




## We are friends: A case study of children's tolerance experience in Komunitas Anak Sabtu Ceria to counter religious radicalism

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**Abstract:** Living in a multicultural society requires openness and acceptance of different people. Nevertheless, it takes work for radicals to open up, accept, and appreciate differences. Religious radicalism is a challenge that we still face today. Radicalism has a harmful impact on life as occurred in several countries worldwide. Therefore the spread of religious radicalism must be stopped, particularly for children as the future of the world. This article offers the concept of heterogeneous friendship as a powerful tool for children to open up and appreciate differences. Heterogeneous friendship becomes a hidden curriculum for children. By using case study, it shows that through friendship with children from different backgrounds, children can share experiences and get to know each other more deeply. Thus this experiences in heterogeneous friendships as a powerful learning process to foster and develop tolerance amid multicultural life.

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## Introduction

Radicalism in religious life is at the centre of the world today. Radicalism gives birth to many intolerant actions that are detrimental to life. The international world is facing challenges related to Islamic fundamentalism from certain traditions and histories of the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> Violence is often found as a form of intolerance toward others. A recent study by the Pew Research Center showed that religious-based inter-community animosity could result in the destruction of property to attacks on people or groups who talk about religious teachings. This aspect, according to this research, scored "high" and "very high" in 45 of 198 countries in the world.<sup>2</sup> From the total population, 45 countries are equivalent to 63 per cent of the earth's total

<sup>1</sup> Valentine M Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1135–1171.

<sup>2</sup> Alain Klarsfeld, Jawad Syed, and Areeba Mumtaz, "An Analysis of Religious Diversity Index (RDI) by Pew Research Center," in *Handbook on Diversity and Inclusion Indices: A Research Compendium*, ed. Eddy S. Ng et al. (United Kingdom: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), 310–319.

population. It means more than half of the earth's population is hostile to fellow humans who involve religious symbols.<sup>3</sup>

Indonesia has yet to be spared from the spread of radicalism, which causes many things related to religious freedom guaranteed by the state. The Setara Institute classified eight provinces as "red zones", where the intensity of the police on religious liberty was very high and repetitive.<sup>4</sup> There have been various incidents, including those involving local or government officials, such as what happened in the case of the Indonesian Christian Church, the Yasmin Congregation in Bogor, West Java, or actions in several areas where the neighborhood interdicted the worship and banned the church building. Of course, this is a common concern. How could religious people not support each other just because of different beliefs or religions? Sindhunata, in the introduction of the Indonesian version of a book entitled "When Religion Becomes Disaster," explains that speaking about religion is like talking about a paradox.

On the one hand, religion is a way and guarantor of safety, love, and peace. On the other hand, history proves that religion is the source, cause and reason for destruction and misfortune for humankind. Because of religion, people can love each other. Nevertheless, in the name of religion, people can kill and destroy one another.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it is happened to people, regardless of age, from children to adults. Parents took their children to carry out suicide bombings in several cities in Indonesia, including in Surabaya and Poso. There were records of children who were brought along by their parents to join ISIS. Therefore, the role of the family is crucial in teaching a model of religious life to children in a multicultural society. Parents who adhere to radicalism will tend to teach things that are inversely related to the teachings of religion itself.

Not only in families, Indonesia has also been surprised by the various discoveries of radicalism that have infiltrated through education in recent years. Starting from Early Childhood Education, which is taught to spell unusual words such as "bomb" or "kafir" and songs or slogans that have a provocative tone to teaching materials in Higher Education. Some survey results conducted by certain institutions showed undesirable results. The increasing understanding of radicalism among school-age children indicates that the goals of education in Indonesia are not being achieved. Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 1 states that National Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spirituality, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills. Necessary for himself, society, nation, and state. In article 3, it is emphasized that National Education functions to develop student's potential to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

This law means that education is beneficial for oneself and others. Being obedient to God Almighty must also be manifested in good deeds and developing tolerance in multicultural life. These objectives confirm that National education is oriented towards intelligence alone. Still, at the same time, it is also projected to teach students religiosity, personality formation, independence, and a democratic spirit.

