



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT *with* RELIGION *and* FAITH *in the* 21ST CENTURY

Peace Journey: Interreligious Dialogue For Peace (Introduction To An Interreligious Dialogue Tool Through Game)

MUHAMMAT SABAR PRIHATIN

ABSTRACT

Indonesia is religiously diverse with six recognized religions and hundreds of registered religions, which contributes to rich beliefs, but also has potential for religiously based conflicts. There have been an increase in religiously motivated violent incidents such as terrorism, radicalism cases from year to year in some areas of Indonesia, illustrating that intolerance, irrespectiveness, and extremism exist. Studies have shown that interreligious dialogue can decrease fear, suspicion, and prevent misunderstanding. This paper introduces an interreligious dialogue tool “Peace Journey» as an educative game that can increase its participants’ knowledge about religious diversity in Indonesia, as well as promote them with tolerance, respect, and peace.

INTRODUCTION

Interreligious dialogue is a world agenda that is being discussed and has been practiced by countless people from time to time. It has not remained bilateral, or even multilateral, but has also become global (Swidler, 2021: 16). The first, historically speaking, was the founding of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP)-also known as Religions for Peace-by Nikkyo Niwano in 1970 in Kyoto, Japan, that affiliated 75 countries around the globe, where some activists hold a number of interreligious dialogue events, including Asian Conference on Religion and Peace in 1976 (Swidler, 2021: 16). The events’ topics make us aware that, to some extent, interreligious dialogue is related to peace. As human beings that never stop trying to create a

better peaceful world, interreligious dialogue, then, will always keep going. Even dialogue goes far and further until this present time. The current state of interreligious dialogue for millennia religion was at the very heart of all human societies. This, then, is the twenty first-century state of interreligious dialogue. Interreligious dialogue is now spreading in all the societal structures of the globe, moving humanity in the direction of a Global Dialogical Civilization (Swidler, 2021: 18).

Interreligious dialogue is no longer a sharing or reflection of religious ideas or perspectives of a person to him/herself, person to person or to a group and so on. It is the global hope that people believe that it can unite and harmonize human beings beyond any background or identity, including religions, where they can learn from one to another across time. The world will always need interreligious dialogue. This ideas relates to Swidler and Mojzes (2000) in Kadayifci-Orellana (2013: 3); at the heart of dialogue is inter-religious dialogue, because religion is the most comprehensive of all the human disciplines.» “An explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, and how to live accordingly.” Until the slow emergence of inter-religious dialogue out of Modernity, out of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment of the West, religion was also the most absolutist, exclusivist of all the disciplines. Thus, dialogue—fundamentally meaning “I can learn from you”—is a dagger pointed at the heart of absolutist religion/ideology (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2013: 3). Kadayifci-Orellana agrees that during the Council in 1964 Pope Paul VI in his first encyclical made it clear that: dialogue is demanded nowadays. It is demanded by the dynamic course of action which is changing the face of modern society. As stated by Eccle-siam suam , no. 78, it is demanded by the pluralism of society, and by the maturity man has reached in this day and age. Whether he is religious or not, his secular education has enabled him to think and speak, and to conduct a dialogue with dignity (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2013: 8). Her focus on it leads her to have published more than ten books dealing with interreligious dialogue.

In doing interreligious dialogue, there is a tool that has been worked on by Aulet and Sureda (2019). They mention that one should not honour only one’s own religion and condemn other religions. Instead, one should honour other religions for various reasons. By so doing, one helps one’s own religion to grow and also renders service to the religions of others (Aulet & Sureda, 2019: 14). Her works presents the phenomenon of the sacred from a conceptual and semantic point of view; to set out the different approaches that have been made to the phenomenon of the sacred; and to propose a definition that will allow us to appreciate how this can become a key tool for articulating interreligious dialogue based on mutual understanding and respect (Aulet & Sureda, 2019: 14). For Aulet & Sureda, religion is to be studied not from the perspective of society, but from that of the religious individual. They explain further that this is as the sacred stands in opposition to the profane, as the religious person stands in opposition to the non-religious person. The experience of the sacred is the lived experience of the transcendent and the ineffable. Phenomenology has tended to play down the historical context of religions in the hope of arriving at the essence of religion (2019: 15).

