

# **Legal Perspectives on Religious Conflict Resolution Among Youth: A Study of Youth Community Strategies for Fostering Interfaith Harmony in Central Java, Indonesia**

*Iman Fadhilah*

Faculty of Islamic Religion, Universitas Wahid Hasyim, Semarang, Indonesia

*Nur Rois*

Faculty of Islamic Religion, Universitas Wahid Hasyim, Semarang, Indonesia

*Imam Khoirul Ulumuddin*

Faculty of Islamic Religion, Universitas Wahid Hasyim, Semarang, Indonesia.

*Aris Abdul Ghoni*

Faculty of Islamic Religion, Universitas Wahid Hasyim, Semarang, Indonesia.

*Ubbadul Adzkiya'*

Faculty of Islamic Religion, Universitas Wahid Hasyim, Semarang, Indonesia.

*Nur Izzati binti Ab Ghani*

Faculty of General Studies and Advanced Education, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia.

✉ Corresponding email: [rois.unwahas@proton.me](mailto:rois.unwahas@proton.me)

## **Abstract**

This study aims to identify and analyze the strategies employed by youth communities in Central Java to address religious conflicts and promote interfaith harmony. The central question explored is how youth communities in Central Java respond to and resolve religious conflicts to maintain social harmony. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, this study involves in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation from several interfaith youth communities in key cities in Central Java, including Semarang, Solo, and Yogyakarta. The findings



Copyrights © Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0). All writings published in this journal are personal views of the author and do not represent the views of this journal and the author's affiliated institutions.

demonstrate that youth communities have developed conflict resolution strategies centered on interfaith dialogue, cultural engagement, and enhancing diversity literacy through social media and informal education. These strategies have been effective in fostering collective awareness, strengthening social solidarity, and creating safe spaces for interfaith interaction at the grassroots level. As a practical recommendation, clearer and more enforceable legal frameworks should be established to support youth efforts in resolving religious conflicts peacefully. Laws such as Law No. 40/2008 on the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and the Electronic Information and Transaction Law (UU ITE) offer a strong legal foundation to protect youth from discrimination and hate speech, while also providing them with the necessary legal space to implement these strategies in a secure and legitimate framework.

**Keywords:** *Youth, religious conflict resolution, interfaith harmony, community strategy, Central Java*

## Introduction

As a country with high religious diversity, Indonesia often faces serious challenges in maintaining social harmony, especially amid the dynamics of inter-religious relations. In this context, the role of the younger generation becomes very strategic, given their position as agents of social and cultural change who can bridge the barriers of religious identity. However, religious conflicts involving youth still occur frequently, in the form of hate speech, social segregation, and symbolic violence in digital and public spaces.

Religious conflicts, particularly among young people, are not only a societal concern but also a legal one.<sup>1</sup> Indonesia's legal framework, rooted in the 1945 Constitution, ensures the protection of religious freedom and the rights of citizens regardless of their religious affiliation. However, despite these protections, religious conflicts among youth persist, often due to a lack of understanding of legal rights and conflict resolution mechanisms. Legal tools such as Law No. 40/2008 on the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Law No. 1/PNPS/1965 on the Prevention of Religious Abuse and Blasphemy provide significant legal backing. Yet, the challenge lies in their effective implementation, especially at the grassroots level, where conflicts are often rooted in misunderstanding and intolerance. Strengthening legal education among young people can bridge this gap and empower them to utilize legal frameworks as tools for peaceful conflict resolution.

In the digital era, religious conflicts are increasingly taking place online, where youth are both the perpetrators and the victims of religiously charged hate speech.<sup>2</sup> Indonesia's Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) addresses such issues by regulating electronic communication to prevent the spread of harmful content. However, the rapid growth of digital platforms has outpaced legal enforcement, often leaving youth vulnerable to cyberbullying and online hate speech.

---

<sup>1</sup> Iin Supriyanti and Hairul Huda, "Religious Tolerance of the Young Generation: Religious Convergence in Education," *Proceeding International Conference on Religion, Science and Education*, 4 (2025): 31-40

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Nurhafiz Hassim, NurNasliza Arina Mohamad Nasir, and Norena Abdul Karim Zamri, "Hate Speech in the Digital Age: A Study in Terms of Impact and Social Implications," *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication* 9, no. 38 (2024): 01-12. DOI:10.35631/IJLGC.938001

Legal reforms that specifically address religious intolerance in the digital space, combined with enhanced digital literacy programs, are crucial in mitigating these online conflicts. Therefore, creating a legal environment that fosters responsible digital behavior and empowers young people to be active participants in online peacebuilding is crucial.

Moreover, legal frameworks should support youth-led initiatives in conflict resolution by formalizing their roles in peace processes. While youth have been recognized as important actors in conflict resolution, there is a lack of legal recognition and support for their community-based efforts. Creating laws that promote and protect youth involvement in interfaith dialogues and conflict resolution could lead to more inclusive and effective solutions. This can include providing platforms for youth to voice their concerns and take active roles in policymaking, ensuring their strategies are supported by institutional frameworks that align with the principles of diversity and inclusion.

Several previous studies have highlighted the issue of religious conflict resolution in Indonesia, such as the work by Martinus Maria Join et al (2021)<sup>3</sup>, Made Nopen Supriadi & Malik Malik (2022)<sup>4</sup>, Abustan (2023)<sup>5</sup>, and Lene Pedersen (2016)<sup>6</sup> on pluralism and reconciliation, as well as the studies by Jaetul Muchlis (2022)<sup>7</sup>, Januariansyah Arfaizar, et al (2022)<sup>8</sup>, dan Marta Miklikowska, et al (2022)<sup>9</sup>, who studied radicalism among youths. In addition, studies such as Mohammad Hasan Ansori & Rostineu's (2020)<sup>10</sup>, Nur Uysal (2016)<sup>11</sup>, Sutamaji Sutamaji & Lukman Hakim (2024)<sup>12</sup>, and Khairulnizam Mat Karim, et al (2014)<sup>13</sup> emphasize more on the

- 
- 3 Martinus Maria Join, Irenius D. Bernad, and Adrianus Naja, "Membongkar Egosentrisme, Eksklusivisme dan Fiksasi Agama dalam Ruang Publik," *Focus* 2, no. 1 (2021): 56–62. <https://doi.org/10.26593/focus.v2i1.4444>
  - 4 Made Nopen Supriadi and Malik Malik, "Perdamaian dalam Konteks Pluralitas Indonesia: Sebuah Analisis Etis-Teologis," *Sesawi* 3, no. 2 (2022): 161–173. <https://doi.org/10.53687/sjtpk.v3i2.78>
  - 5 Abustan, "Pluralism and Equality in the Perspective of Human Rights in Indonesia," *Indonesia Law Reform Journal* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.22219/ilrej.v3i1.24205>
  - 6 Lene Pedersen, "Religious Pluralism in Indonesia," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 17, no. 5 (2016): 387–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2016.1218534>
  - 7 Jaetul Muchlis, "The Radicalism of Young People in Indonesia: The Religious Portraits of Islamic Spiritual Organizations," *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 38, no. 2 (2022): 145–164. <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v38i2.25167>
  - 8 Januariansyah Arfaizar, YUSDANI, Ilham Akbar, and Muh. Rizki, "Family Resistance in Fighting Radicalism among Youth During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Sompilan, Berbah, Sleman, Yogyakarta," *IJIIS (Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies)* 5, no. 3 (2023): 183–198. <https://doi.org/10.20885/ijiis.vol.5.iss3.art4>
  - 9 Marta Miklikowska, Katarzyna Jasko, and Ales Kudrnat, "The Making of A Radical: The Role of Peer Harassment in Youth Political Radicalism," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 49, no. 3 (2022): 477–492. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672211070420>
  - 10 Mohammad Hasan Ansori and Rostineu, "Examining the Potential of Local Interfaith Institution in Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Indonesia: The Case of Forum for Religious Harmony (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama) of Ambon," *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Recent Innovations - ICRI*, (2020): 1723–1729. doi: 10.5220/0009934217231729
  - 11 Nur Uysal, *Peacebuilding through Interfaith Dialogue: The Role of Faith-based NGOs*. In: Roy, S., Shaw, I.S. (eds) *Communicating Differences*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264_17)
  - 12 Sutamaji Sutamaji and Lukman Hakim, "Communication Strategies of FKUB in Managing Conflicts Among Religious Communities in Nganjuk and Kediri," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 35, no. 2 (2024): 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i2.5423>
  - 13 Khairulnizam Mat Karim, Suzy Aziziyana Saili, Khadijah Mohd Khambali@Hambali, "Role of Religious Leader in Interfaith Dialogue towards Conflict Resolution: An Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Education and Research* 2, no. 6 (2014): 77–88.

role of religious organizations in managing conflicts between people. However, a gap exists in the literature regarding the strategies developed by youth communities—rather than formal institutions—in addressing religious conflicts at the grassroots level, particularly in regions such as Central Java, which serves as a microcosm of Indonesia's diversity.

