Salam from Pesantren

Santri's Experience in Managing Media for Peace







Search for Common Ground
The WAHID Institute Seeding Plural and Peaceful Islam
P3M
Kingdom of the Netherlands

Salam from Pesantren

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Foreword

Stories about violence and violations against human rights are not new to people in Indonesia. These stories range from student brawls, bullying in schools, sexual harassment and violence, destruction of sites of worship, eviction of minority groups by majority groups and numerous bombing incidents. We can easily find these stories in print and online media, as well as on television. These stories often make us forget about the other stories, the ones about appreciation, respect, love and peace among human beings. Stories that are beautiful and touching, like the ones we hear from students in Indonesia's *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools).

The following stories come from ten *pesantren* in Indonesia that participated in Search for Common Ground (SFCG) Indonesia's project to promote peace and tolerance in *pesantren* across Indonesia. These *pesantren* are Sabilul Hasanah Banyuasin, Nahdhatul Ulum Maros, Qothrotul Falah Lebak, As-Shiddiqiyah Tangerang, YIC Al-Ghazali Bogor, Baitul Hikmah Tasikmalaya, Raudhatul Banat Cirebon, Al-Ihya Ulumaddin Cilacap, Al-Muayyad Surakarta and Darul Ma'arif Lamongan.

SFCG Indonesia implemented this two-year project from September 2011 to February 2014, in partnership with The Wahid Institute and Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M). With a total number of 18,000 schools across Indonesia, *pesantren* are the oldest basis of Islamic education in the country and highly influential in spreading tolerance and peace. Through the production of radio and short films by *pesantren* students or *santri*, SFCG Indonesia sought to encourage male and female *pesantren* leaders, teachers and students to be critical in dealing with problems of intolerance and radicalism, while also disseminating the values of tolerance and peace in their communities.

The stories documented in this book serve as a future reference of the project's successes. The book records the significant changes experienced by the *santri* and their teachers, when these changes occurred and the important lessons learned from this project.

Out of the ten *pesantren* that participated in the project, SFCG selected five *pesantren* (Sabilul Hasanah Banyuasin, Qothrotul Falah Lebak, Al-Ihya Ulumaddin Cilacap, Al-Muayyad Surakarta and Darul Ma'arif Lamongan) to provide stories that illustrate the changes mentioned above. This book summarizes seven stories from the perspectives of *pesantren* students, leaders and teachers.

It was a great pleasure to hear the beautiful stories from Arifin, Muhlisin, Susi, Neneng, Faiz and other students. Their stories have proven that teenagers from *pesantren* also have dreams and are concerned about their surroundings. They stand for peace and diversity and they celebrate it through radio, photography and documentary movies. It was a great pleasure to witness the admiration-filled eyes of the teachers and *pesantren* leaders when talking about their students, about the future of radio and documentary movies for peace.

This book of success stories is a part of SFCG's hard work for a diverse and peaceful Indonesia. It is done from an angle that complements the diversity of voices heard through the *pesantren* community radio stations, ideas formed through photography and scripts visualized by the *pesantren s*tudents through documentary movies. Along with the radio, photography and documentary movies, this book celebrates Indonesia's peaceful diversity.

Jakarta, January 2014

SFCG Indonesia

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Confidence with a Microphone and a Camera





Confidence with a Microphone and a Camera

"Hello QFM listeners, stay right where you are. Tune in to 107.7 QFM 'cause coming up next is our tips and tricks session brought to you by yours truly, Nining and Setia Foget. Don't go anywhere!"

Her voice sounded crisp, clear and chirpy as she demonstrated her ability to greet listeners when opening QFM radio's broadcast program. She had wanted to broadcast for this community radio operated by *Pondok Pesantren* Qothrotul Falah since 12th grade. Back then, she had to compete against other students who had also signed up for the position. Nining Sari Ningsih was happy beyond words when she was announced as one of the five chosen broadcast-

ers. She said, "Everyone can speak. But not everyone can be a broadcaster."

Like Nining, Cahyati or, as her friends call her, Ayat, also has a high pitched and loud voice. When she told her story of her early days of enrolling in Qothrotul Falah, she sounded well-versed and eloquent as if she were talking on her microphone during a broadcast session. Continuous, almost non-stop. She believes that her ability to express ideas and experiences are better trained by broadcasting on the radio. "Broadcasting is not merely talking, we have to be eloquent. It takes a lot of practice and the sessions must be useful for our listeners, so we also have to read up," she explained. By being fluent in discussing issues that she has read about and has mastered, Cahyati feels more confident when communicating with her friends.

Like other *pesantren* that participated in the project, the Qothrotul Falah *pesantren* started operating QFM in 2011. The *pesantren*, located in Lebak, Banten, has also established a documentary film team



that involves both male and female students. One of their documentary films titled *Shalawat* was successfully launched together with ten other movies about peace and tolerance produced by SFCG's partner *pesantren*. Both Nining and Cahyati were involved in the making of the documentary.

Cahyati explained the correlation between the theme of their video, *Shalawat*, with peace and tolerance. She feels at peace whenever she listens to *shalawat* chants and the choir, like the one at her *pesantren*. "Enmity is not possible, that kind of feeling just doesn't exist. In addition, we usually shake hands during the *shalawat* chanting," she said.

However, she and her friends observed that *shalawat* choirs are now rarely found in their surrounding communities and the video *Shalawat* is intended to reinstate this peaceful culture in *pesantren* within the community. Nining also mentioned, "The video is actually meant to raise awareness, because it has become so rare. That is what inspired us."

Nining and Ayat are only two of many *pesantren* students from Qothrotul Falah that participated in the radio and documentary video training program organized by SFCG. For the participants, the training not only developed their ability to use the camera, but also sharpened their perspective on peace and tolerance. Ayat felt moved to try and show the world the reality of *pesantren*, to change the perception that *pesantren* breed terrorists. She was inspired by the main character from the book *Hijab in Uncle Sam's Arms* (Derni, 2008), who tried to be as kind as possible to everyone in the United States, to show them that Islam is kind.



Ayat was deep in thought, trying to figure out the question that she will ask outsiders about *pesantren*. Nining was also thinking hard. "Maybe we should explain about Islam first. *Pesantren* can show people that Islam is peaceful and non-discriminative. *Pesantren* do not discriminate against people based on their social status, rich or poor are all seen as equals, students. Even though we do not know each other (at first), and we are not related to one another, we all love, protect and care about each other. This is the spirit of Islam. We have to help other people in times of need, even if they are non-Muslims. We have to be friendly to everyone. We must not differentiate between good relations with fellow Muslims and non-Muslims," Ayat said confidently.

Nining also expressed her opinion. She said she would start off her promotion of *pesantren* by raising the common problems inside *pesantren*. "But why?" Ayat argued. "To create curiosity," she said confidently,

with a smile on her face. This made Ayat smile too. "For example, conflicts between junior and senior students, between the board and members. The petty things. I believe conflicts enable us to be more mature, as they challenge our patience," she continued.

Nining and Ayat make a solid team. This is seen not only in their similar ideas of tolerance in *pesantren*, but also from the same black hijab that they are wearing, the uniform of Qothrotul Falah's students aside from their white hijabs. They complement each other when passionately telling stories about their documentary film team with its increasing presence in documenting activities of their *pesantren* and the surrounding community. "Sometimes we visit other *pesantren*. Yesterday we paid a visit to the Riyadhatus Sa'adah *pesantren* during their *haflatul wida'* (farewell ceremony). We then transferred the video and photos into cassettes," Ayat explained, her eyes twinkling.

