

# **UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KINDNESS AND GOTONG ROYONG FOR INDONESIAN CITIZENS IN DEVELOPING BHINEKA TUNGGAL IKA**

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## **Abstract**

Many Indonesians see gotong royong as a characteristic of the Indonesian national identity and important to strengthen Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity and Diversity). Looking at Indonesia's situation and condition today, we see three aspects: economic aspect, socio culturally aspect, and religious sphere. Gotong royong values are important to implement all three of these aspects. Implementation of gotong royong enables sustainable development of Indonesian society by encouraging citizens and youth to take an active role in how their action can benefit their community. Responsible citizens are those that are informed and understand about the social life environment especially in this globalisation era. Gotong royong is essentially about bringing kindness, tolerance, self awareness, showing humility, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, caring in interpersonal relationship, respectful and taking responsibility. Knowing a value means understanding how to apply it in various situations. Developing moral self-knowledge includes becoming aware of the strengths and weaknesses of ourselves as individuals and of our community. Moreover knowing how to compensate weaknesses in order to be effective and efficient in gotong royong. Gotong royong is not only for a big scale but also for a small act. For example: if someone gets hurt you should help them. So when you need help they will help you. Helping people will makes each person a good citizen, and it also makes us feel better when we help people. The most important thing is acting with gotong royong to create caring interpersonal relationships and community relationship for a peaceful world. If people have the moral qualities of intellect and emotion we have just examined, they are likely to do what they know and feel to be right and have a good impact on the environment. Schools must provide a moral environment that accents good values and keeps these in the forefront of everyone's consciousness. Citizens needs lots of opportunities to develop good habits, and plenty of practice at being good persons.

*Keywords: gotong royong, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Indonesian Citizen, and social life environment.*

## **Introduction**

### **Conceptualization of Gotong Royong**

“When people work together, building a house for instance, many riddles are told, to cheer up people up so that they do not find the work too heavy and long,” (Juniator Tulus, 2012: 221). That is one example of enacting gotong

royong in Mentawai Island. As someone tells a riddle to which others will respond, and if the right answer is given, everyone shouts their happiness, excitement, and encouragement. In this way many citizens get an advantage from gotong royong activity/values and gotong royong connects all people with the other multitude of their society to both the activities and their community. The objective of gotong royong is to strengthen the citizens' solidarity and relationship or togetherness in implementing values amongs the society. James A. Banks (2004: 20) explain that citizenship is depend on membership of the nation, seen as a cultural community, whose members were held together by bonds of solidarity, based on shared history, values, and traditions. Gotong royong values are important to the implementation of sustainable development in Indonesian society, by encouraging citizens and youth to take an active role in how their action can be run for the benefit of the community. Many Indonesians see gotong royong as a characteristic of the Indonesian national identity. To become active citizens, Indonesians must see the values of gotong royong and how to enact it with kindness also that everybody must have all kinds of citizens to be a good citizen.

Education has an important role to play in the process of changing society. (Brownhill and Smart, 1989: 2) describe that education is an instrument of social control. It teaches respect for one's betters and the acceptance of authority, and creates a population used to discipline. (Slattery, 1995) describe that education is very important or urgent to be aware of the rapidly changing structure of society and to reassert. Richard I. Arens (2010: 4) also describe that most teachers believe that efforts to raise expectations for all students is a good practice. To prepare our pupils to be citizens of the twenty-first century, it is important to search for exemplary practical proposals in which gotong royong is integrated into Indonesian citizen daily life activities. QCA (2007) in Lee Jerome (2011: 62) argue that in taking lessons to become informed and responsible pupils should be able to:

- (a) explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes
- (b) work individually and with others to negotiate, plan and take action on citizenship issues to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, using time, and resources appropriately
- (c) analyse the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now, and in the future
- (d) reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating, what they have learnt, what went wel, the difficulties encountered and what they would do differently

According to Joseph E. Kahne, *Mills College*, and Susan E. Spote (2008) the measures of neighborhood and family contexts were strongly related to students' commitments to civic participation. As predicted, junior high school student reports of neighborhood social capital were positively related to their overall level of commitment to civic participation. This requires a form of teaching in which the pupils acquire the courage, commitment, and desire to

participate in social interests relating to social environmental, learning to be active citizens. To be most effective, promote a holistic approach and lead by example, using sustainable practices in the classroom and school grounds and encouraging students and parents to bring society environmental issues into their home. One needs to know what is really incorporated into the experience and how it is worked on in order to understand how these experiences contribute to achieving the objectives of the society, and respond or address environmental issues to ensure sustainability community. I can be assured that this knowledge is passed on to our children to come as well for a bright future.

