

Defending Democracy Through Democracy Defenders Accelerator Bootcamp in Estonia

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Abstract

Democracy is becoming mainstream in modern countries. Even though many people choose it, implementing democracy does not always run smoothly. Some countries show inappropriate democratic practices. Through this international community service, the service tries to share stories with the world about the practice of democracy in Indonesia, especially for the younger generation. This community service agenda will occur in Estonia from March 27 to April 5, 2023. The service method is a mixed model, with socialization sessions, discussions, and class material. It is hoped that the results of this service will provide benefits to democracy activists throughout the world. Maintaining democracy requires methods and strategies, such as strengthening godship values in legal products, both at the central and regional levels, accommodating developing values and culture in society as living law, and protecting oneself from values not by the identity of the nation and state.

Abstrak

Demokrasi menjadi arus utama bagi negara-negara modern. Meskipun banyak dipilih, implementasi demokrasi tidak selamanya berjalan lancar. Beberapa negara, menunjukkan praktik demokrasi yang tidak semestinya. Melalui pengabdian kepada masyarakat bertaraf Internasional ini, pengabdian mencoba berbagi cerita kepada dunia, praktik demokrasi di Indonesia, khususnya bagi generasi muda. Agenda pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini berlangsung di Estonia, pada tanggal 27 Maret hingga 5 April 2023. Metode pengabdian yang digunakan adalah model campuran, dimana ada sesi sosialisasi, diskusi juga materi di kelas. Hasil dari pengabdian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan manfaat bagi pegiat demokrasi di seluruh dunia, bahwa untuk mempertahankan demokrasi dibutuhkan cara dan strategi, seperti: memperkuat nilai-nilai ketuhanan dalam produk hukum, baik di tingkat pusat maupun daerah, mengakomodasi nilai-nilai dan budaya yang berkembang di tengah masyarakat sebagai living law dan memproteksi diri dari nilai yang tidak sesuai dengan jati diri bangsa dan negara.



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INTRODUCTION

Democracy and civil society are a twin. Democracy will end while civil society end. As popularly well-known on *adagium*, *demos* and *cratos*, government from the people, by the people and for the people (Abustan, 2022), civil society play an important role in democratic country. According to the data set by the Civicus Monitor, civil society in Indonesia is indicated on the obstructed level (Civicus, 2023). Previous research (Antlöv et al., 2010) indicates that civil society in Indonesia may be strengthened by non-governmental organization (NGO) capacity building and international donor-supported democratic reform. However, those conditions are regarding NGO activities and are promoted by several factors, such as contextual and internal factors. Contextual factors that need to be considered in Indonesia include weak reform implementation, state distrust of NGOs, and backsliding on some fundamental freedoms.

Among the essential internal features of NGOs in democracy promotion are the overreliance on confrontational advocacy strategies, shallow organizational capacity, inability to cooperate to leverage impact, limited outreach to indigenous constituencies, and sustainability problems. Indonesia's democracy-promotion NGO coalitions have primarily operated as instruments of donor-supported reforms. As they seek to become socially embedded actors pursuing indigenous agendas, they face the need to confront the different expectations of their stakeholders regarding their roles and legitimacy, develop the flexibility to respond to new engagements with government and citizens, and address their internal capacity gaps. Three cases illustrate the problems and the encouraging progress with government-NGO collaborations in democratic governance. On another side, the digital era (Al-Fatih et al., 2019) also promoted disruption in civil society (Aditya & Al-Fatih, 2020). Lack of information, hoaxes, hate speech, and another cybercrime brought out Indonesian civil society on the obstructed level.

Another issue in civil society in Indonesia is religious intolerance. The two factors have contributed to the rising influence of religious hardliners/radicals and increasing religious intolerance (Hamayotsu, 2013). The first is hardliner access not only to new media but, more importantly, to traditional means and institutions for religious and political mobilization, including state apparatus, to cultivate antagonistic sentiments and horizontal conflict between religions and beliefs. The other is the rise of conservative religious politicians within the state who are ready and eager to embrace new media and communication technologies while using the state office and prerogatives to advance conservative religious visions and agendas. In order to assess how those conservative politicians, exploit their ministerial prerogatives and state patronage to curtail civil society, particularly the freedom of expression and religion, some violence is allegedly deliberately made by the authorities. Some others are created by separation movements that want to free and be independence state from Indonesia, such as Organisasi Papua



Mereka (OPM), Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS), and previously Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM).

