

## **Narrative Report Pokja Gender & Religion NICMCR 2021**

### *1. Publication on Experiences of activism carried out by religious communities / organizations.*

On November 24, 2019, a workshop held by the NICMCR Pokja Gender and Religion provided information on the strength of religious studies, advocacy, and community-level movements of Christians and Muslims in its network. Three main reflections were observed in this workshop, religious studies, reflections on religious methodologies, and experiences of activism in religious communities. Religious studies in developing alternative discourses was one of the characteristics of religion-based gender activist movements. The existing studies of the Pokja further strengthen awareness around the contestation of religious interpretation and understanding, both referring to the meaning of Islamic and Christian texts and religious practices embraced in Muslim and Christian communities. This academic process gives rise to methodological reflections that can be used as an asset and an alternative method to relate to critical discourses on gender and religion.

The wealth of knowledge and experience is an important treasure to be documented in the form of an anthology book. There are three main agendas underlying this endeavor. First, the importance of preserving the experiences of Pokja members, so that real accomplishments, often forgotten in history, are given a track record. Second, to articulate the reality and the treatment experienced by vulnerable and marginalized groups through development of thinking skills and third, to create a space for inspiration and good examples based on the experiences of Pokja members and which can be developed in other discourses and communities. All these interests will lead to a vision of a more dignified life, without distinction of gender, race, ethnicity, class and other identities.

Work process:

- A small team was set up to work out the details and progress for the documentation and publication of the bilingual anthology book
- In July 2021, the team sent a call for papers to the members of the Consortium and participants whom attended the 2019 workshop and other Pokja activities
- The team received 15 writings, 14 from Indonesia and 1 from the Netherlands
- Upon revision of the writings by the team, 12 papers were revised and translated
- From January till March 2022, two editors will edit the articles in bahasa Indonesia and English.

There were some challenges to meet the dates based on the timeline: this applied to both the authors and the team. Initially it was expected that this book would be launched in December

2021, but we were not able to meet that, due to the meticulous process and overloaded schedules of authors and team. We hope to be able to launch this book in March or April 2022.

## 2. Webinar

The pokja gender & religion organized 4 (four) webinars on the following topics:

a. 'Women, Nature and Religion' on 5 July 2021

Etjie Doek was the first speaker in the webinar. Her presentation was titled "The Impact of Cyclone Seroja to Women in Coastal Area of Kupang City". Her presentation first highlighted the marginalization of women in the fisheries sector. The second presenter, Dr. Mia Siscawati has an academic background and is a lecturer in Gender Studies at the University of Indonesia. Her presentation was titled "Feminist Perspectives on the Environment". The third presenter was Geke van Vliet who spoke about her dissertation on the vision of churches in Amsterdam in the urban area of climate action and sustainability.

The webinar was moderated by Muhammad Dluha.

b. 'The Role of Women in Extremism' on 28 September 2021

The webinar was moderated by Khanis Suvianita, a Ph.D. candidate at Indonesia Consortium for Religious Studies at Gajah Mada University. The webinar featured two speakers, Dr. Martijn de Koning of Radboud University and Dr. Milda Istiqomah of Brawijaya University. The webinar covered multidimensional aspects including the lack of gender dimension in responding to religious extremism.

c. 'Why can't I love the one I love' on 3 November 2021

Apparently, the debate about the acceptance of LGBT, whether motivated by religion or not, is far from over and can sometimes turn ugly, both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia. Discrimination and violence against these groups still prevail. Moderated by Nailah, a Muslim gender activist and member of the Center for Gender Studies (Pusat Riset Gender) of the University of Indonesia, four resource persons share their opinions and experiences from Christian and Islamic perspectives, in responding inclusively to the challenges of sexual and gender diversity.

Speakers were Dr. Ruard Ganzevoort, Dean of the Faculty of Theology and a Professor of Practical Theology at Vrije Universteit Amsterdam, Mufidah Cholil lecturer at Syari'ah Faculty of the State Islamic University (Universitas Islam Negeri – UIN) of Maulana Malik Ibrahim in Malang and Dr. Teguh Wijaya Mulya, lecturer at the University of Surabaya,

d. 'Meet the Faces of Ibu Bumi' on 26 November 2021

On November 26, 2021, the Netherland Indonesia Consortium on Muslim-Christian Relations (NICMCR) organized a webinar under the topic "Meet the Faces of *Ibu Bumi*: Women's endeavours in saving their ancestral land in Kendeng". The topic highlighted

the struggles of local farmers to the conversion of areas around the Kendeng mountains to mining and industrial zones and the building of a cement factory. The land is inhabited by farmers who have been working their rice paddies for generations. Cement factories would destroy the rice paddies and threaten the sources of clean water below the mountains used for drinking, domestic use and farming. Women farmer later organized themselves into a movement that made peaceful protests and appealed for saving their ancestral land from being used as a site for the building of a cement factory.

Prof. Dr. Frans Wijzen of Radboud University in the Netherlands opened the webinar. The webinar was moderated by Marius Koelink.

The webinar featured the so-called '*Kartini Kendeng*', a group of nine female farmers, who held several protests, one of them in front of the Merdeka Palace. They were later referred to as the Kartini's from Kendeng after the name of RA Kartini, who symbolizes the Indonesian women's emancipation. They are part of the Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng (JM-PPK, People's Network for the Kendeng Mountains), a CSO that actively opposes the cement construction of PT. Semen Indonesia. Mr. Gunritno, leader of the JM-PPK, was also present. Speakers were Dr. Dewi Candraningrum (Jejer Wadon Studio) who wrote many articles on ecofeminism, gender and authority, Zaimatus Sa'diyah (Radboud University) and Sukinah (Kartini Kendeng).

At the last two webinars, two interpreters were present to translate into bahasa Indonesia and English respectively. This way we hoped to reach more participants who are interested in the topics but are not bilingual.

### 3. *Research on Impact of Seroja Tropic Cyclone on women/ wives of coastal fisherman at the coastal city of Kupang*

Jaringan Perempuan Indonesia Timur (JPIT) as one member of pokja gender in partnership with NICMCR have been doing this research since September.

Pokja gender gave input on the research proposal through an internal Focus group discussion and the first webinar "Women, Nature and Religion on 5 July 2021". Etji Doek, director JPIT, was one of the speakers that presented the research planning.

#### **Research questions:**

1. How was the life of coastal women before, and after the Seroja cyclone ?
2. What is the role of women in the response process of the post-Seroja disaster?
3. What is the role of religion as a faith and as a religion in the disaster response process with respect to coastal women?

**Core rationale: Strengthening social capital in religious communities and institutions**

- How is the relationship of trust in pre-disaster, response disaster emergency and post-disaster activities. What is the situation of women as spearhead/ breadwinner in meeting the daily needs. From whom do they borrow (debt)? How do they trust their neighbors (about emotional closeness). Is there solidarity in the community?
- How can the recovery of coastal communities be expedited?
- The role of community, environment, government, private sector and religious institutions in providing assistance in post-disaster situations (disaster response). How is assistance provided, is it only to fellow believers or also to people outside?
- Is there a coming together of interfaith communities and leaders in organizing aid stations?
- Recommendations to the government on emergency response situations and recommendations what can be done by government, religious institutions and JPIT.

We hope that the JPIT team will be able to launch the results of the research in March 2022.

The coordinators,



Christine Hutubessy



Yus Sa'diyah-Broersma