The objectives of gotong royong are to increase public awareness about environmental issues, society problem as well as explore possible solutions, and to lay the foundations for a fully informed and active participation of individual in the protection of solidarity and the prudent and rational use of society potential/society ideas. It is important that we capture this enthusiasm and that no opportunity is lost to develop knowledge, understanding and concern for the social environmental through government programs or each area where the people live. (Anggraeni, 2010) The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) describes from international perspective about sustainable living.

- 1) Developing citizens of the world in relation to culture, language and learning to live together;
- 2) Building and reinforcing students' sense of identity and cultural awareness;
- 3) Fostering students' recognition and development of universal human values;
- 4) Stimulating curiosity and inquiry in order to foster a spirit of discovery and enjoyment of learning;
- 5) Equipping students with the skills to learn and acquire knowledge, individually or collaboratively, and to apply these skills and knowledge accordingly across a broad range of areas;
- 6) Providing international content while responding to local requirements and interest;
- 7) Encouraging diversity and flexibility in teaching methods;
- 8) Providing appropriate forms of assessment and international benchmarking.

The IBO framework provides a base to develop citizenship building activities in community. This starts from exploring the environmental issues surrounding them, news, informations, knowledge, life experience, and many other aspects can combined to discuss or to analyze issues. Concurrently it is very important to nurture and encourage citizens in living gotong royong values. This is especially important as challenges are likely to be encountered as individuals become more active in their civic participation. These challenges may relate to changes in how they react, how people learn, and growing awareness about the relationship between the individual and the community. Gotong royong not only stimulates people' interest in and understanding of the problems of their own communities, it also teaches them how to go about trying to solve those problems. It is a continuous, never-ending process. Gotong royong invites peoples to learn the social problem solving process by becoming a part of it. In gotong royong peoples "do" social problem solving process rather than just read or hear about it. And the doing is the start of what can become a life-long disposition towards engaged and empowered citizenship.

Citizenship education aims to educate the citizens to understand their rights and obligations as an Indonesia citizen. The aim works towards the goal of people living a culture of peace, tolerance, nonviolence, honesty, caring, fairness, legal compliance and upholding the rule of law, people who become the face of the nation with national and character built. James A. Banks (2004: 7) describes that Citizenship education should also help students acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to function in cultural communities other than their own, within the national culture and community, as well as within the global community. Civic education is intended to shape learners into human beings who have a sense of nationality and love their country. As for the socialization of civic education this can be arranged through the school, the family, mass media, political institutions, and the country as a whole. In civic education, students are prepared to think critically, rationally and creatively as well as responding to the issues of citizenship and be responsible for the activities in society.

Civic education should be an integral part of a globalization with an awareness of the global community, helping to prepare the students for twenty first century citizenship. Malcolm Waters in Kalidjernih (2010) asserts that Globalization has three dimensions: economics, politics, and cultural. As we know, students are living in this globalization era. The students can observe many social problems surrounding them. And then (Bakrie, 2009) describe that globalization is not monolithic but it brings with it innovation and technological development. As for the basic nature of globalization itself, it is the speed of change. It is this character of globalization that has made a future view become more unpredictable.

Conceptualization of civic education can be undertaken in terms of three interrelated components. Many educators throughout the world focus their programs upon the development of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic virtues.