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<sup>3</sup> Ayu dan Husni Mubarak Mellisa, ed., *Agama, Keterbukaan Dan Demokrasi: Harapan Dan Tantangan* (Jakarta: Pusat Studi Agama dan Demokrasi Yayasan Paramadina, n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Lethal: The Explosive Mix of Politics and Religion in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011).

Thus, formal education infiltrated by radicalism is sure to obscure the aims of education itself. In this article, the author tries to bring up everyday experiences in social life that can ward off the penetration of radicalism in children, especially school-age children ranging from early childhood to high school. The experience of friendship with heterogeneous children with different ethnic and religious backgrounds makes children more open, accepting, and respecting differences. The method used is qualitative research through the case study, interviews, library research, and search for news and or articles related to this topic.

## Radicalism in Indonesia: An Overview

The radicalism that spread in the world, especially when the world's eyes were on America during the 9/11 events, that has happened more than two decades but left a trail of hatred that gave rise to radicalism on the other side, in this case, Christian groups. As one Christian leader in America put it,

It's hypocrisy. It's a mockery. It's mocking the 3,000 Americans who died just around the corner, who were killed by Islamists in the name of Islam. There was not one Islamic cleric who oversees outside the If this had been a Catholic saying his Hail Mary's flying into the World Trade Center, the Pope would have been on television that night denouncing it. The lack of universal condemnation by the Islamic world, their silence, shows their support of this. President Bush and President Obama made great mistakes when they said that Islam is a peaceful religion. It is not. There is no evidence in its history. It's a religion of hatred. It's a religion of war.<sup>6</sup>

If these expressions of hatred are not handled immediately, they have the potential to give birth to other acts of intolerance. This is what the world faces so that the cycle of violence in the name of religion, violence due to radicalism in religion, does not continue. It cannot be denied that radicalism, shown by acts of intolerance, has also spread in Indonesia. Ismatu Ropi, a senior lecturer at the State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, said that violence cases in the name of religion increased sharply when the New Order regime in Indonesia fell in 1998, even though the strengthening of faith in Muslims had grown in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> What is usually referred to as the revival of Islam in Indonesia is the presence of religious symptoms that have emerged predominantly since the 1980s - marked by the strengthening tendency of Muslims to return to their religion by practising Islamic teachings in their daily lives.<sup>8</sup> As long as it does not affect togetherness with others who have different religions in life in the Republic of Indonesia, religion's strengthening is not a threat but a force for the nation to advance life. However, some social scientists have referred to the strengthening of the religious community of Islam regarding the rise of fundamentalist, militant, or revolutionary Islam. Islam, which tends to reject government or has different views on nationality, is also known as transnational. As Hilmy said, quoted by Suharto,

In Indonesian Islam, the term "transnational" Islam has become an academic terminology with a different meaning from other Islamic entities. The time is gaining momentum along with the anti-democracy campaign that some Islamists in Indonesia have intensified. The idea of transnational Islam presupposes a theological-ideological transmutation of something spe-

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Ismatu Ropi, *Religion And Regulation In Indonesia* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, n.d.).

<sup>8</sup> Pribanus Wantara and S. Anugrahini Irawati, "Relationship and Impact of Service Quality, Destination Image, on Customer Satisfaction and Revisit Intention to Syariah Destination in Madura, Indonesia," *European Journal of Business and Management Research* 6, no. 6 (2021): 209–215.

cifically religious doctrine from its original source to become Indonesian Islam without contextualizing that doctrine.<sup>9</sup>

Radical understanding is not always taught in a radical way either. One of the “halal” ways currently being pursued is through education. In a webinar (web seminar) held by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) entitled “Radicalism and Terrorism in the Pandemic: Prevention and Overcoming” it was conveyed that through long-running early childhood education, hardline groups are now ready to harvest “ripe fruits”. This was conveyed by Ken Setiawan, a former fighter for establishing the Islamic State of Indonesia who had undergone a process of deradicalization.<sup>10</sup> Ken Setiawan is a man from Kebumen. From 2000-2003 he joined a radical sect and was named the best recruiter and appointed as Commander of the NII. However, he turned against radicalism by establishing a rehabilitation centre for radical groups, the NII-Crisis Center.

