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STRENGTHENING TOLERANCE AND PLURALISM AMONG YOUTH

Intolerance and violence extremism threaten democracy and undermine development. Youth, who represent one-quarter of Indonesia’s population of more than 270 million people, are particularly vulnerable to hate speech and intolerant messaging. The United States partners with civil society to promote tolerance and pluralism, especially among youth.

The health of Indonesia’s inclusive democracy is threatened by rising intolerance, including growing religious exclusivism and rising inequality, especially in the education system. Recent studies have shown that nearly half of all high school and university students are reluctant to socialize with people of different backgrounds.

USAID CREATIVE YOUTH FOR TOLERANCE (CREATE)

USAID CREATE provides young people with positive outlets to express themselves while promoting interfaith, interethnic, gender, and social inclusion understanding among students, teachers, parents, and government officials. Through arts and culture-based approaches, the project promotes tolerance and

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pluralism among students, enhancing the ability and willingness of young Indonesians to constructively manage differences and counter intolerant messages through individual experiences.

USAID CREATE promotes partnerships to address religious, ethnic, gender, and disability, tolerance and inclusion in Indonesia. The program responds directly to the problem of intolerance in schools with support from parents, teachers, school committees, government policymakers, nongovernmental organizations, and academics. USAID CREATE collaborates with 16 high schools in three provinces—West Java, East Java, and South Sulawesi—to help students gain skills as artists; improve understanding of democracy and human rights; improve the ability of teachers to incorporate the values of tolerance and pluralism in their classrooms; and engage parents, teachers, and principals to monitor and promote school policies on tolerance and pluralism.

RESULTS

To date, the program has trained 35 art facilitators and 300 teachers and parents to promote tolerance in schools. Nearly 350 high school students received training and mentoring prior to participating in art competitions and virtual exhibitions that showcased their work—podcasts, painting, videos, song, theater—around the themes of tolerance, diversity, and anti-violence.

A teacher at Islamic Senior High School (MAN) 2 Bandung who has participated in USAID CREATE teacher training approached school authorities and explained the importance of gender equality leading to an opportunity for women students to run for the organization's leader at their school. As a result, in 2021, MAN 2 Bandung students elected their first female student council leader.

In January 2022, USAID CREATE held public, in-person and online provincial art exhibitions in the three target provinces. This activity, which involved students as young artists, attracted widespread local mass media attention. In addition, this activity successfully displayed 62 pieces of art made by students while participating in USAID CREATE activities.

CONTACT

Yahya Luping, USAID
yluping@usaid.gov

Mohamad Miqdad, Yayasan Humanis dan Inovasi
Sosial, Stichting Hivos (HIVOS)
mmiqdad@hivos.org