

The Education of “*Orang Basudara*”

The Development of Multicultural Education in the Higher Education of Maluku Indonesian Christian University and Its Contribution to Maintain Peace in Maluku

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Abstract— The education of *orang basudara* (literally translated as brothers and sisters) is a process of developing higher education that is rooted in the local wisdom of the people in Moluccas, it is the culture of living as brothers and sisters. The education of *orang basudara* on one side is aimed to shape the capacity of human’s intellectual, and on other side, to shape the human’s characters which receive and respect the reality of pluralism, and it will contribute to develop and maintain peace among the people of Moluccas that just moved out from the social conflict. This research uses the qualitative method. The locus is in the Indonesia Maluku Christian University. This university was a victim of conflict but had the strong commitment to keep the Education of *orang basudara* in order to develop and maintain peace in the Moluccas. The result of this research can be an example of reconstructing the role of the higher education in developing and maintaining peace in the middle of plural society.

Keywords: *Education, Orang Basudara, Multicultural, Peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The sociological reality shows that Indonesia is a biggest multicultural country in the world. Related to this reality, Zainur Ittiad Amin utters a fundamental issue on keeping the integration of Indonesia as multicultural country. He says:

“It is difficult to unify a country as wide as Nusantara that has 17.508 islands, with the citizens from two great races (Malay and Melanesia), over 350 tribes speaking in 583 dialects of language, embracing the five major religions of the world. The varieties of these cultures and geographical conditions make the Nation of Indonesia becomes easier to be fragile [1].”

Moluccas has become one of the provinces in Indonesia with the highest diversity. There are 1.412 big and small islands in Moluccas. From the cultural aspect, Moluccas has about 50 tribes and sub-tribes. This can be seen in the diversity of languages (dialects), tribes and sub-tribes in Moluccas. The

result of Summer Institute of Linguistic’s research as adopted by Abidin Wakano, mentions that the language in the Moluccas consists of 117 languages. This indicates the diversity of its culture [2]. The challenge to integrate the multicultural Moluccans is a problem that needs to be solved.

As a multicultural society that had experienced massive social conflict and violence in 1999 – 2004, Moluccas is in a great need of concept or role of multicultural education that can maintain recent peaceful condition. Education is a very effective instrument of civil transformation. The education environment as one of the public spaces can be an encounter place of the multicultural *civitas academica*, as well as the peace building laboratory [3].

The implementation of multicultural education in the Indonesia Maluku Christian University (abbreviated as UKIM), is a vision of transforming the higher education institution from its exclusivity room to inclusiveness space. UKIM was founded by The Protestant Church in the Moluccas (abbreviated as GPM) in 1985. During the conflict in Moluccas, UKIM as the greatest Christian university in the Moluccas was burned by the rioters in 2000 and 2004. In the process of building peace in Moluccas until today, UKIM has been taking position to promote itself as a campus of *orang basudara* (brothers and sisters) or as a place for education of all people considered as brothers and sisters.

The education of *orang basudara* refers to a pattern of the development of multicultural education implementation that respects diversity of ethnics, religions, group, and so on. The cultural, philosophical and contextual theology of *orang basudara* as a self-image and the glue of multicultural society in Moluccas, intentionally sealed to the existential identity of UKIM, to show that UKIM is not an exclusive but an inclusive institution that is willing to embrace and respect the reality of plurality.

This can be proved by the UKIM’s openness to accept non-Christian students who demand for knowledge in the faculties and courses in UKIM. Based on the data from UKIM academic bureau, in the academic year of 2015/2016, there are

3.000 students who registered. From these, there are 8% Moslem students, and 2% are other non-Christian students. In addition to the students, UKIM accepts the lecturers and employees from the non-Christian background insofar as they have a good capacity or competency.

