

**Journey to Zero Violence:
An Experience of Youth-Based Civil Society
Organization in Eradicating Violent Practices in the
School Initiation Programme**

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Abstrak

Praktek-Praktek kekerasan dalam inisiasi sekolah merupakan bentuk tindakan dehumanisasi yang dilakukan di tingkat sekolah menengah atas di Indonesia terhadap siswa-siswi baru. Implikasi negatifnya muncul tidak hanya di internal sekolah saja, tetapi secara sosial telah merambah ke level yang lebih luas, yaitu merebaknya perilaku kekerasan di tengah masyarakat. Situasi yang telah berlangsung lama ini memerlukan penanganan secara kultural melalui Kemah Perdamaian (Peace Camp). Peace Generation sebagai salah satu organisasi berbasis pemuda menggelar program ini untuk mempromosikan nilai-nilai solidaritas, dialog antaragama, tindakan nir-kekerasan, dan pengenalan identitas sebagai modal berinteraksi sosial di lingkungan sekolah, keluarga, dan masyarakat. Melalui Kemah Perdamaian praktek-praktek kekerasan di sekolah secara perlahan berhasil diminimalisir dan diinternalisasi.

Keywords:

praktek kekerasan; organisasi berbasis pemuda; masyarakat madani; Kemah Perdamaian.

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1. Introduction

Since the late 1990s the school initiation programme has become an embedded process in education, particularly conducted by secondary institutions in Indonesia to educate social values and also altruism to new students (Alam, 2008:9). Not only teachers are involved in this programme as facilitators, but also senior students and alumni are involved in developing and planning. The goals of this activity as mainly stated above are to communicate existing values of the respective schools, set altruistic spirit to the new students as an effort to encourage unity within the schools and to make them adapt to the learning process and assignments. The positive values of this programme are a good understanding of the social interaction in the school, fostering ethical interactions and respect to his/her teachers, principals, and other senior students, and having the ability to determine the best extra curricula activities as part of self-actualisation.

In running the processes and values above, school initiation programme in current years has encountered many protests from different groups of people, mass-media, government, and also the internal school stakeholder because it shows violent actions which impinge upon the moral development of the students. In accordance to the concerns, this paper attempts to analyse the internal process of it which intensively involves teachers and senior students, and to obtain greater importance of peace campaign endorsed by local youth-led organization, Jogjakarta Peace Generation, which has played significant role in Yogyakarta to chair more than 15 activities on peace values dissemination.

Before reading ahead, this paper consists of different sections in order to ease the readers' understanding of this case and resolving actions to solve this case. Part 2 will first elucidate the growing process of school initiation program, including its historical context. Through Part 3, readers will understand how the partnership was forged between youth-based civil society organization-Peace Generation and American Friends

Service Committee through Peace Camp². In Part 4, the concluding remarks emphasize on the importance of restorative discipline to address the problems, which can be implemented by teachers as school educators based on the research undertaken by Jogjakarta Peace Generation in the field.

2. The History of School Initiation Programme and Its Institutional Reasons

After Indonesia Independence day in 1945, number of local people who struggled to fight against Dutch colonialization had died and need more troops for this. The local troops that consisted of a group of college students, so-called "Tentara Pelajar", gradually moved to Yogyakarta from Jakarta to continue their education and return back home. They passed through several jungles between Jakarta to Jogjakarta to fight against Dutch colonialization. To accommodate them, in 1946 the Indonesian Government established specific schools as educational support that enabled them to obtain formal education. The schools were the so-called "School for Endeavor" or in Indonesian it is called "Sekolah Perjuangan". The number of students at that time were not many. There were only about 70-100 students attending the institutions. These schools were mostly located in the heart of Yogyakarta city. On January 16, 1950 after the government issued a Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs Decree No. 115/B regulating about the establishment of senior high school for endeavor, the schools were operated in shifts. students needed to attend class either in the morning or afternoon. The students continued to learn in different times although they had to be ready whenever the government called them back to struggle against Dutch colonial (Alam, 2008:48)

At that time, Education for Nation Defence ("Pendidikan Bela

2 The initiative has respectively encouraged group of local youth to set up organisation which has vision and goals mainly to eradicate violent practices amongst youth and examine the root cause of local conflict. These organizations are Aceh Peace Generation (APG) that concerns in peace education and was formed on August 2006 after several approaches and value sharing from Jogjakarta Peace Generation and Moluccas Peace Generation (MPG). As we all might know that local encroachment in Maluku located in eastern Indonesia has ever traumatized dwellers, not only parents, but also youth. This organization is constituted in March 2007 and based on the various trauma experience perceived by its members.