They also made history by creating the farewell documentation of Qothrotul



Falah, which was previously never completely handled by students. Ayat stayed in the basecamp, as she was the editor of the video. Meanwhile, her friends shared other responsibilities in the field. "Our first target was to complete the video right after the performance ended. We were not sure how this could be done. In the end, when the memory card of the video camera was used up, my friends in the field ran to the basecamp," Ayat said excitedly. "There was a time when the content of the memory card could not be transferred. Everyone was in tears. We were so afraid everything would fail," Nining added.

At the end of the day, all the hard work of the documentary video team paid off. They were praised for their good work. Nining



and Ayat joked, "That was how we became famous. We even became on-demand photographers around the neighborhood." They laughed heartily.

The video team was not the only one still in production towards the end of the SFCG program; the radio team was also still producing several broadcasting programs. Besides producing public service announcements, the team also produced a peace message entitled *Peace Park*. This recording will be put together as a slideshow with other photos or videos.

By experiencing these activities and achievements, Ayat believes that it is not right to think of *pesantren* students as geeks and nerds. "The stereotype is incorrect. I am much better than a lot of people out there. I am a broadcaster. I am a video editor. I am also a filmmaker," she said proudly, smiling. She has also proved herself wrong of her own opinion before enrolling in Qothrotul Falah that all *pesantren* students do is recite the Al-Quran. She proved to herself that as a *pesantren* student, she can also express herself with a microphone and a camera. ■


SONY
Smith's



Kuda Lumping and a Dialogue about Differences


UDARA MILIK KITA
SATUKAN TEKAD KUKUHKAN NIAT
"REVOLUSI MENUJU YANG LEBIH BAIK ADALAH HAL YANG SELALU KITA IMPIKAN"
LG
MILIK RADIO EL IHYA FM
NO. 2013/IHYA.FM/0008

Kuda Lumping and a Dialogue about Differences

Making movies was the most fun part of the program," Uswatun Hasanah, a student at Sabilul Hasanah *Pesantren* in Banyuasin, South Sumatera, began telling her story. That afternoon, she sat at the left end of the row, among her fellow documentary team members. Her voice sounded hoarse, once in a while emphasizing on some words, demonstrating her excitement in reminiscing all the fun activities she had experienced. With her friends, she produced a documentary film titled *Kuda Lumping*. It is a movie about the dilemma, hope and dreams of Susi Yustika Sari, a student who was a *Kuda Lumping* (an Indonesian traditional dance, literally means leather horse) dancer before joining the *pesantren*. This movie attempted to enable a discussion between religion and culture and was selected as the best movie out of the ten movies produced by students of SFCG Indonesia's partner *pesantren* about peace and local wisdom.

One morning, Uus and her friends left the Sabilul Hasanah Banyuasin on a motorcycle to visit Susi's house. They wanted to film the *Jatilan* and *Kuda Lumping* performances in Susi's village. Beforehand, they had looked for information about the perfor-

"We have proven that *pesantren* educate a generation that is patient and peaceful in solving problems. A generation free from anarchism, selfishness and most of all not a generation of terrorists,"
- **Prasetia Maha Sabila**





mances. According to Prasetia Maha Sabila, another member of the film team, the *Kuda Lumping* performers get hired at least once every week in Susi's village. It takes around two hours to get to Susi's house in Banyuasin. It was quite exhausting, especially during the rainy season. Upon their arrival at Susi's house, they rested for a bit while also working to improve the script a little bit more, before continuing their journey to the location of the performance.

"When we finally got there after a long trip, it turned out that the female members of the *Kuda Lumping* group only perform at night. So we had to return to Susi's house, going back through the road full of obstacles," Uus continued her story. They rode back on their motorcycle across a pond, where they unfortunately fell into the pond and had to push the motorcycle. A similar incident happened on their return from another shooting trip elsewhere. During the journey back home, because the roads were wet, th*e ustadz's* (*pesantren* teacher) motorcycle got stuck in mud. "The route we rode through had very muddy roads. It was an unforgettable experience," Uus chuckled. They spent four days shooting on that route and spent the remaining days shooting scenes inside the *pesantren*. "So we spent a total of one month filming *Kuda Lumping*," M. Rizky Astari explained.



Not only did the team have an exciting experience filming the movie, by participating in SFCG's media program, they also learned to understand differences that often cause conflicts and how to handle these conflicts wisely. According to Susi, one factor that causes conflicts between students in *pesantren* is differences in opinion, in addition to a person's big ego. "For example, when one person says one thing and we say another thing, and we both feel we are right, a heated argument takes place," she gave an example. Uus again told a story about her experience during the filming process. "Susi and I were both in the tower, arguing. We had part of the script planned out, like this and like that. But it was only a small part. Then Susi suggested for us to go to the girls' dormitory to edit what we have filmed. I disagreed. We were both tired. We had a fight and we both cried. That was the most unforgettable experience for me," she admitted shyly.

No conflict is left unresolved in a *pesantren* because they are not sources of conflicts, according to Ahmad Nurrohman. Interpersonal conflict resolutions are usually self-initiated. "For instance, take Susi and I. If Susi would talk to me first, it means the problem is solved and we are at peace. If we both don't talk to each other, then Allah knows best how to resolve the conflict (*wallahu a'lam*). However, one very important thing is the existence of mutual respect, to try and find a peaceful way to resolve a problem, just like the picture that another documentary film team of Sabilul Hasanah wanted to paint through their movie, *Our Peaceful Pesantren*.

"The idea for the movie was actually mine. We were trying to show that in our



pesantren, however small the conflict is, we always try to solve it with a cool mind. We want to clearly illustrate how our *pesantren* inspires people to live in peace and respect each other's religions, cultures and ethnicities," Prasetia explained with his thick South Sumateran accent. Previously, Prasetia and his friends knew of respect for diversity only as a general knowledge. Through the process of producing a documentary film, they were also asked to apply that knowledge, using it as the basis of their perspective and presenting it in a visual medium. "If our level of ego was 100, it is now 50," Uus tried to measure the change she experienced in respecting others after participating in the documentary film team.

It is also interesting how the students tried to present a dialogue between religion and culture that is seen as conflicting in the case of *Kuda Lumping*. This traditional dance does not have to be banned or abandoned due to the fact that, in practice, it is often accompanied with getting drunk and spiritually possessed. The task is how to preserve the culture of *Kuda Lumping* while also obeying religion.

"*Kuda Lumping* enables us to understand that culture and religion are related and connected to each other," Rizky emphasized. "Religion does not annihilate previously existing cultures, but it tries to coexist and find common ground," Prasetia continued on. Their film illustrated how Islam contributes in preserving culture, in this case to *Kuda Lumping*, and showed that the performance does not always have to involve being drunk and calling on spirits.

This is what Susi had always dreamed of. She was baffled when her *Kuda Lumping* instructor asked her to continue dan-



cing, while her *ustadz* was forbidding her to do so. Susi mentioned, "I really didn't want *Kuda Lumping* to be banned. I didn't want the culture to be extinct. I think it should still be allowed to entertain people, but not to let people get drunk and call the spirits."