The implementation of multicultural education at UKIM as a locus of education of *orang basudara* has become an interesting social phenomenon to be studied. Such multicultural educational has not been much 'echoed' and held in the higher education in Moluccas. Orientation to increase the competence or academic capacity which is more dominant, in many times eliminates the importance of character education that is rooted in a multicultural context. In the context of SARA {stands for *Suku* (ethnic), *Agama* (religion), *Ras* (race), *Antar Golongan* (groups)} conflict that still disturbing the life of plural society, then the multicultural education becomes an important need for every university in order to maintain peace in Molucas continually.

Starting from the problems explained above, then the main issue studied in this research is what the meaning of the education of *orang basudara*, and how the development of the education of *orang basudara* will contribute to promote or to build peace up in the context of plural society (multicultural).

The main issue of the research is analyzed by using the theoretical concepts that have been studied previously, namely the cultural concept of the life of *orang basudara*. Aholiab Watloly defines the life of *orang basudara* as a way of life that puts fellow Moluccans from different islands, languages and religions in a virtue of life as siblings to live together with care each other (*baku kalesang*), love each other (*baku sayang*), bring peace to each other (*baku bae*) [4]. The term siblings has the essential connotation of meaning that all the children of Moluccans or the people of Moluccas come from the mother's womb called *Maluku* (Moluccas). This meaning can be found in the myths, stories, songs *kapata* - or local Moluccans music, and pieces of tradition from the past that persist in collective memory. These traditions show a genuine belief in the mystical unity known as the Moluccas, which connect the whole islands with many ethnolinguistic communities as a family [5].

In addition, the concept of multicultural education is defined as an education of the diversity of cultures in responding to democratic and cultural changes of a particular society or even the world as a whole [6]. Multicultural education is implemented as an empathetic and appreciative response to a reality of diversity that cannot be denied. The environment and the educational circumstances are always faced by a context of individuals with various backgrounds of nationality, race and ethnicity, religion, gender and social class. The diversity of individuals in the society has implications for the diversity of learners or student in an educational institution [7].

II. METHODOLOGY

The research method used here is qualitative research. Qualitative research method is a research method that

produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the people who became the subject of research and observed behavior. Qualitative research method is useful to explore and understand the attitudes, views, feelings, and behavior of individuals or groups of people [8]. This method is used to collect the data related to the meaning of education of *orang basudara* at UKIM and its contribution in maintaining and building peace in teh Moluccas. The result of data collection is validated, then analyzed with qualitative descriptive approach that follows the stages of analysis, namely: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification [9].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

A. *UKIM: A Christian University with the Multicultural Awareness.*

UKIM is a development of Theological Seminary of Protestant Church in the Moluccas (It was abbreviated as STT GPM that stands for *Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Gereja Protestan Maluku*). The establishment of UKIM is a manifestation of the mission of the Protestant Church in teh Moluccas to get involved in educating the lives of nations and country, including the whole Indonesian people, and the church's members. Therefore, the Synod Board of GPM established the YAPERTI GPM (stands for *Yayasan Perguruan Tinggi*, The Foundation of Higher Education belongs to GPM), based on the letter from Notary H. Limanow's, Nu. 22 dated June 17, 1985, with the main duty of organizing UKIM for duty and on behalf of GPM as the owner. Based on this letter, the Synod Board of GPM issued Decree No. 122 / IX / ORG, dated August 8, 1985 on the establishment of UKIM.

UKIM exists and holds three unified identities within a university they are Christianity, Indonesia, and Moluccas. These three identities are different, but inseparable. Christianity means that UKIM is historically part of the church's mission in education. Indonesia refers to the identity of nationalist, in which UKIM is a part of the Indonesian state, and is also responsible for the intellectual life of a pluralistic Indonesian society. Maluku is the specific locus where UKIM is located. So, the naming of UKIM indicates that the church has an awareness to construct a mission to educate human resources who accept and appreciate the reality of plurality. Acceptance and respect for the reality of pluralism is an early form of UKIM's contribution to promote and maintain peace in the context of vulnerable communities due to diversity.

