



2022 | JULY EDITION

NEWSLETTER



Empathy Building As Violence Prevention



KEEP OUT





Introduction

Throughout the month of July, SEAN-CSO focused on the theme of empathy-building as violence prevention. Although empathy itself is difficult to define in practice, there are studies trying to link empathy-building and the prevention of violent behaviors. Some researchers have tried to solve the puzzle by studying how neuroscience might have an impact on empathy, while other researchers and practitioners mainly focused on the practice of empathy-building towards the society to prevent violence.

This month, we researched to solve these puzzles, organized a webinar, and interviewed a figure regarding how empathy-building might be a way to prevent violence.



8 Things You Should Know about Empathy-Building



Understanding how the nervous system generates empathy is an exciting thing to learn about. In contemporary cognitive neuroscience, empathy is most often represented as a function of higher brain structures, including the cortex (which plays a role in memory, attention, perception, thought, language, and awareness) (Decety & Jackson, 2004; Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007). However, some fundamental physiological substrates required for expressing empathy are shared with the more general aspects of sensitivity, friendliness, and reproduction, which depend on structures of the lower brain and autonomic nervous system. Therefore, the level of empathy for each individual depends on nerve stimulants coming from the formation of each individual, then is manifested by nerves in the form of empathetic behavior.

In addition, we can view the empathetic approach in neurosciences from the perspective of a theory of mind. This has to do with how people think about specific issues and respond to them, all of which require the ability to understand the view of

others. Therefore we have provided eight questions you can ask yourself when considering using empathy building (Batson, 2009):

1. Do you know other people's insides, including their minds and feelings?
2. How can you adopt or match the posture or neural responses of others?
3. Can you feel what others feel?
4. What can you do to be more intuitive or how to project yourself in others' situations?
5. Can you imagine what others think and feel?
6. Can you imagine what others think and feel about somebody else's place?
7. Do you feel distressed or pressured after seeing other people's suffering?
8. Can you feel the suffering of others?

Once you answer these questions, they can be used as a starting point to formulate intervention in countering violent extremism (CVE). However, there is also a particular limitation in using empathy-building. Remarkably, too much empathy can also enable a party to realize how hateful, hostile, or uncompromising an adversary is and to what degree they demonize threats to their sacred values, generating disillusionment about the possibilities for peace (Waldman, 2016).

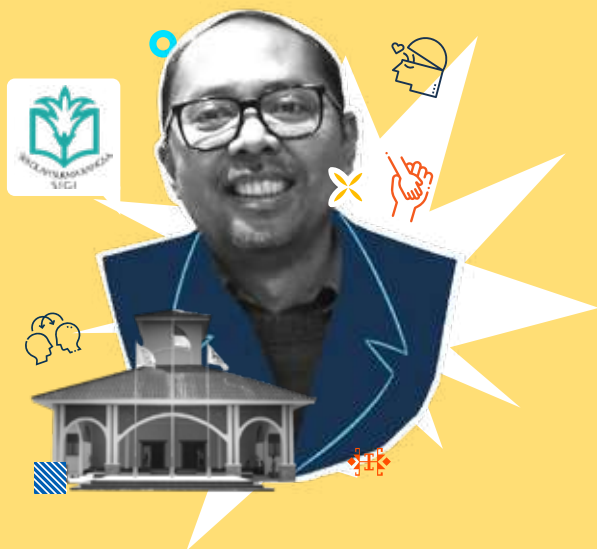
Source:

Decety & Jackson, 2004; Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007 in Carter, C. Sue., Harris, James., & Porges, Stephen W. (2009). *These Things Called Empathy: Neural and Evolutionary Perspectives on Empathy*. Decety, Jean., & Ickes, William (Ed.). London: The MIT Press.

Batson, C Daniel. (2009). *These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena in The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*. Decety, Jean., & Ickes, William (Ed.). London: The MIT Press.

Waldman, Matt. (2016). *Empathy in Conflict Resolution: If, How and When*.

In Touch with Dody Wibowo (MPRK UGM and Sukma Foundation): Finding Empathy- Building in Education



This month, SEAN-CSO interviewed Dody Wibowo, a lecturer at the Peace and Conflict Resolution (MPRK) master's program at Gajah Mada University (UGM), Indonesia. He also serves as the Director of Advocacy and Community Empowerment at Sukma Foundation based in Aceh, focusing on investing in youth through education. We discussed the topic of empathy-building as violence prevention through the academic perspective and his organizational experiences.

