

Promoting Peace Education in Ambon through Developing Strategic Alliances

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Abstract—Soegijapranata Catholic University has developed Peace Education Learning in Ambon, one of Indonesia's Post Conflict Areas. It is designed for students to have more realistic pictures and based on local wisdom in initiating and building peace in their communities. Considering that a lot of young people do not go to universities but they experience their daily life within pluralistic society, it is also necessary to provide them peace education. The important idea is to develop strategic alliances with all stakeholders in post conflict areas. Peace education is also possibly disseminated to some parties like the head of village, NGOs, local government, traditional leaders and community leaders that are expected to see and even to implement the peace education module and activities in any kind of community education activity.

Index Terms—Peacebuilding education, strategic alliances, post conflict areas.

I. INTRODUCTION

After the Ambon religious conflict in 1999-2002, there are still trauma and prejudice remaining among the Moslem and Christian communities that even involve students as young generations [1]. It is a bad situation because the students are supposed to become agents of change and agents of development in their community in the future. Based on this fact, restoring the role of students as pioneers of living in harmony in diversity and within their respective community is very urgent. Moreover, the conflict resolution of Ambon that was not done in a comprehensive manner had left fairly complicated issues. The conflicting parties and government emphasize peaceful settlement instantaneously without understanding that peace should be dynamic, participatory, and long-term.

This means peace requires justice and the rule of law and order. One of the thorny issues faced by today Ambon people is residential segregation; they are grouped into two, Muslim's and Christian's residential sites. The segregation was more intensified after Maluku conflict in 1999 that made the the spaces of interaction between the groups minimized [2]. In other words, there is a lack of public space for the two group to make interaction, to create cross-cutting affiliation, etc. If this situation is not smartly and wisely corrected, it will bring a potential of further conflict outbreak. This means the people of Ambon has not yet reached a strong and primary level of social integration and this means that other conflicts will potentially happen in the future.

Social and religious based conflict happening at Ambon some years ago were very bitter experiences because Ambon

has factually had its own defense mechanism in overcoming any social conflict manifesting. The mechanism is in the form of local wisdom that leads the communities to live in harmony and coexistence. On the other hand, the students who were expected to be the agents in peace building had lost their role and act during the conflicts.

The previous research have successfully dug and described relevant local knowledge and inserted it into peace education modules [3]-[8]. Therefore, it is then to formulate a grand strategy to create peace in the conflict areas by placing students as the prime actors. Furthermore, peace education based on local wisdom is to be implemented by having extra-curricular activities and an evaluation at the end of the activities [8]. Based on these learning process, the students are expected to feel, to get advantages, and to be able to deploy a wide range of positive things to the surrounding community.

The next steps in order to sharpen and expand the peace education is to promote the results to the relevant parties, that is academicians, local leaders, government and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in order to become the feedback for policy and generalization making process and to disseminate as well as to synchronize them to lead for a peaceful life. In order to maintain peace education will require institutional strengthening and networking, so the cooperation and network between stakeholders will enhance the scope of peace aeduction and therefore will ensure the sustainability of the program. The involvement of the government is also very important because thr government will support for of legalization of the program and also develop the sustainability.

This activity is also expected to develop strategic alliances of the students and lecturers involved in peace education with other stakeholder, such as local youth groups, the NGOs, Government Agency and Local Leader in Ambon. In addition, these programs are also to promote the students to become agents of change and stimulators to realize peace in Ambon [8]. This situation will enhance the level of application of peace building education, from campus to local communities.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Bengt Save Soderberg, the Secretary General of IDEA [9]. Horizontal violence in the third world countries is usually due to two elements, which often join and eventually become a trigger of a continuing conflict. The first element is called identity element, namely people mobilization in communal identity group based on race, religion, culture, language differences and the second is called distribution element that is mainly caused by the issues of economic resources distribution, social jealousy and political

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conditions in the society. Horizontal conflicts in Indonesia are, as matter of fact, mostly caused by social and economic gaps and social jealousy but it will be embarrassing for the conflicting parties to show that such reasons are to be the causes of their anger and aggressiveness [10]. In other words, they will be ashamed and humiliated if others assume that they are conflicting because they are poor and are moved by social and economic jealousy.

