

**NUSANTARA CULTURE INTRODUCTION SEMINAR
AS A BRIDGE TO APPRECIATE ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY
AT SASNA SUKSA SCHOOL, PATTANI, SOUTHERN THAILAND**

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Abstract - KKN stands for Kuliah Kerja Nyata. It is one of the college courses in Indonesia that requires students to conduct community service activities off campus as part of their curriculum. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in collaboration with Buana Perjuangan University of Karawang dispatched several of its students to carry out the Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) Tematik Kolaboratif Internasional Program to Thailand. The sociopolitical phenomenon in Southern Thailand is a conflict situation between the Muslim-Thai population and the Thai state which adheres to Buddhist ideology. As a result, there are acts of resistance from the Muslim minority that continue to this day, even intensifying. This resistance has been met with a strong stance by the central government. In the framework of togetherness in Indonesia, the diversity in a society is bound in unity, which is reflected in the phrase "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika". With this in mind, KKN students help emphasize efforts to build togetherness by respecting the existence of each group without losing their identity. This research method is qualitative with a sociological approach. Therefore, data on events in the field is the main focus of this research. Primary data in this study were obtained through observations of respondents, namely the responses of several Muslim-Thai residents, especially Sasna Suksa School students. Secondary data is in the form of journals, dissertations, and theses that include the results of previous research on the lives of Muslims in Southern Thailand. Overall, this program has carried out all the planned activities well, providing significant benefits for students at Sasna Suksa School, Pattani, Southern Thailand. Through these activities, it is hoped that closer ties between Indonesia and Thailand will be established, as well as better understanding and tolerance between the younger generations of both countries.

Keywords: *Kuliah Kerja Nyata, International Community Service, Unity in Diversity, Ethnic And Religious Diversity*

1. INTRODUCTION

KKN stands for Kuliah Kerja Nyata. It is one of the college courses in Indonesia that requires students to conduct community service activities outside the campus as part of their curriculum. KKN activities aim to give students direct experience in applying the knowledge and skills they learn on campus to help the surrounding community. (Fauzi et al., 2023)

On July 17, 2024. State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in collaboration with Buana Perjuangan Karawang University dispatched several of its students to carry out the Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) Tematik Internasional Kolaboratif program to Thailand. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang collaborated with Sasna Suksa School in this activity. This activity is in the form of International Community service. Through KKN, students learn to be responsible, work together, and lead with integrity. (Damayanti, 2023) Community-based education by applying the knowledge and skills obtained in higher education, can provide opportunities for students to hone practical skills, deepen theoretical understanding, explore the application of science in a real context in the field, and solve real problems in society. (Fauzi et al., 2023)

The general objective of this International KKN program is to provide opportunities for students to play a role in developing Islamic religious propagation, to be part of an active learning process in various international activities in the midst of foreigners, and to become a parameter for the development of community service programs within UIN Sunan Kalijaga and Buana Perjuangan University in order to achieve international standards and have measurable outcomes. The specific objectives of this program include the following: 1) Through the KKN program, students can contribute to the development of the Muslim community, especially in the Southern Thailand region; 2) Through the KKN program, students can learn about the challenges and opportunities faced by Muslim communities in Islamic minority countries. Students can contribute to the development of education and social development for Muslim communities in the region; 3) Thailand has good cooperation with many countries in the field of education. Conducting KKN programs in Thailand can strengthen educational cooperation between educational institutions in the students' home countries and educational institutions in Thailand. This can open up wider collaboration opportunities in terms of research, student exchange, curriculum development, and other international programs.

