
PONDOK DAMAI: A STUDY OF PELITA INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION MOVEMENT FOR INTERRELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN INDONESIA

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Keywords:

Interreligious
engagement;
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Seven Moments of
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Abstrak

Indonesia memiliki agama dan aliran kepercayaan yang beragam, sehingga ada beberapa penyebab konflik, seperti ekonomi, sosial, dan politik. Artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana kegiatan remaja di Pondok Damai sangat berorientasi pada upaya menjaga kerukunan antar umat beragama. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui pendekatan sosiologis, artikel ini mewawancarai para peserta yang terlibat dalam Pondok Damai. Selain itu, artikel ini menggunakan teori milik J.B Banawiratma, *'The Seven Moments of Dialogue'* yang menginterpretasikan beberapa kegiatan Pondok Damai dan bagaimana kontribusinya terhadap dialog antar agama di Indonesia. Teori ini berisi dialog kehidupan, analisis sosial dan refleksi etis kontekstual, studi tradisi keagamaan, dialog antar agama dalam berbagi iman dan teologi lintas agama, dialog aksi dan dialog intra-agama. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Pondok Damai menjadi wadah perjumpaan lintas agama bagi anak-anak muda dari berbagai agama. Melalui partisipasi mereka dalam serangkaian kegiatan Pondok Damai, anak-anak muda telah membangun perdamaian sejati melalui keterlibatan antaragama di antara mereka.

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Abstract

Indonesia possesses various religions and faith affiliations, so there is no doubt that there are multiple causes that have conflict due to several factors such as economic, social, and political. To minimize the possibility of the emergence of intolerance and discrimination, 'Pelita,' an interfaith association, seeks to realize the values of interreligious harmony among religious people, one of which is located in Semarang. Pelita aimed for the nation's adolescents to return to knitting peace in its annual plan, 'Pondok Damai'. This paper analyzed how the adolescents' activities in Pondok Damai are strongly oriented toward maintaining interreligious engagement. Using qualitative methods through a sociological approach, this paper interviewed participants involved in Pondok Damai and relevant literature research. Moreover, this paper used an analysis belonging to J.B Banawiratma, 'Seven Moments of Dialogue'. Using the theory of Seven Moments of Dialogue, the author will interpret several Pondok Damai activities and how it contributes to interreligious dialogue in Indonesia. These moments contain dialogue of life, social analysis and contextual ethical reflection, study of religious traditions, interfaith dialogue in sharing faith and interfaith theology, dialogue of action and intra-religious dialogue. This research concluded that Pondok Damai became a forum for interfaith encounters with youngsters from different affiliations. Through their participation in a series of Pondok Damai activities, youngsters have established a true peace by interreligious engagement among them.

Introduction

This article will look at the dynamics of interfaith youth in Pondok Damai events. Pondok Damai is one of the activities organized by Pelita (Interfaith Association) Semarang. The author focuses on interfaith discussion initiatives in which youngsters are active and interact. In this situation, Central Java is noted as a region with numerous inter-religious confrontations, such as the dispute over the construction of the Baptist

Church in Semarang¹, discrimination of Baha'is in Pati², and the radicalism of Jamaah Anshor ad-Daulah (JAD) in Pekalongan.³ According to the chairman of the Central Java Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), K.H Sinwani, the FKUB was still dealing with ethnicity, race, and inter-group problems (SARA) throughout 2019.⁴ With the occurrence of social phenomena, Pelita is visible as one of the community movements attempting to ensure complete peace across religious communities.

The Interfaith Association (Pelita) mediates an ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse community. Semarang is the capital of the province of Central Java, which is known for its multiculturalism. The presence of places of worship distributed around the city in the form of mosques, churches, pagodas, monasteries, and temples is an example of indigenous wisdom that has survived.⁵ However, the roots of fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism will never fade. As a result, it is Pelita's responsibility to mitigate the impact of deviations that lead to tensions amongst religious communities.

In practice, Pelita and several similar community movements, including the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), the Institute for the Study and Development of Human Resources of the Nahdlatul Ulama

¹ Wahyudi Sri Wijayanto, "Analisis Penanganan Konflik Pembangunan Gereja Baptis Indonesia Di Tlogosari Semarang," *Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Musik Gereja* 5, no. 1 (2021).

² Moh Rosyid, "Resolusi Konflik Umat Baha' I Dengan Muslim: Studi Kasus Di Pati, Jawa Tengah," *Jurnal Multikultural & Multireligius* 17, no. 2 (2018).