As an example of this, in Aulet & Sureda, Nathan Söderblom (1966, quoted in Sharpe, 1969) affirmed that the sacred is the most important concept in religion, even more than the notion of God itself. Rudolf Otto (1965) considered the modes of religious experience as different phases and took the contents of this experience as leading to the conclusion that the sacred is an a priori human category, and that this is what enables the soul to perceive the numinous as an inner revelation, as the ganz Andere (Aulet & Sureda, 2019: 15). Their reflection to the Knowledge of the Sacred as a Tool for Building Bridges of Dialogue is this. In order for the dialogue to be fruitful and beneficial, it is essential that intrareligious dialogue be articulated with interreligious dialogue; each tradition (or each person) must engage in dialogue with itself in order

to lay the bases for a truly interreligious dialogue. As Ribera Rgul (2007, quoted by Aulet & Sureda, 2019) dialogue is a matter of exploring the identity of the other, establishing an exchange in order to enrich one's own beliefs and traditions and appreciate the value and the richness of diversity. Then, this relates to the conclusion that the sacred places, with all their symbolisms, with all their power, can serve as bridges of dialogue between people, cultures and religions, always provided they are treated with due respect by those who come to them (Aulet & Sureda, 2019: 26).

Addressing interreligious dialogue, or also understood as interfaith dialogue, it is worth mentioning to see the work of Diana Eck (2019) categorizing the areas of interfaith dialogue in which she engaged herself. In her work she writes:

“First, there is the dialogue of life dialogue that is not named as such, and that does not involve sitting at tables or joining an organization. It is just the give and take of relationships in the neighborhood, the workplace, the hospital, the PTA, or the town council. This dialogue of life has developed so gradually, so naturally, that it has become part of the fabric of the everyday. Of course, there are constant surprises. It might be unexpected for a young Protestant woman from the Midwest to find herself as a freshman at college with a roommate who is a young Muslim or Jain, also from the Midwest. It may be remarkable, at first, but it is not unusual. Increasingly, it is the norm.

There is also the dialogue of learning—the intentional study of another culture and faith. It involves the intellectual energy required to think about and try to understand the humanity, religious life, and ritual expression in communities whose life we do not personally share. There are plenty of opportunities for this in schools and colleges. Students are challenged to think about deeply held values—those of others

and, reflexively, their own. For some interfaith initiatives, mutual learning is the most important purpose.

Third, there is also the dialogue of doing—dialogue in community—in which people engage one another in a Habitat for Humanity project, a blood drive, or a city clean-up campaign. It is simply about cooperation across the dotted lines of difference. Most of what we have identified as the interfaith infrastructure focuses on the multitude of civic concerns that bring people together across lines of faith.

Fourth, there are the more philosophical and theological dialogues in which people engage one another on the deepest and foundational issues of their faith. Some of these are in ongoing dialogue groups like the Buddhist-Christian and Hindu-Christian dialogues that have taken place for decades in such venues as the American Academy of Religion. Increasingly there are dialogues that involve entire denominations or communities: a national Catholic-Muslim dialogue, for instance, and an emerging national Baptist-Muslim dialogue. The most available done by a figure or leader of religions.

Finally, there is the reflection on what all this means for our own faith. The diversity of spiritual voices and perspectives is not only “out there” in society, but is also in here, within ourselves. (Eck, 2017: 33).”

To sum up Eck's work (2017), we can understand that interreligious dialogue can be categorized into five ways. First, the dialogue of life. She defines it as the ordinary give and take of relationships in the neighborhood, workplace, hospital, or town council. I would rather say this is a living dialogue. The second is the dialogue of learning. It is the intentional study of another culture and faith, involving the intellectual energy required to understand another's faith. In

many situations today, this is a mutual process of learning and understanding. This is what is probably mostly done in schools. The third is dialogue in the community that refers to the ways in which people engage with one another in shaping their community and society by doing such a Habitat for Humanity project, a blood drive, or a city clean-up campaign. The fourth is philosophical and theological dialogue, where people engage one another on the deepest and foundational issues of their faith. This dialogue is mostly done by the elite, figures, leaders, or academia of religion/religious studies. Last but not least is the dialogue within which is reflection on the meaning of this all for one's own belief in order to notice that spiritual voices diversity and point of views is not only beyond there in society, but it is actually within ourselves too. This is what I call self-dialogue.