He defines empathy in CVE as an approach to understanding why individuals have been exposed to violence and the effect of that exposure from the first time until today. He explains that the key to persuading individuals to refrain from violent activities is fulfilling their needs. "Humans need to be

whole. If the state or their environment cannot provide their basic needs, other groups would fill in the gaps," he argued. This gap is where empathy plays. It could help us understand how other people think and their needs. Dody also shares what should be avoided when using empathy-building in CVE. He also believes that society's definition of tolerance should not stop at respecting differences but rather, develop to a phase where they could embrace and protect people with differences.

He shared with us the story of when the Sukma Foundation participated in releasing Indonesian fishermen from Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) hostage in 2020. Sukma Foundation awards school scholarships for Moro children in Aceh. "Using empathy, we know that access to education is a basic need of every human. It is a long-term solution to ensure a positive future of children. It's different from a short-term solution, such as handing them money they can quickly spend. That is why we chose to provide the children scholarships to study in Aceh," he added.

In the closing remarks, Dody shared tips to help increase people's awareness about CVE efforts. "The key is collaboration; try to change the mindset, not just the exposed individuals, but also society. He emphasized the importance of educational institutions as an organized and sustainable way to instill peace values in childrens, youth, and the society in general. "In my opinion, all stakeholders, whether the students, school management and even the government, need to be supportive of this cause."



Webinar Highlights

4 Things You Might Have Missed From Our Previous Webinar

As time goes by, we have understood that a softer approach actually works as an alternative to prevent violence. On Wednesday, July 6th, 2022, we held a webinar titled "Empathy-building as a Violence Prevention." Our speakers, Dr. Siti Irma Fadhillah Binti Ismail (Universiti Putra Malaysia) and Mira Kusumarini (Yayasan Empatiku) shared their thoughts and experiences regarding this topic, which led to these four points:

1. Why is empathy important for preventing violence?

The act of supporting violence may have happened because one either doesn't feel or feels a lower level of empathy. "Some people may not realize if they have an absence of empathy," said Dr. Irma. People think they have empathy when it is actually favoritism. Empathy is defined as an ability to look into other people's perspectives, and can significantly impact the prevention of violence. It enables the building of more resilient communities and individuals.

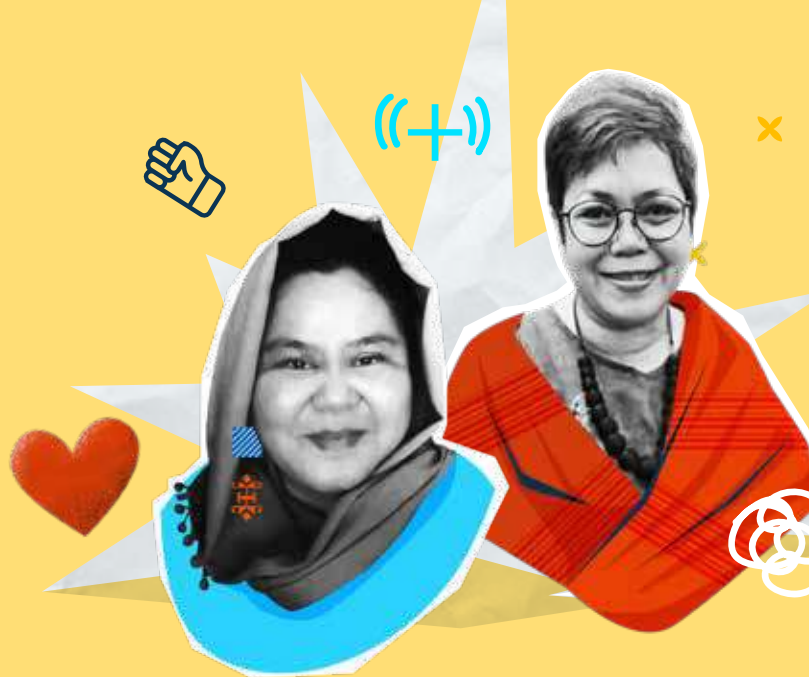
2. Things we need to build individual resilience

People may not be aware if they are less empathetic because they haven't received enough exposure to different experiences, such as meeting people with different

backgrounds or ethnicities. There are steps to build individual resilience and understand PVE better, but empathy must be the foundation. First, Dr. Irma mentioned the essential ability to think critically towards other resources and have a flexibility of thoughts. Second, Dr. Irma discussed understanding one's own identity as well introducing other kinds of identity. Thirdly, individuals should be exploring new things, not avoiding them.

3. The importance of community resilience

Individual resilience is not the only important thing in preventing violence, community resilience also plays a considerable part. Especially, in helping the process of reintegration for the deportees and returnees who have been engaged with VE or have committed violent acts. There is a high chance that society will reject the deportees and returnees since they are worried there might be a spread of radicalism. However, with community resilience, society is able to respond, withstand, and adapt to some possible adverse situations. To have



community resilience, empathy should act as its core, so they can understand the background story of returnees and deportees. "Society should reject the idea of engaging in and committing a criminal act, but not rejecting the person," said Mira.