Thailand is one of the major countries in Southeast Asia with a population of approximately 66.2 million according to the latest data (Aslan, 2020). The country falls into the agrarian category, where most of the population's jobs and income come from the agricultural sector. Thailand has a constitutional monarchy system of government, with a monarch as the head of state and a prime minister as the head of government. The country is bordered by Laos and Myanmar to the north, Malaysia and the Gulf of Siam to the south, Laos and Cambodia to the east, and Myanmar and the Andaman Sea to the west. The official language of Thailand is Thai. The currency

is the baht, and the country's national anthem is "Phleng Chat." Thailand is known as the largest producer of rice in Southeast Asia, so it is often referred to as the "rice granary." Another name for Thailand is Siam, which means servant. The people of Southern Thailand, who are predominantly Muslim, are often referred to as "kheikyang," meaning "outsiders" or "migrants." However, the term "Muslim-Thai" is more commonly used to refer to them. In terms of religion, the majority of the Thai population is Buddhist (90%), while the remaining 10% consists of Muslims, Catholics, Confucianists, and Hindus. Muslims in Thailand make up about 4% or 2.3 million people, and they are concentrated in the Southern region of Thailand, covering the provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Songkhla. The region has been inhabited by a majority of Sunni Muslims for several centuries. (Aslan, 2020)

The socio-political phenomenon in Southern Thailand is a conflict situation between the Muslim-Thai population and the Thai state which adheres to Buddhist ideology. From a historical perspective, this conflict began with the expansion of the Thai kingdom into southern areas such as Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Songkhla. In 1909, Southern Thailand officially came under the rule of the Royal Thai government after the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty. This treaty removed the rights and dignity of the Muslim population in Southern Thailand. As a result, there were acts of resistance from the Muslim minority that continue to this day, even intensifying. This resistance was met with a harsh attitude by the central government. The conflict occurred after the surrender of the northern Malay region by the British colonial government to the kingdom of Siam. The Anglo-Siamese Treaty revoked the power of the Malay kings and made the Pattani region no longer an independent and sovereign Malay kingdom. (Supriyati et al., 2022)

The selection of Thailand as a destination country is very appropriate considering the cultural and community conditions that are very different from Indonesia. Therefore, by teaching Indonesian culture, especially in the field of introducing the Archipelago culture which is full of peace in diversity, with this program making input to always unite ethnic and religious diversity in Thailand, given the conditions in Pattani and several other regions in Southern Thailand which are still fairly sparatic. In the framework of togetherness in Indonesia, diversity in a society is bound in unity which is reflected in the phrase "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika". With this in mind, KKN students help emphasize efforts to build togetherness by respecting the existence of each group without losing their identity.

2. METHOD

This research method is qualitative with a sociological approach. Therefore, data on events in the field is the main focus of this research. Data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary sources are data obtained directly from data collectors, while secondary sources are data that are not obtained directly from data collectors (Sugiyono, 2018). Primary data in this study were obtained through observations of respondents, namely the responses of several Muslim-Thai residents, especially Sasna Suksa School students. While secondary data is in the

form of journals, dissertations, and theses which include the results of previous research on the lives of Muslims in Southern Thailand.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) is an activity to realize the Tridharma of University in Indonesia. In its implementation, there are considerations and research in the field so that everything runs smoothly and as expected, although there is also a risk that the KKN work program will not succeed according to what has been planned. The purpose of KKN is to serve the community through several previously designed work programs. With the knowledge that has been learned in college, it is expected to be useful for the community later. Also so that the college is known by the community through this KKN program. The KKN program has a positive impact on society, in addition to focusing on the academic field, students also play a role in the social world, as a form of actualization of what has been learned while studying in college. With the KKN program, students also have a spirit of caring and giving to the community.(Syardiansah, 2019)

This KKN activity aims to introduce Indonesian culture and language to students in southern Thailand. Because the majority of people in southern Thailand are Muslims, who are a minority of the country, so KKN students instill a form of togetherness of citizens as in Indonesia, the diversity in a society is bound in unity which is reflected in the phrase "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*". With this, KKN students help emphasize efforts to build togetherness by respecting the existence of each group without losing their identity.