Another theory of interreligious dialogue can be seen from Lattu's work (2019: 2) saying that interreligious dialogue is a way to understand other religions and a vehicle for bringing religious followers to peaceful interactions. Lattu's work on interreligious dialogue (2019) is taking local interreligious engagements into account, exploring rituals, symbols, and oral narratives to discover interreligious relationships in Indonesia. He used a cultural sociology approach and indigenous knowledge in folklore studies to test interreligious relationships in Indonesia, his article offers a new pattern of interreligious engagements for an oral-oriented society to enrich existing interreligious approaches. Lattu asserts that sign or symbol plays a central role in the life of an oral-oriented society because the society perceives symbols as a means of communication. In Indonesia, where oral tradition remains dominant, symbols and symbolic actions are central in the process of mastering social ethics (2019: 82). He also explains that people's ethos in many parts of Indonesia lies within the system of symbolic meanings including the significance of interreligious relationships. As a vehicle of cultural meanings, interreligious communities in a given area interact with other spiritual groups through symbolic

significances (2019: 82). Therefore, interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative, collaborative, active and positive interactions among people of different religious beliefs with the aim of increasing tolerance, respect, and promoting peaceful coexistence.

After all, borrowing especially Eck's work and other scholars' theory, we understand that interreligious dialogue is possible by learning, which is the intentional study of another culture and faith to understand another faith/belief, as well as by reflection on the meaning of this all for one's own belief, recognizing that religious and spiritual voices of diversity are not only in society, but also within ourselves so that we can be more tolerant, pay more respect as well as make peace movement. Realizing and relating that to Lattu and Eck's theories, we will look at how the second type of interreligious dialogue by Eck, the intentional study of another culture and faith to understand another's faith/religion/tradition offered by Peace Journey as a tool or concrete vehicle of interreligious dialogue into peaceful interaction in a unique and fun way with its own advantages and distinctions.

The research aims to introduce a tool for interreligious dialogue, namely Peace Journey. It aims to increase the levels of knowledge about Indonesia's religious diversity, as well as promote tolerance, respect, and peace. Using a game for interreligious dialogue has not yet been sufficiently introduced or even studied. Most interreligious dialogue focuses on dialogue of life and philosophical and theological dialogue by elites, prominent figures, and religious and belief leaders. But people at the grassroots level can rarely enjoy interreligious dialogue due to the limits of figures, sources or tools. Therefore, offering an interreligious dialogue tool through a game might make a learning interreligious dialogue more widely practiced and accessible for anyone at any level. Our research attempts to answer the following questions: what is the Peace Journey Game for Interreligious Dialogue? And How does the Peace Journey Game promote tolerance, respect, and peace?

TOLERANCE

Why are we, as human beings, supposed to tolerate each other? What makes humans should be tolerant? These questions can be answered by Corneo & Jeanne stating that every individual is equipped with a value system where this human value requires other humans to honor each other's principles one holds in order to share mutual respect as tolerance is a property of the value system endorsed by people. For them, a person is tolerant if he/she attaches symbolic value not only to his/her own characteristics but also to that he/she does not have - but others have and conversely, an intolerant person has an unbalanced value system that makes her at the same time complacent and respectful of traits and lifestyles that are not her own (2009: 2).

Maintaining and promoting tolerant attitudes toward social alterity is increasingly recognized as an important contribution to make the world a safer place (Corneo & Jeanne, 2009: 23). Somehow, this statement relates to Vogt (1997) saying that tolerance is a path to learn about life with diversity and difference as it can be used to differentiate between prejudice and discrimination by learning about it. Tolerance is not to tell that "I am right, you are wrong" rather to embrace existing differences as a right and fair way to live together.

