



## **PLURALISM TRAIL GENERAL OVERVIEW**

### **An Annual Pluralism Learning Programme Around Plural Cities in Indonesia**

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#### *1. Programme Background*

For thousands of years, people of many religions, ethnicities, and cultures have mingled peacefully in what we now name as Indonesia. But during the colonialization by the Dutch in 16th to 20th century, which segregated people into social classes based on ethnicities, the historical wounds are carved deep.

Racism gets worse when post-independence regimes preserve the discriminative treatment among different races and ethnicities. The 32-years long Suharto regime made it official that any expression of Chinese culture and religion is prohibited. The regime intentionally nurture prejudice and hatred of the so called “indigenous” Indonesians towards the Chinese-Indonesians. Thus, when Suharto was toppled down in May 1998, many Chinese in some major cities became targets of looting, torture, and even brutal rape and killing.

As the largest Moslem population in the world, right now Indonesia is also under the threat of growing religious radicalism. This phenomena has its roots also in poverty and lack of quality education and international radical propaganda facilitated by new media. Teenagers and young adults are especially the vulnerable population targeted by radicalist recruiters.

It is necessary to help Indonesian young people to have a strong conviction and commitment in upholding the value of pluralism. They need to understand how peace and tolerance has been a way of life, and a desirable one, throughout the history of their country. They need to visit places, to meet local figures, to discuss with scholars and activists, and to network with other peace-oriented youth, in order to create positive impacts within their own social circles.

## 2. *Objectives and Goals*

### a. *Objective of the Programme*

To give a chance for programme participants to learn from real situations how people can live harmoniously despite ethnic or religious differences.

### b. *Goals of the Programme*

- 1) To promote pluralism as a successful practice in Indonesia
- 2) To prevent the spread of intolerance, racism, and radicalism in Indonesia

## 3. *Activities*

Pluralism Trail annually offers serials of activities:

- a. A guided tour to historically and culturally important destinations in a specific plural city.
- b. Meet ups and dialogues with pluralist local and national prominent figures, scholars, and activists.
- c. Sessions on pluralism guided by facilitators from EIN Institute to reflect on all experiences and ideas gathered throughout the journey.
- d. Writing tasks through which participants spread the positive message for a wider audience.

## 4. *Impacts*

- a. Participants that learn first hand about pluralism in Lasem are enriched and have more understanding about how to respond to social problems in their own local society.
- b. The practice of tolerance and peaceful multiculturalism among different ethnicities and religions in a specific city can be replicated in other cities.