³ Abdul Adzim, "Religious Harmonization as Deradicalisation Efforts Through Interfaith Communities – A Case Study of the Religious Communication Forum (FKUB) in Pekalongan City," *Islamic Studies Journal for Social Transformation* 5, no. 2 (2021).

⁴ "FKUB Masih Temui Konflik SARA," Jawa Pos Radar Semarang, 2020, <https://radarsemarang.jawapos.com/berita/jateng/ungaran/2020/01/18/fkub-masih-temui-konflik-sara/>, diakses pada 20 Juli 2022.

⁵ Stefanus Wawan Setiawan and Rispritosia Sibarani, "Budaya Srawung Sebagai Potret Toleransi Beragama Dan Bersuku Untuk Meredam Konflik Di Kota Semarang," *Anthropos: Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Dan Budaya (Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology)* 6, no. 2 (2021), 195.

Executive Board (LAKPESDAM PBNU), the Gusdurian Community of Semarang, and other religious organizations, condemned any acts of inter-religious intolerance both inside and outside the city of Semarang.⁶ Pelita, which was formed by interfaith adolescents, then encourages the community to develop peace through brotherhood, among other things. Pelita's socialization in fostering brotherhood takes the shape of Pondok Damai activities, a radio broadcast program of the Inter-People Forum (FORMAT), and delegation of members, volunteers, and many other contributions in inter-religious forums.⁷ Following this explanation, Pondok Damai activities will be thoroughly examined with the participants engaged. The implementation of dialogue directly in social and everyday life becomes the main focus of the ensuing discussion.

Pondok Damai, on the other hand succeeded to develop a brotherhood among the participants over three days. Interaction, conversation, sharing joys and sorrows, as well as religious and spiritual experiences, all lead to participation in engagement of dialogue. Pelita realizes action dialogue in some kind of a wide range of activities. Pondok Damai, an interfaith youth program, is a concrete example of interfaith dialogue implementation. They not only understood each other's canonical teachings and practices, but they also eliminated prejudice by participating in a forum together.

In order to develop this work, it is critical to look at the preceding articles related to the author's title, with the scope of discussion on Pelita (Interfaith Association), tolerance, and engagement in interreligious dialogue. First, the writing of Perdana Aysha Puteri (2021) with the title *"The Role of Structural Engagement in Interreligious Dialogue: In The Case of the Interreligious Conflict in GPDI Semanu, Gunungkidul"*.⁸ Puteri investigates a

⁶ Setiawan and Sibarani, h. 196.

⁷ The interview with Setyawan Budi as Pelita coordinator on Monday, July 11, 2022, in Avalokitesvara Buddhagaya Watugong Vihara, Semarang.

⁸ Perdana Aysha Puteri, "The Role of Structural Engagement in Inter-Religious Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy | Vol. 3, No. 2, Mei - Oktober 2022

situation further in her work by evaluating one of Izak Lattu's modes of engagement. Lattu structured the assignment into four sections: *associational engagement, quotidian engagement* atau *everyday encounter engagement, symbolic-imagined engagement, dan structural engagement*. Puteri uses structural engagement to examine the instance of a pastor's expulsion from the Semanu GpdI Church in Gunungkidul, which was caused by a Christian dispute. According to her, religious elites linked with the government play an essential influence in the occurrence and resolution of conflicts. She did not, however, address the history of interfaith youth discussion in the form of social action by community institutions with interfaith youth dialogue actors.

Charlene Tan (2010) conducted a research entitled: *"Dialogical Education for Inter-Religious Engagement in a Plural Society"* in Singapura, a country that is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Tan emphasizes the value of formal and non-formal education in developing interfaith discourse in his writings. She came to the conclusion that dialogue education can lead to interfaith participation and the formation of partnerships with anyone, including countries, families, communities, and religious groups. It is always possible to achieve complete peace by pushing for educational change based on openness, honesty, and acceptance of differences.

See in the previous research, the topic of interreligious engagement is yet comprehended related to dialog of action by any institution. In this article, the author discusses Pelita movement toward interreligious engagement. Will come in a fresh-advanced discussion relevant to the aspect of dialog of action as it is practiced in Pondok Damai activity. Answering the question of how the youngsters of Pelita convenes interreligious engagement in Pondok Damai.