In this context, this study introduces a novel approach by focusing on community-based initiatives initiated and led by youth. It examines the dynamics of conflict while exploring how young people develop dialogue strategies, construct alternative narratives, and create safe spaces for interfaith interactions, both offline and online.

The contribution of this study lies in strengthening the participatory, youth-driven community approach to conflict resolution, thereby enriching the literature on the sociology of religion, youth, and peace. On a practical level, the study provides models and best practices for maintaining harmony through active youth involvement, which can be replicated in other areas with similar social conditions. Thus, this work offers both theoretical insights and practical solutions for sustaining social integrity in the nation through intergenerational and interfaith engagement.

Religious conflict in Indonesia has been a longstanding concern, particularly in the post-reform era, which has seen an increase in open expressions of religious identity.<sup>14</sup> Franklin Hutabarat (2023) highlights that religious pluralism in Indonesia presents challenges in maintaining social cohesion.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, Asnal Mala and Wiwin Luqna Hunaida (2023) emphasize the importance of institutionalizing moderate values in education and society to prevent sectarian conflict.<sup>16</sup> In contemporary discourse, religious conflicts not only manifest physically but also digitally, through the spread of hate speech and disinformation that further deteriorate relations between religious communities.<sup>17</sup>

Youth are often positioned at two extremes: as potential conflict actors or as agents of peace. A study conducted by Maykel Verkuyten et al. (2019)<sup>18</sup> and Tatyana Bانشchikova, et al. (2015)<sup>19</sup> show that many young people are vulnerable to the influence of intolerant ideologies due to the lack of space for dialogue and interaction across identities. However, on the other hand, works such as those by Sarah K. Anderson and Yulia Nesterova (2024) shows that youth have great potential as peace promoters through community activities, digital campaigns, and peace education

<sup>14</sup> Andreas Jonathan, "Religious Identity and National Conflict in the 20th Century Indonesia," *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 3 (2017): 303–318. <https://doi.org/10.22515/dinika.v2i3.155>

<sup>15</sup> Franklin Hutabarat, "Navigating Diversity: Exploring Religious Pluralism and Social Harmony in Indonesian Society," *European Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 3, no. 6 (2023): 6-13.

<sup>16</sup> Asnal Mala and Wiwin Luqna Hunaida, "Exploring the Role of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: A Comprehensive Analysis of Its Unifying Potential and Practical Applications," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 11, no. 2 (2023): 173–196. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2023.11.2.173-196>

<sup>17</sup> David M. Brenner, Yaqub Chaudhary, Robert M. Geraci, Mark Graves, Haley Griesse, Elias Kruger, Yuriko Ryan, and Marcus Schwarting, "Technical and Religious Perspectives on AI Misinformation and Disinformation," (2024). Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4360413>

<sup>18</sup> Maykel Verkuyten, Kumar Yogeeswaran, and Levi Adelman, "Intergroup Toleration and Its Implications for Culturally Diverse Societies," *Soc Issues Policy Rev.* 13, no. 1 (2019): 5-35. doi: 10.1111/sipr.12051.

<sup>19</sup> Tatyana Bانشchikova, Vladimir Solomonov, and Elena Fomina, "Attitudes and Tolerance in the Structure of Individual Readiness for Intercultural Interaction," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 214, (2015): 916-924. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.753

based on local values.<sup>20</sup> The role of youth in this context needs to be seen as agents of social transformation who can initiate and maintain interfaith dialog at various levels.

Community-based strategies are an approach that is gaining increasing attention in conflict resolution studies.<sup>21</sup> This approach emphasizes the importance of local participation and grassroots initiatives as the main foundation for harmony. According to Dexin Wang & Shijun Li (2024) explains that the success of long-term conflict resolution relies heavily on the involvement of local actors who understand the cultural and social context of the community.<sup>22</sup> In Indonesia, studies by Zainul Arifin et al (2024) and Muhammad Daffa & Indra Anggara (2023)<sup>23</sup> shows how youth communities in multireligious areas actively develop local wisdom-based resolution models, such as cultural dialogue, interfaith cooperation, and digital campaigns for religious moderation.<sup>24</sup>

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design to gain a deep understanding of the strategies used by youth communities in addressing religious conflicts and fostering interfaith harmony. This approach was selected for its ability to capture the complexity of social reality and the contextual dynamics behind conflict resolution practices at the grassroots level. The study focuses on several cities and districts in Central Java Province, characterized by high religious diversity and a history of active youth involvement in interfaith activities, including Semarang City, Surakarta City (also known as Solo), and Magelang Regency. The subjects of this study include members of interfaith youth communities, facilitators of interfaith dialogue, community leaders, and representatives of religious social organizations.

Data were gathered through various methods: (1) In-depth interviews with 15-20 key informants actively involved in youth communities, (2) Participatory observation, particularly in activities aimed at building harmony, such as interfaith discussions, peace campaigns, or joint social actions, and (3) Documentation studies, including the analysis of community social media, activity reports, and internal publications related to conflict resolution efforts.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved the following steps: (1) Transcribing and coding the data, (2) Identifying key themes

<sup>20</sup> Sarah K. Anderson and Yulia Nesterova, "Engaging Young People in Peace Education Research: Using an Arts-Based Approach to Gain Congruence through Democratic Methods," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 23, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241257944>

<sup>21</sup> Obafemi D Akintayo, Chinazo Nneka Ifeanyi, and Okeoma Onunka, "Enhancing Domestic Peace Through Effective Community-Based ADR Programs," *Global Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews* 2, no. 2 (2024): 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.58175/gjarr.2024.2.2.0054>

<sup>22</sup> Dexin Wang and Shijun Li, "Social Conflicts and Their Resolution Paths in the Commercialized Renewal of Old Urban Communities in China Under the Perspective of Public Value," *Journal of Urban Management*, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2024.11.007>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2226585624001535>)

<sup>23</sup> Muhammad Daffa and Indra Anggara, "The Position of Local Religions in Interfaith Relations as A Form of Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society* 5, no. 2 (2023): 112-124. <https://doi.org/10.36256/ijrs.v5i2.369>

<sup>24</sup> Zainul Arifin, Winda Utami, Berly Wijayanti, and Alvin Dian Pramuja, "Ministry of Religious Affairs' Innovative Strategy in Building Lumajang District as A Model of Religious Moderation," *Journal of Research and Thought and Islamic Education (JRTIE)* 7, no. 2 (2024): 122-139. <https://doi.org/10.24260/jrtie.v7i2.3207>



related to conflict resolution strategies and promoting harmony, and (3) Interpreting the social and cultural meanings of these strategies based on the local context.

## Results and Discussion

### Dynamics of Religious Conflict among Youth in Central Java

The dynamics of religious conflict among Central Java's youth show complexities that cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and digital technology development contexts.<sup>25</sup> Although the region is known to be relatively stable in terms of inter-religious relations, religious-based tensions at the grassroots level, especially among the younger generation, still occur frequently. Young people who are in the phase of self-discovery and expression of religious identity become important actors who are sometimes unwittingly involved in symbolic exchanges that have the potential to cause conflict.

