

## EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE TOLERANCE VILLAGE INITIATIVE ON INTERFAITH HARMONY: A CASE STUDY IN JAMIKA, BANDUNG

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### Abstract

The concept of "Kampung Toleransi" (Tolerance Village) is becoming increasingly significant in Indonesia as a strategy to promote ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. This study explores the implementation of the Kampung Toleransi initiative in Jamika Village, Bojongloa Kaler District, Bandung City, which serves as a model for fostering interfaith harmony. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving observations, in-depth interviews with community and religious leaders, and documentation analysis. The results indicate that Kampung Toleransi has successfully promoted interfaith harmony through diverse social and religious programs, educational initiatives, and economic activities. However, challenges such as funding constraints, scheduling conflicts among religious activities, and external threats from radical ideologies remain. The study concludes that enhancing community participation and improving coordination can further strengthen the sustainability of Kampung Toleransi. These findings offer valuable insights for replicating this model in other diverse communities across Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Kampung Toleransi, interfaith harmony, social integration, diversity*

### Abstrak

Konsep "Kampung Toleransi" semakin signifikan di Indonesia sebagai strategi untuk mempromosikan keragaman etnis, agama, dan budaya. Studi ini mengeksplorasi implementasi inisiatif Kampung Toleransi di Kelurahan Jamika, Kecamatan Bojongloa Kaler, Kota Bandung, yang menjadi model dalam membina keharmonisan antarumat beragama. Pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini, dengan melibatkan observasi, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh masyarakat dan pemimpin agama, serta analisis dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kampung Toleransi berhasil mempromosikan keharmonisan antarumat beragama melalui berbagai program sosial dan keagamaan, inisiatif pendidikan, dan kegiatan ekonomi. Namun, tantangan seperti keterbatasan pendanaan, konflik penjadwalan kegiatan keagamaan, dan ancaman eksternal dari ideologi radikal masih ada. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa peningkatan partisipasi masyarakat dan perbaikan koordinasi dapat lebih memperkuat keberlanjutan Kampung Toleransi. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga untuk mereplikasi model ini di komunitas lain yang beragam di seluruh Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kampung Toleransi, keharmonisan antarumat beragama, integrasi sosial*

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## **A. Introduction**

The term "Kampung Toleransi" or Tolerance Village, is gaining traction within the urban lexicon of Indonesia, symbolizing a national shift towards embracing the rich tapestry of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity (Hidayatulloh & Saumantri, 2024; Kohdrata & Semarajaya, 2021; Yuliawati et al., 2023). This nomenclature reflects a strategic initiative to weave the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence into the fabric of community life (Heuser & Wolf, 2024; Hjerm et al., 2020). Originating in recent decades, this concept not only acknowledges the presence of diversity but actively promotes an integrated approach to living harmoniously in mixed societies. The aim is to foster environments where differences are not just tolerated but celebrated, thus enhancing social cohesion and communal resilience against the backdrop of global multicultural challenges.

In the district of Bojongloa Kaler, Bandung City, the Kelurahan Jamika stands as a prime exemplar of the Kampung Toleransi initiative. Officially designated on August 20, 2017, by Ridwan Kamil, the then Mayor of Bandung, this village embodies the practical application of tolerance policies. This official recognition is far from a mere ceremonial gesture; it represents a significant commitment by local government to address and mitigate social and religious conflicts through proactive governance. This case study illustrates how policy and community engagement converge to create a sustainable model of social integration (Oca, 2022).

Jamika Village showcases a microcosm of Indonesia's broader societal mosaic, with a population of 27,942 people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. The village's infrastructure supports an array of religious institutions—including four churches, four viharas, and two mosques—located in close proximity to each other without incident (Sariwaty et al., 2022). This coexistence highlights the community's successful navigation of potential religious tensions, underpinned by mutual respect and understanding among its members. The absence of significant conflicts around these religious sites attests to the high level of tolerance achieved, making Jamika a model of peaceful religious cohabitation (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Bandung, 2020; Indirapasha, 2021).

Research on tolerance villages has been extensively conducted. For instance, Shofa (2022) asserts that community behavior patterns and the role of local actors are crucial in fostering a tolerant life in Desa Pancasila. Sari and Syifauddin (2022) reveal that the local wisdom of the Lasem community plays a strategic role in the harmonization of religious life. Chandra and Budi Yuwono (2021) find that social adaptation and inclusive settlement patterns in Kampung Toleransi Bandung support a tolerant lifestyle. Additionally, moderate Muslim views contribute to peace amidst terrorism threats. The tolerant life in Desa Balun, Lamongan, is examined due to its harmonious coexistence of diverse religions (Huda, 2015). Education in tolerance villages can shape tolerant attitudes among children and adolescents (Kholisah et al.,

2021). Overall, these studies emphasize the importance of dialogue, openness, and the application of national values in creating a tolerant and peaceful society.

