

Pokja Inclusive Religious Education / Costly Tolerance Report 2022

1. Conference

The theme of the online conference of **February 23-24** was “Prevention of Radicalisation through (Religious) Education”. For this conference we invited scholars and teachers of Religious Education and individuals or parties who are interested to be involved in the mental and spiritual development of the young generation. 60 people involved in education participated through zoom and about 900, many among them teachers of Islamic religious education, followed the conference through live streaming. Respected scholars and activists in related fields of (academic) education from Indonesia, The Netherlands, Germany, Turkey and Malaysia were invited to present their thoughts. Full report of the conference at: <https://nicmcr.org/religious-inspiration-gives-space-to-bridge-radicalism/>

The conference, which was moderated by Dr. Gé Speelman aimed at:

1. Exchange and sharing through experiences, research and best practices;
2. Concrete collaboration between teachers and scholars in the countries mentioned;
3. Developing educational strategies in the field of religious education through research and development concerning prevention of (violent) extremism.

The Netherlands-Indonesia Consortium for Muslim-Christian Relations (NICMCR) – Pokja Costly Tolerance/Inclusive Religious Education (CT/IRE) International Conference

Proudly Present International Conference on

PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION THROUGH (RELIGIOUS) EDUCATION

Keynote Speech: Prof. Dr. Al Makin, M.A., Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta
Keynote Speech: Dr. Zuhairi Abidin, Head of Department of Islamic Education

23 February 2022 | 09.45 AM - 12.00 PM CET | 14.45 - 17.00 WIB

24 February 2022 | 09.45 AM - 12.00 PM CET | 14.45 - 17.00 WIB

Join us:
Zoom Meeting ID: 878 8757 5592 | Passcode: pokjaire
Live Streaming: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta
For more information: <https://nicmcr.org> | io.uin-suka.ac.id

In his opening remarks on the first day of the conference, Prof. Dr. Al Makin., M.A, Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga stated that interfaith dialogue is critical to prevent radicalization and especially crucial considering the diversity in Indonesia, 6 official religions and 1300 religious' groups with members from 700 different ethnicities, where overlap between religious groups and political parties is inevitable. Therefore, a new understanding of religious diversity is needed. This new understanding, said Makin, should be focused on isolated religious beliefs caused by an exclusive attitude towards religiosity in education. Additionally, close personal relationships were also pivotal in shaping inclusive religious views. Young people can pursue meaningful conversations by having friends from various religious beliefs and groups.

The first panelist, Prof. Bert Roebben, started the discussion with a quote “The only true way of creating global peace is not only through educating our minds but also our hearts and our souls.” (Malala). He stated that inter-religious education requires a succinct understanding of personal identity and awareness of each and every individual being unique creatures of God. Teachers and students must be a part of conversations from within. “Performative religious educations” meets “learning in the presence of others.”

The second panelist, Alissa Wahid, continued the discussion with views from contemporary Indonesia. Religious education is a medium to prevent religious education through enforcing inclusive religious attitudes. She pointed to legal formalistic-exclusive practices (Takhiri Ideology) and substantive-inclusive religious practices (Ukhuwah Trilogy by KH. Ahmad Shiddiq). Although both paradigms see religion as a worldview, they differ in interpretations and applications, according to

Alissa Wahid. The former translates 'Islam Kaffah' as a religious obligation to unite Muslims in a formal Islamic State, while the latter sees Islam as substantive values that embrace all (inclusiveness). Prof. Stijn Sieckelinck referred to the existing study of the three pillars of radicalization, the need for significance, narratives that identify extreme violence as a means of achieving significance, and a social network that reinforces validation and rewards this narrative justification to use extreme violence. Education can play a role by filling this quest for significance, according to Sieckelinck. Teachers, according to Sieckelinck, should give their students space for learning processes because radicality can also be an opportunity for students to be more involved in activism as we witness more young people involved in social movements like climate strike or BLM in the United States. Therefore, the challenge is to tackle extremism without diminishing activism and idealism in current generations.

Dr. Omer Gurlesin takes his start in psychoeducation, explaining that a person might be a moderate Muslim and they would act as such on a particular event, but there will be a time where their fanaticism was shown in another event. The dialogical Self theory, according to Gurlesin, explains how individuals can be radicalized through processes of domination by influencers. Gurlesin states that a shift of focus is needed from formal education to other informal educational support (e.g. influencers) in the local area (and internet!) in which students live.