Dialogue: In the Case of the Inter-Religious Conflict in GpdI Semanu, Gunungkidul," *Jurnal Studi Agama Dan Masyarakat* 17, no. 2 (2021), h. 164-171.

Research Methodology

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. The data is collected by conducting direct observations by living together with the other participants in Pondok Damai, Semarang. Furthermore, indirect observation is collected by conducting interviews with the participants involved in Pondok Damai, the committee, and the responsible of Pelita. This paper's result will be analyzed by J.B Banawiratma's Seven Moments of Dialog: dialogue of life, social analysis and contextual ethical reflection, study of religious traditions, interfaith dialogue in sharing faith and interfaith theology, dialogue of action and intra-religious dialogue and other related theories of interreligious dialogue and religious studies.

A Brief History of Pelita (Interfaith Association)

Pelita, the Interfaith Association is one of several social movements in Semarang that promote tolerance and peace. Pelita is also a gathering place for inspiration from diverse interfaith communities, organizations, institutions, and individuals in Semarang and its environs, with the goal of preserving diversity and nationality. Pelita is concerned with a variety of religious concerns and works to safeguard religious communities who face prejudice, hostility, persecution, and discrimination.⁹ Pelita attempts to engage in interreligious discourse on a social level through it all. According to Knitter, social participation through dialogue that does not include the study of beliefs, religious practices, and religious systems will only result in justification and prejudice against that religion. As a result, social engagement and empathy are required in peace initiatives to achieve inter-religious harmony.

Pelita was founded on June 20, 2016 and is directed by Setyawan Budi, also known as Mas Wawan. The origins of this organization can

⁹ The interview with Setyawan Budi as Pelita coordinator on Monday, July 11, 2022, in Avalokitesvara Buddhagaya Watugong Vihara, Semarang.

be traced back to the rejection of Mrs. Shinta Wahid's iftar function at the Pundak Payungan Church in Ungaran, Semarang. The objective and mission of the iftar event is to encourage harmony in the diversity of the Semarang society. Several Islamic community organizations, as well as the FPI (Islamic Defenders Front), however, condemned the event as violating the Islamic doctrine.¹⁰ According to Mahmood Vaezi¹¹, In the face of obstacles and socioeconomic situations, Islam must not demonstrate its superiority.¹² Because coping with the aforementioned issues necessitates tolerance, which entails kindness, gentleness, and opposing roughness and violence.

Following the rejection of Mrs. Shinta Wahid's iftar gathering at a church, the friends who went agreed to make a fresh breakthrough. This is designed to avoid such situations from occurring in the future and to strengthen inter-religious cooperation. The Community Legal Aid Institute agreed on the presence of a community movement that connects institutions, organizations, communities, and even people involved in the socio-religious sphere, resulting in the formation of Pelita, which still exists today.¹³ Pelita is present in Semarang as one of the community movements that contribute to dealing with the dynamics of religious conflict and intolerance that occur due to the sensitivity of belief. The existence of the Pelita also implies that the local community opposes any negative behaviors, particularly those that could lead to religious conflict.

¹⁰ Ida Uswatun Hasanah, "Mempertemukan Kesamaan Di Dalam Perbedaan (Studi Atas Peran Aktif Pemuda Di Komunitas Persaudaraan Lintas Agama Semarang)" (Universitas Diponegoro, 2019), h. 25.

¹¹ Dr. Mahmood Vaezi is an Iranian orientalist, expert in Science, Qur'an and Hadith. He is also actively teaching at the University of Tehran, Iran.

¹² Mahmood Vaezi, "The Role of Interreligious Dialogues on Religious Tolerance," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 74, no. 3 (2018), h. 3.

¹³ The interview with Father Aloysius Budi as pioneer of Pelita on Wednesday, July 13, 2022, in Avalokitesvara Buddhagaya Watugong Vihara, Semarang.

Understanding of Interreligious Engagement

Many distinctions can be discovered in a multi-cultural religious life. Religion is one of the most sensitive and intricate factors. Furthermore, when it comes to religion, individuals tend to focus on the differences between their views and those of others, rather than the beauty of differences, which is finding agreement and identification within each religious community.¹⁴ Truth claims and a sense of superiority can set off confrontations that lead to war. The reality of differences cannot be condemned, because differences are unquestionably a God-given blessing. One aspect that may be controlled is how we react to it by meeting, communicating, looking for similarities, and discovering differences, which are all encapsulated in interreligious dialogue.