B. *The Education of Orang Basudara In the Middle of Conflict's 'Whirlpool'*

Since 19 January 1999, the Moluccas conflict had been massive. Starting from the Ambon city and penetrated into various areas in Moluccas. The causes of conflict in the Moluccas have been studied from many eyes of analyzes and the results is the conflict caused by various factors, e.g. by the history of colonialism that created social disparities between Muslims and Christians [10], so it has become a potential for

hidden conflict [11]. Gerry van Klinken explains that the conflict in Moluccas has something to do with the so-called political opposition [12]. The contention of this political opposition extended through the provocation path, which confronts Muslims and Christians on the issue of threats and opportunities to rule over the Maluku Province. Muslims had hopes of achieving upward over government offices, and Christians live in worry of losing authority in the Province Government. This condition was further supported by the fall of Suharto's – the authoritarian, which opened the door for local people to fight for power, resulting in the Moluccas conflict. The local political elites who were fighting for power should use the people's muscles and ride the religion to create conflict [13]. The conflict was difficult to be overcome because it was supported by the content of religious and political ideology [14]. Indonesian Christian University in the Moluccas, whose history was founded by the Protestant Church in the Moluccas, was not out of the flames of conflict. All UKIM campus buildings and facilities in Talake (stands for *Tanah Lapang Kecil*, the small field) were burned and destroyed first on 20 and 21 June 2000. All campus and lectures processes were at a very low point, where all UKIM academicians had to undergo academic processes and campus lives in alternative refugee places, such as in school buildings, churches' buildings and government buildings that was lent. This condition continued until 2003, when several buildings and lecture facilities in the campus of UKIM had been rebuilt by the Government. On April 26, 2014, the campus building, the UKIM Library building along with newly renovated lecture rooms, were burned again by the rioters. Nevertheless, the conflict incident in which the UKIM's campus buildings and facilities were burned was not able to destroy the spirit of *civitas academica* UKIM to build up the human resources in the Moluccas through the higher education organized by UKIM.

In the reality of conflict, the campus that carries a Christian identity in its name remains a role of being a reconciliation agent. UKIM resurfaced and echoed itself as the campus of *orang basudara*. As an institution of higher education that plays a role to shape civilization of people's life, the label of UKIM as the campus of *orang basudara* also asserted that the settlement of the Maluku conflict is properly done by rebuilding the Moluccans civilization as *orang basudara*, which is closely tied to the culture of living together as *orang basudara* in the Moluccas. UKIM has been consistent as an inclusive campus, organizing education of *orang basudara* to all the students, regardless of religious and ethnicity backgrounds they are welcome to be a UKIM academic community.

C. *The Meaning of Education of Orang Basudara at UKIM to Maintain Peace in The Moluccas*

The term UKIM as Campus of *Orang Basudara* is not a slogan without meaning. This term has a deep meaning because it is rooted in the culture and philosophy of life of *orang basudara* in Moluccas. The meaning of the phrase *orang basudara* departs from the culture and philosophy of life *orang basudara* into five self-concepts. *Firstly*, the life of

orang basudara considers all the children of the villages in Moluccas that spread across the vast, segregate and multicultural-based are in a mainstream of self-awareness as *orang basudara*. So even though they come from different islands, languages and religions, even though they are far away wandering, they will come again to the core of life and the call of soul as *orang basudara* who are the eternal humanity of the people of Moluccas. Secondly, self-awareness as a human being has given birth to a new species of the Moluccans. Thirdly, as a species of Moluccans centered on the people's life as *orang basudara*, there is a call to genuine task to still united and mutually alive in the midst of the waves of the archipelago and the wave of world upheaval that strikes. Fourthly, the vast and diverse Moluccas' archipelago is like a cage of the existence of *orang basudara's* life. Fifthly, the local concept of living as *orang basudara* has a fundamental emancipatory idea in order to enlighten and liberate them from the determination of geographical segregation as well as the determination of the isolation of the islands that bind them.