People are reluctant to provide supports for such issues but it will be different when it deals with certain primordial issues, especially dealing with religious ties. It is understandable because religious matters are to be the most sensitive issue that happens not only in Indonesia but in other countries as well. It is common then that religion and religious matters are easily manipulated to be a trigger of social conflict. In surface a conflict seems to be a religious conflict but actually it is just a camouflage of some other reasons or causes, especially social and economic gap [11]. The conflicts in Ambon, Poso and Sampit and Papua are examples of such religion based conflicting situation in Indonesia.

Ambon is interesting to study because the conflicts happened several times based on the same reason for religious issue although many know that it is more economic and even political. Religious issue will always be easily manipulated because it is very sensitive so that it will be able to recruit, aggregate, and to move people as conflicting actors. Ambon is known as an area that has different strong religious followers, especially Moslems and Christian. In Poso, Central Sulawesi, has similar experience with Ambon. Both Poso and Ambon are frequently used to be examples and topics of discourses about horizontal conflicts based on religious issues [5]

Diversity is factually one of the distinguishing characteristics of Indonesian society. A religious matter is always to be a sensitive issue but the Indonesian history has proven that religions within Indonesian society have lived together in peaceful harmony since the early days of independence until the early 2000's. Though, indeed, some incidents of arson and destruction of worship buildings had occurred in some places, the impacts were not as bad as and as wide as that occurred in Ambon and Poso. By the name of 'truth', the religion doctrine is often used to be justification for destroying, burning, attacking and even killing others having with different religious affiliations and ideologies.

Losses caused by religion-based horizontal conflicts both in Ambon and Poso are huge. These losses are not only casualties but also injuries and enormous economic losses. For example, in Ambon riots of July-August 1999 at least 31 people were killed, 60 people were seriously injured and more than 160 people were slightly injured. Economic losses in the violence of Ambon in 1999 are estimated more than 1.3 trillion rupiahs or 100 billion US Dollar [12]. Almost all worship places (both mosques and churches) were badly damaged because of being destroyed and burned in conflict period.

The situation was very tense at that time so that more than 60,000 people were in exodus and displaced to the border areas considered safer. Beside Ambon, Poso conflict was another huge conflict in Indonesia. Talking about the conflict of Poso the losses were also terrible. Although the situation in the two regions are now quite good, hundreds mosque and

church were demolished during the conflict period and the potential of continuing riots as latent dangers are still highly possible.

Some areas in Indonesia, including Ambon and Poso in Central Sulawesi, are known as the areas having strong and fanatical religious ties. Ambon, for example, once was a center of Protestant religion when Protestant missionaries first arrived there. It causes the people in the regions are highly sensitive to religion values and the things associated with religious learning. In other words, if a religious learning is done in appropriate way, it will be able to become a sort of impregnable fortress to face threats from outside [13].

Thus, intensive peace building education in the the post conflicting areas will be able to build awareness or to reinforce existing awareness of the importance of religion as a foundation to deal with the infiltration threat social, cultural, and economic from outside. The local wisdom has lived and even then does not conflict with religion values and has been proven for hundreds of years as a philosophy of social life in those areas. Therefore peacebuilding education enriched by local wisdom will educate the students to become tolerant each other and they can develop trust with other communities, and also revitalize their own local wisdom that teach them how to live in harmony with other.

III. PEACE EDUCATION MODULE

The peace education module enriched by the existing local wisdoms was developed by integrating the existing local wisdoms in Ambon and Poso into the eight universal values and the existing religion education in Ambon and Poso. The module consists of eight chapters, each chapter reflects the universal value integrated with the existing local wisdoms of Ambon in learning process, religion experience and reflection. The cases implemented in each part was a real cases that ever happened in the conflicting areas. Therefore, the contextualization of the module was fit with the real situation in the conflicting areas. The module also exercised some local wisdoms in each part to connect, integrate and revitalize the local wisdom with the universal values in Ambon.