Several parties have known what Ken Setiawan said. The Youth Movement of the Nahdatul Ulama, since 2016, has criticized this by proposing the Nahdatul Ulama Executive Board for the Ministry of Education and Culture to withdraw all Kindergarten children’s textbooks that spread teachings with radical views. The book found by GP Ansor in Depok, West Java, contains words that are deemed inappropriate, including “a passion for Saudi Arabia”, “bomb”, “sahid in the field of jihad”, and “finished with the Kiai massacre”. Then there are also the sentences and the words “willing to die for the defense of religion”, “gegana where is it”, “if our religion is insulted we are not willing”, “basoka is taken away”, and “why is a phobia of religion”. The book that smells of radicalism elements is packaged in the form of a practical reading learning method entitled “Islamic Children Like Reading”.<sup>11</sup> The book was written by the wife of the leader of the Laskar Jihad group in Solo. Books that have been around since 1999 will affect children. They grew up in suspicion and even hatred. So it is not surprising that several surveys show that radicalism is considered normal, even as real understanding.

The 2011 Islamic and Peace Research Institute (LaKIP) survey, which involved 590 PAI teachers, covering 327 SMP PAI teachers and 263 SMA PAI teachers in Jabodetabek found that the level of recognition of radical organizations, PAI teachers was 66.4 per cent, the level of approval of the organization PAI teacher radicals were 23.6 per cent, the level of recognition of PAI teacher radical figures was 59.2 per cent, the level of agreement to radical Islamic education leaders was 23.8 per cent. This study also showed that nearly 52 per cent of students agree with radical actions or actions in Indonesia. In 2018, the State Intelligence Agency stated that, based on research conducted in 2017, it was found that 39 per cent of students from several universities in Indonesia were exposed to radicalism.<sup>12</sup>

Several other facts regarding children exposed to radicalism can be seen from direct family experience. Some of the parental experiences written by Sri Lestari from BBCNews Indonesia show the surprise and concern of parents about religious lessons at school. Parents also shared this concern with BBC Indonesia.

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<sup>9</sup> Masdar Hilmy, “Akar-Akar Transnasionalisme Islam Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI),” *ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 6, no. 1 (January 22, 2014): 1, <http://islamica.uinsby.ac.id/index.php/islamica/article/view/117>.

<sup>10</sup> Ken Setiawan, “Radikalisme Dan Terorisme Di Masa Pandemi: Pencegahan Dan Penanggulangannya,” *Webinar Kominfo* (n.d.).

<sup>11</sup> Susanto, “Inflasi Radikalisme: Amankah Anak Kita Bersekolah?,” *DetikNews* (n.d.).

<sup>12</sup> Ariyani Lasmawati, *Remaja Dan Terorisme: Mengungkap Tabir Radikalisme Di Kalangan Remaja Dan Strategi Pencegahannya Dalam Perspektif Psikologi* (Jakarta: Milenia, n.d.).

One day, I was talking with my son. Then he saw a movie on TV, he conveyed that Muslims are fighting the infidels. What is an infidel, I asked to find out more. (He replied) An infidel is a person who is not Muslim. I was surprised, and so was my husband. "... Another parent, Mira Siregar, immediately transferred her child from a private school in Jakarta, after learning that the school was showing a film about the Palestinian war for her students." When it was second grade, I immediately transferred My child went to another school after graduating in third grade, I was anxious that it was a matter of violence, it had something to do with ideology as well, and it was not worthy of being seen by children," explained Mira.<sup>13</sup>

Suppose parents fully surrender their children's education to school, and it turns out that the school is free to impart radical teachings to the students. In that case, it is not impossible that these children will have a different understanding from their parents when they grow up. Parents have to be able to become a filter for their children because the teaching is not only through school lessons but also reading books that are usually consumed by children. Munajat, exceptional staff of the Minister of Religion, related to radicalism which has now entered through early childhood education in Indonesia, said that the current radicalism has indicated that it leads to an intolerance that has begun to enter and can provide exposure to early childhood.