This broader examination not only enriches our understanding of the societal impact of Kampung Toleransi but also informs ongoing and future initiatives to enhance interfaith harmony and social integration across Indonesia (Saumantri, 2024). Through this research, we aim to document and analyze the process of establishing Kampung Toleransi, examining the influences of religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity on its formation, as well as the roles of religious leaders and the community in this process. This study will also review the programs and activities implemented to strengthen interfaith harmony and tolerance, assessing their effectiveness, challenges, and impacts on the community. The primary goal is to produce insights that can serve as a model for social integration and interfaith harmony adaptable to other locations in Indonesia.

## **B. Method**

This research was conducted in Kampung Toleransi, located on Jalan Luna IV, Kelurahan Jamika, Bojongloa Kaler District, Bandung City, renowned for its diverse community and the harmonious coexistence of various places of worship. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to understand and describe the social phenomena observed in this unique setting (Sugiyono, 2013). Methods included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to gather comprehensive insights into the community dynamics. The participants of this study were key figures within the community, including religious and local leaders such as Mr. Jahja Kosim, Mr. Asep Sudrajat, Mr. Kikim, Mr. Assoi, and Mr. Arief, who provided deep insights into the social fabric of Kampung Toleransi. Data collection was conducted using Purposive Sampling to ensure the inclusion of participants who are significantly knowledgeable about the community's religious and social intricacies.

Primary data were gathered through direct observations of community activities and structured interviews with these key informants. Secondary data were collected from books, official documents, journals, and previous research reports to support the findings. The data collection techniques were designed to capture both the lived experiences of the community members and the contextual background provided by existing literature. Data analysis was carried out using a qualitative approach, consisting of three main stages: data reduction, which involved filtering out irrelevant information; data display, where information was organized into a structured format such as matrices; and conclusion drawing, where findings and their implications were formulated. This methodology aims to provide a detailed portrayal of the challenges and successes encountered by Kampung Toleransi in fostering interfaith harmony.

## **C. Discussion**

### **1. Kampung Toleransi in Kelurahan Jamika**

Kampung Toleransi in Kelurahan Jamika, Bandung, was officially inaugurated by former Bandung Mayor Ridwan Kamil. This initiative designated the area within RW 04 as a model of religious and cultural coexistence under the official decree No. 12 of 2017 issued by the Bojongloa Kaler Sub-district Office. This decree marked the formal establishment of Jamika as a "Kampung Toleransi," aimed at promoting interfaith harmony. The village was selected for its diverse demographic composition and a significant number of religious sites, which have coexisted harmoniously, making it an ideal candidate for this pioneering project.

On August 20, 2017, a ceremony featuring the laying of a white ceramic plaque by Mayor Ridwan Kamil celebrated the designation, symbolizing the purity and peace the initiative aimed to foster. This area, known for its multicultural and multi-religious fabric, was thus aptly named to reflect its inherent diversity and the communal tolerance it showcased. Over time, Jamika has not only upheld its ethos of tolerance but has also inspired the creation of additional Kampung Toleransi throughout Bandung, illustrating a successful model of community-based peacebuilding.

According to Asep Sudrajat, a local community leader, Jamika's comprehensive religious infrastructure significantly surpasses that of other neighborhoods, which typically have one mosque and one church to qualify as a tolerance village. In contrast, Jamika hosts multiple places of worship for various religions, reflecting a higher standard of religious inclusivity and cooperation ("Interview, December 2023").

The primary objective of establishing Kampung Toleransi was to enhance the community's awareness and understanding of the importance of living peacefully amidst religious diversity. This initiative aims to foster peace, order, and harmony within the district, promoting an inclusive atmosphere where interfaith and intercultural interactions are encouraged. This endeavor was significantly supported by local religious and community leaders from diverse backgrounds, including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism, who played crucial roles in advocating for and shaping the ethos of the tolerance village.

Stakeholders' involvement, particularly that of community and religious leaders, has been central to the development and sustained success of Kampung Toleransi. The commitment of these leaders, coupled with active support from local government officials, particularly the endorsement from former mayors Ridwan Kamil and Dada Rosada, has been instrumental. Dede Taryono, the Chairperson of Kampung Toleransi, highlighted that the concept's roots can be traced back to initiatives started during Mayor Rosada's tenure in 2005, responding to the harmonious inter-religious relationships within RW 04 at that time. These efforts were foundational in establishing a robust framework for Kampung Toleransi, which has continued to evolve and serve as a beacon of religious tolerance and communal peace in Kelurahan Jamika.