Then the peace building module was implemented in some partner university in Ambon, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Social Politics Pattimura University Ambon, Postgraduate Program Ambon Islamic State University and Faculty of Theology Christian University Ambon. The team also sending the modules to some local religion leader and customary leader in Ambon and Poso to get input for the relevance of contextualization and revitalitation initiation of local wisdom in the module developed by the team. The entire partner universities were asked to provide input, to criticize and evaluate the level of applicability, and the tangency point of values in the religiosity teaching module enriched with local wisdoms taught at each university. The inputs from partner universities were also obtained by interviews, classroom observations, and focussed group discussions involving the course coordinator and the lecturers of religion course in each university.

Based on the input of the local religion leaders, local customary leaders, and also the evaluation and monitoring to

the implementation of peace education in Pattimura University Ambon, Islamic State University Ambon and Christian University Ambon, the team has made some revisions and refinements to the module. Module revision was very carefully and thoroughly accomplished because the module would be offered to many universities to implement.

The module that had been corrected and adjusted could be a reference of peace education model and it would be shared to other universities in Indonesia. To support the module implementation, the team also implement some extra curricula activities that involve students of different campus and religion, for example students peace camp activities, mangrove tree panting and save the Ambon bay activities. These activities are expected to enhance the students' cooperation, tolerance and peace understanding.

IV. PROMOTING PEACE EDUCATION FROM CAMPUS TO COMMUNITIES

This research is also designed to promote peace education by inserting the content of the module and relevant extra curricula activities to the community education and developing strategic alliances among stakeholders in Ambon. The stakeholders of peace building initiation - the university lecturer and students, Non Governmental Organizations, peace building activists, local government, traditional leaders and community leaders, will spread the virus of peace not only within the campus but also outside communities [8]. Such a collaboration could be a legitimation to make the implementation stronger and have broader prevalence. In order to achieve the objectives, the team design some activities and involve some stakeholders in Ambon to develop the peace building initiatives and integrate in a strategic alliances.

A. Project Participants

The intervening objective of this activity is the students, after accomplishing the peace education, will be able to act as agents of change in bringing about peace, particularly at the ex conflict areas of Ambon. It is important to invest young people to participate and ensure their energies in channeling towards sustainable peace. They are the greatest resource to implement peace education in achieving reconciliation by fostering dialogue and mutual understanding that cuts across ethno-religious lines, which serves to transform conflict into sustainable peace [8]. The final objective is Ambon's post-conflict communities that are expected to coexist in peace and to have mutual respect each other although they have different religious background.

There are some participants involved in peace bulding strategic alliances in Ambon.:

- 1) University Lecturer and Students. This movement involves The University Management, Lecturers and Students in Pattimura University Ambon, Islamic State University Ambon, Indonesian Christian Moluccans University Ambon and Soegijapranata Catholic University.
- 2) Government Agency. The spesific and relevant government agency involved in this movement is The Local Government Planning and Development Agency

in Ambon Area.

- 3) Non Governmental Organisation : The NGOs participated in this activities are : Ambon Reconciliation and Mediation Center (ARMC), Tifa Foundation, Kiranis Foundation, Titian Damai Foundation and also Hekaleka Foundation,
- 4) Students Peace Building Association : Non Violence Study Circle that was developed by some Ambon students that has concern in peace building
- 5) Local youth community. There are some Ambon local sport and cultural youth community involved in this program.
- 6) Traditional and Community Leader : This program also involved the Raja and Latupatti, the head of local communities in Ambon
- 7) Ambon Peace Building Activists : There are some peace building activist in Ambon that have been some years become the partners in this project, They are : Dr Abidin Wakanno, Zakiyah Samal, Rev Jacky Manuputty, Mr John Lefmanut, Professor Dr A Watloly, Professor Dr Tony Pariela, and also Dr John Dirk Passalbessy.

Each participants will share resources and collaborate to implement the general strategic alliances and will play the important role to make sure the sustainability of the peace education program

B. Project Activities

There are some activities designed to implement the peace building strategy in Ambon that involve all the peace building stakeholders above.