Interreligious dialogue is a sort of harmony and concord that results in mutual affirmation and understanding. This is due to the coming together of the hearts and minds of each religious community. The meeting resulted in religious contact between two or more religious people. As a result, dialogue is not a debate, but rather the exchange of information about each other's religions, including similarities and differences.¹⁵ Furthermore, dialogue is a rational and polite form of dispute resolution; additionally, dialogue can be utilized as an alternative to ways of violence and coercion. Lederach contends that dialogue can effect change, he stated "*a fundamental way to promote constructive change on all level is dialogue*".¹⁶ According to him, change can clarify misunderstandings through sharing and listening to each other.

While Hans Kung acknowledged his desire for dialogue via improving knowledge of religious roots, he also remarked:

¹⁴ S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Inter-Religious Dialogue and Peacebuilding," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013), h. 149.

¹⁵ Deni Irawan, "Menciptakan Harmoni Dengan Dialog Antar Umat Beragama," *Religi* XV, no. 2 (2019), h. 2.

¹⁶ John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (PA: Good Books, 2003), h. 21.

No peace among the nations without peace among the religions

No peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions

No dialogue among the religions without the investigation of the foundations of the religions

Hans Kung aims for global peace through nonviolence and the promotion of harmony and peace. According to him, we can establish a happy and peaceful life by grasping the essential ideas and foundations of religion and using dialogue as an instrument for its execution. Because religion, in essence, distributes something positive and serves as a source of ideas, revolution, or liberty, religion becomes the compass of life for its devotees.¹⁷

However, even in the largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia, long-standing interfaith dialogue has failed to secure harmonious interfaith relationships.¹⁸ Interreligious dialogue implementation has stagnated in the study of scriptures and religious teachings, seeking for differences and similarities. The reason for this is because these initiatives continue to set aside preconceptions amongst religions. Understanding of other only reached from it's cover and has not permeated 'from within.' Furthermore, this will only lead to justification and a sense of superiority, which will be the outward form of a religious group in a community. As a result, dialogue experts in the contemporary use the term 'engagement' in interreligious dialogue.

Izak Lattu's literature on interreligious dialogue raises problems concerning rituals, symbols, and oral narratives as factors of developing interreligious interactions in Indonesia. Interreligious engagement with oral orientation and collective memory based on local wisdom, according

¹⁷ Muhammad Harjuna, "Dialog Lintas Agama Dalam Perspektif Hans Kung," *Living Islam Journal of Islamic Discourses* II, no. 1 (2019), h. 5-7.

¹⁸ Izak Y.M Lattu, "Beyond Interreligious Dialogue: Oral-Based Interreligious Engagements in Indonesia," in *Interreligious Dialogue: From Religion to Geopolitics*, ed. Giuseppe Giorden and Andrew P. Lynch, vol. 10 (Boston: Koninklijke Brill, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004401266>, h. 70.

to his observations, can give new patterns in communication. He noted that in interreligious dialogue, an oral-oriented approach is more effective than discourse with canonical discussion.¹⁹ Lattu gives insight into the symbolic interactions between faiths and beliefs in other writings. He decried the interfaith stagnation caused by being confined to formal discourse groups on religious matters. He echoes theological discussion based on daily interactions (dialogue of life) as engagement in dialogue within the same solidarity and understanding.²⁰

Lattu categorizes the concept of engagement into four categories. First, structural engagement, which is a segment established by persons with the power to create inter-religious dialogue. This section emphasizes the importance of community elites in religious dialogue. The second type of engagement is associational engagement. At this stage, involvement entails sharing common interests, values, and attitudes with others. Furthermore, it can take the shape of a comparison and similarity analysis of religious texts, canonical teachings, and classical readings. Quotidian engagement, also known as everyday encounters engagement, is strongly related to the fourth engagement, symbolic-imaginative engagement. Daily engagement is widely directed through daily activities such as sports, trips, and others, creating an informal environment for people to meet and bond. In everyday life, symbols held together in society can foster trust in one another, so it is initiating the formation of collective memory in the community.²¹

Meanwhile, dialogue engagement, according to Banawiratma, is discussion based on social reality. Banawiratma attempts to approach

¹⁹ Lattu., h. 70-72.

²⁰ Izak Y.M Lattu, "A Sociological Breakthrough of Interreligious Engagement in Everyday-Symbolic Interaction Perspectives," *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 6, no. 2 (2016), h. 164-165.