RESPECT

Dillon (2003) in his exploration on respect found that Philosophers have variously identified respect as a mode of behavior, a form of treatment, a kind of valuing, a type of attention, a motive, an attitude, a feeling, a tribute, a principle, a duty, an entitlement, a moral virtue, an epistemic virtue. He remarks that respect and self-respect are discussions of personal, social, political, moral, and philosophical concepts that bear this out. Their roles in this life as individuals, as people living in complex relations with other people and surrounded by a lot of other beings and things

on which our attitudes and actions have numerous effects that cannot be taken lightly. For him, his discussions also reveal that more work remains to be done in clarifying these attitudes for the concepts of ours and our lives. Therefore, respect is when we understand that others have their own rightness that may be just different from ours.

PEACE

In the discussion of peace, there is one of many influential founders of the concept of its term, as mentioned above, Johan Galtung (1969). His concept defined peace into two parts, as the opposite of what most related to peace, which is basically conflict that potentially leads to violence, as he stated the terms <peace> and <violence> be linked to each other such that <peace> can be regarded as <absence of violence> (1969:168), which are positive and negative. To him, positive peace is the absence of structural violence while negative peace is the absence of personal violence (1969: 183).

The major characteristic of the differences between positive and negative peace can be summarized as follows: Negative peace: the absence of violence, pessimistic, curative, peace not always by peaceful means. Positive peace: structural integration, optimistic, preventive, peace by peaceful means (Grewal, 2003). Finally, we can say that peace is a happy, calm condition where people have no fear or suspicion of others. Instead, they have a mutual sense of tolerance, respect, and harmony.

PROJECT OF CREATING INTERRELIGIOUS TOOLS

The engagements of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are worth paying attention to since its works and contributions often offer alternatives for solving

humanitarian issues. Those include their serious concerns about interreligious movements. Some years ago, certain NGOs in Europe such as IUVENTA, TDM, conducted a project of making interreligious tools funded by Erasmus+ Program: Key Action 2 on Youth and Capacity Building. Some of the tools are already printed and used widely. Those, for instance, are Holy Memo and Life Pilgrimage initiated by NGO IUVENTA from Serbia.

NGO “IUVENTA” is an independent non profit organization established 2009 in Sabac, Serbia. It works in the areas of: youth participation, youth policy, volunteerism, human rights, non formal education, international cooperation, local development, violence prevention, gender equality, democracy and civil society. The goals and tasks of NGO Iuventa» are: contribution to the strengthening of youth to become active in their own community, promotion of volunteer work and human rights, promote a non-violent culture/ culture of peace/, intercultural activities, human rights and sustainability issues, promote cultural diversity, contribution of the youth participation in the society through preparation of the youth to take more active role in salvation, as well as their own problems and the problems of the community and broader society. Within their activities, they promote and apply the principles of tolerance to diversity, open discussion, active initiatives, shared experiences, volunteering, non-formal education and informal learning.

IUVENTA and its partnered NGOs have produced the Holy Memo and Life Pilgrimage during 2018/2019, then printed and distributed them to schools as learning materials. Some institutions have been in use of the tools as they are free to be downloaded. Moreover, one Bulgarian organization translates it into local language and gives it to some schools. Most people do enjoy learning interreligious by playing with the tools. Not to mention that many organizations from diverse countries asked for the tools to play.

In this 202, IUVENTA conducted a project of Global Citizenship for Human Right under the fund with support from European Commission Erasmus+ Programme. It is a long-term project aiming to build the capacity of partner organisations for using Human Rights Education (HRE) on the local level and transferring existing tools and creating new ones for promoting Human Rights and Interfaith dialogue.

One of the backgrounds of this project is to respond to the changing needs and circumstances of today’s societies to simply educate young people on tolerance and non-violence as well as intercultural and interfaith dialogue with a tool that can be applied at the local level in order to strengthen the capabilities of all partners. The objectives are to build capacities of the partner organization for planning and running activities related to Human Rights Education - HRE and interreligious dialogue, to equip youth workers for HRE and train multipliers how to organize educational activities on local level, promote different positive and effective approaches of HRE in all partner countries and their realities. To develop competences of youth workers, leaders and trainers needed for working in HRE and intercultural and inter-religious societies. To share good practices in the field of HRE and using tools and methods for running Non-Formal Education (NFE) activities on local level. To explore, create and share relevant and effective tools working in a field of HRE and interreligious dialogue as well to provide opportunity to testing these methods in practice. To create new tools and manuals for HRE. To stimulate the dialogue and discussion among different participants/stakeholders (representatives of institutions, OCDs, youth, etc.) on local level and building strong networking.