## 2. Programs and Activities of Kampung Toleransi

The programs and activities of Kampung Toleransi in Kelurahan Jamika highlight the community's active involvement in fostering tolerance through diverse, community-led initiatives. These efforts demonstrate solidarity and support among residents, rooted in shared values and mutual assistance.

### *Social and Religious Activities:*

In Kampung Toleransi, the fabric of community life is woven with a range of social and religious activities that underscore the village's commitment to fostering interfaith harmony and mutual support. Local religious institutions spearhead charitable actions such as distributing supplemental food and essentials to those in need, embodying a profound sense of humanitarian values and community support. These actions are critical in showcasing the interfaith collaboration that is integral to the spirit of Kampung Toleransi, as highlighted in interviews conducted in December 2023.

During the month of Ramadan, the village comes alive with communal iftar gatherings that bring together residents from diverse religious backgrounds. These gatherings are not just about breaking fast together; they serve as a powerful symbol of interfaith understanding and strengthen the bonds within the community. Additionally, maintaining decorum at worship sites is a collective effort, ensuring that all religious practices are conducted respectfully and orderly, thus providing a peaceful environment conducive to worship for all groups.

The spirit of mutual aid is vividly demonstrated during significant religious festivals like Eid and Christmas, where the community's involvement goes beyond mere participation to actively organizing and securing these events. This practical demonstration of interfaith solidarity is a testament to the village's cohesive and supportive nature. Furthermore, the principle of 'gotong royong'—mutual assistance—is lived out through regular communal activities such as neighborhood clean-ups and support during personal crises, which include all community members regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds.

Tasyakur Nights are another cornerstone of the village's communal activities, where important national milestones, like the Indonesian Independence Day, are commemorated. These events, characterized by interfaith prayers, are a platform for reinforcing both national and community unity, illustrating how Kampung Toleransi harnesses its diverse religious practices to foster a unified community spirit.

### *Educational Initiatives on Diversity*

Kampung Toleransi has developed a series of educational initiatives aimed at enhancing understanding and appreciation of diversity among its residents. The village offers informal educational programs such as English language and Taekwondo classes that are accessible to children and teenagers from diverse religious backgrounds. These classes provide a platform for early intercultural and interfaith interactions, fostering a sense of community and mutual respect from a young age (Interview with Mr. AS, December 2023). Additionally, the village organizes regular interfaith dialogues and

community discussions. Facilitated by local leaders, these dialogues serve to deepen mutual understanding and respect among community members, thereby enhancing the ongoing education on diversity. These programs not only educate but also build the foundations for a cohesive community environment where diversity is celebrated.

### ***Economic Initiatives***

In Kampung Toleransi, economic initiatives are integral to the community's sustainability and growth. Annually, the community, with support from local religious leaders and members, organizes distributions of essential goods, creating a self-sustaining model that underlines the village's capacity for self-support (Interview with Mr. JK, December 2023). Additionally, local viharas have initiated affordable food programs that provide subsidized meals, aiding economically disadvantaged residents and showcasing the community's proactive stance on economic challenges. The diversity within the village has also spurred unique entrepreneurial opportunities, leading to the establishment of ethnic food restaurants and traditional goods stores, which cater to the cultural richness of the area. Furthermore, the Luna Mandiri Cooperative plays a crucial role in enhancing economic welfare and fostering the development of community members' potential, demonstrating a deep commitment to economic resilience and inclusivity (Interview with Mr. Asep, December 2023). These varied economic programs do more than just support financial stability; they promote religious harmony and embody universal values such as justice, solidarity, and respect for diversity. Kampung Toleransi thus stands as a beacon of interfaith coexistence and a source of inspiration for societal inclusion and tolerance, illustrating how economic empowerment can intertwine with cultural and religious harmony to create a robust community model.

### **3. Positive Impact of Community Participation in Fostering Harmony in Kampung Toleransi**

The profound impact of community participation in fostering harmony within Kampung Toleransi has been clearly demonstrated through its positive influence on both social cohesion and interfaith understanding. Active engagement by the residents, as documented through various interviews and sources (Interview with Mr. JK, December 2023), has been pivotal in promoting tolerance and enhancing the communal fabric. This participation spans several dimensions—from collaborative efforts like community service projects, shared iftar during Ramadan, to mutual aid initiatives—which have collectively catalyzed positive interfaith interactions and fostered a harmonious atmosphere where religious diversity is not merely tolerated but forms a cornerstone of the community's identity.