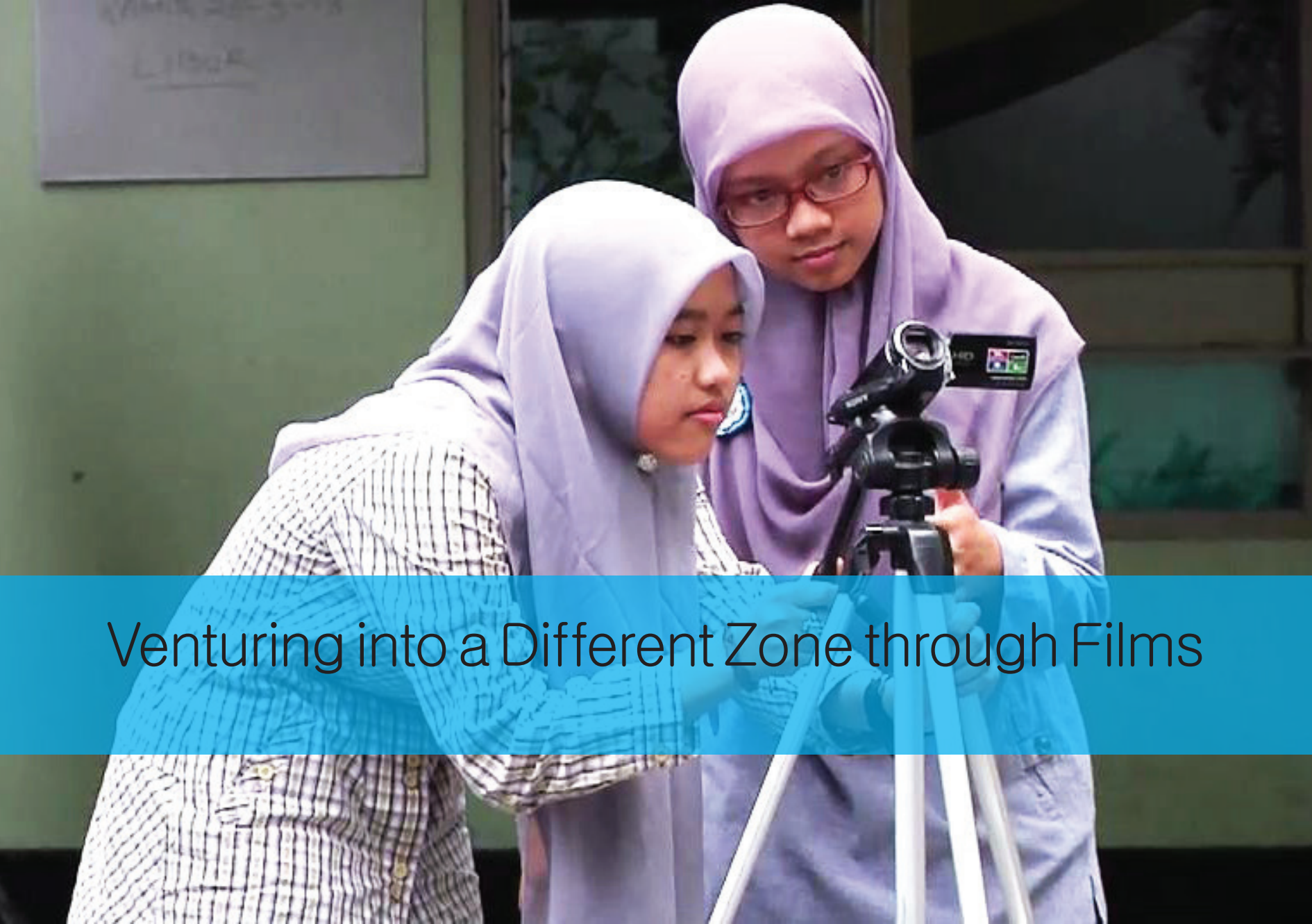
Even after SFCG's training activities ended, the team continues to produce documentary films about tolerance and local wisdom. They were even awarded first place for their movie *The Nahdhiyyin Tradition* in the 2013 South Sumatra Local Government Sports Week for *Pesantren* Students (*Pekan Olah Raga Santri Pemerintah Daerah—Posperda*). "This was Pras's idea, then we developed the idea together and made another movie," Nurrohman explained.

The movie was initially going to be about the Nahdhiyyin and Muhamadiyah groups to show that even though they have different perspectives on the same religion, both groups respect and have tolerance for each other. However, due to technical difficulties during the filming process, Nurrohman made the call to only film the tradition of the Nahdhiyyin group. The team filmed the tradition of Al Quran recitals on the first, second and third nights after someone's passing.

After the *Posperda,* the team continued on to compete at the national level of the Sports Week (*Pospernas*), by producing a movie about Palembang, the River Musi and the Ceng Ho Mosque. Although they did not get nominated for the award this time around, the documentary film team from the Sabilul Hasanah remained solid and enthusiastic to keep producing documentary films on tolerance and local wisdom. Especially now that they are united in a group they call the "Crazy Peaceful Team." In addition to Nurrohman, Susi, Prasetia, Uus and Rizky, the team also has Larasati, Septi Puji Rahayu and Sulistiani.

They are still in their teens, but by living in a *pesantren* and participating in media activities, they have learned of alternative ways to solve every conflict that they may face. ■


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Venturing into a Different Zone through Films


Peluncuran & Penganugerahan



Venturing into a Different Zone through Film

"If not for filming a movie, I would never have entered a church. I am thankful for the new experience."
- Oxy Septinina Wahyu

Ashfia Nur Atqiya was on a university break. She went to visit the Java Joyodiningratan Christian Church that shares the same address with the Al Hikmah Mosque, at 222 Subroto Street in Surakarta, Central Java, to deliver an official letter of request for shoot-



ing a movie in the church. She met a lady priest, who asked her, "What is this letter for?" Fia, as her friends usually call her, explained to the priest that she and her team were about to produce a movie titled *One Address*. She also explained the movie script and the shots that she would need to take inside the church. "You don't have to do anything, Ma'am. We would just be shooting the interior of the Church. Just as it is. You won't even know we're here," Fia continued, ensuring that her team would not disrupt the church's activities. However, the priest did not agree with Fia. "We would also like to help with the filming process. We also have people here who are interested in making movies. Would you need just one video camera or would you need more than one? We can help with another camera." This response amazed Fia.

Oxy Septinina Wahyu had a similar experience when she was filming inside a church. For Oxy, it was the first time she had entered a church. People asked her, "Where are you from?" She would answer, "From Al-Muayyad High School." No one else asked her questions after that, not even to ask what she was filming for. Oxy was standing, so focused into her camera that she did not realize someone brought her a chair to sit on. She was surprised to find a chair behind her, as she was standing in the midst of people walking by.



"I was shocked. I didn't even know who brought me the chair. And then as I was about to return the chair, someone said 'no worries' and for me to just leave it where it was," Oxy was touched.

Discovering new things was an especially interesting experience for Fia and Oxy during their time filming the peace documentary films with SFCG. Similar to Fia and Oxy, their three other friends in the documentary film team, Faiz Tamamy, Farhan Fajriyansyah and Yudha Aditya Arif, also experienced the excitement of going on 'adventures' to diverse zones. The three of them even had to disguise themselves in t-shirts and shorts and walk through a secluded alley to get into Brengosan Village. It is an urban village in Surakarta, home to two terrorist suspects, Air Setyawan and Eko Joko Sarjono, who were shot dead. Even though they had the spirit of detectives, it did not mean that they were not at all scared and worried. They were especially worried about the possibility of coming across a dangerous situation.

