

Assessing Youth Empowerment Programs for Preventing Radicalism and Extremism in Indonesia

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Abstract: The Indonesia government has undertaken a broader range of programs aimed at preventing youth in violence and extremism engagement. However, the youth programs as part of community empowerment, youth's aspirations and participation usually ignored. This article assesses the local government effort for youth as a realistic form of intervention on preventing youth in violent or terrorist groups. The data collected from in-depth interviews of local government and former terrorist prisoners in Lamongan District, East Java. Findings of the study presented that managing youth empowerment programs as an effort to combat radicalism and extremism often challenged a variety of different and competing interests. This has become one of the obstacles to the success of youth empowerment programs.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Indonesia government has undertaken a broader range of programs through the central and local government aimed at preventing youth in violence and extremism engagement. However, youth exposed radical ideology through recitation, education, and internet, that lead to extremism is problematic. Nearly 60 percent of high school and university students admit to having a "radical" religious attitude (PPIM, 2017). Although, radical beliefs is not necessarily a precursor to terrorism. Youth becomes the vulnerable groups on spreading radical ideologies and recruitment targets of extremist organizations. Most people involved with dangerous and extremist actions are male, young, teenagers in early twenties (Silk, 2003).

Youth refers to individual aged from 16 to 30 years old (Law No.7/2009). These group of people occupies an interesting and unique position in the life cycle, as children dependence on parents and community and as adults have primary social status based on their own ability and effort to be independent. Those who character and personality are in malleable, can develop further in one direction or another. the literature on youth studies has been described young people as an age of transitions,

constructing identity, social and political actors, and youth as creators of culture (Jones, 2009).

While some other, characterized carriers of change, occupying strategic positions as mediators in social reproduction and transformation, as an agent of change, the youth has an important role in the Indonesia national struggle movement until seize independence, and the fall of the New Order which led to the era of Reformation and Democratization in Indonesia. The development of globalization which is marked by the intensification of science and technology also has an impact on the social and political role of youth. Usage The use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram among young people is proven to be able to be a trigger for social and political change in various parts of the world (Mahdi & Al-Hattami, 2016: 83-94).

However, youth are often blamed for destroying social norms and order, involvement in various social and political issues in the form of drug abuse, acts of violence and terrorism. Youth are described in paradox, "*as both heroes and villains.*" (Jones, 2009:4). The picture puts youth in an ambiguous condition of having more than one interpretation or explanation; double meaning, or several possible meanings. Ambiguity is characterized by the fact of presenting itself as a series of changes interacting with effects that are often unpredictable. Such a situation fosters a state

of ambivalence, the coexistence of one person from a contradictory emotion or attitude (such as love and hatred) towards a person or object.

There is currently a broad range of literature which discusses about the phenomenon of youth radicalization, ranging from searching for an identity, impulsive attitude, thrill-seeking or desire for revenge, to social inequality, failed state and an ideology. Moreover, studies on countering violent extremism indicated that if a person or group are exposed to radical ideologies, especially religious-based ideology, deradicalization efforts are difficult to radicalize.

Generally, an increase in radical religious understanding for the younger generation due to the opening of opportunities for relations with radical groups, as well as the sources of the discourse, and the opening of access to information both at the local and global levels regarding various issues and inequalities experienced of Muslim communities (Vertigans, 2008:82-83). According to Appleby (1999), that several causes the Muslim community more identified with violence; (1) mass media has increased public awareness of social, economic and political inequalities and injustices that occur in many Muslim societies and corruption and mismanagement that has disrupted government and state institutions. (2) the strength of Islam as a fortress, compared to some other religious traditions until the process of differentiation and privatization that accompanies secularization. (3) preachers and Islamic leaders have competed effectively with mainstream Islamic leaders for resources and respect. They do this by demonstrating integrity, efficiency in service to oppressed and needy people, and militant dedication to their goals.