- 1) Initiation activity to build strategic alliances, communication, promotion and dissemination of the peace building activities that have been and will be carried. The purpose of this activity is to make the stakeholders understand the urgency and able to play an active role in strategic alliances
- 2) To conduct Focused Group Dicussions (FGDs) involving the stakeholders and to build strategic alliances to obtain inputs from the modeling strategic alliances, The purpose of the FGDs is to determine key persons to be members of the working team and give some useful input for the project implementation.
- 3) To formulate strategic alliance models that can be accepted by the stakeholders. The strategic alliances model have to be agrred and approved by all stakeholders because there will be a strategic role played by each stakeholder that will be integrated in the project implementation.
- 4) To organize a kick off workshop on strategic alliances, The purpose of the workshop is to analyze fitness of the model implementation that will be run by the relevant parties. The workshop is also aimed to initiate and integrate strategic alliance implementation program between stakeholders.
- 5) To implement the the strategic alliances activities. There are some strategic alliances activities implemented, i.e : Simultan Chess Competition, Local Music Performance, Greening The Ambon Bay, Cross Religion Student Camp, Discussion and also Interfaith

Dialogue. Participants of strategic alliances activities are the university students and lecturers, sport and cultural group from both Moslem and Christian community, local youth groups and also local NGOs.

- 6) To develop the sustainable program involving all stakeholders. The strategic alliances models that have been developed will be processed and operationalized by the working team. The team will make sure the program implementation by the stakeholders of the peace education will sustain and give some benefit to all stakeholders and the final target is a peaceful coexistence of the communities in Ambon
- 7) To evaluate the implementation strategic alliances activities. The team will asses the effectiveness of the implementation and the program conducted by the stakeholders in the strategic alliance team and give some input and suggestion for the sustainability of the program.

The project effectiveness then will be assessed by the number of involvement of the students, the NGOs', and the local and community leaders that will enhance the sustainability of the program. The program also will be disseminated by the some publications in academic journals and relevant mass media in Indonesia.

C. Project Sustainability

It is necessary to employ an innovative program to engage youth in building social cohesion and promoting intercultural understanding to foster peace and development. Some important measures should be taken to overcome the latent danger of horizontal conflicts, by having a new principle and action that is "segregation to integration". This means the notion of segregation that often causes exclusivity should be directed to a blending having inclusivity spirit.

Peace-building should aim to a constructive transformation of social relations that will open not only for communication but also cooperation so that it will manifest social cohesion. The role of students and young people in general is to become very important, especially to encourage cross-group communication and to make a dialogue as a way problem solution [8]

Some supporting programs are possibly designed to build social cohesion as a preventive measure to prevent horizontal conflicts. Conflict resolution based on or oriented to institution's structural development will be boosted by a forum of communication empowering "a public communication space" and to build a mutual agreement and mutual understanding based on partnership. Building a public space is really a need because in such a space communication and assimilation become possible. Activities at the public space will educate the people visiting the values of togetherness of different people but united in one nation, that is the Indonesian nation. The motto of Indonesia, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, Unity in Diversity, will not then longer remain just as a slogan but it is really alive because it is being revived.

Peace at Ambon really requires a strong role of students and young people in general to build confidence, diminish mutual mistrust, open dialogue in order to develop communication and intensive cooperation between interfaith groups and ethnicities. However, young people can not let

alone in this effort. The important idea is to form strategic alliances of some parties like the head of village, non governmental organisation, local government, traditional and community leaders in any kind of community education activity. Therefore, the virus of peace is spread not only within the campus but also outside communities. Such a collaboration could be a legitimation to make the peace building implementation stronger and have broader prevalence

V. CONCLUSION

The religious conflicts in Ambon are only the examples of many regions of Indonesia that having potentiality of social and religious conflict, so we need to develop the comprehensive peace education strategy to relieve the conflict. We begin the strategy by implementing peace building education for university students in Ambon. After the implementation, the students in Ambon are expected to have a better understanding about their strategic role as young generation and agents of change for peace building in conflicting areas. To enhance and strengthen the impact of the peace building education, then we develop strategic alliances among peace building stakeholders in Ambon, the university lecturer and students, youth sport and cultural groups, non governmental organisations, peace building activists, local government, traditional and community leaders.

By integrating all stakeholders, the virus of peace will spread not only within the campus but also could reach the broader communities. The team also design and implement some relevant activities that involved all peace building stakeholders in Ambon to develop the peace building events and collaboration between communities. This meeting and collaboration could make the implementation of peace building strategy will be stronger and have broader prevalence. In the long run, it is expected that the strategic alliances will enhance the inter religious understanding and tolerance and also creating the the sustainable peace building in Ambon.

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