1. Civic knowledge consists of fundamental ideas and information that learners must know and use to become effective and responsible citizens of a democracy.
2. Civic skills include the intellectual skills needed to understand, explain, compare, and evaluate principles and practices of government and citizenship. They also include participatory skills that enable citizens to monitor and influence public policies.
3. Civic virtues include the traits of character, dispositions, and commitments necessary for the preservation and improvement of democratic governance and citizenship. Examples of civic virtues are respect for the worth and dignity of each person, civility, integrity, self-discipline, tolerance, compassion, and patriotism. Commitments include a dedication to human rights, the common good, equality, and a rule of law.

Civic education can have a substantial impact on youth civic and political engagement, some scholars have focused their attention on understanding how youth who are active and engaged became that way and, in turn, how schools might incorporate that knowledge to provide better quality civic education. Civic learning can provide the kinds of opportunities that allow students to learn and

practice a variety of civic skills, learn about how government works, see how others engage civically and politically, and grapple with their own roles as future citizens, this then brings about increases in both students' commitment to and capacity for future participation.

Civic learning opportunities may be important later in life especially when they have to make important decisions about their future and their relationship to the world. Studying civic role models, learning about problems in society, learning about ways to improve one's community, having social life experiences, being required to keep up with politics and government, being engaged in open classroom discussions, and studying topics about which the student cares, all promoted commitments to civic participation among students.

Related to David Moseley et al (2005) studies reports that understanding thinking and learning are important not only in academic study, but also in professional and vocational courses and in working effectively with younger learners. Some kinds of teaching have traditionally included the philosophical study of theories of knowledge, but most have not included any study of theories of learning. However, it would make good sense for thinking and learning to form the core of such studies, associated with another subject of choice in which human behavior is the focus. An understanding of thinking and learning frameworks should inform the planning of appropriate curricula for all kinds of learning, in order to ensure that they are realistic and achievable.

James A. Banks (2004: 3) describe that however, every pluralistic nation-state must also be concerned about unity and a set of shared values. Furthermore, through their participation in gotong royong, citizens have an opportunity to develop various civic dispositions of pluralistic citizenship, such as a sense of kindness, unity and diversity, improvement of a better social life, commitment to the exercise of the responsibilities of democratic citizenship, individual and community responsibilities, also citizens participation. These traits of character, which may be developed through practices and processes of social environment, encourage responsible and effective participation by citizens in their community life.

### **Bhinneka Tunggal Ika And Gotong Royong Cultural for Indonesian Citizens in Globalization Era.**

The phrase gotong royong as referred to in this paper is from the Indonesian National Language. The term of gotong royong is known throughout many Indonesian provinces in regional languages including:

1. Sakai Sambayan (Lampung)
2. Sabilulungan (West Java)
3. Meuseuraya/Meuramin/Meuurup (Aceh)
4. Berterempoh (Sintang, Pontianak)
5. Kayuh Baimbai (Banjarmasin)
6. Maseddi Majjama (Bugis)
7. Gandong La Mari Gandong/Masohi (Ambon)
8. Marsiadapari/Rap Manghobasi (Batak Toba/North Sumatera)

9. Sambatan (Javanese people tradition when they built a house), and
10. Huyula (Gorontalo).

The Indonesian gotong royong culture has not been kind to textual documents, just because this value was so apparently in maintaining in community activities and also relates to people feelings. With the situation we are facing today, like globalization, information technology and the development of social environmental issues, teaching can be used as an instrument to continue to safeguard our community solidarity in this era. So that's why we need gotong royong in place to reduce conflict, and eliminate negative opinions that are found into our community right now. These problems are at our doorstep and a plan is needed to restore and maintain our society environmental necessarily. All these problems can be addressed through gotong royong. The community entire Indonesian citizens must participate in moving towards a comprehensive working commitment for gotong royong. Action speaks much more cogently than words.