There was an instance when they felt like they were being observed, like someone was suspicious of them. They skillfully stuffed all equipment into their bags and made a turn to Pak Parman's house for safety. Pak Parman is one of the respondents that they met in Brengosan for their documentary film. Again, a movie served as a bridge for students like them, students who spend their daily life inside a *pesantren*, to visit new and foreign



places. An experience they may have never obtained from school and definitely not from a school textbook, in tolerance among different religions.

These experiences did not end in vain. After spending almost three years in a *pesantren*, away from his hometown in Bekasi, West Java, Faiz found a new point of view in looking at the reality of diversity. He said, "I have totally changed my point of view after going to school here at the *pesantren*. When I was home, I believed that Islam is Islam and Christianity is Christianity, we are simply different. After living in this *pesantren*, I learned what tolerance is really about. I first learned about tolerance among friends and among different cultures. And now that we were introduced to (Search for) Common Ground, my level of understanding tolerance among different groups of religion was improved." He hopes to be able to establish an organization like SFCG to develop a culture of dialogue and mutual respect among different religions in his hometown. "Bekasi is home to Islam fanatics, where people of other religions find it difficult to build their place of worship. A lot of times after a worship place is built, the fanatics come to destroy it. Now many choose to have their church in shophouses," he found it hard to believe.

After his interaction with people in Brengosan, Adit came to realize that something was not right with what he had believed thus far. "Firstly, we often assume that everyone shares our belief, meanwhile there are many strands of Islam out there. Some are hardliners, some are unaligned, neutral and some others are extremists. Secondly, besides the hardliners there are also people who fight for the *ahlusunnah waljamaah* (followers of Prophet Muhammad's traditions), like Pak Parman, around hardliners. This can be our inspiration," Adit mentioned, impressed.

Oxy also had a similar self-introspection. Previously, she thought Christians

were intolerant and would not socialize with people of other religions. Her encounter with the church congregation showed her that Christians are also kind, friendly and like to help others.

Getting an experience to enter into a different environment and culture may very well be an effective way to understand pluralism and reduce fanatism, an attitude that according to Faiz has a negative influence towards the spirit of tolerance. Fanatism and chauvinism will trigger people to underestimate and undermine others. It can even cause violence and destruction, as seen in his hometown neighborhood in Bekasi. From these fragments of experience on diversity, Faiz drew his own conclusion about tolerance.

In his opinion, tolerance involves not being a fanatic and being willing to treat all humans equally. "On one side, we should not insult other religions and we should not be fanatics of our religion. We should not be too arrogant of our own religion. We should act normal. If we could lose the fanatism, we would all be equal as human beings," he explained.

Faiz and his friends at Al-Muayyad are a very good example of the success of film as a media to bridge the students with a pluralistic environment, and for them to be able to experience and apply tolerance in their everyday lives. Not only did this experience connect them to new zones, understanding and knowledge, the documentary films have also sharpened their creativity and their sense of adventure. This can be seen from the fact that right after they finished producing their first documentary film, Faiz and his friends could not resist when they were challenged by the District Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Solo to produce a movie about abandoned Islamic cultures. They documented Javanese *Barzanji* (panegyrics of Prophet Muhammad) in one of the *Barzanji* communities in the higher plains of Boyolali.

"If not regularly sharpened, knives become blunt. Likewise, if we have learned how to produce a movie, we can lose our ability if we do not continuously develop our skills," Yudha argued. Perhaps it is their high enthusiasm that made the filming of the *Barzanji* run so smoothly. "The only trouble we faced was at night when the lights in the area were all yellowish and affected the quality of the images captured by our camera. We have very limited equipment. We do not have sufficient lighting equipment and we also do not have a microphone. Everyone sounded like frogs in the video," Faiz and his friends all laughed.



Making movies is an adventure, and therefore it is a fun way for them to learn and spread values of tolerance. ■





Learning about Tolerance from Selok


SALOPA TASIKMAL



Learning about Tolerance from Selok

The documentary film *Dewek Be Islam* (*We Are Also Muslims*) is not just any documentary. The movie that narrates about a certain type of Islam in Java, the *Kejawen* Islam, practiced by the people in Selok, Cilacap, is the only movie produced by *pesantren* students that became a finalist of the *Erasmusindocs International Documentary Competition 2013*, for the teen category. Students of

the Al-Ihya Ulumaddin *Pesantren*, Cilacap, created this film after they participated in a documentary film production training organized by SFCG. For three days, Momon Umar Basri, Miftahuddin, Lulu'atul Jannah, Widia Eka S. and their other fellow team members learned how to write a script, understand every nook and cranny of a video camera and practice shooting scenes in the field. Besides these technical skills, they also learned how to observe social and cultural realities, to find meaning in their everyday experiences to be shared with other people in their surroundings, and to understand and respect diversity in order to build peace.



Understanding is the first step towards respect, as experienced by our friends from the *pesantren*. "We started by trying to understand *Kejawen* Islam," Widya said. People who practice *Kejawen* Islam pray five times in a year and only fast at the beginning and end of Ramadhan. Their place of worship is called a *Kentran*, which is an open space building with a door that separates the main hall and the praying room. They pray by burning incense while reciting prayers. This ritual is different from how other Muslims usually pray.

However, Miftahudin, with his thick Central Java accent, explained, "Even though it is a different kind of Islam than what we are familiar with, we did not right away judge that they have derailed from Islam. We did not right away say that they were wrong. We tried to think that it was the same. We got along well." Momon has a different opinion however, "For me, the most important thing about Islam is the *syahadat*. If someone has recited the *syahadat* but does not pray five times a day (*shalat*), then he/she is a 'passive' Muslim."

The success of *Dewek Be Islam* as a nominee at the *Erasmusindocs Awards* made the production team both proud and shocked. It was the first movie they had ever produced, coming from a team that previously had no

clue about video cameras. They did, however acknowledge the strength of the film. "The strength lies in its uniqueness, because there aren't a lot of movies about *Kejawen* Islam," Miftahudin said. According to Momon, "I see it sort of like a forgotten history, because it exists, maybe even very close and growing among our communities, but ignored. I first heard about *Kejawen* Islam when I came to (Central) Java because I never heard about this culture in my Sundanese (West Javanese) background." Widia added on that the issue of tolerance is highly present in the film they produced, as it presents something different to be understood and accepted as a reality among the larger community.

Widia then also told her story about the making of this film. The idea first came from Sidik Nur Thaha, who was compelled after watching *Kejawen* Muslims perform their rituals. At the time, he was a member of *Basis*, the school magazine. The school magazine held a competition to celebrate the magazine's anniversary in Selok, the name of a mountain that is more well-known as a tourist destination. "I was curious as to what they were doing," Miftahudin added. "After everyone agreed with Sidik's idea, the script was developed and we began filming. The filming process was very challenging," she passionately continued her story. She described the first day in detail, recalling that it rained heavily when they were on their way to Selok on their motorcyles. Miftahuddin and three other friends had to stop and take shelter. "As soon as we got to the location, we drove around to survey. As we were about to return home, we could not start our motorcycle. We were all so scared. We didn't know what was wrong. We were all praying, we were nervous until we finally just left everything in Allah's hands," she laughed while reminiscing.

