

NICMCR FGD POKJA-Gender

November 26, 2018

Library Discussion Room STFT Jakarta

This is the first meeting of NICMCR's Pokja Gender, which took place following the STFT conference on LGBTIQ in Jakarta. The session opened with a short explanation on the history of NICMCR. The focus of the NICMCR is on Dutch-Indonesian cooperation relating to the field of religion, especially Islam and Christianity, to conduct joint research, exchanges, seminars, and all matters relating to the relations of the two countries / religions. In the boardmeeting of May 2018, it was determined to establish Working Groups to help the Steering Committee with the implementation of the organization's policy around important topics, which are: gender, ecology, and education.

An important proposal for a Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies was introduced by Stephen Suleeman. This Center aims to focus on issues of violence against women, domestic violence, employment discrimination, feminist theology, LGBTIQ, Queer theology, etc. Studies will be interdisciplinary: theology, anthropology, sociology, etc. Furthermore, the Study Center is expected to provide training in churches and counseling for those who struggle with issues of domestic violence, sexual violence, LGBTIQ.

The discussion elaborated on the plan of the Center for a half yearly journal. The problem is that results of research are only kept in the library because there are no journals to publish it.

But often journals are academic and do not reach the people on the ground. Preferable is a more artistic and more accessible form, like comics and infographics or music. Other suggestions were: websites or articles (summaries of journals) that are more accessible to young children.

In discussing the tasks of the Working Group, the group focused on issues that need to be addressed and themes related to those issues. In planning activities around those themes, the pokja should a.o. link scholars and practitioners, connect the situation in both Indonesia and the Netherlands, regard gender- and religious balance and disseminate developed and elaborated material to be socialized within the respective institutes

What are the gender-issues in the Netherlands and Indonesia?

It turned out that gender issues are revealed on different levels in these countries. In the Netherlands they center around inequality on wages, discrimination in terms of race and religion when applying for jobs, gender inequality in the Muslim migrant communities, HIV AIDS among illegal migrants and fear of being stigmatized by their church or community.

In Indonesia, there ample issues around women. Human trafficking, health and reproductive health issues, child marriage, migrant workers, counterfeiting of (religious) identity, lack of women leadership, gender bias in churches, etc add up to the long list, concluding with sexual violence, attacks on LGBT, who are equated with communist, excluded from campuses, etc.

On the other side, it was also encouraging when the people sitting around the table shared how their institutions dealt with issues of advocating the rights of women, LGBT and other minority groups, such as pastoral care for African women with HIV/Aids in the Netherlands, collaboration of FBO's controlling the spread of HIV/Aids and counseling female sex workers in East Indonesia, empowering women into leadership up to the legislative level, trainings to counter radical interpretation of religious texts and trainings in contextual theology.

Looking at the diversity of issues, what can we do together in 2019, once the Pokja Gender is established?

Three major common issues came up:

1. Migration and gender (migration and gender). Religion is very influential on this issue. In the Netherlands, there are issues of discrimination for immigrants. In Indonesia there are also identity problems for migrant workers.

2. Gender and HIV AIDS.

In the Netherlands, this is an issue within the migrant (often undocumented) communities. In Indonesia, medication is still not accessible and women are victims of their spouse's sexual infidelities.

3. Gender-based violence.

This is often related to religious conservatism. The word "conservatism" is difficult for some to accept. In the Netherlands, vulnerable groups have to be converted in the name of religion. In Christianity, through exorcism (also the Biblicomedical technique) and in Islam: ruqiyah. In both religions there are types of cleansing packages which very much traumatize our LGBTIQ friends: if you are a lesbian, you will be raped by a close family with the aim of "establishing a corrective act". There is the term honored killing (halal blood).

In Indonesia, the word "sexuality" cannot be contained in state documents. The term gender has been adopted by the state (legalized in the time of Gusdur) and is easier to accept.

The meeting elected and appointed Christin Hutubessy as Coordinator. A core team, in charge of the strategic planning consists of: Iklilah, Stephen Suleeman, Lifter Marbun, Christin, Ruard (author of Adam and Wawan with Lifter), and June Beckx (ex officio).

Full minutes are with the Coordinator, info@nicmcr.org

Present were:

1. Khanis Suvianita (Nusantara Style)
2. Stephen Suleeman (STFT Jakarta)
3. June Beckx (NICMCR)
4. Erich von Marthin (STFT Jakarta)
5. Rika Rosvianti / Neqi (Freelancer)
6. Lifter T. Marbun (ASCLR-VU)
7. Iklilah Muzayyanah DK (Fatayat NU)
8. M. Dluha Luthfillah (UIN Yogyakarta)
9. Elina W. Otu (JPIT) (minutes)
10. Srdjan Sremac (VU)
11. Christin Hutubessy (Oase Intim) (chair)
12. Alifatul Arifiati (Fahmina)