Gotong royong is not restricted to in-society plans. There are numerous ways citizen can do this in which they live. They can do this in class, in the office, and in another opportunities. Gotong royong is not only physically action but also how to implement the frameworks of thinking for a better society. It is certainly possible for a thinking skills framework to be drawn up for each subject area. In my view, many benefits would flow from the interdisciplinary development of a common framework. The viewpoint that continuously excavated from people's life experience will be easier to develop and expand the knowledge and experience of the people to address societies' environmental issues. Many Indonesians see gotong royong as a characteristic of the Indonesian national identity and also a character of how to deal with the situation of our society nowadays. Characters according to Lickona is divided into several sections that are contained in it. As expressed by Lickona below:

Character so conceived has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behaviour. Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good, habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action. All three are necessary for leading a moral life, all three make up moral maturity. When we think about the kind of character we want for our children, it's clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right, even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within. (1991: 51)

Based on the opinion of Lickona above it can be explained that character is made up of three other correlation between moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behaviour. The character itself consists of, among other things: know the things that are good, have a desire to do good, and carrying out good, based on the thoughts and feelings, about whether it is a good thing to do or not, then doing it. All three of these can give you direction or moral good life experience, and give you maturity in being. Implementation of character values like wisdom in choosing which ones are good where the bad, justice, fortitude, self control, love,

gave rise to a positive attitude, hard work, has a strong self integrity, be thankful for what we have today (gratitude), and have a sense of humanity (humility) deserves to be developed and implemented in our daily life activities. Thus good character can continue to flourish and realized what purposes to consider in the future, as well as being able to generate a positive activities. The development of the value of a character early on in children is needed in order to do the absolute values are displayed when they grow up will be better and understand all the differences that exist.

Providing the knowledge and skills required for effective participation and providing practical experience designed to foster a sense of competence and ability, developing and understanding of the importance of citizen participation is strongly needed with the competitiveness for human resources in the globalization period. The quality of civic education in emerging character should be improved in light of the specific contexts where programs are being developed and implemented especially in social environmental. In a globalization era we need to maintain gotong royong and internalize it in Indonesians and also the value itself. At present we can say that it is very difficult for a country in the world, not to say impossible, to be free from direct or indirect influence from what we call globalization. Globalization has positive and negative implications, depending on point of view. This is the explanation about globalization. Hershock et al (2009: 29) describe

Globalization has wrought transformation of similar scale: in how people live, work, identify and aggregate, communicate and engage locally, nationally, internationally, globally, and how they are educated. Changes are taking place in the nature of the state itself, in how states interact, and in the roles of supra and non state actors in organizing and affecting human behaviour. At the core of contemporary globalization are transformations in how capital flows throughout the globe and is linked to production and consumption, in how energy is harnessed and consumed, in how information and knowledge are created, transmitted and conserved, how labour is employed and deployed, and how value is created, distributed, conserved and destroyed.

From various descriptions above, we can see one important factor, namely appropriate gotong royong arrangement/management for effective and efficient mechanism. In addition to being useful in the cooperation to manage Indonesians, this step will also make clear the particular goal to achieve with the basic message in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila. Adjustment to the effective and efficient perception is viewed not only from the traditional conventional aspect, but it will be adjusted to the development of technology and information in globalization era.

### **Internalize Gotong Royong and Kindness In Social Daily Life Activities**

Gotong royong is a part of Indonesian heritage especially for national, regional, and local identity. The relationship between kindness and gotong royong is about how citizens do a good thing, developing from the inside of their heart

and implement this to all society in daily life activities. David S. Meyer (2005: 5) describe that social practices into “identities” is forged from the interaction between people and that state. It is obvious that all social, ethnic, professional, and religious group have their own way to do the gotong royong which can bring the solidarity and carry each other. In Indonesia, in accordance with tradition, gotong royong should not be distanced from the people of each region and their cultural characteristics. It should express national, regional, and local identity by means of implementing, characteristics, cooperation, traditional values and togetherness to the strengthen Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

Gotong royong is essentially about are bringing kindness, tolerance, self awareness, humility, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, caring interpersonal relationship, respect and responsibility. In our society today, we should be improving increase in empathy, in order to bring up kindness for all people at any other situations. In the reality, some people do not realize that they have to help other people when they are in a hard situation. For example, there is a family and one part of their family get sick and stayed in hospital, to see this as a friend or neighbour we can offer a helping to that family, like we can cook for them, taking care of their children's at home, or cleaning the house, and then if someone gets hurt you should help them. So when you need help they will help you. Helping people will make you a good citizen, and it also makes you feel better to help people. So that's why kindness is developing a generalized empathy, the kind that sees beneath differences and responds to our common humanity towards those they know and care about. But in fact, so many factors are influencing to make gotong royong to be part of Indonesian character and to extend respect to other people.