The second day of the conference started with a speech from prof. dr. Mualle Selcuk. She highlighted the importance of finding a common language to understand each other globally, at the same time keeping our own local identity. Her last point to the participants, who were mostly teachers, was the message that everyone needs some courage to teach harmony because we are living in a very conflictual world or even insistently conflictual work.

Dr. M. Wildan, continued the presentation, and informed about Ministry of Religious Affairs who has ordered all Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia to establish a center for moderate religiosity. These efforts will not only depend on the ministry, but the universities should ensure many inclusive religious teachers, whereas the government should provide the teachers with inclusive textbook. He expressed his concern about the extremism in a large number of books, published by private publishers, which contain a lot of intolerant content.

Dr. Mahnan Marbawi and Dr. Atik Tapipin jointly spoke about the role of the religious education teachers in confronting extremism in Indonesian junior and senior high schools. What the Association of Teachers of Islamic religious education (AGPAII) did to prevent extremism in schools, was preparing a handbook for students, introducing concepts of community development for the *Rohis* program and involving students in other programmes to prevent radicalism.

Mr. Alper Alasag, from the Netherlands added some important points. The radicalization of Muslim youngsters in the Netherlands is seen as an urgent problem. He and his team take young people's understanding of religion serious by way of strengthening their roots and creating space to stretch their wings. The module for education that Mr. Alasag and his colleagues have developed aims at broadening young people's horizons. An age-old game is updated and as *MirrorMind* included in the module.

Prof. Hussein Amzat strongly believes in a unique perspective from the Islamic philosophy, namely that the conflicts and problems we have today, all have something to do with the understanding of religion. From the perspective of philosophy, according to Hussein Amzat, we tend to philosophise in very different ways. These differences lead to many interpretations and concepts. In the case of religion, one of the misconceptions about religion leads to the problem of radicalism and terrorism.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Ina ter Avest expressed that for all scholars, researchers, teachers, students and their parents, the courage needed is to strive against the stream, to create safe spaces in which dissonant voices can be expressed, listened to, and can stand firm in the uncertainty.

2. Website 'KoranenBijbel'

The Dutch draft of the website 'KoranenBijbel' is launched; finalizing the texts for the Indonesian draft is work-in-progress.

In the Netherlands Ina ter Avest started with two small groups of interested laymen and women to work according to the method of Scriptural Reasoning – a method that is explained in detail at the website. The experiences of the (informal pilot) two small groups are promising.

3. Participation in AGPAII 4th quinquennial Congress

Since 2021, the Association of Islamic Religious Teachers in Indonesia (*Asosiasi Guru Pelajaran Agama Islam Indonesia, AGPAII*) sought closer contact with NICMCR by inviting representatives of NICMCR to speak during the presentation of their project of religious moderation education. The contact would aim at sharing experiences and mutual strengthening in projects of moderation and community development. Collaboration with representatives of the Dutch Society of Religious Educators (*Godsdienst Pedagogisch Genootschap*) was initiated in 2022. In particular, Dr Metsje Krol and Prof Jan van Doleweerd participate in exploring the possibilities of collaboration.

In October NICMCR was invited to attend an International conference at the AGPAII 4th Quinquennial Congress, Padang, Indonesia on the theme of "Mainstreaming Diversity in Public Schools". Purpose of the conference was to counter the challenges posed by transnational ideologies, terrorist radicalism and identity politics by:

- encouraging collaboration among CSO's on initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism and initiatives to stimulate religious moderation in public schools
- encouraging joint working groups on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and stimulating religious moderation in public schools
- strengthening community development through consolidation of CSO's.

Stakeholders are: 1. Principal 2. Teacher, rohis tutor 3. Student organization, rohis/rokris.



From the Netherlands, Alper Alasag, the coordinator of Pokja IRE, gave a presentation through zoom.

4. Coordinator for Indonesia

After completing the conference in February, the coordinator for Indonesia resigned the coordinatorship, due to a heavier workload at her institution, UIN Sunan Kalijaya Yogya. We thank her for her dedication during the time of her coordinatorship. The Pokja is pleased that Dr. Atik Tapipin, vice chair academic affairs at the Institute of Islamic Religious Education Manggala, is willing to take over the coordinatorship as of 2023.