Thus, knowing how to prevent the spreading of extremist thought for youth as important as preventing them from joining extremist groups. Finding ways to prevent youth from joining extremist groups may be the most important part of an effective strategy. This article evaluates the youth empowerment program conducted by the local government in order to disengage youth in a violent or terrorist organization. The data collected from in-depth interviews of local government, former terrorist prisoners in Lamongan District, East Java. Lamongan gained a reputation as a hub of radicalism in Indonesia, first for being the hometown of Bali bombing in 2002, and the existence of several people pro Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) groups within the town.

2 UNDERSTANDING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

The occurrence of social and economic changes requires adjustment from young people and the ability and readiness of individuals in the adjustment process (Blossfeld, et al, 2006). Youth economic empowerment is one of the efforts to reduce and even fight youth involvement in extremist movements. Although, the relationship between unemployment and poverty to the tendency of the emergence of terrorist behavior. The life cycle of youth in a stage of searching identity, which is marked by a sense of curiosity and high desire to try various experiences of religiosity, becomes an easy space for the entry of various religious ideas, including extremes. The Law on Youth in the article number 24 explains: "youth empowerment is carried out systematically, and continues to increase the potential and physical quality, mental spirituality, knowledge, and skills of self and organization towards youth independence."

Literally, empowerment comes from the word 'power' refer to the ability to do something or the ability to act, while the word 'empowerment' denotes as a process, way, empowering actions. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word empower contains two meanings, namely: (1) to give power or authority to or give power, divert power or delegate authority to other parties; (2) to give the ability to or enable or an attempt to give ability or intelligence. Theoretically, empowerment is an effort to build the power of the community by encouraging, motivating, and raising awareness of the potential that owned and trying to develop it. Thus, empowering community means efforts to improve the dignity of the layers of society in conditions that are less able to escape the poverty trap and underdevelopment. In other words, empowering is enabling and self-sufficient in society.

The condition of community empowerment defined as the ability of individuals who associate with the community in building the empowerment of the community concerned. The World Bank defines empowerment as an effort to provide opportunities and abilities to community groups to sweep and dare to voice our opinions, ideas, or ideas, as well as the ability and courage to choose something (concept, method, products, actions and others) that are best for individuals, families and communities (Wouters, 2015)

Rappaport (1987) defines empowerment as a variety of constructive approaches or applications

that are multi-level, because of individual, social, and collective interactions. Referring to various indicators, such as; individuals, families, organizations, and communities that have access to and control in social, economic, and political contexts that aim to improve social and living justice. Rappaport outlines the empowerment function of an individual empowerment program that focuses on changing at the individual level, especially in terms of psychological empowerment in building personal capacity, integrating control perceptions and controls, a proactive approach to life, and critical understanding in the social and political environment. While the second is empowerment at the collective level within which families, organizations and communities involve processes and systems that can enhance the skills or abilities of their members, facilitate them in efforts to change, enhance their collective welfare, and strengthen intra and extra-organizational networks to maintain the quality and collective integrity. In this context, youth empowerment has relevance.

Community economic empowerment is strengthening ownership of production factors, strengthening distribution and marketing, strengthening communities to get adequate salary / wages, and strengthening communities to obtain information, knowledge, and skills, which carried out in multiple aspects, both in terms of the community itself, and policy aspects. Of these, around 13.44 percent belong to the category of open unemployment. The open unemployment rate experienced a decline when compared to 2015, which was around 15.38 percent. Those conditions show that out of every 100 youth workforce, there are 15 to 16 youth who are not working and are preparing a business or looking for work. (BPS, 2015;2016)

3 LAMONGAN IN THE MIDST OF TERRORISM

The Lamongan regency known for national and international media after three brothers perpetrated the Bali 1 tragedy which killed 202 people in October 2002, from Lamongan. They are Amrozi and Ali Ghufron who were executed in 2008; and Ali Imron is currently serving a life sentence. The three are members of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), Al Qaeda terrorist network for the Southeast Asian region, militant groups that form extremist growth in Lamongan. According to IPAC (April, 2015), the

radical and extremist networks in Lamongan have been entrenched in the region and in recent years have turned into pro-ISIS sentiments. The extremist network in Lamongan, East Java, illustrates how support for the local jihad resistance has transformed into support for ISIS. Pro-ISIS groups in Indonesia have emerged from existing radical networks that have never left. They may have changed, adjusted, rejoined, and regenerated but they were not new. This ragency seems to be a fertile ground for the development of radical and jihadist ideologies in Indonesia.