This phenomenon demonstrates that religious expression is not merely a form of individual faith, but a means of negotiating and contesting meaning within a broader social context. Religious conflicts that occur among youth can be classified into three main forms, namely verbal, symbolic, and digital social conflicts.<sup>26</sup> Verbal conflicts often appear in the form of open debates, both in public spaces and online media, which contain hate speech or statements that offend the religious identity of other groups.<sup>27</sup> Symbolic conflict, on the other hand, involves the use of certain religious attributes or representations in cross-community events that are interpreted differently by the parties involved.<sup>28</sup> While digital social conflict is the most dominant form, primarily due to the high level of interaction among youth through social media platforms.<sup>29</sup> This is where narratives of intolerance quickly spread and create new tensions rooted in misunderstandings, stereotypes, or even disinformation.

This form of symbolic conflict illustrates how religious symbols can become powerful markers of identity, potentially causing collective resentment if not managed properly. In multicultural events, for example, the use of certain religious symbols is often questioned because they are considered dominant or exclusive. This aligns with the perspective of symbolic conflict theory, which posits that social conflicts frequently arise from differences in interpreting symbols and the meanings associated with them.<sup>30</sup> Amid limited space for healthy dialogue, youth are easily trapped in the

<sup>25</sup> Mohammad Takdir, M Mushthafa, and Rozinah AS, "The Dynamics of Religious Conflict in Indonesia: Contestation and Resolution of Religious Conflicts in The New Order Age," *Al-Adyan: Journal of Religious Studies* 2, no. 2 (2021): 103-121. doi:10.15548/al-adyan.v2i2.3184

<sup>26</sup> Millah Ananda Yunita, Pawennari Hijjang, Ahmad Ismail, Muhammad Neil, Muh. Nur Rahmat Yasim, and Abdul Masli, "Tracing the Threads of Potential Conflict among Youth in Tarakan City," *Hasanuddin International Conference on Social and Political Sciences (HICOSPOS) 2024*, Sciendo, (2025): 136-142. <https://doi.org/10.2478/9788367405928>

<sup>27</sup> María Antonia Paz, Julio Montero-Díaz, and Alicia Moreno-Delgado, "Hate Speech: A Systematized Review," *SAGE Open* 10, no. 4 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020973022>

<sup>28</sup> Vlaho Kovačević, Krunoslav Malenica, and Goran Kardum, "Symbolic Interactions in Popular Religion According to Dimensions of Religiosity: A Qualitative Study," *Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 30. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11020030>

<sup>29</sup> Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz, "How Social Media is Shaping Conflicts: Evidence from Contemporary Research," *Journal of Peace Development & Communication* 5, no. 4 (2021): 76-94. doi:10.36968/JPDC-V05-I04-06

<sup>30</sup> Michael J Carter and Celene Fuller, "Symbolic Interactionism," *Sociopedia.isa*, (2015), doi:10.1177/205684601561

dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them' based on religious symbols that can be transformed into a bridge of understanding.

The role of social media in this dynamic is very significant. On the one hand, social media has become a new platform for young people to express their diversity and share interfaith knowledge. However, on the other hand, it opens up a wide space for the spread of provocative, intolerant, and even manipulative content. Social media algorithms that reinforce user preferences create echo chambers,<sup>31</sup> where youth are only exposed to content that affirms their own views, this leads to digital segregation that reinforces the boundaries of religious identity, while complicating efforts at dialogue and reconciliation.

The digital polarization that occurs has an impact on the way youth understand other groups.<sup>32</sup> Many youth admitted to feeling threatened or uncomfortable when viewing religious content from different groups, even though there was no direct threat. This shows that religious conflicts do not always manifest in tangible or physical forms, but can also develop in the form of perceptions and mutual suspicion that are built digitally. When digital space is dominated by intolerant and exclusive content, conflicts that occur in cyberspace slowly crystallize into tensions in the real world.

In online forums such as youth community WhatsApp groups or comment sections on religious content on TikTok and Instagram, conflicts often erupt due to impulsive statements that are not clarified. Misinterpretations of quotations from sacred texts, or the use of complex theological terms in online debates, often trigger arguments that lead to communication breakdowns between communities. A lack of cross-cultural understanding, low digital literacy, and the absence of dialogue facilitators exacerbate conflicts, making them even more difficult to contain.

In this situation, narratives of intolerance easily utilize religion as a political identity. Youth become easy targets for religious propaganda that promotes exclusivism and puritanism. In Central Java, some digital religious communities build rigid moral dichotomies, blaming other groups for various social and cultural crises. This corroborates the finding that religious conflicts among youth are more often mediated by ideological narratives rather than the empirical reality of diversity around them.

Rivalries between faith-based youth organizations also complicate the conflict's dynamics. Tensions sometimes stem not from differences in doctrine, but from a long history of competition between the parent organizations that house them. Youth active in certain religious organizations often carry the legacy of past conflicts, albeit in a more symbolic form. This competition manifests itself in the form of exclusive truth claims, competing religious programs, and even in the use of public space.

The impact of these conflicts is not always immediately visible, but it is felt in the daily lives of young people. When differences are perceived as a threat, interfaith interactions become less frequent and limited. Some youth admitted to feeling unwelcome or ostracized in social activities simply because of different religions. Therefore, interfaith youth communities have created safe spaces to build dialog. In cities like Semarang and Solo, these spaces are filled with non-formal activities such

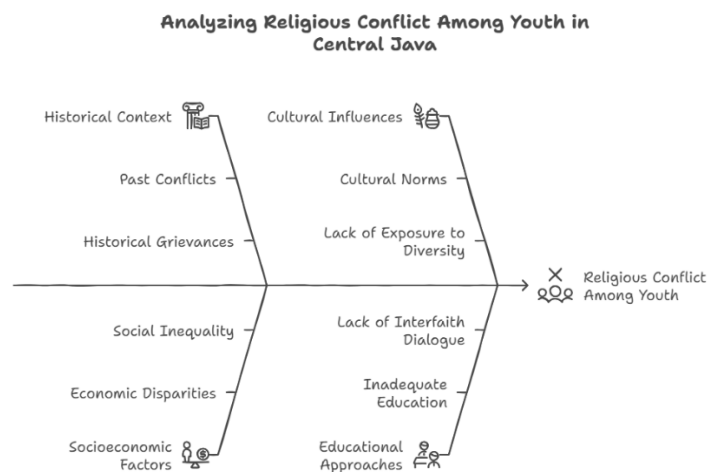
---

<sup>31</sup> Tarun Gupta and Supriya Bansal, "Beyond Echo Chambers: Unraveling the Impact of Social Media Algorithms on Consumer Behavior and Exploring Pathways to a Diverse Digital Discourse," *Journal of Marketing Studies* 7, no. 1 (2024): 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.47941/jms.1799>

<sup>32</sup> Maria Nordbrandt, "Affective Polarization in the Digital Age: Testing the Direction of the Relationship Between Social Media and Users' Feelings for Out-Group Parties," *New Media & Society* 25, no. 12 (2021): 3392–3411. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211044393>

as film discussions, collaborative art projects, or more open and participatory religious literacy classes.

Theoretically, this dynamic strengthens the relevance of symbolic conflict theory in reading the relationship between interfaith youth groups. The substance of religious doctrine does not solely trigger tensions, but rather how symbols and identities are interpreted and communicated. In the digital context, symbols become stronger and easier to disseminate, but are increasingly vulnerable to misinterpretation. Therefore, conflict resolution strategies must touch the symbolic and digital levels by mainstreaming diversity literacy, strengthening online communication ethics, and creating shared spaces that transcend formal religious boundaries to maintain harmony and prevent conflict. Take a look at the following picture:



### Active Role of Youth Community in Preventing and Mediating Conflicts

The role of youth communities in maintaining interfaith harmony in Central Java is an important highlight in the socio-religious dynamics at the grassroots level.<sup>33</sup> Amidst the increasing polarization of religious-based identities, youth communities have emerged as actors who prevent conflict and become mediators and reconcilers when friction arises between groups.<sup>34</sup> They move independently and collaboratively to create safe and inclusive spaces for interaction, foster interfaith solidarity, and strengthen awareness of the importance of diversity in the nation's life.