The participants are youth workers, trainers, youth leaders, part of NGO, who have interest in developing competences to work as multipliers/facilitators, basic experience in leading educational activities with youngsters, at local or international level, have the

potential and need to develop competencies and act after the training as a multiplier for HRE on local level, who want to develop new methodologies and tools for youth work to reinforce Human Rights Education, that can develop new international partnerships and network of HRE promoters, motivated and interested to learn how to organise large scale event to promote HRE and interfaith dialogue. The training course took place at Vrnjacka Banja, Serbia on 22 – 30 April 2021. The partner organizations of this project were Nevladina organizacija «IUVENTA» (Serbia), TDM 2000 (Italy), Kulturális Kapcsolatokért Alapítvány (Hungary); Darusselam Vakfi (Turkey); Gerakan Kerelawanan Internasional (GREAT) (Indonesia), Disha International Foundation Trust (India). One of the first follow-up of the training is creating a new interreligious tool relevant to contexts of each country.

PEACE JOURNEY: INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE TOOL ON INDONESIA CONTEXT

Peace Journey is an educative game and as an interreligious dialogue tool that can be played in a fun way. This tool is inspired by existing interreligious tools made by Erasmus Projects through the International Voluntary Services (IVS) community in Europe such as IUVENTA, Serbia, etc. Peace Journey is an interreligious tool made by IVS *Gerakan Kerelawanan Internasional* (GREAT) Indonesia. The objectives of the game are to increase participants' knowledge level about religious diversity in Indonesia, to give the participants an opportunity to simulate interreligious dialogue, as well as to promote them with tolerance, respect, and peace. The game is possibly played by various participants such as students of Junior or Senior High School, university students, teachers, lecturers, activists, volunteers, young people, etc. from any religious backgrounds, including atheisms. The number of players can be just two up to seven. In addition to the participants, there must be one

person as the judge who understands the game. The judge is named Peace Hero, while the participants are called Peace Ambassador. The physical form of this game is a puzzle that can be arranged to become a board. The game board contains a picture of religious diversity in Indonesia, consisting of symbols, rituals, and keywords of six recognized religions and some certain registered religions. Moreover, there is also a picture of a circular stair. The name of the board is the Holy Peace Land. And, there is the Holy Book of Peace Journey that contains academic information about religious diversity in Indonesia, as well as the reference of the questions and answers card, excluding reflections, of the game. This game takes 45 - 60 (could be more) minutes to play. Basically, as this game is designed like a snake stair game, the needed materials are like a cube and certain pawns representing the real participants.

This game has three steps or sections and the judge is fully responsible for its running.

1. Arranging the Puzzle.

As mentioned earlier, the puzzle is the board of the game, which contains a picture of religious diversity in Indonesia, consisting of symbols, rituals, and keywords of six recognized religions and some certain registered religions. This part challenges participants to unite random pieces of the puzzle. When the entire pieces of puzzle get arranged correctly, the board will be showing participants a visual of Indonesian religious diversity, including a circular stair of the game.

2. Peace Adventure

This stage allows participants to play a game, just like a snake stair game, on the game board. In every stop, there will be a religious question, reflection, or action that requires participants to respond. For instance «What is a house of worship in Islam? You are a Muslim and being invited to a birthday party celebration of your Christian friend, how do you

respond it? Ammatoa group takes care seriously of environmental preservation, how does your religion teach so? Great Friday is a ritual of tradition? Would you like to perform Azan/meditation/else?» Etc. The questions and answers of the game refer to the Holy Book of Peace Journey as all information and material is written there.

