

# The Role of Nahdlatul Ulama in Strategizing Vaccine Communication during Covid-19

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## Abstract

Nahdlatul Ulama, as the biggest Islamic civil society in Indonesia, has a significant contribution in managing the risks of the pandemic in Indonesia as Covid-19 affects adversely against Indonesian. The issue of Covid-19 and its development always ignites the debate in Indonesia, including the vaccination process to minimize the virus risks. A plethora of rumours related to vaccination is spreading widely among Indonesian society which is more likely leading to adverse attitudes and behaviour of the people against vaccination. This research will elaborate on the role of Nahdlatul Ulama in managing public risk communication about vaccination. The Public Risk Communication concept will be used in this research as the main framework. Library studies and document analysis are employed in this research to explore related data and information. The data will be analyzed based on the framework suggested. The result shows that Nahdlatul Ulama has sufficient public risk communication management as it fulfils the framework suggested in delivering the information about vaccination to penetrate the messages in a subtle way. In conclusion, Nahdlatul Ulama has a systematic public risk communication management in delivering the messages about vaccination for most Indonesians.

**Keywords:** Islamic Civil Society, Nahdlatul Ulama', Vaccination, Public Risk Communication

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### Abstrak

Nahdlatul Ulama sebagai organisasi Islam terbesar di Indonesia, memiliki kontribusi signifikan dalam mengelola risiko pandemi di Indonesia. Isu Covid-19 dan perkembangannya selalu menjadi perbincangan di Indonesia, termasuk vaksinasi dalam rangka meminimalisir dari terpapar virus. Banyaknya rumor seputar vaksinasi di kalangan masyarakat Indonesia melahirkan respon dan perilaku kurang baik terhadap vaksinasi. Penelitian ini akan mengelaborasi peran Nahdlatul Ulama dalam mengelola komunikasi risiko publik tentang vaksinasi. Konsep Public Risk Communication akan digunakan dalam penelitian ini sebagai kerangka utama. Studi pustaka dan analisis dokumen digunakan untuk menggali data dan informasi terkait. Data akan dianalisis berdasarkan kerangka yang disarankan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Nahdlatul Ulama memiliki manajemen komunikasi risiko publik yang memadai karena memenuhi kerangka yang disarankan dalam menyampaikan informasi tentang vaksinasi untuk menembus pesan secara halus. Kesimpulannya, Nahdlatul Ulama memiliki manajemen komunikasi risiko publik yang sistematis dalam menyampaikan pesan tentang vaksinasi bagi sebagian besar masyarakat Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci:** Masyarakat Sipil Islam, Nahdlatul Ulama', Vaksinasi, Komunikasi Risiko Publik

### Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries with a relatively high number of Covid-19 cases globally.<sup>32</sup> There has been some non-governmental organization that has involved in promoting the awareness regarding covid-19 prevention such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and Tzu Chi Indonesia from religious civil society.<sup>33</sup> However, it is not accompanied by public awareness to get vaccinated. Vaccine apprehension and misinformation are major impediments to achieving community coverage and immunity. Likewise, in Indonesia, the amount of information circulating about vaccines created bias conditions for the community. Despite the fact that the government has made significant efforts to educate the public about the importance of vaccines in fighting the Covid-19 outbreak. Even

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<sup>32</sup> Muhyiddin and Hanan Nugroho, "Indonesia Development Update a Year of Covid-19: A Long Road to Recovery and Acceleration of Indonesia's Development," *Jurnal Perencanaan Pembangunan the Indonesian Journal of Development Planning*, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.36574/jpp.v5i1>.

<sup>33</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, "The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Handling the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia," UMY, April 18, 2020, <https://www.umy.ac.id/the-role-of-non-governmental-organizations-in-handling-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-indonesia>.

so, groups that oppose vaccines and express reservations about them continue to grow in society.

Then there is the issue in the community about the halalness of vaccines distributed by the government. As a Muslim-majority country, the certainty of whether an object is halal or not is crucial in gaining Indonesian trust. As a result, the government must continue to push for herd immunity by maintaining clear and consistent communication about how vaccines work and how to develop them, from recruitment to regulatory approval based on safety, halalness, and efficacy. The government encouraged the Islamic civil society to ensure the importance of vaccines to reach the target of vaccination.<sup>34</sup> NU is the largest Islamic organization its networks are spread all around Indonesia. For this reason, the government chose NU to cooperate in promoting the vaccination.<sup>35</sup> As a result, NU's role is important in assisting the government in disseminating the COVID-19 vaccine, explaining the law, and emphasizing halalness that has been verified by the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars.