In the end, the team was able to successfully finish filming and received extraordinary appreciation when the film was screened at different venues, including at the Imam Ghozali Institute of Islamic Studies in Cilacap that involved a prominent writer, Ahmad Tohari.





They also received criticism, however. One of the comments that they received from an audience was about the title of the movie. "There is something not quite right about the title," Widya recalled the comment. '*Be*' can mean 'become'. A lot of people may interpret the title to mean *Dewek* (we are too, in Javanese) becomes Islam. In its original dialect, the actual meaning of the title is accurate, it reads *Dewek* is Also Islam," she explained. Other than this, there was criticism on the lack of variety in the types of religions and beliefs documented in the film. It was only about two religions and both were within Islam. The criticisms were taken constructively, and Widia felt challenged to produce even better documentaries. "To compare our own film with another one which is much better in quality makes me really motivated," Miftahuddin said with enthusiasm.

Being involved in the production of a film has also provided the students with a lot of lessons learned. Luluk was finally able to experience the many different types of tolerance that people apply in their everyday lives. Muslims and *Kejawen* people live in peace and harmony in Selok. For Luluk, an important thing is also to publish these real life examples. "When talking about tolerance, it is important for people to know that tolerance does not only exist in *pesantren* but also in the outside world," Luluk emphasized his opinion. In spreading awareness about tolerance, documentary films play a very important role. "Film can be a medium for *da'wah*. It can be more fulfilling to also be able to see, not only listen," he said firmly.

The experience can also make students bolder and more confident, like what both Miftahuddin and Widya experienced. Luluk continued on to say, "Interviewing other people increases our level of confidence. We have to speak in public now, as tutors and moderators. We are now better public speakers."

After wrapping up the film production of *Dewek Be Islam* and another film, *Kiai Santri*, Luluk and his friends have become more skillful with the camera and also with putriying the theme of local wisdom. They have also produced another documentary film titled *Janengan*. "It is about a type of religious chanting (*shalawat*) performed in the old times, the times of the Walisongo (nine revered saints who spread Islam in Indonesia especially in Java circa 1400-1550 CE). It is accompanied by drums, flutes and gongs. It is chanted with voices from the throat and the chants are in Javanese," Widia explained.



The idea came from Miftahuddin. He was curious and unfamiliar with the *janengan* music that was constantly playing at the time of the Islamic New Year. They developed the movie script together, but the filming was executed by the male students because it had to be performed at night, during the celebration of the Islamic New Year and Birthday of Prophet Muhammad. The film, which has duration of ten minutes and was based on interviews with the performers, was entered into the *Porseni* (Sports & Arts Week, an annual sporting and arts event) competition among *pesantren* in Cilacap, even though it was not nominated. "Not only pop music is nice to listen to, there is also classical and traditional music," Miftahuddin confirmed.

Equipping students with sharpened perspectives about diversity and local wisdom is probably much more challenging than training technical skills on making documentary films. This perspective may be seen through the documentary films produced by Miftahuddin and his friends. Their films not only demonstrated their skills of documenting through film, but also proved how the students' perspectives on local traditions have been improved.

They may live inside a *pesantren*, but their sight reaches beyond the walls of their school, and has even reached a stage where they have witnessed other people's spiritual experiences on tolerance and respect among fellow humans. ■


DIGITAL



A New Brave Mentality



A New Brave Mentality



"(Radio broadcasting) was most beneficial for me when I had to go for a work interview. I was already used to speaking, so I could speak really well and got recruited immediately." - Arifin

Ahmad Zahri Arifin never imagined that his involvement in a radio and documentary program would result in such success. When he was an eleventh grade student at the Darul Ma'arif Vocational High School in Payaman Lamongan, Arifin and his friends received information and an invitation to participate in SFCG's peace activities.

He made the right decision. Without waiting to be chosen by his teachers, Arifin registered himself as a candidate to participate in the media training program, despite the fact that he had never learned about radio and film in his life. He only studied automotives in school. Who would have guessed that this new activity would bring so many positive changes in his life.

Arifin admitted that he often had many ideas in his mind, but never had the courage to express them in public. "Since joining

this radio program, I have gotten used to speaking, public speaking in front of a lot of people. I am now more comfortable in expressing my ideas, and my ideas are well received by the public," Arifin articulately and systematically explained. He calls this experience a mental transformation, from having the mentality of an introvert to becoming someone confident. From having the mentality of a coward to becoming someone brave. Now his life principle is, "It is useless to have a lot of ideas if we are unable to express them."



Filming scenes in Tenggulun Village for a documentary movie about terrorists was initially not easy task for Arifin, despite the fact that he was not alone. He came to the village with his friends. "At first, we were very shy. We were shy when we had to meet the public figures of the village. We were doing alright with the people of the village. A lot of people wondered why we were filming a movie with such a grown-up theme because they saw us as kids," he smiled, remembering his nerdy days. But he then mustered up his courage and explained to people that his team's documentary film will try to improve the image of the Tenggulun Village as a terrorist village. This would of course benefit the people and *pesantren* in the village. Arifin was right, his team was well accepted by the people.

Even though his team's documentary film was not chosen by SFCG as one of the ten best movies, Arifin was not discouraged. He already felt successful having produced this documentary. "It was an original creation and it was our first movie. None of us had ever operated a video camera or written a screenplay before, but we did it anyway. It was our first production ever, so it is normal that there were faults," he said wisely.



He then told some stories of little surprises for his team while making the movie. "There was a time when we were already at the filming location, everything was clear, then one of our friends wanted to change the plot all of a sudden. It was 9 o'clock in the evening and this new idea was suddenly brought up," he said regretfully. Arifin and his team have indeed succeeded, and the news about his success spread to his neighbors at home. His role movie film was seen as a huge achievement. "I was the cameraman in our team. After producing the movie, the people in my village began to see me as a skilled cameraman," he mentioned excitedly. He now has a freelance job as a cameraman in one of the schools in his village, which gets him some extra income.

Moreover, the experience of having to approach stakeholders in Tenggulun Village and also at the Al-Islam Tenggulun *pesantren* has mentally trained Arifin. He has never had to submit a proposal or ask permission from an authority for any kind of activity. Now everything has changed. "After the Tenggulun experience, I am now bold enough to submit proposals and seek permission for activities," he looked pleased.

At Darma FM, the "Community Radio, Everyone's Pride," Arifin is known as Mr. Pancung. He hosts the radio's session on teenage opinions, a program that gives an opportunity for listeners to request current pop hits songs and for teenagers to pour their hearts out. There are different themes for each session, for example a session on broken hearts or on being in love. To decide on the theme, he usually discusses with his team of broadcasters so that all broadcasters can implement the theme on that day.

When asked whether he already has fans of his own, Arifin answered, "Uncountable. Because there is none, hahaha."



He does not dream big of having a lot of fans. "The most important thing for us broadcasters is to provide information and useful tips to keep up the spirit and enthusiasm of our listeners. We give them some helpful advice to be able to move on (from heartbreaks)," he said.

