in the video intro, followed by images of mosques, churches, temples, and various other places of worship; that seems to explain that Indonesia is a country consisting of various beliefs. Dr. Muhrisun “Rison” Afandi B.S.W. M.Ag, M.S.W., the Research Coordina-

tor, said that the project was motivated by the findings of previous PPIM UIN Jakarta's research showing the tolerance level of early childhood education teachers was actually lower than those from other levels of education. Dr. Muhammad Wildan, MA, the researcher of CISForm, said that, based on field observations, it was found that some preschool, kindergarten, and RA teachers refused to fill out the survey and attend the FGDs held by CISForm. According to her, this is significant enough as a basis for further study.

Rison, who currently serves as the Head of LPPM UIN Sunan Kalijaga, explained that the activity was then designed to obtain information about religious education for early childhood. The data were collected from curriculum contents, teaching style and approach, and the teachers' capacity. The aim was to build the resilience of PAUD teachers against conservatism, intolerance, and extremism in the education sector.

Dr. Moh. Nur Ichwan, MA, another CISForm researcher, said most teachers actually

rejected violence and advocated teaching compassion. However, in the FGD, there were teachers who liked to emphasize themes on war when teaching Islamic history in the Prophet's and his companions' era. He argued that teachers should teach compassions to their students, such as persistence in learning, patience, etc. Irma asserted that the teachers' views were generally quite moderate. The results of the FGD also showed that Muslim and non-Muslim students interacted very well in PAUD and Kindergarten.

However, there were several areas such as national issues that need more attention, according to Irma. For example, some research findings showed that some of the teachers were pro-caliphate; they said that the values of Pancasila were against Islam, the current government is *thogut* (evil), and respect for the flag (nation) could damage the faith and so on. Such perspectives are certainly very significant in influencing the way they teach their students.

The capacity building module developed by CISForm



Fatimah Husein explaining the findings of the CISForm research

was based on an online survey of more than six hundred respondents in nine districts and cities. The demography of the respondents varied; some were twenty years old and some were over fifty years old. However, the majority of them had bachelor's degree from the education department. The survey results were then followed up through FGDs; all the results were then developed as the Religious Moderation module for preschool, RA, and kindergarten teachers piloted in three regions: Surakarta and Salatiga Yogyakarta. The observation and analysis results based on the pre-test and post-test showed that the modules were very effective in reducing Islamism. It was indeed exceeding the researchers' expectations.

Dewi Widiyastuti, S.Pd.I, Chairperson of the Islamic Ed-

ucation Kindergarten Teacher Communication Forum, Yogyakarta, admitted that he had gained additional scientific insights and friends by joining the workshop. "The materials presented are extraordinary; (I learned) how we should love our homeland, instill tolerance in early childhood, to create a generation that loves their nation and their religion," she said.

Mastiti Subur M.Si., RA Harapan Bangsa teacher in Sleman, Yogyakarta, said the same thing; she said the material was very good and could motivate teachers to show their expression. According to Mastiti, by issuing expressions, teachers can create innovations that will be developed in their respective schools. Subardiyah, S.Pd. TK Masyitoh Greges teacher in Donotirto, Kretek Bantul, emphasized that the training appreciated and provided opportunities for kindergarten early education teachers so that they can increase their creativity and understanding in developing PAUD, RA and TK education models.

H. Achmad Fauzi, S.Ag, M.Si., Head of the Madrasah

Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Sleman, said that PAUD students are at their golden age phase, and they will be the future of Indonesia. He hopes that the results of the research and module can be used as material for his institution in providing guidance for kindergarten and madrasas entirely. It is in line with the hopes of CIS-Form, represented by Wildan; he stated policymakers could consider the module to train early childhood, kindergarten, and Islamic kindergarten teachers in various other cities in Indonesia.