The discussion on the concept of civil society has been known firstly in 1767 by a book authored by a Scotland thinker entitled "An Essay on History of Civil Society" and it was finally developed by some Western modern thinkers such as John Lock, J.J. Rousseau, Hegel, Marx and Tocqueville.<sup>36</sup> There are some interpretations among Muslims regarding the existence of civil society, some of them totally rejected the civil society concept because of the comprehensive concept of Islam and some others accept this concept due to Islamic values that can be related to civil society.<sup>37</sup> In response to it, Madani society is a new term that emerged by the speech of Anwar Ibrahim in 1995 that refers to Civil society which stands by the moral principles

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<sup>34</sup> Charlos Roy Fajarta, "Pemprov DKI Minta Ormas Dukung Vaksinasi Covid-19," *Tribunnews.com*, August 9, 2021, <https://metro.sindonews.com/read/505424/171/pemprov-dki-minta-ormas-dukung-vaksinasi-covid-19-1628467683>.

<sup>35</sup> Gita Irawan, "PBNU Siap Bantu Pemerintah Salurkan Vaksin Untuk Masyarakat Di Seluruh Indonesia," *Tribunnews.com*, July 19, 2021, <https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2021/07/19/pbnu-siap-bantu-pemerintah-salurkan-vaksin-untuk-masyarakat-di-seluruh-indonesia>.

<sup>36</sup> Imam Sukardi, "Islam Dan Civil Society," *TSAQAFAH* 6, no. 1 (May 31, 2010): 115, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v6i1.141>.

<sup>37</sup> Ozi Setiadi, "ISLAM DAN PERGERAKAN CIVIL SOCIETY KEBUDAYAAN TRANSNASIONAL HIZMET DI INDONESIA," *Kordinat: Jurnal Komunikasi Antar Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam* 16, no. 1 (April 8, 2017): 127–58, <https://doi.org/10.15408/kordinat.v16i1.6458>.

to ensure the balance of individual freedom and social stability.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Culla mentioned that civil society refers to the term of Madani society except he distinguished the term of Madani society and civil society based on the background of the people. Madani society is a term used by Islamic modernists whereas civil society is a term used by Islamic culturists.<sup>39</sup>

Generally, civil society is a non-governmental organization that has functions to control the stability of the society and to balance the government policy. Civil society in Indonesia developed since the new order as a reaction to the political issues that were far from the democratic system during the new order era and hence. However, the movement of civil society in Indonesia was more massive after the fall of the new order.<sup>40</sup> Indonesia as a country with Muslims as its major population considered Islam as an important factor to create a civil society. Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are some examples of civil society that was established in the 20th century and both are civil societies in the context of achieving a civilization.<sup>41</sup> Hence, it can be concluded that civil society plays an important role to achieve the balance of social life in Indonesia.

This research used a qualitative methodology with the approach of document analysis and library studies by grasping a vaccination issue during the covid-19 pandemic with specifying the role of Islamic civil society in Indonesia. This approach will be applied to observe the role of Nahdlatul Ulama as one of the biggest Islamic civil societies in Indonesia in strategizing vaccine communication during Covid-19 in Indonesia by using the framework of public risk communication theory. Data are collected through journals, books, and reports that are related to this topic. All collected data will be analysed based on the framework suggested.

Based on this explanation, the research will focus on the

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<sup>38</sup> Aswab Mahasin and Yayasan Festival Istiqlal (Jakarta, Indonesia, Ruh Islam Dalam Budaya Bangsa (Jakarta: Yayasan Festival Istiqlal, 1996).

<sup>39</sup> Adi Suryadi Culla, Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia, and Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia, *Rekonstruksi Civil Society : Wacana Dan Aksi Ornop Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia, 2006).

<sup>40</sup> M Zainal Abidin, "CIVIL SOCIETY DALAM WAJAH KEISLAMAN DAN KEINDONESIAAN," *Khazanah:*

*Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 12, no. 2 (August 8, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v12i2.1607>.

<sup>41</sup> Esty Ekawati, "NAHDLATUL ULAMA (NU) SEBAGAI CIVIL SOCIETY DI INDONESIA," *NUANSA: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Sosial Dan Keagamaan Islam* 13, no. 2 (December 31, 2016): 233, <https://doi.org/10.19105/nuansa.v13i2.1098>.

attitude of Nahdlatul Ulama towards the implementation of vaccines in Indonesia. This article begins with the attitude of Nahdlatul Ulama regarding worship in the early days of the emergence of Covid-19. Then describe the implementation of vaccines in Indonesia to get an initial picture of the problem. Then ends with the findings and conclusions of the study.