The current UKIM Rector, C.A. Alyona asserts that the meaning of UKIM as the Campus of *Orang Basudara* is a basic value that also determine how UKIM exists now and in the future. UKIM has become the campus of the *orang basudara* is inseparable from the impact of the conflict context in Moluccas, and UKIM was also affected by the conflict. Nevertheless, UKIM is able to get out of the conflict, and instead promote the value of brotherhood or sisterhood which makes UKIM as an open educational institution and appreciates the plurality and multicultural realities that present in the entire educational process at UKIM [15].

The understanding of UKIM as a place for education of *orang basudara* is directly internalized in the character and daily activities of UKIM students, who have different religious background and origins. In an observation, there is an interesting activity that illustrates the pattern of *orang basudara* relationship as the following story. On June 22, 2017, at about 14.20 WIT, a group of students wore white shirts and black skirts walked out of the UKIM campus. They were students of the Nursing Study Program – the Faculty of Health who had just completed the Final Examination of the semester. During their walk, a christian student said “*mari katong makan bersama jua di warung yang di depan*” (let us having lunch together in the restaurant in front of the campus). Then another christian student responded “*jangan makan sekarang, ini kan teman-teman, Maryam, Mia dan Serlin, sedang berpuasa. Katong hargai dong yang berpuasa juga toh*” (Don't do that now, our friends named Maryam, Mia and Serlin are fasting. We have to respect their fast.) Spontaneously, Maryam who wore a black veil said “*seng apa-apa, tamang-tamang dong makan dolo nanti katong tunggu di sini, katong puasa tapi tamang-tamang harus makan karena seng puasa*” (It's OK, my friends. You may continue for your lunch and we'll be waiting for you here. We are fasting, but you don't, so please have your lunch). Maryam's answer was at once a decision so that Christian students continue their lunch activities, while respecting Muslim friends who were

fasting, and Maryam and her two friends willingly awaiting their friends who were having lunch.

Maryam Latuconsina, a Muslim student who gave solution in the conversation above, is a second semester student of the Faculty of Health in UKIM. Maryam and her parents come from Pelau, known as one of the great Muslim villages in Moluccas. Maryam recounted that her parents had told her to take a course at UKIM even though they realized that UKIM was a Christian university. According to his father, entering UKIM does not mean converting her faith to be a Christian, but to study for reaching her dreams of being a health nurse, as well as an opportunity to learn, to recognize and to appreciate the others who are different in believes. This encouragement from the parent then gave birth to a new experience for Maryam and her friends. According to Maryam, before study in UKIM, she was confronted with a worldview of Christians or other religions outside of Muslims as an exclusive outlook. Religious people other than Muslims are often seen as "*kafir*" (unbelievers), or people who are not good and righteous, and certainly will not go to heaven. This perspective can be changed or updated through the experience of daily encounter in the classroom, even carried into the wider social space [16]. The education of the *orang basudara*, developed by UKIM with openness and appreciation of all people from different backgrounds is an investment to continue supporting and maintaining peace in the Moluccas. Thus, being a Muslim student who study in UKIM is a pride, because we can learn to improve the capacities and building up a character of loving the peaceful [17].

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of UKIM as a place for education of *orang basudara*, is not only standing on its historical establishment, but also as a response to the SARA conflict that was undergone by the Moluccans. In the conflict context, UKIM was a victim, while all its facilities in Talake were burned twice. Nevertheless, UKIM stands again form the ruins and becomes the pioneer for the education of *orang basudara* which contributes to build up and maintain peace in the Moluccas. The implementation of the education of *orang basudara*, as a manifestation of a multicultural education as developed by UKIM can be a pattern for higher educaton institutions to build up and maintain peace in the middle of society that always make the reality of plurality as a threat to fragile the community. The educational institutions are not only forming the intellectual capacities but also build the character up as the agents of peace in the world.

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