Negara”) was to educate students on their readiness in fighting against colonialization and to protect their nation from attacks perpetuated by the Dutch. During the sessions students were taught not only the way to develop war strategy and identify the enemy, but also they performed physical training. During these sessions they had to do regular exercise, including push-ups and sit-ups. This activity was conducted after school finished. If they showed their seniors a wrongdoing, they would be punished. The punishments were various, ranging from push-ups and sit-ups for 100 repetitions to running around the field for 12 times. The goal of this exercise was to create a strong generation of youth that had undeniable resilience and were exceptional performers. The implementation of the Education for Nation Defence was then continued until the 1960-1970s because the government desired to maintain the nation stability post-war. Since then, this Education for Nation Defence is continuously implemented for new selected students and its activities including a school march is executed. Although recent school initiation is not fully based on the Education for Nation Defence. Its content and the way to educate new students are taken for granted from its practice, which involves severe punishment, snapping, bullying, and hazing.

Sarcastic actions are also perpetuated by the senior students when calling out to new students at school during this programme and it is authorised for senior committee to do this. The more wrongdoing new students do, the more sarcastic a call they will have from senior students. During school initiation many rules developed are to govern new students behavior and to control their interaction within the school environment. No warnings or early assessment alert new students to wrongdoing or failures. Once they do so, they will be punished. No early warnings or evaluations help new students to identify their mistakes. Punishment is “reward” for failures. This kind of punishment is construed as the best method to communicate the principle of discipline and finally all behaviors in the form of punishment is continuously replicated in the later school violence. After long elucidation you might ask where are the teachers during these events?

Since Education for Nation Defence had been implemented, teachers have had authority to let senior students to develop school initiation, including the ground rules and punishments. The role of

teachers were only to act as bystanders although they did review the activity proposal submitted to the school principal. When the activity was conducted their position was passive audience. No positive actions to restrict further impact of punishment were performed.

Before 2007, numerous schools performed violent actions during school initiation and it happened prior to the Peace Camp for Youth which sought to disseminate peace values to students and gangs. From the teachers' perspectives, there are various reasons and justification that lead to violent actions. First, they construed that punishment is an effective way to teach moral discipline is because through the punishment students will be discouraged from replicating their wrongdoings. However, psychological impact exists which is not considered by the teachers. Students who received physical punishment are traumatized for several long periods and their ability to concentrate during classroom sessions is diminished.

In addition, schools actually possess another better method, instead of performing punishment, but limited budget, human resources, and also lack of innovations are tangible constraints. A limited number of teachers and staff prevents the development of more innovative activities such as school trip for the purpose of introducing research capability, school camps for new selected students to facilitate unity, and also students assistance program which enables new students to share and exchange their ideas. Thus most of their times is absorbed by administrative work does not let give teacher to perform reflection and evaluation. By doing reflection and evaluation in timely manner teachers could identify the root of analysis on the student moral development and several activities to boost it within school environment. At the process, school initiation program is a mandatory activity for all new selected students.

Teachers play the roles as controller in this activity, but not too much, because all of process regarding concept development is handed over to the committee which is consists of second and third year students. Critics from the mass media and parent group has increased since 2007 because school initiation was perceived as an activity which alienated students. Students had no adequate time to do homework at home and they spend most of the time to complete the assignments given by the committee. Their concentration and performance in the classroom

is decreased Teachers, ignorance has resulted in many violent actions undertaken during school initiation.