Arifin still broadcasts for Darma FM although he has graduated from high school. He is also still enthusiastic about producing another film, especially after he has seen the other films on peace and local wisdom produced by other *pesantren* students who participated in the SFCG program. He is determined to make an even better film. "I have learned from the process of filmmaking that when making friends we should not have to think about where someone comes from, his/her religion, what kind of family he/she is from. It is unnecessary. We should be friends with anyone and everyone, religion is an individual matter. You have your religion and I have my religion," he concluded. He wanted to express this idea of understanding through a film as well, so that people could become more aware that human beings are all equal.

For almost a year and a half Arifin spent most of his time in the studio, even though he did not stay in the *pesantren's* dormitory. He is now enjoying the result of his training and hard work and most of all, the birth of his new mentality: bolder and more confident.

He now works at by a motorcycle dealer in Lamongan. "I work in sales and marketing so I have to be able to speak well. If I didn't get to know Darma FM maybe I would never have picked up this ability to speak in public. I may have never gotten accepted to work as a sales staff," he said wholeheartedly. He mentioned that he often has to handle buyers from other cities. As a marketing staff, he has to be as friendly as possible with all buyers, even though he hardly knows them and it is usually his first encounter with them.

Deep inside, he is always thankful that all his experience in radio and filmmaking has turned out to be very useful in his personal and work lives. ■



From Ordinary to Extraordinary



From Ordinary to Extraordinary

"There is a saying that goes, 'Experience is the best teacher'. When I first held a camera, I was shaking and when I got used to it, the shaking disappeared. Just like when water continuously falls onto a stone, it will eventually erode."
- Fahmi



Five teenage boys were wearing white shirts, sarongs and *peci* (traditional Muslim men cap commonly worn as the national headdress). They were seated on the floor, facing a row of low tables organized to form a square. Across from them were four girls wearing uniform black hijabs seated in the same position. The appearance of the teens from the Qothrotul Falah *Pesantren* in Lebak, became Banten, looked simple. A normal *pesantren* student look. However, as soon as they started telling their stories, the ordinary becomes extraordinary.



Take Matlubi, for instance. Last year, when the Wahid Institute held a photography competition with the theme of tolerance for its 9th anniversary, out of numerous photos that were shortlisted, Matlubi's shot won the competition.

"There were two people of different religions. One of them was holding an Al-Quran and the other holding a Bible," Matlubi explained the photo he sent to the Wahid Institute. He asked two of his friends to model for this photo. Through his photo, he wanted to send a message that bringing together two people of different faiths may eliminate negative presumptions and assumptions that may cause misunderstanding between them. When asked of his reaction if someone took him to a church, he firmly answered, "I would go inside. It is better to find out than being a know-it-all."

Matlubi did not go through the process by himself. With his friends Yulianingsih, Fahmi Anugerah Salami, Fitri, Munawir dan Eman Sulaeman, he participated in a filmmaking and radio training organized by SFCG Indonesia at his *pesantren*. They were trained on documentation and publication techniques using movies and photos as the media, and also trained as radio broadcasters for peace. For them, radio and movies were forms of new media that they had never touched, let alone used.

"My first experience holding a camera, I was so shaky and scared, afraid that I would break the camera. So I was extra careful," Eman, who took the role of cameraman, told his part of the story. As time went by, he got used to holding the camera. "There is a saying that goes, 'Experience is the best teacher'. When I first held the camera, I was shaky. After a while I got used to it and the shakiness disappeared. It's like water continuously dropping onto a stone, after some time the stone will eventually erode," Fahmi said.



In addition to receiving an award from the Wahid Institute, Matlubi also won Second Place at the Islamic Photography Competition among *pesantren* in Lebak (*Pospekab*). These awards have proven that he is not only skillful in using a camera, that he also has the ability to come up with brilliant concepts and ideas for his work. It is no wonder that he now often receives requests from his teachers or people in his neighborhood to document their activities. With this, Matlubi transformed from ordinary to extraordinary.

"Some people even told me, *babalama tangkil tos nyepengan* handycam. It means I used to be only good at peeling fruits, but now I am great, I can operate a handycam," Matlubi said happily. A similar transformation happened to Fahmi. One of his friends from his previous *pesantren* told him, "You were an ordinary student before. You had no extracurricular activities. But you are now even busier than I am. You are even better than me. You can even document our scouts' activities."

In the hands of the *pesantren* students, movies, photos and radio not only serve as a media for learning, but they also serve as media to raise awareness on the values of tolerance and peace, especially within the *pesantren*. There have been so many negative assumptions about *pesantren,* according to Eman. The least that the students can do is to make use of these form of media to open up and show the world what life in *pesantren* is really like. "We have to socialize with as many groups of people as possible, to let them know what really goes on in *pesantren*. This should be our attitude towards the general public," Munawir explained.

Meanwhile, according to Fahmi, "We also need to show them tolerance, for example we should take part in *gotong royong* (communal work) activities. This way we are able to show people that we can adapt to our surroundings." Another important thing is to be kind to everyone, as Matlu-



bi mentioned, so that people's perception of *pesantren* and the students can become more positive.

As a result, the activities of radio broadcasting and documentary film making brought about a positive impact to the Qothrotul Falah and its students. The people around the *pesantren* have shown positive responses. "They were impressed. This is now our motivation," Fahmi shared his observation.

Matlubi's experience was more specific. He now has a fan from the neighboring village. He was once absent from hosting his radio program because he had to visit the Netherlands Embassy in Jakarta to attend an event. "When I came back to broadcast, one listener commented to me, 'Where have you been *Abang* (brother) Bebeng? You have been missing in action recently. I have been waiting for your session to broadcast. The program is no fun when you're not the one broadcasting,'" Matlubi recounted. Matlubi comes from the area in the vicinity of his *pesantren*. He was so happy and immediately shared this experience with his mentor, Miss Eneng.

According to Yulianingsih, her newly acquired skills to speak as a radio broadcaster boosts her confidence, while also supporting her "triple –ing" activities, i.e. listening, writing and speaking. In the training, she learned to write, discuss and argue with other people. Meanwhile, as a radio broadcaster she is used to speaking an reading to improve her knowledge. Her ambition to become a lawyer has also benefited from her current activities. "Speaking is what I will be doing in court in the future. I will also have to read a lot of books," she said confidently.

Yulia is not the only one that has enjoyed the benefits of participating in a media program for their future; her friends are of the same opinion. Their introduction to and activities with the media have provided these students with inspirations about their ambitions.



Matlubi is interested in learning more about multimedia. "I want to master the techniques of shooting and editing videos. I am now learning as much as possible through the internet," he explained. Eman prefers to develop his public speaking skills by going to a broadcasting school. So does Fahmi. "I would like to spread the news about *pesantren* and Islam. I am sure a lot of people need to know more about life in *pesantren* and about Islam in general. In short, I would like to do *da'wah* through the radio," Fahmi said. Munawir, who preferred to listen to his friends, finally spoke up about his dreams. "I like to preach and broadcasting on the radio is similar to preaching. My ambition is to become a preacher."

Having been equipped with sharpened perspectives on tolerance and peace during his training with SFCG, Munawir mentioned that he will become a preacher that respects diversity. "Every human being is equal; even though in reality people may have different faiths and beliefs. This is why mutual respect is important," he said. Lia, who wants to become a lawyer, expressed a similar opinion. "I want to become a lawyer that helps others without discriminating. We should defend people who are on the right side, even if they are Chinese or non-Muslims," she said earnestly.