Based on the background above, this article wants to share an idea regarding defending democracy through community services and activities held in Estonia, supported by the CitizenOS Foundation and a block grant fund from the Faculty of Law, University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

METHODS

The target audience for this community services is the Greater Malang community, specifically regional officials, both Regional Heads and BPDs, who can be expanded and supplemented by Tidar Sakti FM Radio's faithful listeners and watchers. Why? because every lecturer who funded by block grant from Faculty of Law, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Number E.2.e/1013/UMM/VIII/2023 signed by Dean, should share their idea on air in Tidar Sakti FM. This community service also creates output in the form of papers in this journal, the Jurnal Dedikasi Hukum, to disseminate the results of service and scientific findings for discussion by academics and practitioners (Al-Fatih & Siboy, 2021). Furthermore, this community service program is integrated with mixed activities within the framework of a program called Democracy Defenders Accelerator, which is funded by the CitizenOS Foundation and has been taking place in Estonia for a few days, from March 27 to April 5, 2023, and online from January 20 to November 17, 2023 (Foundation, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local Government Practice in Indonesia as Democratic Country

Implementing Regional Autonomy must be integrated with the role of autonomous regions called Regions (Al Fatih & Nur, 2023). In administering Regional Government, Regions have the authority to make regional regulations consisting of Regional and Regional Head Regulations. Article 1 points 25 and 26 of the Regional Government Law states that Regional Regulations, from now on referred to as Regional Regulations or referred to by other names, are Provincial Regulations and Regency/City Regulations, and Regional Head Regulations, from now on referred to as *Perkada*, are governor regulations and regent/mayor regulations (Al-Fatih, 2020).

After being discussed and agreed upon with the Regional Consultative Body (hereinafter referred as BPD/*Badan Permusyawaratan Daerah*), regional regulations stipulated by the Regional Head constitute the legal and policy framework for implementing Regional Government and Regional Development. The stipulation of Regional Regulations elaborates on the various authorities possessed by the Regions referring to the provisions of higher laws and regulations. (Wijayanto, 2014). As a legal product, Regional Regulations must not conflict with higher regulations and must not



harm the public interest. As a political product, Regional Regulations are processed democratically and participatively; that is, the drafting process includes the participation of the regional community. Regional communities have the right to propose or provide input to the Regional Head and BPD in drafting Regional Regulations. (Aditya & Winata, 2018).

Indonesia has 514 districts/cities spread across 34 provinces. In detail, there are 416 districts and 98 cities throughout the country. Of that number, East Java is the province with the most districts/cities. The number of villages in the Greater Malang area reaches hundreds, even close to thousands. By comparison, Malang Regency alone has 378 villages and 12 sub-districts. The number of towns (and sub-districts, of course) is a little small, potentially producing opportunities and challenges. It is an excellent opportunity for each region, in terms of human and natural resources, to prosper and create comfort for its people with all its efforts. However, it has the potential to become a threat if it is not balanced with competence; for example, it is vulnerable to being caught by the Corruption Eradication Committee due to misappropriation of funds sourced from the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (hereinafter referred as APBD/*Alokasi Penerimaan dan Belanja Daerah*), and so on.

Regional governments with their uniqueness, may issue high-quality of regulations or not. To ensure that regions can issued good legal products to create prosperity and comfort for the community, assistance is needed in preparing and forming Regional Regulations (Fatih, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to provide outreach to the community, especially officials at the regional level, so that they can make excellent and correct Regional Regulations primarily based on the values of the Almighty God. The Regional Head stipulates Regional Regulations after being discussed and agreed upon with the BPD, the legal and policy framework for administering Regional Government and Regional Development. The stipulation of Regional Regulations elaborates on the various authorities possessed by the Region, referring to the provisions of higher laws and regulations. So, as a legal product, Regional Regulations must not conflict with more increased regulations and must not harm the public interest.