Wawan Gunawan



***Significance
in the Times
of COVID-19
Pandemic***



Significance in the Times of Covid-19 Pandemic

“The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow”

– Nelson Mandela



Cross Islamic Sects (Mazhab) Participants attending
the Peace Sociopreneur Academy's (PSA) Kick-Off Meeting
at Eco Camp Bandung, December 12, 2020

The red sofa was put alongside the yellow background, in tune with the wood-colored floor, warming the atmosphere. The red, yellow, and brown colors in the room contrasted with the green trees surrounding the open-walled building. Fresh air infiltrated the peaceful Peace Sociopreneur Academy (PSA) participants waiting for the event to begin. They sat apart and wore face masks. Even though they wore masks, enthusiasm and smiles were reflected in their eyes. While on the second floor, the guests and performers also sat waiting, facing the red sofa.

This awaited event was the culmination of a series of activities for the Peace Sociopreneur Academy (PSA). PSA was organized by Peace Generation (Peace Gen) with the support of UNDP and the CONVEY PPIM UIN Jakarta program. The master of ceremony (MC) opened the

event, and it was followed by remarks of Irfan Amalae, the leader of the Peace Gen. Irfan said that, based on various studies, the biggest challenge right now was intra-faith tolerance, loss of respect and rampant hatred among fellow believers. According to Irfan, hundreds of people signed up for the PSA, only around thirty were accepted. They came from various youth organizations, NU, Muhammadiyah, IJABI, Ahmadiyah, PERSIS, ABI, Hijrah Youth, Thoriqoh Naqshabandiyah and many others.

“Intra-faith dialogues will not happen if not started with dialogue among friends. On the other hand, serious dialogues can sometimes be very monotonous; what matters is the solution,” said Irfan. Although the program aimed to facilitate dialogues, what was being carried out was not just a courtesy meeting; instead, it was designed to find out barriers among themselves. There were five issues offered, ranging from women, gender equality, the rights of minority and/or marginalized groups, natural environment, etc. The six groups then worked on this challenge. The project had been completed, and that day was its celebration carried out through an exhibition.

“PSA is the hard work of many people. Some said differ-

ences are a problem, but here different people propose solutions to the problem. PERSIS and Shia can work together to make something,” Irfan adds the proof. The event was also attended by Jawa Barat’s FKPT, the representatives of Bandung City’s Local Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bandung City’s National and Political Unity Agency, West Java National and Political Unity Agency, and various representatives of youth organizations. Bambang Sukardi from Bandung City’s National and Political Unity Agency expressed his appreciation for the positive activities of young people who came from various cities. Sukardi argued that that kind of event was essential in supporting the unity of the nation.

The event went well, filled with humor by the MC and performers. The MC said that if there was a problem during the event, just ask for help to “the one above.” Literally, it meant people on the second floor; they were the local government representatives. The activity was also interspersed by ice-breaking, clapping games with friends, spelling and sending positive energy alternately among the participants. Each group told their own works, such as short films, board games, podcasts, mini-lessons, videos, and songs. The presentation was also complemented

Nine Inspirational Stories about Religious Moderation During the Pandemic

with stories of changes that occurred during their participation in PSA activities. The event was postponed to respect the silent moment in the eco-camp. Then, the time flew so fast because of the excitement and the depth of meaning behind the various presentations. The song played at the end even made anyone more thrilled:

*We're here,
sitting together,
listening to each other*

*We respect,
chose our own ways,*

Let's not damage this relation

*We're still here,
sitting together*

Plans to Respond to Disaster

The way he spoke, showed his gentleness and enthusiasm in supervising and working on the program. “Diversity can be a disaster because people have nothing to do. That’s why in this PSA, the participants who come from different intra-religious organizations are kept busy,” he said. Wawan Gunawan is his name. He was the person in charge of PSA. Since May 2020, he has worked as a Content Manager for Peace Generation in Bandung. In addition to managing PSA, he was also responsible for the Knowledge Hub, a program to create a database of activities and institutions on peace issues, with the support of AIPJ 2.