In correspondence to above argument, Remboldt (1994:15) asserts that ignorance towards misunderstanding of violence is a triggering factor to continue misbehavior which claims violence as part of core system in education. In this level of understanding, most of teachers do not have consciousness in controlling violent action in which they are looking at and therefore, teacher will be ineffective in overseeing school activities and even they support violent action by implementing uneducated punishment and social sanctions to the students. What the teachers do are on the contrary of their natures as educator. Educators should be able to demonstrate their importance in providing democratic circumstance in the school environment. As coined in Haryatmoko (2002:41-42), an educator has a role to prepare their students for accepting pluralism and therefore active non-violent actions to prevail collective consciousness in bringing cultural and personality difference to the school environment.

School initiation was basically started at 1 pm after school hour, but the control system to the new students is practiced the whole day by senior students who participate in the initiation committee. From the beginning, it is a must for all new students to wear similar t-shirt style and its color, including shoes and hair attributes. Why they must do so? Because its goals is to enhance feeling of solidarity amongst new students at schools. The Activity will end at 5 pm when it is time for all students to be evaluated and assessed. During this last session, student will be evaluated and interrogated and need to disclose their wrongdoing. If they demonstrate crucial violation, they will be sent out to "Room for Detention". "Room for Detention" is a terminology to state a room used by committee to punish students. Research has revealed that 90 percent of students who entered this room were traumatized by the violent treatment of the committee. Freire (2007) sees this type of disciplinary action places students as passive objects and the school just considers them as individuals who are mentally "molded".

In daily school hour new students are also watched and controlled by the committee of school initiation. The Committee will come with punishment when they see students who wear inappropriate dress or behave in an inappropriate manner. However, new students do not

recognise themselves that they were under control and surveillance. This situation is almost similar with so-called Panopticon jail where all of prisoners did not acknowledge the location of the soldier who watch and control them. This way leads fear and feeling of threatened in the individuals because they always remain under surveillance and are forcibly demanded to obey regulation with its punishment. During this process, intimidation and subjugated actions contribute to form sense of compliance. By this desentralized authority, hidden surveillance can reconstruct consciousness and permanent possibility which legitimates the function of certain power of dominant actors to treat their object inhumanely (Janangelo, 1991: 47)

3. Capability of Yogyakarta Peace Generation as Youth-based Civil Society Organization in Forging Partnership with International Funding Agency

Punishment as part of violent practice during school initiation encouraged a youth-based civil society organization to develop positive action to eradicate it. Hyden (1998) asserts that civil society organizations have the capability in struggling democratic actions and their positions are out of state which based on community involvement. In addition to prevail democratic society, civil society organisation embracing multiculturalism values can have wider space in promulgating ideas of peace through active non-violence action. The principal argument is that they can do so because they can prevail these values through their activities networks with other organisation which has same goals and therefore support democratization process (Suharko, 2005:274). As part of CSO, Peace Generation commits to build peace in at the education level and through community engagement. It is a community established in 2002. This community has open membership to all students from different level of education and now the number of members is over 250 students, consisting of 10 percent of senior high and university students. Even though it is a new emerging youth based-organization, JPG has expanded its network across countries in Southeast Asia. JPG members has inspired other youth throughout Indonesia to bring peace and multiculturalism values as mainstream to achieve its goals in peaceful community. Since 2002, JPG has worked and forged partnership with

American Friends Service Committee; a US-home based non-government organisation (NGO) which has aligned value in peace dissemination across community.

In 2007 this issues of violent action at school was raised as a concerns from Jogjakarta Peace Generation. From 2005 to 2007 JPG identified that 90 percent of 11 national high school in Yogyakarta still implemented school initiation programmes and they applied punishment as part of violent practice to develop moral discipline and solidarity. It was then found that violent actions done by senior students done during school initiation would be re-implemented by the next coming committee. Surprisingly, this case had occurred during 5 batches of new students at each school. Relying on this research, it is urgent to develop positive and tangible actions in order to eradicate violent actions. School initiation is actually a good step to stimulate moral development of new selected students, but the on-going process which includes traumatizing punishment can no longer tolerated.

