



JUPIIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu-ilmu Sosial

Available online <http://jurnal.unimed.ac.id/2012/index.php/jupiis>

IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN GERAKAN PEMUDA ANSOR CIAMIS DISTRICT AS AN EFFORT TO PREVENT RADICALISM

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Accepted: May, 26th 2024

Published: June, 13rd 2024

Abstract

Indonesian people live in an environment full of diversity, both ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious, spread from Sabang to Merauke. This diversity is shaded by the ideology of Pancasila and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which must be a guide for the community. However, currently threats that can divide the Republic of Indonesia amidst this diversity are still emerging, one of which is radicalism. Religious moderation is one method that is currently being advocated by many organizations and institutions to prevent the growth and development of radicalism. One of the organizations that develops religious moderation is the Ansor Gerakan Pemuda Ansor in Ciamis district as an effort to prevent radicalism. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques in this research are interviews, observation and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with NU administrators, GP Ansor administrators, and GP Ansor cadres. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions and verification. The research results show that the implementation of religious moderation carried out by the Ciamis Regency Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Organization has a culture and programs that are able to distance its cadres from radicalism. Some of the programs from this organization include cadre formation for prospective cadres to form loyalty to the organization, strengthen understanding of statehood and tolerance. Then uphold the principles of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia's fixed price, a culture of democratic and inclusive discussion, studies that do not only focus on religious issues, and maintaining good relations across organizations and across religions. This good program is also wrapped in a solid organizational culture for mutual development which implicitly is the realization of Sundanese philosophical values, namely *silih asih, silih asih, and silih asuh*.

Key words: *erakan pemuda ansor, preventing radicalism, religious moderation*

How to Cite: Marlyono. Y. N., Wildan. D., Ruyadi. Y.(2024). Implementation Of Religious Moderation In Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Ciamis District As An Effort To Prefent Radicalism. JUPIIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu-ilmu Sosial (44-52).

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ISSN 2085-482X (Print)
ISSN 2407-7429 (Online)

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian people live in an environment full of diversity, including ethnicity, language, culture and religion, spread from Sabang to Merauke (Rohmah et al. 2022). This diversity is underscored by the Pancasila ideology and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Rahman et al. 2020). These two things must become a philosophy for Indonesian people in behaving amidst diversity. Society must realize that diversity is a great gift that this country has, we must always protect and care for it so that conflicts do not occur that cause it to be torn apart amidst the onslaught of extremism and radicalism that is developing through the flow of globalization and openness of information.

Currently, Indonesian people have become active consumers of information circulating in the digital era, so changes in perspective are very likely to occur, this is where radicalism has infected Indonesian society. Judging from the meaning of the word radical, it refers to extreme, comprehensive, fanatical and revolutionary. Meanwhile, radicalism means the doctrine or practice of adherents of radical ideology or extreme ideology (Husein, 2017). This understanding is very dangerous if it is not anticipated, because in its development radicalism will lead to terrorism. Some of the major cases of terrorism that have occurred in Indonesia are the Bali bombing, the bomb at the JW Marriot Hotel, the bomb at the Australian Embassy, and many more (Mufid, 2013). The bombing case claimed many lives, damaged facilities, and caused a tense situation that made people worried when traveling.

Apart from the bomb cases above, Indonesian society has recently been terrorized by small-scale bombs. As happened recently, the case of the Panci Bomb that exploded in Pandawa Park, Bandung City (Quanandi, Kertopati, & Timur, 2022) and the Suicide Bomb at the Astana Anyar Police Chief, Bandung City, which killed the perpetrator and one policeman (Hakiki & Dwinarko, 2023). Even though the scale of the explosion was small, this case made people afraid. This was caused by perpetrators who made public places and police headquarters targets for bombing.

The case above shows that radicalism which leads to terrorism is a serious problem in this country. It is not surprising that the Indonesian government takes cases of

radicalism very seriously and has categorized it as a national issue (Budijanto & Rahmanto, 2021). Based on reports from the Indonesian National Police (Polri), it was revealed that at least 370 terrorism suspects were arrested (Haryono, 2022). There is other data that shows Indonesia is in third place as the country most affected by terrorism in the Asia Pacific Region in 2021 according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (Databoks, 2021). Various efforts have been made to prevent and minimize radicalism by various parties, and one way is to increase awareness of religious moderation.