In Semarang, for example, youth communities such as the Semarang Interfaith Youth Forum act as facilitators of peace through various interfaith dialogue programs.<sup>35</sup> These activities are held on campuses, houses of worship, and neutral

<sup>33</sup> Ika Hana Pertiwi and Faturachman Faturachman, "Integration of Social Identities in Interreligious-Group Relations," *Jurnal Psikologi* 50, no. 3 (2023): 219--244. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22146/jpsi.86182>

<sup>34</sup> Jamaludin Hadi Kusuma and Sulistiyono Susilo, "Intercultural and Religious Sensitivity among Young Indonesian Interfaith Groups," *Religions* 11, no. 1 (2020): 26. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010026>

<sup>35</sup> Imam Taufiq, Muhammad Makmun, Mishbah Khoiruddin Zuhri, Lucky Ade Sessiani, and Ririh Megah Safitri, "Understanding Peacebuilding Fundamentals in Southeast Asia: Intersection among Religion, Education, and Psychosocial Perspective," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 2 (2022): 401–430. <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v22i2.6095>



public spaces to create opportunities for honest, reflective, and constructive discussions. They understand that top-down approaches from formal institutions often fail to reach the more spontaneous and expressive dynamics of young people's emotions and experiences. Therefore, this community chooses a more participatory local method, utilizing local wisdom and contextual experiences to build dialogue.

In Surakarta, the approach is more culturally and expressively oriented. The Forum *Pemuda Damai Solo* community has designed various peace campaign activities that incorporate arts and culture,<sup>36</sup> such as tolerance-themed murals, interfaith story-based theatre performances, and diversity festivals that present peaceful narratives in a festive and educational atmosphere. These efforts demonstrate that cultural expression can be an effective medium for building emotional connections across diverse identities. Within the participatory conflict resolution theory framework, this strategy serves as a bridge between identity expression and respect for diversity, while building social capital resistant to disintegration.

Meanwhile, youth communities in Magelang exhibit a more responsive approach to addressing the dynamics of digital conflict. Through groups such as the Magelang Interfaith Youth, the youth actively monitor issues that have the potential to trigger conflict on social media. They create positive content, counter-narrate hoaxes and hate speech, and facilitate online discussions that bring together teenagers from different religious backgrounds. This strategy represents a digital adaptation of traditional peacebuilding, reflecting the recognition that conflict today extends beyond physical spaces to virtual ones, which significantly impact public opinion.

These activities show that the youth community not only acts reactively, but also preventively. They organize tolerance training, diversity literacy workshops, and social mediation training based on informal approaches. This process develops young cadres with a high sensitivity to religious issues and the cross-cultural communication skills necessary for mediation. Armed with a sustainable peacebuilding approach, this community aims to establish a social ecosystem that can withstand the long-term pressures of conflict rooted in differences.

Their collaboration is limited to fellow youth communities and involves the local government, religious leaders, and educational institutions. In many cases, youth communities are involved in drafting local policies aimed at countering radicalism and organizing national events that promote the values of unity. This demonstrates that the role of youth can bridge state policies with social practices, particularly in Central Java, which has a rich and complex history of religious pluralism.

The contribution of youth communities to preventing conflict is evident in the flexibility of the methods they employ. They do not always rely on formal formats, but instead choose approaches that suit the communication style of the younger generation. Casual discussions in cafes, interfaith podcasts, short video content, and live streaming have become strategic media for spreading messages of peace. This is where their main strength lies: being able to adapt to the times without losing the substance of the message they want to convey.

However, challenges still loom over the struggles of these communities. It is not uncommon for them to face resistance from conservative groups who suspect interfaith work as a form of liberal pluralism that is considered damaging to faith. In the face of these challenges, youth communities respond with a non-confrontational

---

<sup>36</sup> Rifda Lushiya Zakiya, Erma Fitria Rini, and Rizon Pamardhi Utomo, "Local Wisdom on Urban Tourism: (Surakarta Urban Art Corridor Case Study)," *Local Wisdom Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Kearifan Lokal* 17, no. 1 (2025): 32–49. <https://doi.org/10.26905/lw.v17i1.13184>

approach. They raise universal humanitarian issues, such as joint disaster management, interfaith blood donation, and other social movements that address the basic needs of society. This strategy has proven to erode prejudice and open space for dialog without sacrificing the identity of each group.

Youth communities in various regions in Central Java have shown an extraordinary ability to play a strategic role as actors of peace. They are not just spectators or victims of religious conflicts, but appear as agents of social transformation, bringing about change through inclusive, creative, and contextual approaches. Their success shows that effective peacebuilding does not always have to start from the top, but can grow from community initiatives that directly understand the realities on the ground.

Utilizing a locally based and participatory approach, this study emphasizes the significance of incorporating youth voices into conflict resolution and social development policies. Their role as facilitators, peacemakers, and mediators must be more widely recognized nationally and internationally. In addition, the findings contribute to the academic literature on youth-led peacebuilding in Southeast Asia, particularly in the context of plural societies like Indonesia, which continues to struggle with navigating the challenges of diversity in the era of globalization. Take a look at the picture below:



### Youth Community Strategies in Building Interfaith Harmony

In the context of religious plurality in Indonesia, particularly in Central Java, the youth community plays a crucial role in fostering and sustaining interfaith harmony.<sup>37</sup> The strategies developed by youth communities in responding to religious conflicts are diverse, yet they share a common thread of being participatory, inclusive, and grounded in local cultural roots. Youth communities are not merely the subjects of socio-religious dynamics but also serve as active agents who design and implement various community-based peacebuilding initiatives.

One of the primary strategies widely adopted is a cultural approach grounded in local wisdom and traditions. In cities such as Solo and Yogyakarta, interfaith youth utilize traditional arts, including *gamelan*, *ketoprak*, and puppet shows, as a medium to convey messages of tolerance and togetherness. In each performance, narratives about the importance of respecting differences are often incorporated as a form of education that is contextual and resonates with the community's cultural roots. This

<sup>37</sup> Dina Mardiana, Muhammad Yusuf, and Asyraf Isyraqi Jamil, "Religious Harmony Construct Amid A Plural Community in East Java," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 28, no. 2 (2020): 192-210. <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v28i2.3777>.

approach has proven effective because it can penetrate the boundaries of religious identity through cultural media familiar and widely accepted by the community.

In addition to the local cultural approach, youth communities utilize social media as a strategic space to build a narrative of tolerance. Through platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, they produce creative content highlighting true stories of interfaith friendship, testimonies of diversity, and virtual campaigns such as #BeragamaTanpaBenci and #TemanBerbeda. Using visual narratives and personal storytelling in these media creates an emotional effect. It opens up a wider space for dialogue, especially among teenagers and Generation Z, who are familiar with digital technology.

Another prominent strategy is interfaith collaboration, often manifested in social activities and events. For example, the youth community in Semarang routinely holds interfaith house of worship clean-ups, joint blood donations, and disaster fundraisers involving various youth organizations from different religious backgrounds. These activities foster direct interaction between interfaith individuals in a non-doctrinal atmosphere that encourages the formation of empathy and a sense of belonging as citizens of the nation, rather than just as religious adherents.

In practice, these youth community strategies have similarities with the interfaith youth movement approaches developed in countries such as the United States, India, and Lebanon. In the US, for example, organizations such as the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) emphasize shared experiences and social action as a meeting point between faiths. Similarly, many Hindu-Muslim youth communities in India build solidarity through joint environmental projects. These similarities suggest that interfaith solidarity tends to be more easily built through collaborative activities rather than theological discussions.

However, what is unique about the youth community strategy in Central Java is the integration of local and digital approaches. Youth do not only rely on face-to-face forums, but also actively design digital campaigns that promote local cultural values. This creates a hybrid model that combines the advantages of a grassroots approach with the wide reach of digital media, a feature not commonly found in many interfaith practices in other regions.