As a father of three children, Wawan completed his bachelor’s degree in Islamic Broadcasting at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung. He continued his master’s in Religious Studies to support a scholarship from the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the same university. Wawan started a movement, “PAKUAN,” an indigenous community assistance organization, with his

friends. He was also a Desantara alumnus for the emancipatory madrasa training program. Wawan said that since the Gus Dur administration, there had been much progress for minority groups. For example, Confucianism has been recognized as a religion, but indigenous peoples still do not have the right to be officially recognized.

Since 2004, Wawan has also been active in the Inter-Religious Network (Jakatarub) in which Setara, Wahid Institute, and others have also joined in it. The man who became Jakatarub's president said that the organization was a forum and not an NGO, so the primary funding source was crowdfunding from people. As an activist, Wawan said he never stopped being close to society, especially in interfaith networks. His organizational background is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and he currently serves as Secretary of the Lakpesdam for West Java region.

In mid-March, Wawan will go to North Sumatra and Poso for a social psychology approach program in some conflict areas. He feels comfortable working in Peace Gen because he is accompanied by Irfan Aali, who is also very active in grassroots. Irfan Amalee is a supple man who can talk to everyone regardless of their background. Thus, ac-

ording to Wawan, peace can be echoed in all circles. In addition to reaching various groups, Peace Gen has also proven to have multiple innovations and creativity in designing programs. PSA was one of them. It aimed to build intra-faith dialogue but did not lecture a particular faith. In addition, PSA tried to bridge differences by initiating economic development and harmony program for sustainable coexistence.

Hostile, then United

*“Peace must be taught
to raise awareness”*

-Irfan Amalee



FGD with representatives of Religious Leaders across Islamic Groups (NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis, Shia, Ahmadiyah) at the Peace Generation Office, August 5, 2020

Through CONVEY Project, the PSA program successfully built mutual understanding and eliminated prejudice between youth from diverse Muslim communities. The program consisted of three main activities, namely induction workshops, mentoring and media development. Starting with a focus group discussion (FGD) activity at Peace Gen office in August 2020, two representatives from each religious mass organization (one youth and one religious figure) in Bandung. In the FGD the participants agreed that dialogue activities on general issues were important to build a common ground among the participants. The mass organization members who attended also agreed to send representatives for Peace Gen opened a fair selection.

The initial proposal required only fifteen participants. Surprisingly, it turned out that people were extraordinarily interested in the program resulting in one hundred and fifty people officially registering. After going through administrative selection, the candidates were invited

to interview selection via telephone or WhatsApp. In the end, 32 young people were selected as participants. Those who registered were from NU, Muhammadiyah, PERSIS, IJABI, Hijrah Youth, Jamaah Tabligh and even HTI. Apart from Bandung, participants came from Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Jember.

The induction workshop was held for three days at the Muslim Kaji Community (Komuji) in November 2020. Considering the Covid-19 pandemic protocol, the MC and the facilitators were in separate rooms while participants followed through zooming. The workshop took place interactively with games punctuated. Peace Gen also sent a diary to record and merchandise prizes in t-shirts, books and so on. Before the workshop started, facilitators were recruited to act as bridges between Peace Gen and the participants. Some technical mentors help create innovative products such as movies/videos, podcasts, mini-lessons, board games and music.

The first day of the workshop was about sociopreneurs by Irfan Amalee, Amelia Hapsari, Usman Hamid and Kalis Mardiasih. The main topic was how to work on projects that have an impact on society. On the second day, the topic related to the content and developed in the project

was about environmental and social issues. Besides the diversity of the participants, Peace Gen also took into account the background and gender balance of the speakers. For example, the topic of women's discrimination was delivered by Neng Hannah on behalf of NU. Nia Kurniawati presented substances on the economy. Also, there were other speakers, such as Mudiwati Rahmatunnisa, a lecturer at FISIP UNPAD and Ahmadiyah, and I Ketut Wiguna, an expert on environmental friendliness.

In addition, in the afternoon, the topic of environmental issues was delivered by Father Ferry, Ai Yunus Rusyana (founder of YIPC and representatives of Muhammadiyah), and Rini Rahmawati (Mutti Institute), and Yulianti Hamdani (Counselor). On the third day, Andi Abdul Qodir presented a topic on design thinking design and making programs to be interesting. After the induction workshop, participants who were divided into six groups were required to create works in one month. Then, they created some creative works, such as films/videos, podcasts, mini lessons, board games and music.