²¹ Izak Y.M Lattu, "Culture and Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Moluccas Indonesia," *Interreligious Insight* 10, no. 1 (2012), h. 45-52. dapat dilihat juga di video mata kuliah CRCS Universitas Gadjah Mada dengan judul "Peran Tradisi Lisan Dalam Dialog Agama Dan Budaya".

interreligious dialogue holistically ‘from within’ each religion. He classified dialogue based on its content, which he later referred to as the seven moments or seven plains in dialogue, which included dialogue of life, social analysis and contextual ethical reflection, study of religious traditions, dialogue between religious believers in sharing faith and interfaith theology, dialogue of action and intra-religious dialogue. According to Banawiratma, the plains are adaptable and can be started from anywhere dependent on their contextual role, surroundings, and time.²²

As the name suggests, a dialogue of life occurs in everyday life. Dialogue that takes place in an open and neighborly atmosphere, so that they can sympathize with each other in happy or sad events, as well as in their respective issues and activities. According to Banawiratma’s perspective, a succession of daily living activities involving each other will develop mutual concern.²³ The church says the same thing regarding the rules for dialogue that must be fulfilled, as well as the methods, concepts, objects, and issues that are addressed. The encyclical Dialogue and Mission summarizes all of these explanations. Dialogue of life in Dialogue and Mission is the most fundamental level of dialogue and is designed for everyone. This discourse is frequently not in direct contact with one’s faith and belief; yet, each individual must represent religious values (Bible values) through daily participation in all spheres, whether social, political, economic, artistic, educational, philosophical, and so on.²⁴

After engaging in daily discussion, religious individuals attempt to examine the social condition by creating ethical considerations. The ethical considerations involve determining causality by integrating the occurrences. The findings of the study are not value-free; they are founded on what is collectively agreed upon, struggled for, and even produced

²² J.B Banawiratma et al., *Dialog Antarumat Beragama: Gagasan Dan Praktik Di Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Mizan Publika, 2010), h. 8-9.

²³ Banawiratma et al, h. 9.

²⁴ Armada Riyanto, *Dialog Agama Dalam Pandangan Gereja Katolik* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1995), h. 111.

with the faith of community members in consideration. Banawiatma also emphasized mutual compassion by putting poor people's needs foremost. He also emphasized the significance of emancipation in the sphere of the many. Banawiratma took on several interpretations from Hardt and Negeri, including the power of liberation, the power of God's kingdom, and the power of the Jesus movement. This concept is known as Emancipation Theology, and it refers to the process of liberation that occurs in the world of 'multitude.'²⁵

The third of the seven plains describes how participants in the dialogue study their own faith traditions. In other words, each can support his view about what God's will is by thoroughly grasping ethical choices as the root of each other's faith. Swidler also makes a reference to this in his dialogue. Participants in dialogue, according to him, must define themselves, and any interpreted 'self-definition' must be embraced in order to know themselves better and more critically.²⁶ Human concerns, followed by societal analyses and ethical issues, are clearly recognized as religious concerns on this premise.²⁷ Contemplative faith knowledge leads to a willingness to share faith experiences in interfaith societies. This fourth plain attempts to reduce manipulative and aggressive behavior while also exploring various religious traditions on the basis of each discussion participant's dedication and openness. As a result, dialogue about religious experiences requires a strong and deep faith. The dialogue of exchanging

²⁵ Multitude is regarded as the second face of globalization, which allows for the integration of differences in the unity of purpose, allowing for communication and cooperative action. It can also be regarded as a 'network' or an open, widespread network where all differences can be freely and equitably expressed, an encounter that strives to work and live in unity 'in common.' Johannes Baptista Giyana Banawiratma, "Teologi Lokal Dalam Konteks Global," *Gema Teologika* 1, no. 1 (2016).

²⁶ Leonard Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: The Ground Rules for Interreligious, Intertheological Dialogue," in *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding* (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2014), h. 31.