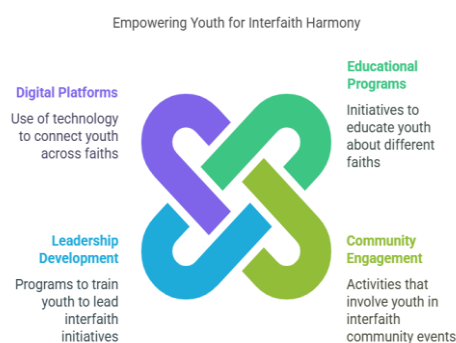
It is important to note that the success of this strategy is influenced by the relatively open social structure of the community and the existence of spaces for dialogue among religious leaders who support youth initiatives. In many cases, youth communities have the support of progressive local religious leaders, who legitimize their activities and act as mediators when horizontal tensions arise. The synergy between moral authority and youthful enthusiasm is key to creating a sustainable ecosystem of harmony.

Additionally, there are strategies to strengthen diversity literacy through informal education. Many youth communities offer discussion classes, inclusive leadership training, and workshops on conflict resolution that are grounded in universal values from various religions. These activities aim to equip youth with an interfaith understanding that is not merely symbolic, but substantive, so that they can become agents of change in their communities.

The contribution of youth communities to religious conflict resolution demonstrates that their strategies are contextual, flexible, and adaptable to the

challenges of the times.<sup>38</sup> They demonstrated that social reconciliation can be achieved through formal state intervention and creative, inclusive citizen initiatives. In the context of Central Java, this strategy has created a relatively peaceful social ecosystem despite being in a region with high potential for identity friction.

Theoretically, these findings support arguments in the community-based conflict resolution literature that emphasize the importance of local actors, particularly youth, in bottom-up peacebuilding. The approach taken by youth communities in Central Java can serve as a model for other regions facing similar challenges, particularly in fostering healthy and productive interfaith interactions within the framework of national unity and human dignity. Take a look at the following picture:



## Legal Perspectives on the Resolution of Religious Conflicts among the Youth

Religious conflicts in Indonesia, especially those involving youth, continue to challenge the maintenance of social harmony in a plural society. Under the 1945 Constitution, the Indonesian state guarantees freedom of religion for all citizens. However, challenges arise when this freedom intersects with expressions of intolerance, often exhibited by youth, both in person and through social media. Law No. 1/PNPS/1965 provides a legal foundation for preventing the misuse of religion and blasphemy; however, its application in addressing religious conflicts among youth remains limited. Martinus Maria Join et al. (2021) highlight that although regulations exist, their enforcement often does not extend to the grassroots level, where such conflicts are most likely to emerge.<sup>39</sup>

Regarding the resolution of religious conflicts, youth play a crucial role as agents of peace. Sarah K. Anderson and Yulia Nesterova (2024)<sup>40</sup> point out that youth

<sup>38</sup> Weihong Guo, "Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Communication: Strategies for Managing Cultural Conflicts," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 12, (2025): 73. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04391-0>

<sup>39</sup> Martinus Maria Join, Irenius D. Bernad, and Adrianus Naja, "Dismantling Egocentrism, Exclusivism and Religious Fixation in the Public Sphere," *Focus* 2, no. 1 (2021): 56-62. <https://doi.org/10.26593/focus.v2i1.4444>

<sup>40</sup> Sarah K. Anderson and Yulia Nesterova, "Engaging Young People in Peace Education Research: Using an Arts Based Approach to Gain Congruence through Democratic Methods," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 23, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241257944>

have great potential to initiate dialogue and build peace, through community activities based on local values and interfaith education. However, many youth communities lack adequate knowledge of existing legal mechanisms to address religious conflict. Law No. 40/2008 on the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination provides a legal framework for protecting individuals from religious discrimination. However, its application at the community level for youth is still very limited. Therefore, legal education on religious rights and conflict resolution is necessary among young people.

On the other hand, many religious conflicts also occur in the digital space. Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz (2021)<sup>41</sup> explain that social media has become a new space for growing intolerance and spreading fake news that fuels interfaith tensions, especially among youth. The Electronic Information and Transaction Law (UU ITE) already provides a legal basis for spreading hateful and defamatory content. Still, a major challenge is the lack of effective monitoring and law enforcement in cyberspace. For this reason, it is important to develop stricter regulations regarding intolerant digital content by involving the youth community in monitoring and empowering positive narratives online. Rifda Lushiya Zakiya et al. (2025) also emphasised the need for deeper digital literacy for youth to mitigate potential conflicts in digital spaces.<sup>42</sup>

Through legal policies, the government must also provide space for youth to be actively involved in forming public policies related to religious diversity and tolerance. Dexin Wang and Shijun Li (2024)<sup>43</sup> reveal that youth involvement in religious conflict resolution is often hampered by a lack of space for participation in more inclusive policymaking. Therefore, a legal approach that provides legitimacy and institutional support to youth-led community-based initiatives is needed. The government should be more active in developing policies that support youth as mediators in religious conflict resolution through interfaith education and dialogue regulated by law.

Therefore, it is essential to incorporate local culture-based approaches into conflict resolution to develop a legal system that is more responsive to religious conflicts among young people. Muhammad Daffa and Indra Anggara (2023)<sup>44</sup> emphasise the importance of using local wisdom in resolving interfaith conflicts by incorporating cultural values accepted by local communities. This culture-based approach strengthens cultural identity and serves as a bridge in building religious harmony among young people. Therefore, strengthening culturally based legal frameworks that support interfaith collaboration at the grassroots level is crucial for reducing social tensions and maintaining interfaith harmony in Indonesia.

## Analysis of the Existing Legal Framework

<sup>41</sup> Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz, "How Social Media is Shaping Conflicts: Evidences from Contemporary Research," *Journal of Peace Development & Communication* 5, no. 4 (2021): 76-94. doi:10.36968/JPDC-V05-I04-06

<sup>42</sup> Rifda Lushiya Zakiya, Erma Fitria Rini, and Rizon Pamardhi Utomo, "Local Wisdom on Urban Tourism: (Surakarta Urban Art Corridor Case Study)," *Local Wisdom Scientific Journal of Local Wisdom Studies* 17, no. 1 (2025): 32-49. <https://doi.org/10.26905/lw.v17i1.13184>

<sup>43</sup> Dexin Wang and Shijun Li, "Social Conflicts and Their Resolution Paths in the Commercialised Renewal of Old Urban Communities in China Under the Perspective of Public Value," *Journal of Urban Management*, (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2024.11.007>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2226585624001535>)

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Daffa and Indra Anggara, "The Position of Local Religions in Interfaith Relations as A Form of Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society* 5, no. 2 (2023): 112-124. <https://doi.org/10.36256/ijrs.v5i2.369>



In Indonesia, the legal framework governing religious diversity has been established in the 1945 Constitution which guarantees freedom of religion and the right to practice their respective religious teachings (UUD 1945, Article 29). This constitution establishes a robust legal framework for promoting diversity and equality. Yet, major challenges arise in implementing and enforcing laws that often fail to adequately consider the social context at the grassroots level, especially among young people. For example, while Law No. 1/PNPS/1965 on the Prevention of Religious Abuse and Blasphemy provides the basis for prohibiting the dissemination of teachings that contradict religious norms developed in Indonesia, its implementation is often hampered by differences in interpretation, especially at the local level.<sup>45</sup>

In addressing religious conflicts, Law No. 40/2008 on the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination protects individual rights from religious-based discrimination. However, while this law protects against religious discrimination, there are still gaps in conflict resolution in youth communities, which are often not accommodated in formal legal mechanisms. This is often due to the youth's lack of understanding of their rights within the legal framework or difficulties in accessing existing legal channels. According to Nur Uysal (2016), conflict resolution involving youth often requires more flexible and community-based approaches, which more formal and rigid legal frameworks may not cover.<sup>46</sup>

Another challenge is the lack of regulations governing social media in the context of religious conflict. The current Electronic Information and Transaction Law (UU ITE) protects electronic information and online transactions, but does not explicitly regulate the spread of religiously-based intolerant or discriminatory content online. Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz (2021) explain that social media has become a new battleground in religious conflict, where the spread of hatred and misinformation is rapidly expanding among youth, who are often both victims and perpetrators.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, a clearer and more comprehensive legal policy is needed to regulate intolerant behaviour that appears in cyberspace by involving youth as actors in spreading positive narratives on digital platforms.