Administratively, Lamongan Regency is divided into 27 sub-districts and 262 villages and 12 villages. The government center of Lamongan Regency is located 50 km west of Surabaya Regency, the mother of East Java Province Regency (Central Bureau of Statistics of Lamongan, 2016). The population of Lamongan Regency is 1,188,193 in 2016, with differences based on sex being 576,812 men and 610,983 women. A slight increase compared to 2015, which was 1,187,795 people. (Lamongan Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016). While the population composition based on age is as follows; young age (0-14 years) of 18.50 percent, productive age (15-64 years) of 77.05 percent, and old age (> 65 years) of 4.45 percent. Of these, the population of 16 to 30 years totaled 313,850 people. Consists of Men 161,860 people and Women 151,990 people.

Although Islam has become the religion of the majority of the population, the dynamics of social relations especially Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah are very interesting. Both religious organizations competed with their organizational identities. In some villages and sub-districts, mosques and NU and Muhammadiyah buildings face each other, horizontal conflicts occur frequently based on differences in affiliations of religious organizations. Social organizations such as The Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Institute/*Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (LDII)*, The Islamic Defenders Front/*Front Pembela Islam (FPI)*, The Islamic Union *Persatuan Islam (PERSIS)*, *al-Irsyad*, and others also have followers. Another portraits of differences are also reflected in the choice of education between general education (elementary and junior high school) and religious education (Islamic Elementary School/*Madrasah Ibtida'iyah* and Islamic Junior High School/*Madrasah Tsanawiyah* of Islamic Boarding School or *Pesantren*). According Lamongan's Central Bureau of Statistics data for 2016, the total population of the age of primary education is 192,568 people. For

people who live in the northern and remote areas, the majority of the population chooses to enter their children into religious education rather than send their children to public education institutions. As for the southern region, the majority send their education to public schools.

Based on description above that poverty factors that affect certain individuals or groups are considered as the main variables that contribute greatly to extremism and violence. Poor conditions coupled with low education and high unemployment rates will quickly lead to social frustration which in turn triggers aggression attitudes. The existence of conditions of inequality or inequality and the occurrence of rapid socio-economic changes have a more direct impact on the growth of radicalism and violence. Radicalization denotes as a process through which individuals assure that violent action is justified and eventually become determined to engage in violence. However, it is probably more useful to understand it as a process through which people embrace opinions, views, including ideas that may or may not lead to acts of violence-essentially a phenomenon resulting from a complex interaction of factors that do not necessarily lead to violence. That process, it is quite clear, can evolve in many directions, including non-violent ones. Developing or adopting extremist beliefs that justify violence is only one of the possible ways into violent action. Radicalization indicates as a precursor to recruitment rather than as part of or the result of recruitment. Yet, we know that recruitment is an important catalyst in the radicalization process.

The process and dynamics of radicalism involve two important elements called 'push and pull' factors. The push factors include certain structural and emotional-psychological conditions that make people or groups have the potential for violence. Meanwhile, pull factors are organizations or associations that actively recruit, and spread various narratives and messages that invite extremism. The interaction and connection of these two factors produces caused a number of people or groups increasingly vulnerable to being mired in a cycle of violence and extremism.

Generally, recruitment activities carried out through top-down and bottom-up processes. Top-down recruitment strategies were carried out by terrorist organizations or networks. Whereas the bottom-up strategy was thought peer bonds and other social influences, or both. Though bottom-up trajectory, people and groups interact in a variety of settings that include prisons, radical families, religious homes that support violence, and the

Internet. Groups either in the top-down or bottom-up process can have an effect as a result of perceptions of social and religious alienation.