Religious moderation is one method that is currently being widely used by organizations and institutions to prevent the growth and development of radicalism. According to Ali (in Anwar & Muhayati, 2021) stated that religious moderation itself means having complete belief in the religion one adheres to and giving space to other individuals to believe in other religions. Similar to the view above, Saifudin (in Lessy et al., 2022) revealed that religious moderation is a behavior or attitude of understanding religious teachings fairly to avoid excessive behavior towards something that is different from one's beliefs. Another view considers religious moderation to be a neutral attitude taken when faced with extreme choices (Nurdin, 2021). Understanding nationality is a way to foster religious moderation because Indonesia has a very diverse society, so this is easier for society to accept.

Increasing awareness of religious moderation through national material is often used, because the condition of the Indonesian nation is very diverse, plus the ideologies of Pancasila and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* are closely related to diversity. Currently, religious moderation is also carried out by Islamic organizations with a large number of members, such as Nadhatul Ulama (NU). According to (Elvinaro & Syarif, 2022) revealed that Islamic-based social organizations are the mainstream of increasing religious moderation. Making large organizations the party responsible for developing awareness of religious moderation makes sense, because basically they have a clear target or audience.

Nadhatul Ulama (NU) is currently the social organization with the largest number of members in Indonesia. One news report (wahananews.co) stated that the number of NU members reached 91.2 million people. One of the districts/cities that contributes the largest

membership is Ciamis Regency. This was published by the official online news journal belonging to the West Java NU (jabar.nu.co.id) which stated that the Nahdliyin (as NU members) who have the second most number of KartaNU (NU Identification Cards) are from PCNU Ciamis after PCNU Lamongan (NU Online West Java, 6 August 2021). With such a large number of members, it is not surprising that this organization is the spearhead in spreading religious moderation to society. So therefore, Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested in examining how religious moderation is implemented as an effort to prevent radicalism, especially in the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor organization in Ciamis Regency.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, researchers used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. This approach and method were chosen because they have the strongest relevance to the aim of this research which wants to examine matters relating to the experiences and understanding of individuals or groups regarding the implementation of religious moderation at GP Ansor as an effort to prevent radicalism which the researchers want to explore in depth. The focus of experience and understanding in question is individuals in responding to the differences that exist around them, efforts to instill the values of religious moderation, and efforts to prevent the emergence of radical ideas in the GP Ansor organization. This research was conducted for 5 months, namely from March to July at the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor organization, Ciamis Regency. Ciamis district was chosen as the research location because GP Ansor members in Ciamis Regency are among the largest in Indonesia, namely in second place after Lamongan district (jabar.nu.co.id).

In the research, researchers interviewed 2 NU administrators, then 3 GP Ansor administrators and 10 GP Ansor cadres. Data collection techniques in this research were carried out in three ways, namely interviews, observation and documentation studies. The interview process is also carried out in various ways, namely meeting in person, via Zoom or Whatsapp. Meanwhile, the data analysis carried out includes data reduction, data display and conclusions and verification. To test the validity of the data, researchers

triangulated the data sources, namely the NU administrators, GP Ansor administrators and GP Ansor members. Researchers also triangulated data collection techniques by comparing the results of interviews, observations and documentation studies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Religious moderation is a concept that is currently being promoted by the Minister of Religion, Yaqut Cholil Quomas, since he was appointed in December 2020. Religious moderation itself refers to an impartial, neutral and mediocre attitude in responding to two different choices. behind. This concept is considered as both a prevention and a solution to the upheaval of religious conflict. Published in online news (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 27 July 2022), Yaqut conveyed the activities *International Conference On Religious Moderation (ICROM)* that religious moderation can be one of the best solutions in anticipating conflict between religious communities in a country as diverse as Indonesia. Understanding of religious moderation must begin to be internalized in the wider community starting from religious organizations.