The participants followed FIDS rules (feeling, imagine, do and sharing) in developing the works. This strategy succeeded in making the participants pro-

duce works with their minds and hearts reflected from the project names. For example, one of them gave the name “*Suhunan*,” which is a part of the traditional Sundanese house. *Suhunan* means a place of support/shelter. The meaning is to collaborate with diversity in groups, consisting of representatives of the Hijrah Youth, PERSIS, NU, Muhammadiyah, Ahmadiyah. Another entitled the project “Peace with the Environment.”

Risqieka, a PERSIS representative, said that the project activity was entertaining. She met five different people in a group and decided to discuss environmental issues related to water management, food waste, and plastic waste. In addition, she had a new experience making friends with the veiled Mila. Initially hesitated, it turned out that they now good friends. “Diversity is fascinating. How can the five of us work together and produce a real project,” she said. “Even though we do not agree with each other, but we understand each other,” added Wawan. One of Risqieka’s friends, Kiki emphasized,

“Intensive meetings break down barriers.”

Wawu from another group made a board game. Wawu was taken from Arabic, “to connect,” and Sundanese “to know.” In this group there were representatives from NU, Muhammadiyah, IJABI and Jamaah Tabligh, and HTI. Irfan from IJABI said they chose a topic on minority groups. His group also agreed that in the future, they would keep making board games to build sustainable peace efforts, especially among young people.

The other group chose the name “*Metanoia*”, which in Greek means a change of mind, mindset, and lifestyle for the better. The group happened to be all women representing the Hijrah Youth, Muhammadiyah, and IJABI. Cinta from Youth Hijrah said that her group decided to choose a



One of the group discussions
at the Peace Sociopreneur Academy (PSA) activity

theme on violence and discrimination against women. They produced seven podcasts that can be accessed at [peacegen.id](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9111111111), each lasting 15-20 minutes. In addition, the group invited two informants who were victims and psychologists to discuss mental health and abuse themes.

The victim of violence who was willing to be interviewed was a woman with a veil, where the perpetrator of the violence was her own friend. Anyone can become a victim; the veil is not guaranteeing security. He emphasized how to accept oneself and the importance of continuing to self-love. Besides inviting victims, the podcast also was about identifying the characteristics of perpetrators and how to seek help. In this group, Siska was initially afraid to admit that she was an IJABI representative. It turned out that some of the other participants and even the resource persons also came from IJABI. She was relieved after figuring out that her friends were able to accept it.

The “Independent” Group made two videos on sexual harassment (catcalling). Siti Fatmah, in her presentation, stated that free means free to work and free to talk about anything. This includes being free to ask questions about the suspicions that have occurred in her group. They

consisted of representatives of Ahmadiyah, NU, Muhammadiyah and IJABI. Another group that created mini-lessons introduced themselves as an avatar. They hoped to absorb the Avatar’s ability to control water, land, and air so that they were able to control themselves. This group elaborated people’s stories, then turned them into content and broadcasts on Instagram.

Abdul Azis Muharam Mulyadi had been involved in Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) since high school. In the last three years, he was no longer active once the government dissolved his organization. One time, Aziz saw Peace Gen’s posts through social media on PSA and thought that entrepreneurial training was. It turned out that the activity was a youth meeting across Islamic schools. At first, he was reluctant but the Peace Gen activities played a very important role in changing his view. The program stimulated experience working and creating collaborative works, allowing dialogue and interaction more intimately. Aziz better understood diversity in Islam. “From opponents to become friends,” he said.

In line with Aziz, Milla Fauziah Fitriawati, representing Pemuda Hijrah said that previously she had a prejudice against several different organizations and schools of thought.