About education twisted for a particular purpose, Bell Hooks provides a reminder that education should not hurt. Hooks is one of the figures in Christian Education whose real name is Gloria Jean Watkins. Hooks makes the classroom continue theory or strengthen student academics and become a space for recovery for all parties, a space for mutual respect for differences (including multicultural differences). This was due to the bad experience she had in college. Knowledge was sudden about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle.<sup>14</sup>

### **Friendship in Counteracting the Effects of Radicalism on Children**

How to counteract the radical notions that are ingrained in children is certainly not easy, but it is not impossible. For adults, dialogue between religions and cooperation between religions is usually done to minimize the influence of radicalism. Through literacy, the publication of books related to writing about togetherness also helps adults to reduce and even eliminate suspicion of those who are different. Friendship Across Religion in every volume raises things that enable adults to strengthen unity in diversity. One of the volumes of *Friendship Across Religion* is when the subject is introduced in friendship, what is the basis and what results are expected from a friendship between religions (Goshen-Gottsein, 2015).<sup>15</sup> Through the experience of the children together with their friends or in a different environment, it is believed that it can be a space for them to get to know each other. Children exposed to radicalism can be seen as victims. They need a community that sincerely accepts as self-actualizing persons. Only by getting acceptance, Maslow said that children could actualize themselves and deliver them to be able to respect others by recognizing that children are independent entities and as autonomous individuals.<sup>16</sup> Through this togetherness, children who are exposed to radicalism do not only learn formally in school but also learn through daily interactions and experiences.

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<sup>13</sup> Sri Lestari, "Ketika Paham Radikal Masuk Ke Ruang Kelas Sekolah-BBC News Indonesia," *BBC News Indonesia*. [https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita/\\_indonesia/2016/05/160519/\\_indonesia/\\_lapsus/\\_radikalisme/\\_anakmuda/\\_sekolah](https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita/_indonesia/2016/05/160519/_indonesia/_lapsus/_radikalisme/_anakmuda/_sekolah) (2016).

<sup>14</sup> Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (Routledge, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Alon Goshen-Gottstein, *Friendship Across Religions: Theological Perspectives on Interreligious Friendship* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> A. H. Maslow, *Motivasi Dan Kepribadian* (Jakarta: Pustaka Binaman Presindo, 1987).

Our attention is not only to children who have been exposed but also to other children, by taking preventive measures so that they are not (easily) exposed to radicalism.

In mid-2020, a book created by the collaboration of young people conveyed various experiences of togetherness in a multicultural society entitled *Toleransi: Aksi dan Narasi*, Supriatno, as one of the editors of this book, wrote that from the various experiences he wrote, he saw that there were still many young people who were amazed by multicultural life in Indonesia. The experience of meeting the pluralistic realities of life gives birth to a commitment to safeguard and maintain that plurality.<sup>17</sup> Rafael Mathando Hinganaday's experience as outlined in writing "Indonesia Tidak Butuh Toleransi" confirms that since birth Indonesians are accustomed to differences and diversity.<sup>18</sup> Hinganaday reflects from the experiences with various young people that sometimes there is fear and a feeling of being threatened because of a pluralistic reality because of the cultivation of a strong identity but not accompanied by the cultivation of awareness and the lack of shared experience of how to treat different people.

Cardinal Francis Arinze saw an opportunity to cultivate compassion in the life of a multicultural society. He said, "Our relationship as believers...should be based on tolerance, understood as a manifestation of tolerance for one another. Brotherhood is not merely an attitude of tolerance but love."<sup>19</sup> The experience of being loved and accepted goes beyond the radical teachings that are implanted, as long as they have the opportunity to make friends, build togetherness. Hinganaday also draws on Miroslav Volf's experience and understanding. Volf saw how the ethnic slaughter by the Serbian Forces and with an impulse of love how the process of forgiveness was fought for peace. One form of love that Volf conveyed was "embracing", both in the real sense and in the sense of acceptance. The act of "embracing" becomes a symbol of acceptance of others,

A positive environment, in which there are acceptance and friendship, can help children to open up and show tolerance to differences. Even if family life is not very good if it is open to a positive and supportive environment, children and young people will remember it. This happened to Ariarajah who as a child had good experiences with his environment. S. Wesley Ariarajah is a professor of ecumenical theology at Drew University School of Theology in New Jersey. His twelve years experience at the World Council of Churches in the dialogue program has made Ariarajah see various perspectives on the existing differences, both religious differences and differences in religion with many denominations. Ariarajah's experience in his childhood, friendship or friendship with neighbours who do not recognize religious differences, greatly influenced his views. In his book, *Not Without My Neighbour*, which is translated into Indonesian, *It is impossible without my neighbour*, Ariarajah wrote about his personal experiences that coloured his ministry during his tenure at the World Council of Churches. He wrote that Hindu neighbours surrounded his family.