Internalizing the values of religious moderation was started by religious-based organizations considering that they had a large number of members and their members were considered more receptive to the new understanding provided by the organization. According to the statement Elvinaro & Syarif (2022) which reveals that Islamic-based social organizations are the mainstream of increasing religious moderation. In this case, Nahdlatul Ulama, as the Islamic organization with the largest number of members in Indonesia, is an ideal organization for spreading understanding of religious moderation.

Nahdlatul Ulama Ciamis Regency has many autonomous bodies that operate in specific fields. The Gerakan Pemuda Ansor was chosen to be one of the spearheads in spreading the understanding of religious moderation. GP Ansor was made as an organization that seeks to internalize the values of religious moderation with the consideration that GP Ansor members consist of young people who are considered more ready to accept new things. The implementation of the value of religious moderation to prevent radicalism in the

Gerakan Pemuda Ansor in Ciamis Regency is as follows.

1. Cadreization Carried Out for Prospective Cadres

Before someone wants to become a GP Ansor cadre, they must go through a cadre formation process first. In this cadre formation process there is an instilling of understanding in prospective cadres regarding organizational material to foster a sense of love and loyalty towards the organization and its ideology, then state material to strengthen nationalism, as well as religious tolerance and moderation material to form a tolerant and moderate character.

This is in accordance with the expression of SA (initials) as Chair of GP Ansor, who stated that:

"We understand the message that the NU administrators want to convey about the importance of religious moderation, so the Ansor administrators and I agreed to start providing an understanding of religious moderation since the cadre formation process as a condition for becoming cadres so that they use this understanding as the basis for their thinking in their behavior".

If this is coupled with the characteristics of radicalism, of course this cultivation can counter radical understanding, because one of the radical understandings is intolerance and rejection of the Republic of Indonesia (Kurniawan, 2019: 77). This means that the planting of material carried out by the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor is contrary to the characteristics of radicalism and is expected to be able to distance its members from understanding this radicalism. Moreover, this understanding is strengthened by organizational material which aims to ensure that cadres are loyal to the organization and its vision, mission and principles. This can help the understanding gained from cadre formation be more lasting to be implemented in everyday life. The speakers regarding activities are not haphazard but are also carefully considered where the speakers are selected by the branch management and have been approved by the branch management by looking at credibility in a particular field. In fact, it is not uncommon for information to come from the police and TNI. This will also help to provide a moderate understanding in accordance with the

principles of NU and NKRI. Selecting speakers who are not just random will really help to form a good understanding. In several cases of radicalism in the field, it is not uncommon for the growth of radical ideas to be caused by preachers who have radical indications (Haryadi & Muthia, 2018), for example radicalization through a lecture, radicalism often infects the congregation because the preachers who fill their religious studies come from radical ulama or from invited ulama who preach radically (Akbarzadeh & Mansouri, 2007). The selection of presenters can also help cadre members to become more familiar with and uphold NU's principles of moderation, because if you look at the characteristics of the Ciamis community, this community still adheres to the understanding brought by local religious leaders who tend to be fanatical where they consider that their own school of thought is the one that right and others wrong. Therefore, cadre formation can help them to be more inclusive in diversity and away from radicalism.

2. Upholding the Principle of the NKRI is Dead Price

One of the principles adhered to by the Ansor youth is that the Unitary Republic of Indonesia has a fixed price, which is of course implemented in every organizational activity. One way is to provide an attitude towards a particular problem. This was conveyed by the chairman of GP Ansor as follows.

"Ansor youth will ask "whether the decisions that have been made are aimed at destroying the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia? Or does the decision we choose have the risk of destroying the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia?" "If these two questions show answers that refer to the risk of disintegrating the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, then GP Ansor will think again and revise the initial decision, they will not even hesitate to reject the decision that has been made if it risks destroying the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia".

From this it can certainly be seen that the principle of protecting the Republic of Indonesia is truly implemented in the activities carried out. This principle is certainly a good thing in countering radicalism because the youth of Ansor will avoid any activity that could

disrupt the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, so that if they encounter radical ideology, at least they will have a filter and consider it again.