Indonesian Language Teaching Work Program

As mentioned above, this program aims to teach Indonesian culture and language in Thailand. In addition to teaching, KKN students also learn about each other's cultures between two very different countries. During teaching we learned many things.(Daimun, 2019) Started learning the Thai language because before teaching Indonesian the teachers had to learn Thai first so that when explaining the students understood what was meant.(Mubin & Aryanto, 2024)



The students were very happy with the Indonesian language lessons, especially since those who taught were people from Indonesia directly. The students were very enthusiastic about the lessons given when we taught there. Although the accent and pronunciation are different, it is very natural because they are used to Thai. Although they also learn to write alphabet letters because their daily life is to use Thai letters when studying and daily life.(Larlen, 2020) They are very excited when learning because some of them want to continue studying in Indonesia after finishing school there. Many students from Thailand also go to school or college in Indonesia, because Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim country and there are many Islamic universities in Indonesia.

Introducing Bhineka Tunggal Ika As a Tool For Mutual Respect Between Ethnicities And Religions.

Students generally have knowledge in society. Students are allowed to have a considerable role in realizing national change. A student is also required to have smart ideas and thoughts that can change the situation and conditions in a community group and make it directed and advanced according to common interests. And there is one more thing that students are proud of, namely having a burning spirit to make a change (Kurniawan, 2014).



"Unity in Diversity", a motto meaning different but still one, can be an effective tool to promote mutual respect between ethnicities and religions in Southern Thailand. In a region with a background of inter-religious conflict, the principle of Unity in Diversity can help build understanding and tolerance between different ethnic and religious groups. By adopting this philosophy, the students of Sasna Suksa school are expected to appreciate the differences more, realizing that diversity is neither a barrier nor a hostility, but rather an enrichment of life together. KKN students from UIN Sunan Kalijaga and Buana Perjuangan University Karawang have an important role to play in promoting the principle of Unity in Diversity in Southern Thailand, a principle that underscores the importance of respecting ethnic and religious differences. They can contribute by holding seminars to educate and socialize about tolerance, as well as engaging in community activities that celebrate diversity through cultural events. Utilizing Instagram and Tiktok social media for public campaigns and building networks with various parties are also effective strategies that can be implemented. Through these efforts, KKN students can help

strengthen social integration and create a more harmonious and inclusive Southern Thai society, especially in terms of religious tolerance.

Work Program Achievement

The achievement of the international KKN work program can be measured based on direct observation of the activity process. From a total of 30 Tsanawiyah and 35 Mutawasithah level participants, the students mostly showed high enthusiasm and were actively involved in the activities. The students asked several questions to the KKN students about ethnic and religious diversity in Indonesia. This indicates a curiosity about the culture of the archipelago as well as an urge to continue learning by Sasna Suksa students. It can be assumed that there is an interest in culture, education, and local wisdom in Indonesia. In addition, the introduction of language and culture to the participants also signaled their active involvement in the activities.

The purpose of this International KKN activity is not only to increase participants' understanding of the archipelago's culture, but also to provide greater insight into the importance of maintaining harmony between ethnicities and religions. With the Seminar program on cultural and religious diversity, it is hoped that this program can contribute to creating a harmonious environment and reduce the possibility of conflicts on behalf of ethnicity and religion in the future.

4. CONCLUSION

The International Collaborative Thematic KKN program organized by Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, in collaboration with Buana Perjuangan University of Karawang, involved sending a number of students to Thailand, specifically at Sasna Suksa School, Sai Buri, Pattani Province. The main purpose of this program was to provide education about Islamic religion, Indonesian language, and Indonesian culture to students at the school. The implementation of this program was successful and had a positive impact on the students at Sasna Suksa School.

Among the activities undertaken, one of the main focuses is the teaching of Indonesian language. This effort aims to enable students in Thailand to gain adequate knowledge of the Indonesian language. With good Indonesian language skills, students are expected to be better prepared and able to adapt if they intend to continue their education in Indonesia in the future. In addition, the program also includes an introduction to the culture of the archipelago, designed to instill mutual respect and understanding of ethnic and religious diversity. Hopefully, with this knowledge, students will be more tolerant and open to cultural and religious differences in their environment.

Overall, the program has carried out all planned activities well, providing significant benefits for students at Sasna Suksa School, Pattani, Southern Thailand. Through this activity, it is hoped that a closer relationship between Indonesia and Thailand will be established, as well as a better understanding and tolerance between the younger generations of both countries.

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