As children, we played with Hindu children, went to school with them, and as is common in Asia, we were in and out of their houses all day long. Two children next door regularly joined our family evening prayer meeting. We pray for our activities each day, sing together several songs, read the Bible, and two or three people, including the children, intercede. The children of the Hindu family are happy, and their families are also delighted that their children can

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<sup>17</sup> Wawan dan Supriatno Gunawan, *Toleransi Aksi Dan Narasi* (Bandung: Mission21 dan Jakatarub, n.d.).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Tony Terwase Famave, "Fostering Dialogue and Engagement: The Role of the Catholic Church in Nigeria" (2019).

pray with us. Sometimes we from Christian families also come to Hindu families at night when they do pujas (Hindu religious prayers) and sing tevaram (devotional songs)."<sup>20</sup>

The friendship experience that Arirajah goes through can be said to be a daily experience that we often see in Indonesia, at least the author's personal experience. Playing around the mosque or even participating in the Koran with friends who are doing the Koran or vice versa, friends who are waiting when Sunday School arrives are expected, nothing special. However, an experience like that is an experience that is rarely found anymore, becomes something rare, something special. Citing several figures, Sumakyo in his writing stated that although it escapes the attention of democracy researchers, various studies have shown that the diversity of networks of friends affects a person's level of tolerance. The more a person is friends with people from other groups, the more tolerant he will be and have a positive assessment of that group.<sup>21</sup> This certainly proves that the experience of friendship has a more substantial influence than religious teachings or dogmas which (sometimes) separate people from one another. According to Goshen-Gottstein's notes, his research shows that friendship between religions is a new phenomenon.

Friendship or friendship that is often emphasized in religious life (sometimes) limits the meaning of friendship itself. For example, in Christianity, the expression "brothers in faith" and Islam is known as *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, as if it shows that those who become brothers, who can be close to forging partnerships, make friends are people of faith. In fact, by digging deeper into friendship, the result is a broader understanding of friendship. Friendships should not remain in fenced, closed areas where we stay friends with people who are similar to us. Friendship can form an environment for us to be 'trained' in the characteristics of theological friendship in which we make friends in freedom and without hierarchy and, in doing so, learn to treat all humans as equals.<sup>22</sup>

The tendency of children to be more exclusive is, at present, possible. Almost all children's activities (especially education) are separated based on religion, and it can be imagined if children only have homogeneous friends, who consist of the same (religious) group. So what they know is their religion and feel foreign to differences. If it is related to how radicalism develops in Indonesia, then encouraging children, conditioning children to be able to make more heterogeneous friends will have a significant impact on life together in this multicultural society. One of the challenges faced by this nation, one of which, according to Franz Magnis Suseno, is These are some form of violent, exclusive, fundamentalist religious revival. The characteristic of religiosity is arrogance, arrogance which makes them belittle, insult and oppress anyone who does not follow them, where extreme groups claim to have the right to determine who can live and who is not, so they put themselves in the place of the Divine.<sup>23</sup>

Extreme groups, which are also often referred to as radicals, exhibit intolerance that profoundly affects children. Hooks place emphasis on everyday experiences that can affect children. As an educator, social activist, and writer, Hooks demonstrates the importance of every community in teaching. Walls in the classroom do not limit learning, but also takes place

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<sup>20</sup> Seevaratnam Wesley Ariarajah, *Tak Mungkin Tanpa Sesamaku: Isu-Isu Dalam Relasi Antar-Iman* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Nathanael G Sumakyo, *Pertemanan Dan Keterbukaan Beragama: Pengalaman Amerika Serikat*, ed. Agama, Keterbukaan Demokrasi, and Husni Mubarak (Jakarta: PUSAD yayasan Paramadina, n.d.).

<sup>22</sup> Manitza Kotze and Carike Noeth, "Friendship as a Theological Model: Bonhoeffer, Moltmann and the Trinity," *In die Skriflig / In Luce Verbi* 53, no. 1 (January 2019).