As is known, radicalism has the characteristic of being very strong in opposing forms of state that are contrary to their principles, including the Republic of Indonesia (Rijal, 2017). They believe that the basics of the Islamic radicalism and jihad approach focus more on adherence to the basics of Islam as stated literally in the Koran and Hadith (Dinata, 2012). They think that politics and religion must be two sides of the same thing, so that there is only one way to establish God's government on earth, which is the way stipulated in the Koran. Adherents of this view argue that the only legitimate form of political system in a Muslim-majority society is an Islamic government, whose task is to implement Sharia (Islamic law) as the law of the land. He postulated that individual and communal rights and freedoms could be sacrificed for the higher purpose of protecting and defending Islam and the Islamic community. This is the jihad doctrine for radicals (Akbarzadeh & Mansouri, 2007). Not only the Republic of Indonesia but Al-Qaeda leaders have used similar reasons to incite Muslims in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other countries to wage jihad against the ruling elites in these countries (Akbarzadeh & Mansouri, 2007). Therefore, it is a very good thing when GP Ansor has the principle of protecting the Republic of Indonesia well to keep them away from radicalism.

3. A Democratic and Inclusive Discussion Culture

One of the routine activities carried out by the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor organization is discussions on current issues. Ansor youth has an inclusive and democratic discussion culture where basically the members of the organization consist of various schools of thought and views and they also accommodate these differences so that the discussion process consists of members who have diverse views, but interestingly they do not hesitate to express their opinions because forums are always treated casually with respect for all opinions. This is in accordance with the members of GP Ansor as follows.

"It's natural that everyone brings an

understanding of their respective regions, it actually makes the discussion more lively. The more diverse the views, the more knowledge received, the better the conclusions drawn by the forum. With discussions seen from various points of view, we learn again with understanding that we have understood for a long time, sometimes even though we believe in the same school of thought, the attitudes we choose are different, so discussion forums make us gain new understanding and also strengthen it. our own understanding. We are also accustomed to being open, we don't need to be afraid to express our opinion because it could be that opinion that makes better decisions. We also never blame different views, in fact that is a trigger for us to discuss it further"

From this it can be seen that the discussion culture among Ansor youth assumes that the more diverse the opinions and views in the discussion, the better the discussion process will be because it will produce decisions that can benefit all parties and each member will gain new views. Prospective members are given the understanding that differences become a strength to bind unity, differences become capital for making decisions so as not to benefit one party, differences become knowledge so as not to become extremists on a particular side. Ansor youth will try to find a middle ground and similarities between these differences. Discussions can also be carried out for hours or even days with caution for fear of not being in accordance with NU principles. They will not be hostile to people who have different opinions and even see it as a blessing. Discussions among diverse participants made the Ansor youth aware that they were in the midst of diversity that had to be maintained and had to be empathetic to each other and open to different ideas. Apart from that, what is most important is that once a decision has been reached, the Ansor youth will not demand rapid changes to the existing conditions because they are of the principle that this will have the potential to cause commotion and give rise to coercion and violence. They will start the decision from their closest circle.

What NU is doing will certainly be very good in countering radical ideology because radical ideology thinks the opposite where according to them Muslims who do not share their views are not true Muslims or what is

usually called Takfirism, which mistakenly believes that all other Muslims must be destroyed. For them the definition of infidel is stated firmly. If they do not follow their views then they are infidels who must be rejected and opposed by violence (Zhussipbek, 2013). Apart from a democratic and inclusive discussion culture, another thing that makes GP Anzor have a good culture in keeping its members away from radicalism is that they initiate decisions from those closest to them and never force revolutionary changes.

This is different from the characteristics of radicals where they always demand rapid change which is often accompanied by violence. One of them is that they radicalize the concept of jihad not only in terms of its offensive and defensive roles but more broadly as restoring the usurped sovereignty of God. According to him, the operationalization of jihad also means fighting and getting rid of systems and authorities that can prevent the implementation of all God's laws and rules in all aspects of life (Asrori, 2019). They also argue that just being a Muslim is not enough. But you also have to follow Islamic law. If he disobeys, then he must be fought, in fact fighting them is not only legal but obligatory. This fatwa still resonates with adherents of radical Islam (Akbarzadeh & Mansouri, 2007).