²⁷ Banawiratma et al., *Dialog Antarumat Beragama: Gagasan Dan Praktik Di Indonesia*, h. 10.

religious experiences or religion, according to the church is the highest dialogue. This dialogue is a patience test that takes a lot of tolerance.²⁸

On the fifth level, theological disputes between faiths and religions take place, with dialogue exchanges conducted by dialogue practitioners in order to deepen awareness of each religion's teachings and heritage. Departing from a thorough grasp of each religion can help to increase tolerance for the spiritual values of other religions. According to Swidler, dialogue heading to the spiritual realm takes up the most space in his dialogue decalogue. Interreligious dialogue, according to him, is separated into three parts: practical, cognitive, and spiritual.²⁹ The spiritual area attempts to comprehend different religions 'from within,' which will then challenge each other's new domains of reality, meaning, and truth. As a result, it can be stated once more that interreligious dialogue is the appropriate tool for uncovering the hidden reality in which dialogue participants must behave.

The sixth moment of dialogue is dialogue of action, which is defined as a type of mutual engagement in reacting to numerous social concerns that are incorporated in everyday life and then collectively seeking answers. Banawiratma focuses on the actions of religious community groups to strengthen the community via perspectives of social justice, gender justice, human rights, the environment, and other perspectives. Meanwhile, the church defines dialogue of action as a dialogue of works (Dialogue and Mission) (for cooperation).³⁰ The interpretation of the meaning of works is a more intense and deep collaboration with adherents of other religions. In practice, collaboration takes place under the auspices of an organization that is today oriented on a global scale and seeks to improve human dignity.

²⁸ Armada Riyanto, *Dialog Agama Dalam Pandangan Gereja Katolik*, h. 113.

²⁹ Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: The Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interdeological Dialogue.", h. 33.

³⁰ Armada Riyanto, *Dialog Agama Dalam Pandangan Gereja Katolik*, h. 111-112.

After going through several plains in the dialogue, a person will reset in the seventh level to return to his own personal faith (self-criticism). Self-criticism makes a person more aware of their religion, whether it is confirmed or reprimanded. Interreligious dialogue does not necessarily result in the same religious perspective. Religious dialogue aims to promote understanding of one's own faith as well as other people's religions. In practice, interreligious dialogue seeks to enhance, trust, respect, and foster a sense of "us/we" through greater understanding. Of course, there is a renewal of education and learning in the process of gaining understanding through honesty, openness, and active interaction with one another.³¹ As a result, intra-religious dialogue might be defined as the summoning of one's faith to another religion. Deep contacts between religions and faiths have resulted in substantial changes and developments in their own faiths and religions.

The significance of Pondok Damai's interfaith dialogue engagement activities

Pelita organized numerous activities, one of which being Pondok Damai, to promote peace and harmony among religious communities. Pondok Damai is a group of youngsters from various faiths and beliefs who get together to promote harmony in diversity. Pondok Damai participants comprehend one other's beliefs, religious traditions, and distinctions. The engagement of the participants, the committee, and the person in charge of the light is unavoidable; all of them contribute to the accomplishment of the Pondok Damai activities.

Pondok Damai activities bring together people from all backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue. Communication permits persons who hold opposing viewpoints to exchange ideas and opinions. The outcomes of this communication have the potential to develop and transform

³¹ Kadayifci-Orellana, "Inter-Religious Dialogue and Peacebuilding."

participants' misconceptions about other religions. Swidler believes that through discourse, each participant can learn from the others and thereby 'transform' and 'grow'.³² So it's no doubt that the viewpoints of the dialogue participants will change and will not return to the way it was before meeting other religions.

There are numerous and rigorous ways to participate in Pondok Damai activities. The participants, who included young people from various religions, met at the Avalokitesvara Buddhagaya Watugong Vihara. Participants come from various religious and cultural backgrounds, including Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Ahmadiyah.³³ Even though it was brief, the three-day, two-night event was sufficient to instill positive attitudes toward different religions in the attendees. Pondok Damai has succeeded in creating a forum for interreligious discourse between young as actors in dialogue, with the subject "Knitting Harmony, Removing Prejudice".

Mrs. Siti Rofi'ah³⁴ supervised a series of prejudice screening sessions in which participants shared their religious and spiritual experiences with one another. The participants took turns telling stories about how they discovered the truth and the beliefs they now hold in response to the question "Why do you have religion x?" Citta, which discusses her efforts to find God. Citta sought to worship in numerous places of worship in order to achieve serenity because she was born from a diverse religious background. As a result of his experiences with many religious rites, he discovered calm and stability in Buddhism.³⁵ The gathering proceeded until

³² Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: The Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interdeological Dialogue.", h. 30.

³³ The Interview with Shinta as one of the committee of the event, on Friday, July 15, 2022, in in Avalokitesvara Buddhagaya Watugong Vihara, Semarang.