3. Debriefing and Reflection Moment

To begin the debriefing session, the judge kindly asks the participants to reflect on their Indonesian religious diversity and asks some of them to share their thoughts with others. After that, the judge explains in brief about tolerance, respect, and peace according to the Holy Book of Peace Journey based on the theoretical framework, then asks the participants to reflect on them. The judge then invites some of the participants to share their point of view about their feelings of tolerance, respect, and peace during the game. The discussion is open during the entirety of this part. During the whole of the game, all participants are encouraged to discuss, dialogue, and share their own perspectives of their life-related experiences. The judge is responsible for this encouragement.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISTINCTIONS OF PEACE JOURNEY

This tool is playable for diverse participants including certain interfaith or peacemaker community members such as SRILI (*Srikandi Lintas Iman-Interfaith Srikandi*), located in Yogyakarta. This is a community in which the members are exclusively women coming from multi religious groups and they work mostly on interreligious issues, including dialogue. Another targeted community is Peace Generation. This group consists of youth whose religious backgrounds are diverse. This community has a strong focus on peacebuilding. Not to mention YIPC (Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community). In

addition, involving diverse youth activists from non-Government Organization GREAT Indonesia.

Moreover, this tool offers a unique approach in a way of doing interreligious dialogue with learning by playing, sharing, reflection, etc. Another available crucial way is the existence of reflection moment which allows each participant to contemplate the sacred dignity and spirituality of human beings to be fully respected and valued. Additionally, this game, as a tool is expandable as well as adoptable to be used in addressing and exploring other various issues. Also, in this game men and women can play equally so that all their voices are heard in the same matters and manners. This tool, too, is youth-involving, so that the younger generation is responsible as well - to understand religious diversity so that in the future they are prospective peace makers. It is worth mentioning as well that the game can be used effortlessly, and opens for, not only commonly for those who are open-minded people, closed-minded people who also may benefit from the dialogue. As printed, the tool instructions can be the manual guide for any user. However, the presence of Peace Hero will be helpful to run the game.

CONCLUSION

Human beings, as long as they still live, will never come to an end of doing interreligious dialogue as an attempt to build peace. Therefore, developing tools on it is important. In fact, interreligious dialogue is doable in many ways not only by the elites or academicians, figures or leaders of certain religions, but any religions by anyone at any level, including local or grassroots. Peace Journey is an alternative to conduct interreligious dialogue that presents religious diversity in the Indonesian context. By playing it, the participants are informed religious realities that happen in Indonesia. The contents are designed to increase participant's knowledge of religious diversity. Meanwhile, the process of the dialogue

through non-formal learning promotes among the players mutual understanding of respect, tolerance, and so peace. We encourage anyone who desires peace to share and spread this ideas wider starting from secondary junior school until high school, in addition to in *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) as numerous Muslims living there, with the hope that it will educate Muslims generation about religious pluralism and tolerance. Not to mention in the café as Indonesian youths do like to go to coffee shop with diverse purposes including hanging out and playing with their colleagues. This tool could be one of the provided games. We also recommend that in the future this kind of interreligious tool can be available as a digital application that can be downloaded and utilized by countless, diverse people so that it will open possible peace broader.

REFERENCES

- Aulet, S., & Sureda, M. (2019). The Semantics of the Sacred: A Tool for Interreligious Dialogue. *Tourism, Pilgrimage and Intercultural Dialogue. Interpreting Sacred Stories; Vidal-Casellas, D., Aulet, S., Crous-Costa, N., Eds*, 14-28.
- Corneo, G., & Jeanne, O. (2009). A theory of tolerance. *Journal of Public economics*. 93(5-6), 691-702, Etc.
- Dillon, R. S. (2003). Respect.
- Eck, D. (2017). *Interfaith Dialogue in the New Religious America*. USA. SAGE
- Galtung, J. (1969). *Violence, peace, and peace research*. *Journal of peace research*, 6(3),167-191.
- Grewal, B. S. (2003). *Johan Galtung: Positive and negative peace. School of social science, Auckland University of technology*, 30, 23-26.
- Kadayifci-Orellana, S. A. (2013). Interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, 149-167.
- Lattu, I., Y., M. (2019). *Beyond Interreligious Dialogue: Oral-Based Interreligious Engagements in Indonesia*, Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden I Boston.
- Vogt, W. P. (1997). *Tolerance & education: Learning to live with diversity and difference*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Swidler, L. (2013). The history of inter-religious dialogue. *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to inter-religious dialogue*, 3-20.
-

Disclaimer: All the views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual Authors. None of the opinions, views or content shared in this publication necessarily reflects official policies, positions or missions, of any of the organising institutions, Boards, or territories.