4. Studies That Do Not Only Focus On Religious Issues

The studies carried out by Anzor youth do not only focus on religious studies, but also discuss trending social issues. In fact, it is not uncommon for them to have the enthusiasm to come to study social issues because the majority of Anzor members feel that they have not mastered religious knowledge completely and have increased enthusiasm to learn more. The majority of Anzor members use differences in views as their reason for attending social issues study events. Not infrequently there are also studies and discussions about business. Recently, NU has had the enthusiasm to develop the economy of its members by frequently holding lectures and studies on economics. This was expressed by the chairman of GP Anzor as follows.

"As previously explained, "the NU organization must not only fill the brain, but also fill the pockets."

NU's enthusiasm for improving the economy of its members is realized by providing lectures on how to open a business, how to develop a business, how to obtain permits, business ownership rights, and much more. Not only presentations, several NU members often provide bureaucratic assistance to other NU members in carrying out business permits so that they can do business well according to state regulations.

These studies that focus on other fields can also help NU members to be more open and have a different view of the world. This is different from radicalism which has a narrow understanding. Every piece of information they get is always linked to confirm their understanding. For example, the radicalization that occurred in the Kazakhs where they instrumentalized Islam in politics and brought it to the level of political ideology. As a result, in this period Islamic religions and organizations were more concerned with political matters than with Islamic values themselves (Zhussipbek, 2013). Studies that help members' economies are also an advantage for members who are far from radicalism. Because in some contexts the spread of radical ideology often takes advantage of the economic shortcomings of prospective cadres. For example, in the case of ISIS cadres, some of them are farmers who do not have theological and intellectual achievements. Then there was also the systematic incorporation of many former Iraqi military and police officers into ISIS cadres. These trained, skilled and highly experienced former Iraqi officers joined ISIS en masse, even though most of them did not agree with the Salafi Jihadi ideology. However, the 2003 invasion of Iraq left them unemployed, with no alternative employment opportunities. Ultimately ISIS provided recruitment and support for those not employed, from generals to landless peasants (Dingley & Marcello, 2018).

Therefore, equalizing the economy or opening up job opportunities by providing equal opportunities to people in marginalized areas is very important in a country (Nawawi et al. 2015). In the context of radicalization which also occurs in Indonesia, it also often concerns economic aspects where many people feel that the government system in this country is unfair so that from disappointment with the economy and injustice they believe that the radical system they believe is better

(Akbarzadeh & Mansouri, 2007). They argue that poverty, ignorance and conflict are synonymous with an Islamic state. This is the result of secularization and this is the result of the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate (Akbarzadeh & Mansouri, 2007). Therefore, it is important to provide a broad insight into the modern world whose studies do not only focus on religious studies. It is also important to open the horizons of each member to improve their lives and be open to contemporary issues with a broad and open perspective.

5. Maintaining Relations with Organizations Outside NU

The Gerakan Pemuda Anzor organization also has activities to maintain good relations with external parties to the organization, such as associations with Islamic organizations outside NU and even across religions. NU's involvement, especially GP Anzor, with other organizations is often carried out to maintain its good name and kinship relations, not only with fellow Muslims, but also non-Muslims and the local government. Government activities regarding religion often involve NU as a committee and also a participant because NU has the largest number of members compared to other Islamic organizations. Anzor, as a forum for the younger generation at NU, is often given the opportunity to take part in these activities. This was expressed by the chairman of GP Anzor as follows.

"We are often asked to help with the implementation of Christian holidays together with the local police".

This statement confirms Anzor's tolerant attitude towards differences, and is even directly involved in its activities. This is very different from a very exclusive radical understanding. They consider anyone who is different from them to be an enemy (IPAC, 2014). They also don't want to socialize, let alone collaborate with non-Muslims (Asrori, 2019).