In youth empowerment, the existing legal framework is still limited in providing space for youth to engage in formal religious conflict resolution. Sutamaji and Lukman Hakim (2024)<sup>48</sup> point out that although youth have great potential to be agents of peace, they are often denied the opportunity to participate in policy-making related to religious diversity at the national and local levels. Due to the lack of legal legitimization of youth initiatives, the strategies produced by them are often limited to the community scope without adequate legal backing. Therefore, it is essential to establish policies that recognize the role of youth in interfaith mediation and dialogue by granting them legal recognition for their community-level activities.

Zainul Arifin et al. (2024) highlight that local culture-based approaches to resolving religious conflicts in Indonesia, implemented by many youth communities,

<sup>45</sup> Lene Pedersen, "Religious Pluralism in Indonesia," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 17, no. 5 (2016): 387-398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2016.1218534>

<sup>46</sup> Nur Uysal, *Peacebuilding through Interfaith Dialogue: The Role of Faith-based NGOs*. In: Roy, S., Shaw, I.S. (eds) *Communicating Differences*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264_17)

<sup>47</sup> Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz, "How Social Media is Shaping Conflicts: Evidences from Contemporary Research," *Journal of Peace Development & Communication* 5, no. 4 (2021): 76-94. doi:10.36968/JPDC-V05-I04-06

<sup>48</sup> Sutamaji Sutamaji and Lukman Hakim, "Communication Strategies of FKUB in Managing Conflicts Among Religious Communities in Nganjuk and Kediri," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 35, no. 2 (2024): 225-242. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i2.5423>

still require stronger institutional support to be integrated into national policies. The success of youth initiatives in developing conflict resolution models based on local wisdom, such as through cultural arts and interfaith dialogue, should be encouraged by policies that support the establishment of formal dialogue spaces and more structured interfaith education within a clear legal framework.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, to create an effective legal framework, it is necessary to strengthen collaboration between law, culture and government policy in supporting youth initiatives oriented towards social peace and interfaith harmony.

### Legal Proposals to Improve Conflict Resolution

Resolving religious conflicts<sup>50</sup> Among youth in Indonesia, a more proactive and inclusive approach to law is required, especially given the numerous conflicts that arise in both the physical and digital worlds. One of the main suggestions is the need to strengthen youth legal education to help them understand their rights in resolving conflicts. Youth often do not know how to use existing legal mechanisms to protect themselves from religious discrimination or hatred. In their study, Sarah K. Anderson and Yulia Nesterova (2024) demonstrated that legal education grounded in human rights and diversity can enhance youth's capacity to address conflicts legitimately and constructively.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, integrating legal education programs into school and university curricula can be an important first step in increasing legal awareness among young people.

Introducing mediation training programs for youth actively involved in interfaith activities is important. This training will equip them with the skills to handle conflicts directly and provide knowledge of proper mediation and dispute resolution legal procedures. According to Zainul Arifin et al. (2024), youth-driven community-based conflict resolution can be more effective if mediation skills and adequate legal knowledge are supported.<sup>52</sup> Such a programme could collaborate with legal institutions and non-governmental organisations to develop training modules tailored to the challenges faced by young people in the context of religious conflicts.

In the digital context, religious conflicts involving youth are often triggered by the spread of hoaxes and hate speech through social media. Therefore, one of the much-needed legal proposals is the establishment of stricter regulations against intolerant content in cyberspace. Although Indonesia has an Electronic Information and Transaction Law (UU ITE), implementing this law is often not swift enough to address the spread of hateful content. Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz (2021) reveal

<sup>49</sup> Zainul Arifin, Winda Utami, Berly Wijayanti, and Alvin Dian Pramuja, "Ministry of Religious Affairs' Innovative Strategy in Building Lumajang District as A Model of Religious Moderation," *Journal of Research and Thought and Islamic Education (JRTIE)* 7, no. 2 (2024): 122-139. <https://doi.org/10.24260/jrtie.v7i2.3207>

<sup>50</sup> Felipe Romero-Moreno, "Deepfake Detection in Generative AI: A Legal Framework Proposal to Protect Human Rights," *Computer Law & Security Review* 58, (2025): 106162, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2025.106162>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212473X25000355>)

<sup>51</sup> Sarah K. Anderson and Yulia Nesterova, "Engaging Young People in Peace Education Research: Using an Arts Based Approach to Gain Congruence through Democratic Methods," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 23, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241257944>

<sup>52</sup> Zainul Arifin, Winda Utami, Berly Wijayanti, and Alvin Dian Pramuja, "Ministry of Religious Affairs' Innovative Strategy in Building Lumajang District as A Model of Religious Moderation," *Journal of Research and Thought and Islamic Education (JRTIE)* 7, no. 2 (2024): 122-139. <https://doi.org/10.24260/jrtie.v7i2.3207>

that social media algorithms that amplify echo chambers make intolerant narratives easy to spread, so better monitoring and more responsive legal mechanisms are needed to address content that has the potential to exacerbate religious conflicts online.<sup>53</sup> Thus, policies to enhance digital literacy and improve law enforcement's responsiveness to negative content are crucial.

Furthermore, another legal proposal is the need for regulations supporting youth involvement in religious and diversity policymaking. Youth often have no place in formal policymaking related to religious conflicts, despite being key actors in social change. Sutamaji and Lukman Hakim (2024) emphasise that youth involved in conflict resolution should be given more space for decision-making.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, one proposal is to establish a state-recognised interfaith youth forum to provide recommendations and participate in national and local policymaking related to religious tolerance and conflict resolution.

Strengthening the culture-based legal framework is another crucial proposal to support the resolution of religious conflicts among young people. Given the cultural diversity in Indonesia, one step that can be taken is to integrate local wisdom and culture into conflict resolution strategies. Dexin Wang and Shijun Li (2024) highlight that integrating local wisdom into conflict resolution provides an approach that is more readily accepted by society, particularly in youth communities deeply connected to their culture.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the law can support initiatives that utilize local arts, culture, and traditions to foster more effective and inclusive interfaith dialogue.

## Novelty in Legal Proposals

The proposed law in this study introduces a novel approach that integrates the role of youth as agents of change in resolving religious conflicts. This concept has received little attention in existing legal policies in Indonesia. One of the main innovations in the proposal is the recognition of youth as key actors in community-based conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue. While many studies have recognised the importance of youth in social peace processes,<sup>56</sup> their role in formal legal frameworks is often overlooked. This approach enables youth to be directly involved in policy-making that governs religious diversity and conflict resolution, promoting more adaptive and locally based solutions.<sup>57</sup>

The second innovation involves enhancing legal and digital literacy among youth. Along with the rapid development of technology and social media, content that

<sup>53</sup> Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz, "How Social Media is Shaping Conflicts: Evidences from Contemporary Research," *Journal of Peace Development & Communication* 5, no. 4 (2021): 76-94. doi:10.36968/JPDC-V05-I04-06

<sup>54</sup> Sutamaji Sutamaji and Lukman Hakim, "Communication Strategies of FKUB in Managing Conflicts Among Religious Communities in Nganjuk and Kediri," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 35, no. 2 (2024): 225-242. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i2.5423>

<sup>55</sup> Dexin Wang and Shijun Li, "Social Conflicts and Their Resolution Paths in the Commercialised Renewal of Old Urban Communities in China Under the Perspective of Public Value," *Journal of Urban Management*, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2024.11.007>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2226585624001535>)

<sup>56</sup> Maykel Verkuyten, Kumar Yogeeswaran, and Levi Adelman, "Intergroup Toleration and Its Implications for Culturally Diverse Societies," *Soc Issues Policy Rev.* 13, no. 1 (2019): 5-35. doi: 10.1111/sipr.12051.

<sup>57</sup> Tatyana Banshchikova, Vladimir Solomonov, and Elena Fomina, "Attitudes and Tolerance in the Structure of Individual Readiness for Intercultural Interaction," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 214, (2015): 916-924. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.753

spreads hate speech and religious misinformation is increasingly prevalent. The proposal to build legal capacity through online conflict resolution, facilitated by law-based digital literacy training programs, is the first step in reducing the spread of intolerant content among youth. According to Shams-ur-Rehman and Riaz (2021), well-educated youth in digital ethics will be better equipped to identify and address negative content online, thereby reducing the potential for conflict fueled by social media.<sup>58</sup> This approach can be a significant novelty to overcome the challenges of conflict resolution in the digital era.