The process of people and group involved in the terror movement is generally through three channels; First, social affiliation with the movement through friendship, kinship, and teacher-student relations. This teacher-student factor is most evident in the Southeast Asian jihadist group. They generally have a relationship, directly or indirectly, with Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'ashir who are positioned as mentors or teachers. Sageman stressed that social ties are a very important element in this radicalization process. Secondly, the intensification of beliefs and teachings progressively leads to the acceptance of Salafi-jihadist ideology; Third, formal acceptance in the jihad movement through meetings with the global Salafi network.

4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

Generally, youth economic empowerment is an effort to increase the potential of youth in social, economic and political processes in order to create youth independence in all fields. Empowerment popularity has increased when some of them were involved in acts of social and political radicalism such as crime, narcotics abuse, violence, and terrorism. So there is a tendency to equate the idea of youth empowerment with community empowerment. Poverty alleviation programs, for example, the National Program for Community Empowerment/*Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (PNPM)*, the Social Security Program, the Smart Indonesia Program/*Program Indonesia Pintar*, the Movement for Building the Rural-Based Lamongan People's Economy Program/*Gerakan Membangun Ekonomi Rakyat Lamongan Berbasis Pedesaan (Gemerlap)* all of these community programs are always incorporate elements of youth in it. Unfortunately, several studies show that the participation and involvement of youth who actually aim to provide greater opportunities for youth to strengthen their identity and potential are often only artificial. The community empowerment programs of is often dominated by elites, and community leaders who are generally mature and old.

The *Gemerlap* program is a flagship program of Lamongan district, this program was officially approved on June 14 2011, based on the Regent's Regulation Number 13 of 2011. The program aims

to improve welfare and increase employment opportunities of rural communities. The target of the recipient of the program is the rural community that has had an independent business, which is possible to be developed into a village community business which will then become the village's superior product. The program stimulates superior products in every village and sub-district so that productivity increases. The stimulation is in the form of intensive capital assistance and technical guidance. Especially stimulating the mentality of society so as not to give up and fight to succeed. The implementation of the Program was carried out by several Local Government Unit of Work/*Satuan Kerja Pemerintah Daerah* (SKPD) in the Lamongan Regency Government Environment. The *Gemerlap* Program includes; (1) agriculture and forestry, (2) animal husbandry, (3) Fisheries, (4) cooperatives, trade and industry.

The implementation of the *Gemerlap* Program begins with the socialization carried out in two stages. The first phase of socialization at the district level was carried out at the *Bupati's* office. In the second phase, the socialization was carried out at the sub-district level. After the socialization at the sub-district level will be conducted a selection will be conducted in several community groups. Groups that have passed the selection stage will be verified by the Verification Team consisting of the program implementing the Local Government Unit of Work.

Several community empowerment programs are also carried out by the Local Government Work Unit (SKPD) of Lamongan district according to their main duties and functions. The Office of Social, Manpower and Transmigration, for example, in the field of employment, the Office functions to formulate and implement technical policies in the field of manpower such as overcoming unemployment, employment, industrial relations, supervision of work protection, foreign labor, job training, and guarantees, social employment. One of the SKPD's authorities is to provide job seeker status. To get the status of this job seeker, the applicant simply meets the requirements such as submitting a copy of Lamongan ID card, diploma. The applicant does not even need to include in his application a police record certificate/*Surat Keterangan Catatan Kepolisian* (SKCK). If the applicant does not have a Lamongan ID card, the applicant simply carries a residence certificate in Lamongan issued by the village where the applicant is domiciled. In 2016, the policies adopted was related to the improvement of the quality and development of workforce competencies, among

others through the development of community work skills, strengthening the facilities and infrastructure of the vocational training centers, as well as the dissemination of labor market information through the Job Market Fair.