³⁴ Siti Rofi'ah adalah dosen aktif Fakultas Syari'ah dan Hukum di Universitas Walisongo Semarang

³⁵ The transcript of the story of Citta, a Buddhist, one of the participants of Pondok Damai 2021.

all participants discussed “why religion x.” The aforementioned activities can be classified as belonging to the first stage of Banawiratma’s dialogue, namely the dialogue of life; they coexist in one location. It can also be classified as the fourth dialogue, which is characterized by the sharing of faith experiences in interfaith groups.³⁶ Where people deepen each other’s contemplative experiences, find, and follow the Creator of life.

Participants were invited to explore places of worship on the second day, including the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Congregation Mosque, the Atmodirono Holy Family Catholic Church, and Pura Agung Giri Natha.³⁷ Participants interacted with ustadz, pastors, and stakeholders in addition to visiting. They interact and dialogue in order to clear up any confusion about their perspectives on other religions. Analyzing the plains of Banawiratma reveals that religious leaders’ utterances are a method of retrieving traditions for their distinct faiths. This produces human concern, which is then followed by a societal examination of each faith.³⁸

The activity concludes with an evaluation in the form of positive and negative encounters with other religions. Despite being sensitive and unpleasant, each religion must be honest and self-critical. According to Swidler’s sixth commandment, every actor in dialogue must listen with openness and sympathy, even if it means agreeing with other religious discussion actors.³⁹ This is done to ensure that each religion preserves its religious traditions. The impact that happens after knowing whether or not the encounter was pleasant allows individuals to determine attitudes with other participants. This can aid in the healing of trauma for those

³⁶ Banawiratma et al., *Dialog Antarumat Beragama: Gagasan Dan Praktik Di Indonesia*, 10-11.

³⁷ Documentation of Pondok Damai 2021 schedule of events by the committee.

³⁸ Banawiratma et al., *Dialog Antarumat Beragama: Gagasan Dan Praktik Di Indonesia*, 10.

³⁹ Leonard Swidler, “The Dialogue Decalogue: The Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interdeological Dialogue,” in *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding* (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2014), 3.

who have had negative encounters with other religions. Not only that, but they can keep an attitude toward different religions that can be accepted as a joyful experience.

The series of events in Pondok Damai, beginning with sharing religious and spiritual experiences, visits to various places of worship, dialogue with religious leaders, and evaluation by accepting pleasant and unpleasant experiences with other religions, can be explicitly called a form of interreligious engagement dialogue. Overall, the activity is a communication-based dialogue. Oral communication-based dialogue is the most effective approach for humans to develop memories with other individuals. Social reality memories can be generated, mirrored, and even invented. As a result, memory alters prior memories through time, which can be built by the social framework environment. The environment's influence can help to alter the stigma of the past, which is not yet clear with a new paradigm that is more open to different religions. Halbwachs asserted that the memory of past images can be rebuilt using society's prevalent ideas.⁴⁰

Beyond Interreligious Dialogue: Pelita as Interreligious Venue for Youngsters in Pondok Damai

Pondok Damai, with all of its activities, is one of the many activities founded by Pelita. This activity aims to foster peace through humanitarian efforts. Pelita and its members interpret harmony differently since peace equals harmony. Harmony, according to them, means sustaining tolerance implies respect, togetherness will always produce beauty, harmony and peace are an indivisible oneness, harmony means equal - nothing is greater or inferior, difference is destiny, and harmony is a gift and a gift from Almighty.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. Lewis A. Coser (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 40.

⁴¹ The Interview with Erasmus as chief of the committee of the event on Friday, Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy | Vol. 3, No. 2, Mei - Oktober 2022

As aforementioned, different inter-religious dialogues take place in Pondok Damai. These activities effectively implement the plains or moments in the dialogue that are summarized in the seven stages. Life dialogue is a representation of everyday life that can occur anywhere and by anyone. They are involved and attached to one other since they are in direct contact and live next to each other. Activities that are repeated cause them to discover commonalities, pleasures, and even concerns in daily life, resulting in a sense of mutual care. To develop peace via discourse and action, all components of society must be involved and cooperate. Responding to intolerant challenges in society requires both grassroots initiatives and elite answers.⁴² Based on what Pelita has done, the majority of its actions can be classified as engagement in interreligious dialogue.