Furthermore, culture-based approaches in resolving religious conflicts are another novel element in this proposed law. Given Indonesia's cultural diversity, local culture-based approaches used by youth in resolving religious conflicts have proven effective; however, they have not been formally incorporated into the legal framework. Integrating local wisdom in religious conflict resolution offers a more inclusive approach that is easily accepted by local communities. Dexin Wang and Shijun Li (2024) demonstrate that policies that strengthen local wisdom in conflict resolution can enrich the theory of community-based conflict resolution and enhance community participation.<sup>59</sup> This breakthrough emphasises dialogue based on cultural traditions, which can be adopted within a formal legal framework.

Another innovation is the legal empowerment of youth in creating formal interfaith dialogue spaces. While there are many youth-led initiatives in this area, they often lack formal recognition in policymaking. Sutamaji and Hakim (2024) emphasise that an inclusive legal approach should encourage youth involvement in religion-related policymaking.<sup>60</sup> The novelty of this proposal lies in recognizing interfaith youth forums as legal entities that can play a role in formulating public policies based on religious diversity and tolerance. This recognition will open up more space for youth to formalise their role in creating religious harmony through constructive dialogue sanctioned by the state.

Therefore, collaboration between the legal, government, and community sectors in facilitating youth-based initiatives is a crucial aspect of innovation. Governments often overlook the potential of youth in social policymaking and conflict resolution involving religious diversity. The Indonesian legal system can introduce a more holistic and participatory conflict resolution model by encouraging greater cooperation among government agencies, religious organizations, and youth communities. Youth legal empowerment, which extends beyond conflict resolution to include social policymaking, can have a significant impact on achieving sustainable social harmony in Indonesia.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Shams-ur-Rehman and Saqib Riaz, "How Social Media is Shaping Conflicts: Evidences from Contemporary Research," *Journal of Peace Development & Communication* 5, no. 4 (2021): 76-94. doi:10.36968/JPDC-V05-I04-06

<sup>59</sup> Dexin Wang and Shijun Li, "Social Conflicts and Their Resolution Paths in the Commercialised Renewal of Old Urban Communities in China Under the Perspective of Public Value," *Journal of Urban Management*, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2024.11.007>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2226585624001535>)

<sup>60</sup> Sutamaji Sutamaji and Lukman Hakim, "Communication Strategies of FKUB in Managing Conflicts Among Religious Communities in Nganjuk and Kediri," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 35, no. 2 (2024): 225-242. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i2.5423>

<sup>61</sup> Zainul Arifin, Winda Utami, Berly Wijayanti, and Alvin Dian Pramuja, "Ministry of Religious Affairs' Innovative Strategy in Building Lumajang District as A Model of Religious Moderation," *Journal of Research and Thought and Islamic Education (JRTIE)* 7, no. 2 (2024): 122-139. <https://doi.org/10.24260/jrtie.v7i2.3207>



## Conclusion

This work aims to identify and analyze the strategies employed by youth communities in Central Java to address and resolve religious conflicts, thereby maintaining social harmony. Based on findings gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation from several interfaith youth communities in major cities of Central Java, such as Semarang, Solo, and Yogyakarta, it can be concluded that youth communities in the area have developed effective strategies to defuse tensions and maintain interfaith harmony. First, youth communities often utilize interfaith dialogue as a primary strategy for resolving religious conflicts. They built a better understanding between different religious groups through open dialog and mutual listening. This activity broadened their horizons and fostered the creation of more harmonious relationships between individuals who were previously isolated by differences in their beliefs. Second, youth in Central Java integrate a cultural approach in their strategy, involving local traditions and cultural activities that emphasize the values of togetherness and tolerance. This approach has proven effective as it introduces an understanding of diversity in a context that is easier to accept and more relevant to young people with strong ties to local culture. Third, youth optimize the strengthening of diversity literacy through social media and informal education. They disseminate positive narratives about harmony and tolerance through online platforms, enabling them to reach a broader audience, particularly young people. Informal education programs conducted in various communities have instilled a deep understanding of the importance of diversity in maintaining social harmony.

These strategies have proven effective in building collective consciousness among youth, strengthening social solidarity, and creating safe spaces for interfaith interaction at the grassroots level. This demonstrates that youth communities play a crucial role in resolving religious conflicts and promoting interfaith harmony in Central Java. Thus, this study shows that strategies based on dialogue, local culture, and diversity literacy have become effective tools in maintaining social peace and enhancing interfaith harmony among youth in Central Java. This success contributes to the development of a community-based conflict resolution model that can be applied in other regions with similar contexts.

## References

- (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212473X25000355>)  
 Abustan, Abustan. "Pluralism and Equality in the Perspective of Human Rights in Indonesia." *Indonesia Law Reform Journal* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1–14.  
<https://doi.org/10.22219/ilrej.v3i1.24205>  
 Akintayo, Obafemi D, Chinazo Nneka Ifeanyi, and Okeoma Onunka. "Enhancing Domestic Peace Through Effective Community-Based ADR Programs." *Global Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews* 2, no. 2 (2024): 1-15.  
<https://doi.org/10.58175/gjarr.2024.2.2.0054>  
 Alunaza, Hardi. "The Role of Youth in Promoting Peace in Southeast Asia." *Proyeksi: Jurnal Nasional Ilmu-ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora* 21, no. 2 (2016): 94-101.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.26418%2Fproyeksi.v21i2.2428>



- Anderson, Sarah K., and Yulia Nesterova. "Engaging Young People in Peace Education Research: Using an Arts Based Approach to Gain Congruence through Democratic Methods." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 23, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241257944>
- Ansori, Mohammad Hasan, and Rostineu. "Examining the Potential of Local Interfaith Institution in Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Indonesia: The Case of Forum for Religious Harmony (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama) of Ambon." *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Recent Innovations - ICRI*, (2020): 1723-1729. doi: 10.5220/0009934217231729
- Arfaizar, Januariansyah, YUSDANI, Ilham Akbar, and Muh. Rizki. "Family Resistance in Fighting Radicalism among Youth During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Sompilan, Berbah, Sleman, Yogyakarta." *IJIIS (Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies)* 5, no. 3 (2023): 183–198. <https://doi.org/10.20885/ijiis.vol.5.iss3.art4>
- Arifin, Zainul, Winda Utami, Berly Wijayanti, and Alvin Dian Pramaja. "Ministry of Religious Affairs' Innovative Strategy in Building Lumajang District as A Model of Religious Moderation." *Journal of Research and Thought and Islamic Education (JRTIE)* 7, no. 2 (2024): 122-139. <https://doi.org/10.24260/jrtie.v7i2.3207>
- Badrun, Badrun, Sujadi Sujadi, Idi Warsah, Imron Muttaqin, and Ruly Morganna. "Pancasila, Islam, and Harmonising Socio-Cultural Conflict in Indonesia." *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 61, no. 1 (2023): 137-156. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2023.611.137-156>
- Banshchikova, Tatyana, Vladimir Solomonov, and Elena Fomina. "Attitudes and Tolerance in the Structure of Individual Readiness for Intercultural Interaction." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 214, (2015): 916-924. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.753
- Brenner, David M., Yaqub Chaudhary, Robert M. Geraci, Mark Graves, Haley Griesse, Elias Kruger, Yuriko Ryan, and Marcus Schwarting. "Technical and Religious Perspectives on AI Misinformation and Disinformation." (2024). <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4360413>
- Carter, Michael J, and Celene Fuller. "Symbolic Interactionism." (2015). *Sociopedia.isa*, doi:10.1177/205684601561
- Ciocan, Cosmin. "Interfaith Dialogue as A Tool for Combating Discrimination: Theological Insights and Practical Applications." *Dialogo* 11, no. 1 (2024): 518-548. doi:10.51917/dialogo.2024.11.1.34.
- Daffa, Muhammad, and Indra Anggara. "The Position of Local Religions in Interfaith Relations as a Form of Religious Moderation in Indonesia." *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society* 5, no. 2 (2023): 112-124. <https://doi.org/10.36256/ijrs.v5i2.369>
- Guo, Weihong. "Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Communication: Strategies for Managing Cultural Conflicts." *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 12, (2025): 73. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04391-0>
- Gupta, Tarun, and Supriya Bansal. "Beyond Echo Chambers: Unraveling the Impact of Social Media Algorithms on Consumer Behavior and Exploring Pathways to a Diverse Digital Discourse." *Journal of Marketing Studies* 7, no. 1 (2024): 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.47941/jms.1799>
- Hassim, Mohammad Nurhafiz, NurNasliza Arina Mohamad Nasir, and Norena Abdul Karim Zamri. "Hate Speech in the Digital Age: A Study in Terms of Impact and