“So, I thought that there was no good in diversity. All of them changed when in the “Ask Me Anything” session, I talked to others and found that mutual understanding can be formed through dialogues,”

she concluded. Supported by CONVEY 4 Project, PSA seemed to be a relatively short project. However, the program successfully turned prejudice into mutual understanding. Aziz and Milla’s experience was reflected in the work of the group of five named Nada. They wrote a song, “Bersama Kita Di Sini,” which represents the commitment of the participants to keep working regardless of the differences they have.

*We’re here, sitting together,
listening to each other*

*We’re still here, telling good
stories*

*We respect the journey,
endure together, hack restless*

*We are strong together, yes,
we can*

*Stand up, work, all is the
same*

*We live together, match the
ideals,*

*Agree to make peace, there
is no pause ...*

EPILOGUE

*Together we are strong,
believe that we can
Stand tall, work,
we are all the same*

*Let's live together,
bring our dream together
Hold the peace, forever*

Those lines are part of the song “Together We Are Here” which was composed by young Muslims from various groups of different sects. They came from the Indonesian Ahlul Bait Jamaah Association (IJABI), Muhammadiyah, former members of Hizbu Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Nadlatul Ulama, and Ahmadiyah. The song contains an invitation to see differences as a gift that we must be grateful for. When the video clip of this song was shown on CONVEY Day 2021 “Harmony in Diversity” via YouTube, many viewers commented that they realized that differences were not an obstacle to being friends with each other.

The song is a collaboration product of the participants in the Peace Sociopreneur Academy (PSA) activity conducted by Peace Generation through the CONVEY Indonesia program. This activity is a follow-up program designed based on the findings of a national survey conducted by Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta in 2018.

This survey found that Muslim students were more intolerant of those of different sects in Islam than those from other religions. Kang Wawan, the coordinator of PSA activities, said that this activity succeeded in bringing youths from various sects in Islam to come together. Even some of them often had wrong prejudices against each other. The participants were made aware that the encounter and dialogue between differences is an important key to peace through this activity. "There is no dialogue between faiths before dialogue between friends," said Wawan.

This activity is one example of many CONVEY (Countering Violent Extremism for Youth) activities in its fourth year. CONVEY aims to build community resilience, especially among the younger generation, against violent extremism through moderate religious education. From the start, CONVEY deliberately chose the path of education, particularly religious education, as a medium to achieve this goal. We believe that through education, values and awareness of the importance of peace and celebrating diversity can be instilled. Moreover, by equipping the younger generation with inclusive education, we believe that our generation can increasingly love the diversity and peace in the nation. Although the im-

plementation of the CONVEY program has experienced many challenges due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in this fourth year, all activities were carried out well and contributed to the prevention of violent extremism in Indonesia.

Besides Kang Wawan's story with his PSA activities, there are many other interesting stories in this book that tell how CONVEY was able to help make many people aware of the importance of preventing violent extremism. Dita Kirana, a PPIM researcher, for example, when hosting CONVEY Day 2021, shared how CONVEY has helped her understand the importance of encountering differences to foster tolerance and mutual respect between human beings. Pipit Aidul Fitriaya, a researcher at the MAARIF Institute, told of her involvement in a study on how the visit of pesantren leaders to Japan was impactful. Many participants learned about living in tolerance with people of different religions through this visit. Fatimah Husein, also a researcher at CISForm, said that the training modules developed through the CONVEY program succeeded in reducing the level of Islamism of female playgroup and kindergarten teachers in Surakarta, Yogyakarta, and Salatiga.

Nine Inspirational Stories about Religious Moderation During the Pandemic

The stories written in this book prove the importance of spreading the values of religious tolerance and moderation to prevent violent extremism in Indonesia, including during the Covid-19 pandemic. The many parties who are inspired by CONVEY's activities have given a new spirit

to us to keep promoting peace through education in our motherland. Hopefully, the stories conveyed can also inspire readers to care for the diversity of the nation to be more peaceful and comfortable and all groups in Indonesia can live in harmony.

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**Empowering Educational Actors and Institutions
to Promote Religious Moderation in Preventing Violent Extremism**

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