Furthermore, the author will use an appreciative inquiry approach to examine how Pelita contributes to the interfaith discourse that occurs. This approach can be used as an alternative to knowing a problem and can provide elements and processes for analysis. Appreciative inquiry, in terms of language, is the governance of social constructionist theory and its application to governance and organizational reform. *SOAR is an analysis developed by appreciative inquiry (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)*.⁴³ Strengths and Opportunities are indicators of strategic analysis, whereas aspirations and results are indicators of appreciating objectives. The following are the findings from an examination of Pelita's embodiment of religious discussion dynamics utilizing appreciative inquiry and SOAR analysis:

July 15, 2022, in Avalokitesvara Buddhagaya Watugong Vihara, Semarang.

⁴² Banawiratma et al., *Dialog Antarumat Beragama: Gagasan Dan Praktik Di Indonesia*, h. 125-126.

⁴³ J.B. Banawiratma, "Proses Teologi Praktis Melalui Appreciative Inquiry," *Gema Teologika* 37, no. 2 (2013), 124-126.

Strengths	Opportunities
Pelita’s main assets are interfaith youth, partnerships with religious leaders, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.	Pelita’s greatest opportunity is to use the media and the strength of its members to participate in regional religious activities.
Aspirations	Results
Pelita’s ideal future is one of reduced conflict and harmonious religious life.	Becoming a well-known organization that succeeds in promoting peace is a measurable outcome.

Knitter emphasized that the meaning of interfaith dialogue based on social action is a necessity and a priority.⁴⁴ Conversation or dialogue, in his opinion, only explores, comprehends, and learns the teachings, doctrines, and practices of other religions. Knitter compares himself to an anthropologist who merely sees things from the outside, without delving into society’s complicated dynamics. In addition, Knitter adds that the main contribution of dialogue of action is to react to postmodern and particular criticisms of interreligious dialogue. Because people who engage in dialogue have the ability to uncover and even create similarities in the midst of variety. Catherine Cornille emphasized “virtues for dialogue” in terms of discourse, implying that social interaction will be able to uncover what unifies religions without limiting or exploiting what makes them distinct.⁴⁵

Diana Eck supports Cornille’s viewpoint by stating that societal diversity is not an insurmountable barrier. Eck attempts to transform it into a chance for discourse. The lively discussion elements extend from one person to the next. Engaging in discussion does not imply abandoning existing commitments, but rather creating space for new commitments

⁴⁴ Paul F. Knitter, “Inter-Religious Dialogue and Social Action,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille, First (Oxford, 2013), h. 138.

⁴⁵ Knitter, h. 140.

to give each other, receive understanding of new things, and, of course, change, transformation.⁴⁶

Pelita holds numerous forums in each of its activities, which are attended by people from all walks of life. Pelita welcomes interfaith youths from the affluent community to the grassroots. The youth are expected to carry on Pelita's struggle as future generations. Pelita succeeded in contributing to the dynamics in it and supporting the peace movement by departing from the desires of the people of Semarang, who also rejected unpleasant activities in the form of religious and belief conflicts. It is envisaged that the SOAR analysis would serve as a reference for Pelita to further create relationships in order to attain the specified aims.

Conclusion

Interfaith youth activities in Pondok Damai are defined as engagement in interreligious dialogue. All layers of society are involved, which in this case are the Pelita pioneers, personnel, committees, and participants as well. Pondok Damai has a number of programs in practically every sector to enhance the practice of dialogue. Pondok Damai is intended to bring together interfaith youths, develop understanding of various religions, and solve problems as a family. Meanwhile, Pelita as a whole is involved in a variety of inter-religious dialogue dynamics in the Semarang area. Pelita has been successful in presenting a variety of platforms where not only canonical teachings and practices of one religion and another are discussed, but also social interaction that eliminates individual prejudices against other religions 'from within.' One of Pelita's success factors in the dynamics of religious dialogue is the use of external and internal features in the form of media and the spirit of peace from members and interfaith youth. The objective of living together cannot be adequately

⁴⁶ Diana L Eck, "Is Our God Listening? Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism," in *Encountering God* (Boston.: Beacon Press, 2003), h. 23.

realized without the participation of all parties. Participation and a sense of belonging must be prioritized in a holistic perspective. According to the facts stated above, Pelita's dialogue activities as a community movement in the field of interreligious dialogue emphasize its experience in action dialogue, the sixth level of Banawiratma's moments of dialogue.

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