

Firdaus Aulia Rahman: Shattering Homogeneity in University Spaces

Firdaus Aulia Rahman often called Daus was born and raised in Garut (a three-hour drive from Bandung) and moved to Bandung to pursue higher education at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) / Indonesia University of Education. After graduating, he found a job in an environmental and energy enterprise that aligns with his educational background, collecting and recycling used cooking oil from households into biodiesel fuel.

Besides his work on environmental and energy issues, Daus also actively manages an informal social media account from his alma mater, UP! Media ([@infoUPIBandung](https://www.instagram.com/infoUPIBandung)). This account is more focused on the current trends that interest UPI students, such as travel tips, the newest cafe to visit, or any other trivial trends. However, this account sometimes also raised and crowdfunded social issues related to UPI. With this experience in the past, Daus was instantly interested in registering for the CREDIBLE program since he loves making social media content. Daus registered with the aim to expand his content creator network for collaboration and gain content creation insights from other content creators.

When attending the “Creator Space” training in Bandung, Daus was amazed to see the training topics were not only about the content creation process, *“I was astonished! [As a young Muslim man], I was very familiar with a seminar from an Islamic cleric, like Hanan Attaki, with a Muslim point of view. We seemed to easily agree with other people due to our similar backgrounds and homogenous points of view. Then, meeting many people with various backgrounds during the training taught me that diverse backgrounds meant diverse points of view. I just realized people with minority faiths have some concerns, such as the difficulty in receiving permits to build their place of worship, that I just learned when interacting with them. I found lots and lots of “aha!” moments during the training sessions, and I think I should be wiser and support my different faith friends when they face difficulties in their worship activities.”*

In the last training sessions, where the participants could consult their ideas, Daus proposed a personal story that he experienced while studying at UPI. Daus has a Buddhist friend and is the only Buddhist student in his batch year. *“I remembered that they were the only Buddhist student in my batch year. They were always uncertain about what they were supposed to do while most of us, who are Muslims, took the Islamic Studies class. Not to mention that UPI only has Mosques or Musalla facilities in every faculty, but not other worship places”.* As Daus explained, his university has still not considered accommodating other religious or worship needs or setting up neutral prayer rooms. Daus was inspired to highlight his Buddhist friend's story, as well as stories of the daily lives of affirmative students from Papua as an ethnic minority representative at UPI.

Based on this proposal, Daus was then selected as one of the 20 creators to join the Youth Fellowship Program, part of the USAID-funded CREDIBLE project implemented by Search in collaboration with local partners Campaign, Indika Foundation, SEJUK, and Solopos Institute. The project provided him

with seed funding to initiate a social media campaign and organize a community event that would contribute to the promotion of religious freedom in Indonesia.

Daus' content highlights the stories of religious and ethnic minority students at UPI. The first content tells the story of a [female Papuan student](#)¹ and how she adapted to Sundanese and Muslim majority culture, such as the misunderstanding of the Sundanese language that many students use on a daily basis. The second content, divided into two parts, shows [Muslim, Christian, Catholic, and Hindu student representatives](#) answered [right or wrong questions](#) about Indonesian culture and Indonesia's FoRB issue. The last content, in the format of an 11-minute video, talks about the friendship between [a Chinese-Medanese Buddhist student and a Sundanese Muslim student](#).



Figure 1 The Walking Tour participants listen to the Buddhist tour guide at Satya Budhi Vihara. Photo by Firdays Aulia Rahman.

Aligning Daus' personal story and one of the content, Daus and @infoUPIBandung team collaborated with [@ceritabandung.id](#) and [@dr.ellscoffe](#) for the offline event to create a four-hour walking tour of Bandung's Chinatown, named "[Jelajah Makna Keberagaman](#)" (Exploring the Meaning of Diversity). The walking tour event, which was attended by 31 participants, highlighted the history of the migration of Chinese people to Bandung, the diversity of the Chinatown population that included Arab-descendant people, *Bumiputra* (the indigenous people), and the Chinese-descendant people, the heritage building

architecture, and the businesses that the Chinese descendants of people ran.

By running the FoRB campaign on @infoUPIBandung social media account, Daus has learned much about the content creation process, collaboration with other stakeholders, and the FoRB issues in Bandung, specifically in his alma mater scope. Although Daus has successfully completed the FoRB campaign, he also admitted to encountering several challenges, especially in the planning process. Daus and the team had to consider its original audience, who are mostly UPI's students or alumni. Thus, they maintained a lighthearted approach while emphasizing the diversity present in their range of content. *"After all, our account is affiliated with the university, and as an amateur in campaigning FoRB, it might affect the university's image or inspire other universities to emphasize their diversity. Also, we couldn't imagine if the content goes viral in a bad way; we still don't know how and don't have many resources to handle it".*

Despite encountering numerous challenges, Daus and the team found it surprising that content highlighting UPI's diversity garnered overwhelmingly positive responses, including requests to feature other minority students. These three pieces of content achieved a reach of 412,570 and 8,303 engagements. *"We were so surprised! We garnered quite positive responses. Also, they asked other*

¹ Ethnic Papuan students have often faced racial discrimination in Indonesia. In 2019, racist taunts aimed at a group of Papuan students sparked violent protests.

minority students for their stories. Some students, especially from STEM faculties, which are more homogenous than social faculties, were surprised that UPI is so diverse". However, Daus further explained that sustaining ForB/diversity-related content on @infoUPIBadung account was difficult. "We have considered the requests. However, we need a proper plan. I couldn't say we are confident enough to keep posting about diversity, especially the need for a meticulous research process. Without support, our team still lacks resources, including the diverse representatives in our team. However, we gained many lessons from this campaign, expanding our portfolio, and still have some raw materials to refine into content. Also, our collaborator, @ceritabandung.id has asked for another content collaboration regarding UPI and Bandung diversity stories. Wish us luck..."