<sup>23</sup> Franz Magnis "Agama Suseno, *Kebangsaan Dan Demokrasi: Nurcholish Madjid Dan Kemanusiaan*, ed. Keterbukaan dan Demokrasi Agama and Husni Mubarak (Jakarta: PUSAD Yayasan Paramadina, n.d.).

in various communities such as churches, shops, and in the home environment.<sup>24</sup> Through his experiences of friends that are not limited to equality of race, gender and others, Hooks said: "They lead us back to the drawing board and help us strengthen ideas. We have continued to support each other as friends, as colleagues, crossing the boundaries of race, gender, and status."<sup>25</sup> (Hooks, 2003)

### **Komunitas Anak Sabtu Ceria: A Big Inspiration from a Small Alley**

The longing for children today to experience heterogeneous friendships to accept and appreciate differences was expressed by one of the religious leaders in the Kampung Tengah area, East Jakarta, namely Uztad H says, "Poor kids now. Just want to play, you have to know what religion your friend is. In the past, my son (who later became a Koran teacher in the neighbourhood) played with his Christian friends. My son will wait at church until his Christian friend finishes worship. On the other hand, if their Christian friends are playing in the afternoon and my child is doing the Koran, they will wait in the prayer room until the Koran lesson is over." The life of residents in Kampung Tengah (precisely RT 001 RW 08), East Jakarta, is indeed unique. As a region, in a densely populated environment consisting of various ethnic groups and religions, it has been living harmoniously since decades ago. Two houses of worship of different religions have become like second "houses" for residents because almost all activities can be carried out in the two places of worship. A sense of belonging is evident from the phrase "our church is on TV!", Which a woman wearing a hijab shouted one morning in December 2014 to inform residents. Apparently, he had just watched a private TV station broadcasting a unique Christmas Tree. One of the churches that were highlighted was GKP Kampung Tengah which made a Christmas tree from old newspapers which were shaped like a rose with large petals. This isn't about the church getting on TV. But this shows closeness, brotherhood, friendship that transcends existing differences.

Suppose in the past few years the flag ceremony commemorating the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia has become a rare thing. In that case, this is not the case with this environment. There have been dozens of times the flag ceremony was held simply but meaningfully. The ceremony is stored in the morning after Christians have held the Independence Day Thanksgiving Service. The head of the Rukun Tetangga will act as the supervisor of the ceremony, conveying the mandate of the coach which is related to what is happening in the life of the nation and always calls on maintaining harmony and raising hot issues. Children to the elderly were very enthusiastic in participating in this ceremony. Not only during the ceremony but a series of competition activities the week before Independence Day and the happy night (which is usually held a few days after Independence Day) are also what to look forward to. The scenery is beautiful and inspires feelings when news related to radicalism tearing apart the unity of the nation. The involvement of all parties involved will undoubtedly be a wonderful experience for children, both in the present and in the future. Another activity, still in the series of Independence Day activities, is watching together or what in the past was known as "layar tancap". The white screen that was installed in front of the alley became a big screen for children and residents to enjoy the film being shown. The types of movies displayed are films with the theme of struggle, love for the country, respect for differences, care for the environment and others. While watching this together, various snacks made by residents are also served to enjoy together. The series of activities carried out in commemoration of the

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<sup>24</sup> Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia indeed fosters love for the country. Zulfani categorized the growth of love for the country as the success of the environment in implementing character education which was marked by three things, namely awareness as the being of God Almighty, scholarship and love, and pride for the country (Sesmiarni, 2015).

Other activities that involve all residents are related to health (routine health checks for children to the elderly who take place in the church building, joint sports taking place in the field or if it is raining, it is carried out in the church building); activities that support the economic development of residents (social gathering and community cooperatives); activities related to education are counselling for residents regarding specific topics such as healthy food for families, HIV Aids, Prevention of Sexual Violence and so on. Still related to education, there is also the Komunitas Anak Sabtu Ceria which is held once a month and takes place at the Musholla. Armed with past experiences, with good intentions and for the sake of harmony between different citizens, all sections of the community support the presence of the Komunitas Anak Sabtu Ceria. One of the activities that foster friendship between children in this area is based on the awareness that children must-have experiences of meeting friends of different ethnicities and religions. Even though we are different, it does not mean that we must be enemies, but in differences, we are just friends. This experience of togetherness will undermine the negative image that has been formed, whether within the family or at school.