These students' ambitions might not be that different from other *pesantren* students. However, their perspective in looking at the diversity of social reality can be their advantage over other students, making them extraordinary. ■





Two Years Spreading Values of Peace

The WAHID Institute
Seeding Plural and Peaceful Islam

Search for Common Ground

P3M

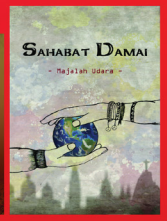
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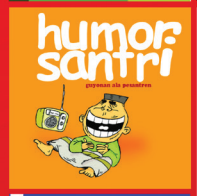
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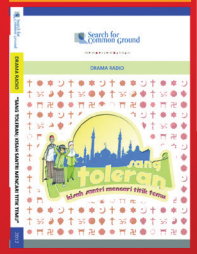














FESTIVAL FILM SANTRI
FFS 2013

Peluncuran & Penganugerahan:

Jumat, 21 Juni 2013
13.00 WIB - 17.30 WIB
di Erasmus Huis Jakarta
Jl. HR Rasuna Said Kav. S-3, Jakarta 12950

Roadshow Screening Juni-Juli 2013:

Pesantren Raudlatul Banat Cirebon | Al-Ihya Ulumaddin Cilacap
Al-Muayyad Surakarta | Nahdlatul Ulum Makassar
Darul Ma'Arif Lamongan | Qorthrotul Falah Lebak | Baitul Hikmah Tasikmalaya | Al Ghazali Bogor | As-Shidiqiyah Tangerang | Sabilul Hasanah Palembang | Kampus-kampus di Jakarta, Bandung dan Jogjakarta

"Memahami untuk Menghargai"



21 Film Karya Santri
tentang Toleransi, Perdamaian, Identitas Pesantren, Anti Kekerasan dan Kearifan Lokal

Search for Common Ground
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Two Years Spreading Values of Peace



Taking up the name of the *pesantren*, the community radio that broadcasts from the grounds of the Sabilul Hasanah Pesantren in Banyuasin, South Sumatera is known as As-Sabil. Operating for almost three years since 2011, the radio fills the audio space of the students and part of the Purwosari village, a village comprised mostly of transmigrants from the island of Java. It has a simple studio, located on the second floor of the building next to the *pesantren*'s mosque tower. The studio can be accessed via a flight of wooden stairs at a corner of the first floor of the building. The bright window on the outside of the

building also functions as a notice board. One announcement placed on the board says, "107.7 MHz As-Sabil FM… for you creative and artistic fellas, keep sending your scripts to the As-Sabil radio crew. If your script gets chosen, you can come join our broadcasting team… the results will be announced every Friday… hmmm, isn't this exciting…"

Having an in-house radio station in a pesantren was a long time dream of the head of the Sabilul Hasanah *pesantren*, KH. M. Mudarris SM. One of his sons, Muhammad Ubaidillah Lu'ai Addimsyiqi, explained the reasons why his father wanted to establish a radio, "The benefits are, firstly, to preach and spread news about *pesantren*. People who do not know about this *pesantren* will now find out about it. Secondly, with this radio being on air, the people in the surrounding area can learn more about the Qur'an. Even if it is not actually reciting from the Holy Qur'an, people can at least listen to preachings or Islamic pearls of wisdom." Moreover, the



people of Purwosari also gave a positive response to the radio. When the radio opened their telephone and text messaging lines for people to ask questions about Islam, the lines were flooded with questions. "We even had non-Muslims that were interested in learning more about Islam and we offered them to come and visit our studio," he gave an example of how the radio can be the bridge that connects the diverse groups that exist within the community.

Based on their experience, according to the Al-Muayyad *Pesantren* located in Surakarta, radio is a highly effective media to share views on tolerance in *pesan-*



tren, especially for the community that lives around the *pesantren*. In the beginning of its radio operations, there was a riot in Solo (Surakarta's other name), between gangsters and the Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*-FPI). "We immediately produced a public service announcement about peace, urging people to restrain themselves from violence and for peace in Solo. That was ours. There are numerous radio stations in Solo. But I don't think any of those radios have peace as their mission," said Nur Ridho, teacher and also mentor for radio activities in Al-Muayyad.

Similar to the As-Sabil radio, the Al-Muayyad radio which carries the slogan "Courteous, Religious and Cultural," has also received positive feedback from the surrounding community. People like to listen to the radio's programs in between their daily activities. Nur Ridho and the radio crew have also initiated inviting teenagers from outside the *pesantren* to come in and have a go at broadcasting. He said, "We let the neighborhood teens who are interested to try broadcasting on the radio. The theme would most likely be about having a dialogue with the community."

According to leaders of SFCG's partner *pesantren*, tolerance and mutual respect are not foreign concepts within their pesantren. For the Al-Ihya Ulumaddin *Pesantren* in Cilacap, tolerance and mutual respect have been implanted in its students since their first day of school by Romo Casbulloh Badawi, the current *pesantren* head. *Pesantren* has opened up and is getting used to interacting with the diverse cultures and values that exist within the community. "It is even more extreme when there is a celebration for completing the book of *Ihya*'. There are per-

formances such as the Chinese lion dance (*barongsai*), Javanese puppet play (*wayang*), modern music group bands, even the band of the Banyumas palace," explained Shoiman Nawawi, a young mentor from the Al-Ihya Ulumaddin. Allowing these performances on *pesantren* grounds shows the penetration of cultural diversity from outside the *pesantren*. This is also portrayed by the layout of the Al-Ihya building complex. Unlike most *pesantren*, high walls and gates do not surround the buildings of Al-Ihya, including the classrooms, the dormitories, the mosque, the mentors' quarter and other facilities. The buildings stay open in the community, blending in with the surrounding houses.

Nurul Huda Ma'arif, a young leader from the Qothrotul Falah *Pesantren*, also described the religious tolerance that has become a tradition in his *pesantren*. "We have been visited by several different priests. They have come to visit us from Serang, Pakis Raya and Taman Aries Church in Jakarta. There was never any problem. "It is a



normal thing to take photos of our *pesantren* head talking to a priest," he confirmed.

Similarly, Nur Ridho and Ubaidillah also mentioned that the basis of their *pesantren* is moderate Islam, open to anyone and everyone. Nur Ridho mentioned that Al-Muayyad once received an invitation from the local police for a friendly football match between neighboring *pesantren*. But then the police changed their plan and decided to have a match between the police squad and Al-Muayyad. "We asked them what happened to the plan of having an inter-*pesantren* tournament. The police answered that they were worried it would not be a football tournament, but more like a foot-kicking tournament," he explained, smiling. "We then asked the police why they chose Al-Muayyad and the police said Al-Muayyad is 'normal'," he continued

to explain. For Nur Ridho, this incident shows the community's perception that Al-Muayyad is a *pesantren* that supports tolerance and is open to everyone.

However, this does not necessarily mean that *pesantren* and its surrounding communities are free from problems of intolerance and radicalism. In several cases, according to the *pesantren* leaders, *pesantren* need to be aware. "Especially in the city of Palembang. Numerous mosques have been taking over, spreading a strand of Islam that is a bit different from that practiced by *pesantren*. These mosques often criticize several pesantren routine activities, such as *tahlil* (recital of *la ilah ha illalah* - "There is no god but Allah"), *yasinan* (recital of the 36th Surah of the Al-Quran), and *zikiran* (remembrance of Allah; chanting of the greatness of Allah)," Ubaidillah gave an example.