What about the situation and condition of Indonesia today if we view them from the economy aspect, social culturally aspect, and religious sphere? Indeed, there are of course many problems although it does not mean there is no improvement or progress. (Conny Rahakundini Bakrie, 2009: 70) describe that the Indonesian government is expected to be able to manage the changes well so that starting from 2010 the economy of Indonesia will be relatively stable and developed in 2015, ... socio culturally, it is estimated that there is still a gap between the poor and the rich, ... these group will emerge in all religions with their ideological variations ranging from the super conservative to the ultra-liberal.” Kindness, tolerance, self awareness, humility, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, caring interpersonal relationship, respect and responsibility-these make up the emotional side of our moral self especially the internalize Pancasila values. These feelings about self, others, and goodness itself combine with moral knowing to form the source of our moral motivation. They help us cross the bridge from knowing what's right to doing it. It seems obvious that for most people being cared for themselves is a prerequisite to caring for others.

Gotong royong can respect the heritage of the past while also protecting the interests of the future. It is also spatial in nature in that it acknowledges the different levels of community which must be taken into account as we face and attempt to resolve global problems and issues which are manifested in regional, state, provincial, and most certainly, local circumstances. Saskia Sassin (2007: 6)



from A Sociology of Globalization describe that although localized in national, indeed, in subnational settings, these processes are part of globalization in that they involve trans-boundary networks entities connecting multiple local or national processes and actors, or the recurrence of particular issues or dynamic in a growing number of countries or localities. If we think seriously about the need of citizens and youths for care and continuity of Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika values, we can begin to assess all of our social life experience in its light in order to improving our community for this time and the the future. Nodding Nels (2002: 31) describe that care requires attention to individuals, and individuals have different needs and interests. John Dewey argued the case this way:

The general aim translates into the aim of regard for individual differences among children. Nobody can take the principle of consideration of native powers into account without being struck by the fact that these powers differ in different individuals. The difference applies not merely to their intensity, but even more to their quality and arrangement. As Rousseau said, "Each individual is born with a *distinctive* temperament. ... We indiscriminately employ children of different bents on the same exercises: their education destroys the special bent and leaves a dull uniformity. Therefore after we have wasted our efforts in stunting the true gifts of nature we see the short-lived and illusory brilliance we have substituted die away, while the natural abilities we have crushed do not revive." (1916, p. 116).

With this idea as an important point, we must take into account the two factors in building a strong gotong royong implementation management and the values for Indonesian citizen. How to deal with effective and efficient management for gotong royong, obviously we need the classification to achieve the target that we want to reach based on management mechanism to perform tasks and exercise control. Connie Rahakundini Bakrie (2009: 21) describe that there are five steps according to Beishline, must be taken in the drawing up of planning, namely as follows:

1. Recognition of the problem; Understanding the mission from the tasks planned
2. Observation and preliminary analysis; It is important to make a profound and objective analysis of various conditions in achieving the objectives.
3. Building a hypothesis; after a preliminary analysis (with forecasting) has been made, then build a number of possible solutions.
4. To make an analysis; It is important to certain the choice is workable
5. Testing; The solution chosen will be put to a test in a detailed manner in a condition close to reality.

According to Beishline, there are at least five characteristics of good planning. Good planning must be simple and clear and it must be balanced for all situations and conditions.

## **Conclusion**

Gotong royong is essentially about bringing kindness, tolerance, self

awareness, humility, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, caring interpersonal relationship, respect and responsibility. In our society today, we should be improving increase in empathy, in order to bring up kindness for all people at any other situations. For as long as there has been gotong royong implementation there has been the values for citizens, and indeed the formation of character and the development of virtue have for many years been seen as the very core of the citizen internalize in social life environment. The strong emphasis on gotong royong values is a part of the people solidarity and kindness. It encourages citizens to play helpful part in the life of their communities, neighbourhoods, and the wider world.

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