4. Challenges in building empathy

There are two main challenges. First, most people are not ready to convey their feelings, which could hinder the process of being empathetic to other people's feelings. When people don't understand their feelings, it can be more difficult to be ready and willing to understand the feeling

of an act of violence, discrimination, or being discriminated against. Second, not everyone can reflect on a situation, let alone reflect on how someone could face discrimination, and some people are not used to having a process to reflect on their own lives and past.

We can conclude that empathy plays a significant role in violence prevention, not only at the individual level, but also at the community level. Although empathy and resilience building has its challenges, it is important to remember the main reason behind it: peace.



Upcoming Webinar

How does creating creative content help to disengage and deradicalize?

The process of disengagement and deradicalization always seems challenging and hard to do. However, some of our experts have practiced a more fun way to disengage and deradicalize through creative content.

Let's hear what our experts have in mind on this topic and share your thoughts.

Save the date!

Wednesday, August 3rd 2022

03:00 PM Jakarta Time

04:00 PM Kuala Lumpur Time

06:00 PM Melbourne Time

Don't miss out on this opportunity!

Please register at :

bit.ly/CreativeContentforPCVE

to get the Zoom link.

SEAN-CSO **IMAN RESEARCH**

Creative Content as a Tool to Disengage and Deradicalize

Wednesday, August 3rd 2022

Event Time:
 | 03:00 PM Jakarta Time
 | 04:00 PM Kuala Lumpur Time
 | 06:00 PM Melbourne Time

Speakers:
Mahi Ramakrishnan
 (Refugee Advocate, Journalist, & Filmmaker, Malaysia)
Linda Sumpenawati
 (PeaceGeneration, Indonesia)
Dr. Amporn Marddermt
 (Thammasat University, Thailand)

Moderator:
Dina Zaman (Co-Founder of IMAN Research, Malaysia)

Register Now:
bit.ly/CreativeContentforPCVE

sean-cso.org



Seed Funding 2 is Now Open!

On behalf of SEAN-CSO, the **Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF)** will offer five seeding grants to the value of **AUD\$2000** to develop ideas and content for e-learning modules.

The AMF will collaborate closely with the creators of the winning proposals to build these e-learning tools. Please review the following criteria to aid in the development of your submission.

- The application period for the seed funding grant for e-learning will begin on **Tuesday, 9 August 2022, and end on Monday, 22 August 2022, at 5:00 p.m. (AEST).**
- Submit a 'concept brief' that is **no longer than 500 words**

- Mandatory attendance is required at a workshop hosted by the AMF **on Tuesday, August 9, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. (AEST)** to discuss a second round of seeding funds to aid in creating secondary/tertiary intervention ideas to inform the development of two new interactive e-learning modules.

Please read

bit.ly/E-learningModulesProgram

for complete instructions on how to apply for this grant, including information on enrolling for the workshop and receiving the Zoom invitation link.

Applications should be submitted to Katrina Scaramella, Project, Research, and Training Manager at the AMF, via email: katrina@amf.net.au.



Are you the one that SEAN-CSO are looking for?

If you are an academic, NGO officer, or Human rights activist that has knowledge and/or experience in the field of secondary and tertiary interventions, and would love to spread positive messages to prevent and oppose violent extremism in Southeast Asia through creative ideas, then, you are eligible to apply to our new program SEAN-CSO Content Contributors.

Not only can you spread positive messages, but you can also have this additional benefit:

- Incentive up to USD\$150.
The article will be published on the
- SEAN-CSO website, social media, and newsletter.
- Special merchandise from SEAN-CSO.

To read more of the requirements, you can click this post on our linkinbio. We provide the link for our guidelines and application, or you can simply visit our website at:

bit.ly/SEAN-CSOContentContributorINFO



Funding Opportunities

Strengthening Young Women Peacebuilders' Capacity in Complex Crises

► bit.ly/SEANCSO-UNAOC

Join the Entrepreneurship Campus and create a Peaceful and Sustainable World!

► bit.ly/SEANCSO-EntrepreneurshipCampus

New Partnerships Initiative Conflict Prevention and Recovery Program Agency for International Development

► bit.ly/SEANCSO-USAIDGrant

Follow us

Follow us for updated info on P/CVE issues:



@SEAN.CSO.WTAVE



@sean.cso



@sean_cso

Synergy in Harmony

Walk together for a better world



This update has been brought to you by SEAN-CSO in collaboration with Peace Generation Indonesia.

Would you like to be featured in the next SEAN-CSO Newsletter or in our upcoming social media campaign?

If you have stories, research, or programs focused on Preventing or Countering Violent Extremism, contact us at:

sean-cso@peacegen.id