- Social Implications." *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication* 9, no. 38 (2024): 01-12. DOI:10.35631/IJLGC.938001
- Hutabarat, Franklin. "Navigating Diversity: Exploring Religious Pluralism and Social Harmony in Indonesian Society." *European Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 3, no. 6 (2023): 6-13. <https://doi.org/10.24018/theology.2023.3.6.125>
- Join, Martinus Maria, Irenius D. Bernad, and Adrianus Naja, "Membongkar Egosentrisme, Eksklusivisme dan Fiksasi Agama dalam Ruang Publik." *Focus* 2, no. 1 (2021): 56-62. <https://doi.org/10.26593/focus.v2i1.4444>
- Jonathan, Andreas. "Religious Identity and National Conflict in the 20th Century Indonesia." *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 3 (2017): 303-318. <https://doi.org/10.22515/dinika.v2i3.155>
- Karim, Khairulnizam Mat, Suzy Aziziyana Saili, and Khadijah Mohd Khambali@Hambali. "Role of Religious Leader in Interfaith Dialogue towards Conflict Resolution: An Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Education and Research* 2, no. 6 (2014): 77-88.
- Kovačević, Vlaho, Krunoslav Malenica, and Goran Kardum. "Symbolic Interactions in Popular Religion According to Dimensions of Religiosity: A Qualitative Study." *Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 30. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11020030>
- Kusuma, Jamaludin Hadi, and Sulistiyono Susilo. "Intercultural and Religious Sensitivity among Young Indonesian Interfaith Groups." *Religions* 11, no. 1 (2020): 26. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010026>
- Mala, Asnal, and Wiwin Luqna Hunaida. "Exploring the Role of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: A Comprehensive Analysis of Its Unifying Potential and Practical Applications." *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 11, no. 2 (2023): 173-196. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2023.11.2.173-196>
- Mardiana, Dina, Muhammad Yusuf, and Asyraf Isyraqi Jamil. "Religious Harmony Construct Amid A Plural Community in East Java." *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 28, no. 2 (2020): 192-210. <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v28i2.3777>
- Miklikowska, Marta, Katarzyna Jasko, and Ales Kudrnac. "The Making of A Radical: The Role of Peer Harassment in Youth Political Radicalism," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 49, no. 3 (2022): 477-492. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672211070420>
- Muchlis, Jaetul. "The Radicalism of Young People in Indonesia the Religious Portraits of Islamic Spiritual Organizations." *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 38, no. 2 (2022): 145-164. <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v38i2.25167>
- Muhsin, Ilyya, Achmad Maimun, and Sukron Ma'mun. "Habitus of Interreligious Harmony in a Central Java Village." *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 2 (2024): 579-610. <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol23.iss2.art3>
- Nordbrandt, Maria. "Affective Polarization in the Digital Age: Testing the Direction of the Relationship Between Social Media and Users' Feelings for Out-Group Parties." *New Media & Society* 25(12) (2021): 3392-3411. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211044393>
- Paz, María Antonia, Julio Montero-Díaz, and Alicia Moreno-Delgado. "Hate Speech: A Systematized Review." *SAGE Open* 10, no. 4 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020973022>

- Pedersen, Lene. "Religious Pluralism in Indonesia." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 17, no. 5 (2016): 387–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2016.1218534>
- Pertiwi, Ika Hana, and Faturochman Faturochman. "Integration of Social Identities in Interreligious-Group Relations." *Jurnal Psikologi* 50, 3 (2023): 219–244. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22146/jpsi.86182>
- Rehman, Shams-ur-, and Saqib Riaz. "How Social Media is Shaping Conflicts: Evidences from Contemporary Research." *Journal of Peace Development & Communication* 5, no. 4 (2021): 76–94. doi:10.36968/JPDC-V05-I04-06
- Romero-Moreno, Felipe. "Deepfake Detection in Generative AI: A Legal Framework Proposal to Protect Human Rights." *Computer Law & Security Review* 58, (2025): 106162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2025.106162>.
- Sanginga, Pascal C., Rick N. Kamugisha, and Andrienne M. Martin. "The Dynamics of Social Capital and Conflict Management in Multiple Resource Regimes: A Case of the Southwestern Highlands of Uganda." *Ecology and Society* 12, no. 1 (2007). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26267833>
- Supriadi, Made Nopen, and Malik Malik. "Perdamaian dalam Konteks Pluralitas Indonesia: Sebuah Analisis Etis-Teologis." *Sesawi* 3, no. 2 (2022): 161–173. <https://doi.org/10.53687/sjtpk.v3i2.78>
- Supriyanti, Iin, and Hairul Huda. "Religious Tolerance of the Young Generation: Religious Convergence in Education." *Proceeding International Conference on Religion, Science and Education*, 4 (2025): 31–40
- Sutamaji, Sutamaji, and Lukman Hakim. "Communication Strategies of FKUB in Managing Conflicts Among Religious Communities in Nganjuk and Kediri." *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 35, no. 2 (2024): 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i2.5423>
- Takdir, Mohammad, M Mushthafa, and Rozinah AS. "The Dynamics of Religious Conflict in Indonesia: Contestation and Resolution of Religious Conflicts in The New Order Age." *Al-Adyan: Journal of Religious Studies* 2, no. 2 (2021): 103–121. doi:10.15548/al-adyan.v2i2.3184
- Taufiq, Imam, Muhammad Makmun, Mishbah Khoiruddin Zuhri, Lucky Ade Sessiani, and Ririh Megah Safitri. "Understanding Peacebuilding Fundamentals in Southeast Asia: Intersection among Religion, Education, and Psychosocial Perspective." *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 2 (2022): 401–430. <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v22i2.6095>
- Uysal, Nur. "Peacebuilding through Interfaith Dialogue: The Role of Faith-based NGOs." In: Roy, S., Shaw, I.S. (eds) *Communicating Differences*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264_17)
- Verkuyten, Maykel, Kumar Yogeeswaran, and Levi Adelman. 2019, "Intergroup Toleration and Its Implications for Culturally Diverse Societies." *Soc Issues Policy Rev.* 13, no. 1 (2019): 5–35. doi: 10.1111/sipr.12051.
- Wang, Dexin, and Shijun Li. "Social Conflicts and Their Resolution Paths in the Commercialized Renewal of Old Urban Communities in China Under the Perspective of Public Value." *Journal of Urban Management*, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2024.11.007>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2226585624001535>)
- Yunita, Millah Ananda, Pawennari Hijjang, Ahmad Ismail, Muhammad Neil, Muh. Nur Rahmat Yasim, and Abdul Masli. "Tracing the Threads of Potential Conflict among Youth in Tarakan City." *Hasanuddin International Conference on Social*

*and Political Sciences (HICOSPOS) 2024*, Sciendo, (2025): 136-142.  
<https://doi.org/10.2478/9788367405928>

Zakiya, Rifda Lushiya, Erma Fitria Rini, and Rizon Pamardhi Utomo. "Local Wisdom on Urban Tourism: (Surakarta Urban Art Corridor Case Study)." *Local Wisdom Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Kearifan Lokal* 17, no. 1 (2025): 32-49.  
<https://doi.org/10.26905/lw.v17i1.13184>

\*\*\*

#### **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

There is no conflict of interest in the publication of this manuscript.

#### **FUNDING INFORMATION**

None

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

None