This agency also in charge on running government programs both central and local governments of Lamongan district such as the implementation of social security and protection, social rehabilitation, and also social empowerment. The Central Government program, which is escorted by the Social Service of Lamongan, is related to the assistance of the Minister of Social Affairs for the Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian, such as a live skill program or vocational training of former terrorist prisoners, Smart Indonesia Card, their families Healthy Indonesia Cards and Prosperous Family Cards for former terrorist prisoners children.

Lamongan Regency Office of Cooperatives, Industry and Trade, one of the foundations of regional economic development. Based on the division of authority regulated by Government Regulation No. 37 of 2007 concerning the division of government affairs, there are two matters which are the authority of the Lamongan Regency Office of Cooperatives, Industry and Trade/ *Dinas Koperasi dan Usaha Menengah Kecil (UMKM)*, which are compulsory and Industrial Choice and Trade affairs that must be carried out by the provincial and district/district governments. The existence of cooperatives as economic pillars is expected to be able to mobilize the regional economy.

Broadly speaking, the activities of the Office can be described as follows; (1) an increase the percentage of active cooperatives. Quality improvement program for cooperative institutions and businesses, institutional and business inspection activities, assessment activities for conventional and *Syari'ah*, monitoring activities for implementing sanctions and institutional and business rehabilitation, (2) increasing the scale of business from the classification of micro enterprises to small. Making conducive climate creation programs for micro small business and cooperative, Policy making activities on small and medium enterprises, Cooperative clinic service activities, Facilitation Activities and business legality for cooperatives and Medium and Small enterprise (MSE), socialization activities principles for understanding cooperative rules and regulations, development activities standardization of Indonesian National Work/Strandar Kompetensi Kerja Nasional Indonesia (SKKNI). (3) new entrepreneurial growth,

and organizing entrepreneurship training and enhancing the cooperative network of cooperatives.

The Office that is most responsible for the affairs of youth development is the Youth and Sports Service. The vision of this service is “the realization of productive, prestigious and innovative youth and sports people.” While its mission is; (1) creating productive, patifying and innovative youth, (2) realizing quality, achievement and community sports; 3) realizing independent and prosperous youth and sports people.

Generally, the programs of activities is youth awareness, empowerment and development. The field of youth awareness, is a new field in the Duties and Functions of the Disspora of Lamongan Regency so that it does not have a special program for young people, families or former terrorist prisoners. related to terrorist countermeasures or efforts to prevent the recurrence of terrorist cases committed by old actors or their families. The Head of the Youth Section at the Youth and Sports Service (*Dinas Pendidikan dan Olahraga/Dispora*) in Lamongan revealed that: “We are entrusted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports on matters of terrorism, not to technical matters. But in the area of service, awareness. In the field of youth empowerment, youth empowerment activities are carried out through activities to generate potential and active youth roles through, training in defense of the country every year, we ask participants to go to the subdistrict head and copy organization, then forward to organizations such as the Indonesian National Youth Committee/Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia (KNPI), Nahdlatul Ulama Student Association (IPNU) and other youth organization in Lamongan district. Youth development activities as disclosed by the Secretary of the Department of Youth and Sport said: “giving birth to reliable athletes by striving to filter talented seed athletes through selection and training sports activities.”

National Unity and Politics (*Kesatuan bangsa dan politik/Kesbangpol*) Lamongan district. The vision of the National and Political Unity Agency of Lamongan Regency is taken from the realization of Lamongan Regency’s vision “the realization of lamongan is more prosperous and competitive”. While the Department's mission is “to establish a peaceful and peaceful community life by upholding local culture”. Social and political development in the region, then the initial steps and thoughts about the Main Tasks and Functions of the National Unity Political and Public Protection Agency are also synchronized with the new paradigm and adapted to

the situation and conditions of the surrounding community in carrying out the task of social political roles in the regions in accordance with the reform era. Broadly speaking, the duties and authorities of this Service are divided into; 1) Political and inter-institutional relations; 2) Strategic study and awareness; 3) National integration and nationality. SKPD whose portfolios or commonly known as tasks and functions are striving to improve the field of ideology, insight into nationality, awareness, domestic politics, artistic, cultural, religious and economic resilience in society.