One of the reasons for enacting Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regions is the recognition that Regions have original and traditional rights in regulating and managing the interests of local communities and play a role in realizing the ideals of independence based on the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Putu Sarga, 2021). This is because recognizing the region as an autonomous region means that the area has a significant role in managing, empowering, and advancing available natural and human resources (Wijayanto, 2014). So, in the end, it can move the wheels of development, which must be accompanied by the awareness of understanding the spirit of autonomy for all regional residents and the capacity of the apparatus and the community to understand government governance. Regional/Traditional Area Institutions, namely Regional/Traditional Area Government institutions consisting of Regional/Traditional Area Governments and Regional/Traditional Area Consultative Bodies, Regional

Community Institutions, and traditional institutions. The Head of the Regional/Traditional Area, or what is known by other names, is the head of the Regional Government/Traditional Area who leads the implementation of Regional Government. Regional/Traditional Area Heads, or those known by other names, have an essential role in their position as an arm of the state that is close to the community and as a community leader (Widiarto et al., 2023).

Democracy Defenders Accelerator; A Way to Understanding Best Regional Regulations Making Process

The law-making process is unique because of its variety of models, such as RIA (Regulatory Impact Assessment), Omnibus Law, ROCCUPI (Rule, Opportunity, Capacity, Communication, Interest, Process, and Ideology), and so on (Ihsanul Maarif & Arifin, 2022)(Al-Fatih et al., 2022). Regional regulation also uses those models. To understand the law-making process, the dynamic of democratic countries, and much more about practice of democracy in all over the world, the first author came to join the Democracy Defenders Accelerator (DDA) Bootcamp in Estonia. The DDA is financed by the ACF Fund and the Citizen OS Foundation. ACF's operator in Estonia is the Open Estonia Foundation, which works in cooperation with the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO) (Foundation, 2023).



Figure 1. DDA Participants in Vanaoue Puskekehsus, Estonia

DDA Bootcamp serve daily program, such as;

1. Participatory leadership;
2. Argumentation and critical thinking;

3. Project impact and Theory of Change;
4. Design thinking of civic engagement projects;
5. Day off to discover beautiful Estonia;
6. Marketing and communication of civil engagement projects; and
7. Financing the projects and first five steps of the action plan.

The Democracy Defenders Accelerator empowers young individuals to defend open societies, democratic values, and a functional civil society. Participants in this immersive, hands-on training will learn how to plan and deliver civic engagement projects, as well as practice participative leadership abilities by leading both a fictional company and real-life projects.



Figure 2. Sharing Session in Small-Groups

Mentors and facilitators will provide help throughout the ten-month learning process. The four primary goals of this initiative are:

1. **Open Society and Democratic Values:** Discuss and investigate democratic values, as well as potential risks and opportunities for democracy in international contexts;
2. **Empower Civil Society:** Create highly inventive, grassroots civic engagement activities. Gain the confidence to put these ideas to the test in real life, solving community problems on a local, national, or global scale;
3. **Qualitative Participatory Leadership:** Learn about participatory leadership ideas and values by heading a (fictitious) company;
4. **More Collaborative Decision-Making:** Learn diverse decision-making techniques to help you create better collaborative judgments.



Figure 4. Individual Photo with UMM Uniform

From the DDA Bootcamp, the first author understands that every single decision-making, especially in the public interest, should be approved by civil society, such as in the law-making process. Moreover, due to living law, regulations in a democratic country should be adopted. Indonesia, with a Pancasila ideology (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* or translated as Belief in the one and only God, in the first article of Pancasila) (Siboy et al., 2023), as mentioned in the ROCCUPI law-making process model, should be based on godship when making any regulations. The value of godship, placed as *irah-irah* in the head of regulations (located in top-center of regulations), translated "in the name of god.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the community service that has been carried out, with a combination of activities, including attending the DDA Bootcamp in Estonia, broadcasting on Tidar Sakti FM Radio, and writing output articles in this Jurnal Dedikasi Hukum, the community service concludes that to make an excellent regional regulation, it is indeed necessary involves civil society, living law and is guided by godship values as mandated by Pancasila.

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