In this community, children have the opportunity to read and listen to fairy tales, write poetry/stories, sing, draw, colour, origami, and learn to plan specific activities such as a vacation together or an event to fill certain activities. Fun Friday activities were also held to help children who were left behind in school. Whether we realize it or not, this strengthens the friendship between children, which then also strengthens friendships between families. This became clear when in 2017 the unity of the citizens of Jakarta (even Indonesia) was almost torn apart by the election of governors and deputy governors who twisted religion for the benefit of certain groups. This does not affect friendships between children. 4) Activities of gathering or visiting each other during religious holidays. When there is a group that prohibits Muslims from saying "Merry Christmas" to Christians, in this area Muslims who are Muslim will collectively visit Christian homes to say "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year". Dishes in the form of cakes that are synonymous with Christmas are served and enjoyed together. On the other hand, when Lebaran or Eid al-Fitr arrives, Christian residents, together, will visit the houses of Muslim residents to say "Happy Eid, apologize physically and mentally". A special dish for Eid, namely "ketupat", was served.

No wonder the leader in this neighbourhood, the Chairman of Rukun Tetangga 001, Mrs NH, once decorated one of the well-known mass media in Indonesia with the headline, "Guardians of Middle Village Tolerance". Mrs NH is a housewife who has served as Chair of the Rukun Tetangga for several periods (more than fifteen years). His presence in every religious event, not only Islam but also Christianity, is a strong example for citizens to respect each other. This shows the critical role of leaders in maintaining tolerance between people. The experience of living with tolerance is not without challenges. When newcomers live in the area and show intolerant behavior, religious and community leaders will have a conversation with them to convey how friendship and brotherhood between people of different beliefs are closely knit in this area. Another quite big challenge was the governor's election and deputy governor of DKI Jakarta a few years ago. Religious and community leaders played an essential role in preventing citizens from splitting.

The two houses of worship in the neighborhood, the church, and the mushala, which are only about a hundred meters apart, have become shared houses where various activities are

carried out. Do not hesitate; children or parents call the church "our church" or call the pastor directly "ibu pendeta". Simple things, average, but I hope this is also a treasure for those who experience it. "We pray that these children will be successful in the future, Pastor. Unfortunately, the same siblings wherever they will be. They always remember that being different is not being an enemy but being different and can also be a friend ", that was how the RT mother expressed her hope. This hope, which is always echoed, is repeated every time he delivers the message of the Leader of the Flag Ceremony at the Republic of Indonesia's Anniversary.

The experience becomes a hidden curriculum by which educational goals can be achieved. Of course, this requires all parties' involvement, starting from the family, religious leaders, community leaders, and the surrounding community. Regarding the role of religious figures or people who play a role in shaping children's character, they must clearly understand the texts in the Bible, which must support a multicultural society's life. For Christianity itself, learning to appreciate a multicultural society can be emulated from Jesus' attitude towards Syro-Phoenician women. We know this story, how at the beginning of the conversation, Jesus looked very exclusive, as if he rejected women who were different from Him, as Jews. However, then with a broader horizon of thought, Jesus openly demonstrated his transformation by making the statement, "Women, you have great faith!" (LAI: O mother, great is your faith) Jesus was not declaring "your Christian faith: but the faith that the woman had indifference." In this encounter and afterward, Jesus remained a genuinely faithful Jew. Still, He must have come out with a broader perspective of valuing or judging others according to their standards.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusions

It is undeniable that a sound world of formal education can stimulate students to continuously learn to be aware of themselves as responsible for carrying out their entrusted tasks. The world of formal education can be considered a forum for cultivating noble values in social life. However, the world of formal education is not enough, especially when it is infiltrated by radicalism. So to counteract this, the experience of being with different people will help children to be able to accept and appreciate differences. The experience of friendship can erase suspicion and cultivate love. The role of all sections of society to open opportunities for children to have heterogeneous friendships is needed. This can be started from living with the closest community, namely neighbors.

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<sup>26</sup> Gunilla Dahlberg, Peter Moss, and Alan R Pence, *Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Postmodern Perspectives* (Psychology Press, 1999).

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