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Document

The Mainstreaming of Pesantrens and Madrasahs in Indonesia

Jamhari

Background

Indonesia has undergone radical changes in the last decade. The collapse of the New Order in 1998 marked the beginning of a drawn-out economic, social and political crisis in Indonesia that has further impacted on national unity. Another perhaps more serious challenge has reared its ugly head in Indonesia, that is religious radicalism. The rise of radical Islamic groups not to mention the terrorist bombings that have struck different parts of Indonesia are no doubt a serious threat to Indonesia's stability and a massive challenge for the Indonesian Government. However, in spite of these serious setbacks, the crises have provided opportunities for renewal and reform. The prime example of this is of course democracy.

In regard to facing the challenge of religious radicalism, State Islamic Universities (UIN and IAIN) across Indonesia have emerged as critical players in overcoming radicalism. Through its networks (pesantrens, madrasahs and mass Islamic organizations) which can reach the grass root level, UINs and IAINs have played a major role in the development and promotion of moderate Indonesian Islam. An impact study on the role of UINs and IAINs conducted by PPIM in 2000 showed that alumnus of UINs and IAINs are people that could be described as possessing "critical thought, understanding of other religions, a participatory, democratic and inclusive approach, respect for humanistic, tolerant, egalitarian values, and gender sensitive in understanding Islam."

Islamic education, especially in pesantrens and madrasahs, also faces a national challenge in regards to how Islamic education can be integrated into national education. Since the enactment of the new Indonesian educa-

tion act 2003 that incorporates Islamic education into the national education system, pesantrens and madrasahs have faced serious challenges, namely in regards to: 1) how Islamic education can accommodate new contemporary issues and trends such as democracy, civil society and human rights; and 2) at the management and networking level, as most of Islamic schools are run in a traditional manner, there is always a question as to how they can adapt to the current trends of modernization and globalization.

In consideration of these concerns, PPIM UIN Jakarta in cooperation with the Postgraduate Faculty of UIN Jogjakarta is carrying out training to mainstream pesantrens and madrasahs. With financial support from DANIDA, the training will provide in-service training for staff of 180 pesantrens and madrasahs. The project, to be run over a three-year period, aims to bring pesantrens and madrasahs closer to mainstream Indonesian society as well as the global community by exposing pesantrens and madrasahs to contemporary and democratic values such as civil society, religious pluralism, human rights and gender equity, as well as such concepts as participatory and accountable management. This project supports the Indonesian Government's efforts to accelerate the transformation of the Islamic education sector.

Project Description

The three year (2005-2007) mainstreaming project is designed to support the process of introducing pesantrens into the mainstream Indonesian and global community. It focuses on six provinces (South Sumatra, Banten, West Java, Central Java and Yogyakarta, East Java and Madura, and West Nusa Tenggara). The project provides in-service training for 180 pesantrens (90 pesantren khalaf and 90 pesantren salaf).¹

The project has focused on six strategic groups in pesantrens and madrasahs. These are: 1) Kyai (male religious leaders) and nyai (female religious leaders) of pesantren salaf; 2) kyai and nyai at pesantren khalaf; 3) key community leaders; 4) principals of madrasah aliyah (Islamic high schools); 5) religious teachers at madrasah aliyah; and 6) student leaders of madrasah aliyah.

The kyai and nyai have been chosen because of their position as icons of the pesantrens Indonesia. As pesantren management is usually left in the hands of the kyai, the involvement of kyai in the training is critical. Teachers of religious subjects are targeted for the training because of their important role in the transmission of religious knowledge to students and thus in the development of their ideas. Student leaders of madrasah aliyah are also important as they will become leaders of the future.

Four programs have been developed to support the mainstreaming process:

- 1) *Program Development Planning for Pesantrens and Madrasahs.* This program is a forum where stake-holders can discuss the training, including the modules and methodology. The outcome of this program is to design a training module for Kyai, Head of Madrasah, Teachers of religious subject and senior students of Pesantren and Madrasah.
- 2) *In-Service training in six provinces.* The in-service training is conducted in pesantren by inviting other 15 pesantren in each province. In the training, the participants discuss the contemporary issues such as civic values, democracy, developing new curriculum and widening the network of pesantren.
- 3) *Piloting to directly implement program activities in several selected pesantren and madrasah.* In each province there will be one pesantren selected as a pilot project to implement the project.
- 4) *Monitoring and Evaluation.* After training monitoring and evaluation is conducted to see the success and failure of the in-service training.

Expected Results

The project goal is to mainstream pesantrens and madrasahs by introducing them to contemporary and democratic civic values, as mentioned above.

The expected impact is to change the views of those in the Islamic educational community regarding the diversity and complexity of the modern world, and increased engagement of Islamic educational institutions in issues concerning contemporary civic values (democracy, civil society, religious pluralism, human rights and gender equity)

The project purpose is to promote contemporary and progressive Islam and expose pesantren and madrasah communities to current debates on civic values, and to provide management skills for the sustainable development of pesantrens and madrasah, and to provide educational and curriculum skills to improve the quality and relevance of religious education.

The expected outcomes are: 1) Improved awareness of progressive Islam by staff and students within Islamic educational institutions; 2) Increased exposure to contemporary issues in democratic Indonesia such as democracy, civil society, religious pluralism, human rights and gender equity for Islamic authorities and students within Islamic education institutions; 3) Better inclusion of progressive Islam in the teaching of fiqh and aqidah-akhlak pesantren and madrasah curriculums; 4) More active and participatory instruction of religious education; 5) More efficient, demo-

cratic, and participatory management of Islamic education institutions; 6) Greater involvement from individuals and institutions outside the pesantren and madrasah traditional circles connected to pesantren and madrasah activities.

The expected outputs are: 1) A number of workshops, the design of training modules, TOT and training on progressive Islam; 2) kyai/nyai, young kyai and teachers of fiqh and aqidah-akhlak trained in progressive Islam; 3) Training in which women's right issues are integrated carried out; 4) Sermons and Koranic study sessions based on progressive Islam given during the training sessions; 5) Discussions held by pesantren and madrasah students on progressive Islam given during the training.

Endnotes

1. *Pesantren khalaf is loosely defined as a pesantren which applies a modern classical system in their education. It also follows a national curriculum of Islamic schools administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. On the other hand, pesantren salaf is defined as a pesantren which still sustains the traditional Islamic teaching which mainly focuses on teaching Classical Islamic books without applying a classical system of education.*