6. Have Good Solidarity To Build Each Other Up

Apart from several programs described above, researchers see that the GP Anzor organization has good solidarity to build each other among members. The researcher saw that implicitly there was an implementation of

the realization of one of the Sundanese philosophical values in the organization. The Sundanese philosophy is *silih asah, silih asih and silih asuh*.

a. Silih Asah

Silih Asah means educating each other, broadening each other's horizons, and sharing experiences (Alhafizh, Effendi, Musthofa, & Najmura, 2015). Researchers see that the Gerakan Pemuda Anzor organization has strong solidarity to share knowledge with each other even though it is done outside the forum. They will always discuss and share knowledge and even remind each other if their ideas are out of line with moderate values. The disappearance of the feeling of awkwardness in honing each other's knowledge and reminding each other occurred because the GP Anzor organization truly adheres to religious moderation in its organizational culture. The principle of religious moderation which is deeply rooted amidst the diversity of NU members makes their interactions inclusive and ultimately they feel comfortable and do not hesitate to hone each other's skills and remind each other so that members have broad insight and remain in the corridors of moderate NU principles. So in reality the instillation of religious moderation in the Gerakan Pemuda Anzor is not only through cadre and knowledge instillation, but also instillation is carried out through habituation to the organizational culture.

b. Silih Asih

Silih Asih means feelings of mutual love and affection for each other without expecting anything in return (Sukarna, Novianti, & Lontoh, 2023). The researcher saw that in the GP Anzor organization they implemented the principle of religious moderation which was firmly held and implemented into the organizational culture, thus making the interactions between cadres very inclusive and intimate even though each of them had different backgrounds. This makes social relations between them colored by affection for each other. In the end, they believe that religious moderation must be maintained properly because they feel its benefits. This feeling of selfless affection in Sundanese philosophy is called *silih asih*. This feeling of compassion for differences ultimately makes them believe that differences must be treated

with love, not with hatred or violence as is done by radicals. This also ultimately made Ansor cadres believe that what the radicals were doing was wrong. They condemn what the radicals are doing because they believe that what the radicals are doing only spreads hatred and does not create peace.

c. *Silih Asuh*

Silih Asuh means protecting each other, guiding each other, and developing each other (Sukarna et al., 2023). Researchers see why religious moderation is so firmly adhered to by this organization, namely because there is a culture of mutual care. Religious moderation in this organization is well understood by the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor, so that basically instilling the values of religious moderation is not only an abstract concept but religious moderation is implemented well and becomes an organizational habit. Religious moderation is implemented in every activity within the organization and because of this moderate attitude, each cadre will embrace each other even though they have different backgrounds. This makes the cadres feel comfortable in the organization and finally they understand and believe that religious moderation is the best solution that they must adhere to strongly. This was conveyed by the Ansor cadres as follows.

"Yes, there are members who haven't taken part in cadre formation, so sometimes they don't know the principles of the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor. However, we are slowly embracing the culture of the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor which prioritizes feelings of family, making them care for this organization and also believe in the principles of this organization."

This statement was also reinforced by GP Ansor members as follows.

"In this organization I feel comfortable because even though I'm new and at first I didn't really understand the principles of religious moderation, I really feel like I'm being treated well here. This is what makes me convinced that the principles applied by the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor are indeed good, especially in our different conditions. because in reality, before I knew the concept of religious moderation, it was with a good embrace that made me comfortable and

convinced that indeed these differences need to be treated with good behavior and trying to accommodate all views".

In the principles or philosophy of Sundanese society, this sense of mutual protection is called *silih asuh*. This sense of mutual care ultimately makes them have a strong intimacy and in the end they believe in the beauty of the concept of religious moderation. From this it can be seen that in fact they understand religious moderation well not only through teaching but also through an organizational culture and finally because this religious moderation is implemented well and the benefits and beauty are felt, it makes them believe in this principle and finally it takes root and is held firmly by everyone. organizational cadres.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of religious moderation carried out by the Ciamis Regency Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Organization has a program that is able to distance its members from radicalism. Some of the organization's programs include cadre formation for prospective cadres to form loyalty to the organization, strengthen understanding of statehood and tolerance. Then uphold the principles of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia's fixed price, a culture of democratic and inclusive discussion, studies that do not only focus on religious issues, and maintaining good relations across organizations and across religions. Then the program is wrapped in a solid organizational culture of GP Ansor to build each other up by realizing the values of Sundanese philosophy, namely *silih asah, silih asih and silih asuh*.

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