Investigating the role of transformative human rights education in preventing violent extremism in Indonesia
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**INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

Recent studies on preventing, rather than countering violent extremism (VE), are calling for stronger attention to education and the significant roles of schools and families to fight extremist views. If we recognize the role of both cognitive and behavioral processes in committing a violent act motivated by extremist ideology, a form of education that addresses both ideas and behavior would be necessary to help prevent the spread of VE among youth.

**WHY INDONESIA?**

- There are still prevalent viewpoints that threaten values of tolerance in Java, Indonesia.
- Less inclusive attitudes towards religious diversity suggest a need for educational programs that can provide a space for the discussion of issues relating to diversity and tolerance of others’ rights.
- Studies conducted provide limited insight into what Indonesian students currently understand about issues related to extremism, such as grievances over social justice and human rights issues.

**RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS**

This study explored the potential role of transformative human rights education (HRE)—which encourages activism and social change—in preventing VE, through a dual-level, mixed-methods case study. We gathered our data to accompany a 10 lesson HRE workshop that we developed called Rights in Action.

**Sampling Site:** SMK Pelita Muda, an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) in Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia.

**Sample**
- 21 male and female students aged 16 and 17 attending SMK Pelita Muda.
- Convenience sampling

**Data**
- Pre- and post-workshop surveys (n=21)
- Semi-structured individual interviews (n=20)
- Focus group discussions (n=2)
- 30+ hours of classroom observations

Note: All research was conducted in Bahasa Indonesian, recorded, transcribed, and translated into English for data analysis. All data has been encrypted.

**RQs & FINDINGS**

**RQ 1**
How do Indonesian youth perceive human rights, diversity, and violence?

- Civil and political rights mentioned more often than economic, social, and cultural rights.
- Lower SES (economic diversity) considered to be a greater indicator for decreased access to rights than ethnic or religious diversity.
- Violence against women and children commonly experienced. HR described as a means of protection from such violence.
- Authority figures such as parents or teachers described as perpetrators of violence.
- Less concern for large-scale violence (war, political violence).

**RQ 2**
What is the relationship between human rights-related knowledge and LOC?

- The shift from internal to external LOC may indicate an increased awareness of the role of collective action in creating change.
- Authority figures considered to have the primary ability to affect change within the community.
- Change is thought to occur on a community level through discussion of issues and raising awareness.

**RQ 3**
How do Indonesian youth perceive their ability to affect social change in their local community?

- Violence against women and children commonly experienced. HR described as a means of protection from such violence.
- Less concern for large-scale violence (war, political violence).

**TRANSFORMATIVE HRE & LOC**

An external LOC is when a person views outcomes in the world as primarily being a result of chance. Hence, they are less likely to invest effort. A person will demonstrate a high level of effort if he/she has an internal LOC. This is when an outcome is perceived as being a consequence of action. Empowerment is defined as a shift towards an internal LOC. This attitude change is in line with the goal of an Activism-Transformation Model of HRE.

Baseline LOC scores ranged from 5 to 12, and endline scores ranged from 6 to 14. Though this shift in range suggests an internal change in LOC, aggregate data show 43 percent of students shifting from an internal to external LOC after participating in the program, 28.5 percent maintaining an internal LOC, and the remaining 28.5 maintaining an external LOC.

**CONCLUSION**

- Education has the key task of developing agency as a response to authoritative structures.
- We must extend our understanding of LOC beyond the binary of internal vs external to be more inclusive of other cultural contexts that place more of an emphasis on the collective.
- Transformative HRE is a beneficial strategy for Indonesian youth to develop the capacities necessary for collective efficacy. Further research is needed to better understand the role that HRE can play in preventing VE.
- This pilot study should be extended to a larger population of youth, encompassing other regions of Indonesia.

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*S. Garnett Russell is a pseudonym*