Finally, JPG supported by AFSC developed a Peace Camp inviting more than 50 students from different schools where violent practices remained. Over 120 candidates were strictly evaluated based on their potential to serve as change agent, academic accolades, their writing skills, their presentation skill, and their basic negotiation skill. The 65 participating students (PS) were then put together in 3 days peace camp in a village. Interestingly, those PS's were students who had ever sit on "top" function in school initiation as chairperson, guards/security, and observer. In 3 intensive days, this Peace Camp brought "Solidarity and Identity" as core themes to address the issue of violence practice during school initiation.

One-day session for Solidarity was conducted by discussion and reflection on the true meaning of Solidarity of daily life. During this session participating students were asked to develop and seek alternative methods in educating solidarity among peers without violent actions. Before resurfacing with alternative methods, participating students were requested to forge commitment that upon completion of this Peace Camp they needed to practice what they had developed during the sessions and disseminate the values to all of their friends at schools. On the second day which was their Identity session, students were requested to understand

why every single human in the world was born with a different religion, faith, physical ability, race, way of life, gender, sexual preference, and so forth. To make them confident enough to understand their own identity, first they had to form a round chain and touch shoulder each other. The rule was, they must stay in the same group according to the request conveyed by the committee. For instance, if I screamed out "Religion", those who were belonged to Muslim, Hindu, and Christian must be together in the same religion and in another session I said "those who have ever given a punishment during school initiation please proceed!", by then they must do so. For the last question, they were encouraged to convey feelings of being the identity they embrace, how they feel about other identity, and how do they feel as violent perpetrators during school initiation. In the night, all of students stayed together in a various groups to develop action plan and path-forwards. By being involved in this group-based session, they could exchange ideas, opinions, and share knowledge to resolve the problems.

Three days Peace Camp brought changes in their perception of violence as they learnt many things and were encouraged to think out of the box in order to find out alternatives. A year later, in August 2008, the Peace Camp committee undertook a survey to assess the positive impact by doing interview stakeholders where the peace camp alumni studying. Most of participating youth in the Peace Camp were from 11 national schools in Yogyakarta. The results was interesting, 10 of 11 schools have had no longer implemented punishment during school initiation. A school had not been implemented because they lacked communication with the principal. The Peace Camp they participated in became an eye-opener regarding school violence.

4. Concluding Remarks

Punishment involving violent practices at some level as shown in the above elaboration is destructive and causes great impact to the new students. The first impact is trauma and a decreased ability to focus during classroom sessions. Tthe second impact is violence replication. In the later stage, new students will be seniors at school and according to the former research of educators as cited above, those who were victims of violence will be more highly proned to demonstrate similar actions

towards another individual. Thus in these stages violence prevails. In resolving this problem, not only do school stakeholders included parents, teachers, principals, and students who have an obligation to stop, but it is also the responsibility of other stakeholders who have concerns about this issues. Teachers who are the closest individuals to the students must understand this process thoroughly. To reconcile and stop violence in the school, they can practice restorative disciplines.

Based on the approach of restorative discipline found by Amstutz and Mullet (2005), teacher and other school stakeholders need to practice “restorative discipline”. This discipline model attempts to prevent and stop misbehavior and teaches more life-giving responses. In today’s schools, care for person(s) harmed through misbehavior is rarely addressed in intentional ways. Restorative discipline is implemented for larger educational community to help misbehaving students deal with the harm they did to individuals. Several activities can be implemented as key goals of restorative discipline, which are: a) Understand the harm and violent perpetrator and develop empathy for both the harmed and the harmer, b) Listen and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed, c) Encourage responsibility and accountability through personal affection within collaborative planning process, d) Reintegrate the harmer and if necessary the harmed as well into the community as valuable and contributing members, e) Develop caring climates to support healthy communities, f) Change the system when it contributes to the harm, and g) Forge partnership with youth based organisation in local scale to help find out the resolution and handling sources. Youth-based organisation often has a system to see the punishment case from the perspective of “otherness” so that they could provide more objective suggestions and recommendations for schools.*****

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