In Muhid Murtadlo's opinion, a religious teacher from the Darul Ma'arif *Pesantren* in Lamongan, geographically speaking, the location of his *pesantren* (in the same regency as Tenggulun, hometown of terrorist suspect Amrozi, seemed as though the *pesantren* is handed the mandate to eliminate the radicalism growing within the community. Meanwhile, Nur Ridho also observed that the environment of urban Solo tends to have different strands of Islam, which may cause conflict if the levels of tolerance and mutual respect in *pesantren* and within the community are still weak.

Therefore, Nurul Huda Ma'arif is of the opinion that it is important to bring together *pesantren* students and the surrounding community through the tradition of peace. "I have seen that friends become influenced by radicalism because they were taken away from their traditions. These traditions are actually their strongest shields. It would not be easy to get influenced by any kind of doctrine if people stay close to their traditons," he explained. In addition, it is important to organize "meet ups", bringing together *pesantren* students and people from outside the *pesantren*. He said, "At first the students assumed that meeting with people from dif-



ferent backgrounds was dangerous, both towards their faith and social life. As soon as the students got acquainted and communicated with people from outside, all these assumptions disappeared." He has also witnessed people talk about tolerance, but it did not necessarily make the person free from negative assumptions when applying it in real life.

There are a lot of stories about getting closer to traditions and meeting up with people of diverse backgrounds that stem from the radio and documentary movie activities that involved the students of these ten *pesantren*. Muhid could see that these activities, like the musical activities in Darul Ma'arif, serve as effective media that enables students to explore the values of peace in a much wider scope. "Students have gained confidence that they did not previously have to get directly involved, interviewing people of different religions. The students were able to prepare a list of questions about tolerance, diversity, peace, or local wisdom," he described. One of the movies produced



by the documentary movie team from his *pesantren* was entitled *Sutarji's Harmony*.

The radio and documentary movie trainings by SFCG were implemented separately. For the radio training, participants from the ten *pesantren* were invited to Jakarta, while the documentary movie trainings were held at each *pesantren*, involving two trainers, Endah W. Sulistiani (Program Manager of Eagle Institute) and Kisno Ardi (documentary film director). According to Kisno, there is a term in documentary movie trainings called post-documentary. "A documentary is not only seen as a movie production and an end result, it is also how the movie is seen as a process, mediation and an opportunity for review. These processes not only involve how the story was developed,

but also involve how the learning, research and reality interpretation processes were the important aspects." As a result, through filmmaking, students have also learned to criticize assumptions and get closer to reality.

Pesantren students produced 10 documentary movies about tolerance, peace and local wisdom, as a result of SFCG's media training. One of these movies, *Dewek Be Islam*, was nominated for the teen category of the *Erasmusindocs International Documentary Competition 2013*.

Muyassaroh, wife of Al-Ihya Ulumaddin's head and Chair of the Council of El-Ihya Community Radio Broadcasting, observed that the filmmaking process served as a medium to build the students' characters. "They did not have to raise an issue that does not exist in their environment. The process has made them more critical and sensitive, bringing up issues from around them. I think that this is also a learning process for us in the future, right? They are smart and critical, raising a topic that reflects who they really are. They were not influenced to produce a movie based on who knows what culture, and they did not merely follow trends that are currently popular among teenagers," she proudly explained.

Ubaidilah also expressed a similar appreciation. The documentary movie produced by his students, *Kuda Lumping*, was chosen as the best movie by SFCG at the *Santri Film Festival* launched in June 2013. In between their busy schedules, the documentary movie team of the Sabilul Hasanah *Pesantren* is still very much enthusiastic in producing other movies. "The radio also broadcasts programs during the students' break time," he said admiringly.

The involvement of the radio team in the Indonesian Community Radio Network (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia* – JRKI also has its own pride. Muhid from Darma FM Lamongan said he was honored to be accepted and respected by JRK East Java. "We were considered as a senior radio because we were acquainted with important people from JRKI and we are proud to be the only community radio from Lamongan affiliated with JRKI. We are one of the most





active community radios on Lamongan, which is why we have been requested to work together with the BKKBN (National Family Planning Coordination Board)," he said, looking pleased.

Muhlisin, a crew member of El-Ihya FM radio, also mentioned his valuable experiences during his time with the radio. He was lucky to be able to join JRKI and JRK Solo. He used to think that the *pesantren* community was the best. He admittedly said, "We often think of people outside the *pesantren* as not as righteous as we are. But after I had the opportunity to socialize with other communities, I found out that I can learn a lot of positive things from them. For example, unity and tolerance." In fact, most community radios, such as the ones from the community of laborers and farmers, usually fight for the right of common people.

Aside from bringing *pesantren* students and the community closer together, the community radio program also succeeded in getting people closer to *pesantren*. A number of positive responses received by the ten *pesantren* radios demonstrated this closeness. Abdurrahman, a broadcaster from Assabil FM Banyuasin mentioned that the radio listeners are like family to him. A female listener even brings food for the radio crew every week. "She is very close to the students of the *pesantren*, until now," he said. Through the radio, people can get to know about *pesantren* and listen to messages about peace. Nurul Huda, once a radio broadcaster of QFM Lebak during its first year on air, told a story about a listener that came to see him after his broadcasting session. He had just finished hosting a program about respecting other people. The listener came in crying, telling him that she cannot understand why her mother would not let her have what she asked for. "Then I told her that people have different interests.



A mother has her own interest and her child may have another. When both sides force their interest onto each other, a conflict will happen. This is why we need to respect our mother's interest and also reconsider our interest."

From his long note of experiences during the two-year involvement in SFCG's radio and documentary movie program, Ubaidillah thinks that it is important to evaluate and improve the two activities so that they can continue to run. Maintenance of the equipment, which requires special attention, is necessary and so is building capacity of the media team members. Eneng Atiqah Syatibi, a mentor in the Qothrotul Falah *Pesantren*, mentioned that QFM Radio is currently recruiting new broadcasters. From 150 students of the *pesantren*, 50 students have signed up for the selection process.

Meanwhile, several other radios such as Darma FM and Rama FM have started to try live streaming. "We cannot only count on radio transmitters, because in Solo, especially in the city center, there are a lot of radio stations. Community radios can only reach listeners within a maximum radius of five kilometers. A few kilometers further, we are already blocked by other radios. We are trying to modify our reach to the listeners via streaming, so that our listeners can access our radio broadcast on their *Android* and *BlackBerry* phones. In addition, our alumni can also keep track of Al-Muayyad's development," Nur Ridho explained.

After two-years of training and committed interaction between trainers, santri, preachers, teachers and community members it is hoped that the achievements, pride and learning process in the pesantrens will be sustained after SFCG's engagement. Moreover, that filmmaking and radio broadcasting will continue to mediate self-empowerment on the values of tolerance from within the students and pesantren with more encounters with the communities surrounding the *pesantren*.

One final hope is for the *pesantren* radio and documentary movie teams will continue to air and spread values of peace. ■

Search for Common Ground

Search for Common Ground is an international non-profit organization dedicated to peace building. We have worked in Indonesia since 2002 partnering with people to ignite shared solutions to destructive conflicts.

We bring people together from across dividing lines at all levels of society to build sustainable peace through dialogue, capacity building and creative media productions (television, film, radio, comics and social media).

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