In addition, this SKPD also cooperated with religious leaders in creating inter-religious harmony in Lamongan district. This form of cooperation is implemented in the activities of the Religious Harmony Forum (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama/FKUB*). This institution is a “cultural diplomacy”, which is a form of symbiotic relations between religious actors and government agents who both benefit from one another. Religious figures are one of the institutions that are relied upon in building dialogue between religious communities. This model of dialogue can be called an Institutional Dialogue, which is a dialogue between institutional representatives of various religious organizations involving government-recognized religious assemblies.

From the field study it was found that the Ministry of Religion Office (*Kantor Urusan Agama/KKA*) of Lamongan Regency was also not directly involved in the economic empowerment of young people, let alone participate in running programs that were oriented towards improving skills so that this young group could be economically independent and eventually more protected from radicalism and acts of terrorism. So that when there is a pop-up from Lamongan it is casuistic, only people are not on behalf of institutions or organizations. So we the Ministry of Religion is doing guidance in nature. Ministry of Religion works to provide guidance and fostering religion “There are coaching activities, there are two. The first is guidance every once a week in prison, and every Friday there is guidance for inmates, including terrorists. Secondly, we do the Friday sermon every Friday.”

5 CONCLUSIONS

From the explanation above it can be seen that economic factors will have a significant impact for some people to resort to violence if they encounter the situation of people who experience socio-

economic deprivation, especially as a result of modernization and rapid change. Unfortunately, The economic empowerment program for youth in Lamongan District is part of the community empowerment program. Although, those programs not directed at efforts to fight criminal acts of terrorism and extremism directly, it was expect to be able to keep or keep young people involved in acts of violence and terrorism.

The economic empowerment program for youth in Lamongan District is part of the community empowerment program. Various programs have been carried out by the central government such as the PNPM Mandiri Program or local government programs such as the Sparkling Program aiming to reduce poverty in Lamongan District. This program is also designed to increase youth participation. The Lamongan regional government also undertakes various efforts to improve services through the local government work unit (SKPD). The Manpower and Transmigration Manpower Office, for example, carries out quality improvement and development of workforce competencies, among others through fostering community work skills, strengthening facilities and infrastructure for vocational training centers, and disseminating labor market information through the Job Market Fair.

The Office of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises carries out services in order to create an increase in the percentage of active cooperatives, increase the scale of business from the classification of Micro to Small Businesses and increase the growth of New Entrepreneurs. Youth service is also carried out by the Youth and Sports Service, the service is carried out through its field of work, namely the field of youth awareness, the field of youth empowerment. several activities carried out such as training in defense of the country, and the revitalization of youth organizations and the empowerment of athletes. Empowerment is also carried out by the National Unity and Politics (Kesbangpol) Lamongan district. The performance of affairs on National Unity and Politics is the percentage of social conflicts that are handled reached 100 percent and the percentage of organizations, registered political organizations and NGOs is 96.58 according to the target set and the increase of Inter-Religious Harmony in Lamongan Regency. While the Ministry of Religion Office (KKA) of Lamongan Regency, the empowerment efforts are carried out through guidance and religious guidance.

Community Empowerment including youth is also carried out by Community Organizations. One

of the characteristics of the Lamongan community is the strength of civil society, this community power is gathered in various organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah. Some community empowerment activities are carried out by these two organizations, such as education and training activities, and community strengthening programs. In addition, the Lamongan community also has a high entrepreneurial spirit, the economic downturn has caused them to become traders and work abroad.

Regarding the vulnerability of youth to be involved in acts of terrorism, the Central Government, through the BNPT and the Regional Government has collaborated with the Lingkar Perdamain Foundation. The Foundation seeks to de-radicalize youth involved in terrorism activities.

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