

# UGM Offers Conflict Resolution through Cultural School

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Researchers from Universitas Gadjah Mada have developed cultural school programme to rejuvenate traditional culture as well as offer the concept of conflict resolution and preserve the nature through culture and customary law enhancement.

The cultural school programme runs in six villages of North Mollo sub-district in Timor Tengah Selatan, East Nusa Tenggara. Anthropologist of UGM, Dr. Lono Simatupang, said the school is a concept born by the community of Mollo after UGM doing the Community Resilience and Economic Development (CaRED) programme.

“We involve women, customary institutions, local customary chiefs, and the youth, in the cultural school,” said Lono after meeting the chiefs in the villages of Lelobatan and Tune on Sunday (27/8).

Along with Dr. Muhadi Sugiono, International Relations lecturer, they had previously done research on women’s role in conflict resolution when the local women rejected marble mining in the Fatunausus area. This had sparked the establishment of cultural school that asked the local people to enhance their cultural traditions.



Muhadi Sugiono said apart from sustaining their culture, the cultural school is able to explore the traditional roots and noble values for daily practice. Muhadi said after three years, the people had the hope that they can sustain their customs, the nature and water. “They hope the school can enhance their cultural customs,” he said.

Concerns that conflict would reappear between conflicting groups proved to be able to reduce through cultural events because the cultural school can maintain brotherhood and harmony between the groups. “For us, the cultural school became the media of conflict resolution,” he said.

Imanuel Salisi, chief of Nefokoko village, said the cultural school initiated by UGM was able to rejuvenate the arts and culture in Mollo area. Chief of Lelobatan village, Bora Bullu, shared the views, saying that the idea to enhance the culture become the drive for the customary chiefs to introduce the ancient culture to the young generation and children. “I saw that our cultures are very strong, but they they are almost extinct. It seems UGM has awakened us to be aware of these values,” he said.

Honi Ombaya Kasse, 45, woman leader from Lelobatan village, said although the majority of the Mollo people live modestly, but their intention to sustain their culture is very strong. “Our ancestors had owned strong cultural values, now with UGM we are guided to sustain those noble values,” she said.


Markus Lakke, 65, from Nefokoko village, admitted the Mollo’s high cultural values which are somehow ignored. There are values of ethics and courtesy that need to be explored again. “For me, customs are courtesy. So, the cultural school has to go on despite technology advancements. The young generation has to learn them and pass them to the next generation,” he said.

Primus Lake, M.Si., culture observer from Universitas Nusa Cendana, Kupang, said the cultural school concept from UGM has the potential to initiate the development of customary village in Mollo sub-district. Primus said the customary village is the smallest government unit that is run by the community and it has the right to administer its affairs independently. “Cultural school can be the door to the customary village,” he said.

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