The successful implementation of social and religious programs further underscores the effectiveness of this community participation. Extensive support across different segments of the community has ensured the robust execution of various initiatives, including charitable activities and communal iftar, marking them as tangible evidence of the village's commitment to its objectives. This dynamic involvement also serves as a critical metric for assessing the sustainability and effectiveness of Kampung

Toleransi, allowing for the identification of areas needing enhancement to sustain and augment the established harmony.

Moreover, a comparative analysis of Kampung Toleransi with other locations highlights its unique characteristics and strengths, driven by several key internal and external factors identified through extensive interviews (Interview with Mr. AR, December 2023). Internally, the strong backing from key stakeholders, active community participation, and the availability of local resources supportive of tolerance initiatives have been fundamental. Externally, effective interfaith cooperation, supportive government policies, and contributions from external organizations significantly impact the village's capacity to maintain and enhance its communal harmony. These insights collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the success of the Kampung Toleransi model in Kelurahan Jamika, offering valuable lessons for other communities and stakeholders aiming to replicate this model in different settings.

#### **4. Positive Implications and Changes in Community Attitudes**

Kampung Toleransi serves as a beacon for interfaith harmony, realized through diverse activities and religious dialogues, significantly impacting the communal spirit. The establishment has fostered a conducive environment for interfaith harmony, where religious dialogues and joint activities have successfully created a harmonious atmosphere. Interviews indicate that the village has inspired local communities to appreciate and understand religious differences better, highlighting its role in enhancing social cohesion (Interview with Mr. JK, December 2023).

Key community figures play a central role in sustaining and developing Kampung Toleransi. Their involvement in social and religious activities has been crucial in forming harmonious interfaith relationships within the village. Effective collaboration among these entities ensures a safe and inclusive space, where mutual understanding and active participation flourish. Interviews reveal that such collaborations have effectively bridged interfaith gaps, fostering a communal space for understanding and active engagement (Interview with Mr. JK, December 2023).

Over time, positive changes in attitudes and interactions among religious community members have been observed. Religious dialogues, joint activities, and collaborative programs have catalyzed these changes, with community interviews highlighting an increase in understanding and a reduction in negative stereotypes among religious groups (Interview with Mr. JK, December 2023).

#### ***Challenges and Barriers***

However, the village faces several challenges and barriers. The simultaneous scheduling of worship calls, such as the daily prayers of Konghucu followers overlapping with the Muslim call to prayer (Adzan), poses logistical challenges (Interview with Mr. MM, December 2023). The lack of government funding for tolerance programs and resistance from individuals who do not fully grasp the concept of tolerance are significant hurdles. Additionally, threats from radical and intolerant ideologies also impede the

realization of full community harmony. Securing funding for ongoing programs remains a major barrier, along with the need for better coordination in scheduling religious activities involving diverse communities. Human resource limitations also constrain the effective management and execution of Kampung Toleransi's programs.

#### ***Strategies to Overcome Challenges***

To address these challenges, planned fundraising campaigns are essential to ensure the sustainability of Kampung Toleransi's activities. Enhancing community participation can strengthen support and involve more stakeholders in maintaining harmony. Improving coordination, especially in managing the timing of religious activities, is crucial to overcoming scheduling barriers. Emphasizing the human aspect in social interactions and shared religious facility use can foster a sense of communal ownership and care for diversity, thereby enhancing the village's cohesive fabric. This comprehensive approach not only addresses immediate challenges but also sets a foundation for long-term sustainability and success of Kampung Toleransi, making it a model for tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study highlights that Kampung Toleransi in Kelurahan Jamika, Bandung, serves as a successful model for promoting interfaith harmony and strengthening social integration amidst ethnic and religious diversity. Initiated in 2017, this initiative has effectively transformed Jamika into a beacon of peace and tolerance through various social programs, joint religious activities, and interfaith dialogues involving all community groups. This success is attributed to the active roles of religious leaders and local community figures who continuously foster cooperation and mutual understanding among residents, supported by favorable government policies. However, the study also identifies several challenges, such as limited funding, the need for better coordination of religious activities, and threats from radical ideologies. To address these issues, it is recommended to enhance community participation, improve fundraising strategies, and emphasize diversity education to ensure the sustainability of Kampung Toleransi. The findings of this study provide valuable insights that can be adapted to other contexts in Indonesia seeking to implement similar models of social integration and interfaith tolerance. Further research is recommended to evaluate the long-term impact of this initiative and to develop more effective strategies to address the existing challenges.

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