## **Roles of Nahdlatul Ulama in Overcoming Covid-19**

The covid-19 pandemic caused a significant change in human life as it creates many problems in the aspects of health, economic, education and social. Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest civil society has the significant role in overcoming covid-19 in Indonesia and it is evident by the action of them during the pandemic. Woodward claimed that NU has some challenges during pandemic especially on how to bring the religious meaning to the pandemic and they assumed that social distancing is the most important protocol to cut the covid-19 transmission. Moreover, NU also provided some posts all around Indonesia in spreading the information about covid-19 and giving assistance to the victims and unprivileged society.<sup>42</sup> Other than that, NU is an Islamic organization that does not eliminate its characteristic which is spreading da'wah regarding covid-19. They kept reminding the society to follow the protocol from the government as well as to not be panic during the pandemic.<sup>43</sup>

Understanding the challenges during the covid-19 pandemic, there are some fatwas related to covid-19 to guide the Muslims in performing their ibadah. Hence, NU also emphasized the society to follow the fatwas released by MUI in terms of worship such as the congregational prayer that is contradicting the rule of social distancing.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, NU cared about the frontliners during the pandemic, the followers of NU who have also claimed themselves as Gusdurians assisted by giving the PPE, vitamins, milk

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<sup>42</sup> Mark Woodward, "Nahdlatul Ulama, Pesantren and the Pandemic," *Inside Indonesia*, April 23, 2020, <https://www.insideindonesia.org/nahdlatul-ulama-pesantren-and-the-pandemic>.

<sup>43</sup> Moh. Lukman Hakim and Moh. Ali Aziz, "Dakwah Da'i Nahdlatul Ulama Dalam Mencegah Penyebaran Covid- 19," *Anida (Aktualisasi Nuansa Ilmu Dakwah)* 20, no. 2 (2020): 201–21, <https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/anida/article/view/10820/5265>.

<sup>44</sup> Aisyah Rahvy and Ilham Ridlo, "How Does Islamic Organizations Respond to COVID-19 in Indonesia? A Case Study How Does Islamic Organizations Respond to COVID-19 in Indonesia? A Case Study," *Preventive Medicine Archive | PHPMA* 9, no. 1 (2021): 11–16, <https://doi.org/10.15562/phpma.v9i1.274>.

and masks to the frontliners such as health workers, volunteers, and funeral attendants.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, NU also created the covid-19 task force to conduct some activities such as a campaign about the prevention of covid- 19, optimizing the roles of Nahdlatul Ulama hospital association, giving the assistance and motivating the community mentally and spiritually in facing the covid-19 pandemic.<sup>46</sup> It is obvious that NU has made its efforts to maximally overcome the covid-19 pandemic as well as spread the awareness to the Indonesian community regarding covid-19.outbreak in Indonesia.

### Vaccination in Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the countries with a relatively high number of Covid-19 cases globally. However, it is not accompanied by a public awareness to get vaccinated. Vaccine apprehension and misinformation are major impediments to achieving community coverage and immunity. Likewise, in Indonesia, the amount of information circulating about vaccines created bias conditions for the community. Despite the fact that the government has made significant efforts to educate the public about the importance of vaccines in fighting the Covid- 19 outbreak. Even so, groups that oppose vaccines and express reservations about them continue to grow in society. Lazarus, who conducted research for the COVID-19 Vaccine Acceptance Survey, stated that several factors, including income levels, education, and the role of the government, were impediments to the global community receiving vaccines. In the case of Indonesia, we discovered that the main reason for the low interest in vaccines is a lack of public trust in the government, which allows hoaxes to spread easily. Until now, it was estimated that approximately 41% of the population had received the first stage of the vaccine, with only nearly 24% having completed the second stage of vaccination.

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<sup>45</sup> Aru Lego Triono, "Gusdurian Peduli Kirim Bantuan Kepada Tenaga Kesehatan," NU Online, September 19, 2021, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/131436/gusdurian-peduli-kirim-bantuan-kepada-tenaga-kesehatan>.

<sup>46</sup> Sri Noor, Mustaqimatul Hidayah, and Hasan Bastomi, "Peran Masyarakat Sipil Keagamaan ... Peran Masyarakat Sipil Keagamaan Di Tengah Pandemi: Analisis Peran Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Dalam Menghadapi Pandemi Covid 19 Di Indonesia," 2020, 131–56, <https://doi.org/10.21043/cdjpmi.v4i2.8925>.

Overcoming vaccine apprehension, on the other hand, requires more than just building trust. This is a multifaceted, complex, and context-dependent endeavour that must be addressed at the global, national, and subnational levels all at the same time.<sup>47</sup> Then there is the issue in the community about the halalness of vaccines distributed by the government. As a Muslim-majority country, the certainty of whether an object is halal or not is crucial in gaining Indonesian trust. As a result, the government must continue to push for herd immunity by maintaining clear and consistent communication about how vaccines work and how to develop them, from recruitment to regulatory approval based on safety, halalness, and efficacy. As a result, NU's role is important as one of Indonesia's largest Islamic community organizations in assisting the government in disseminating the COVID-19 vaccine, explaining the law, and emphasizing halalness that has been verified by the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars.

### Public Risk Communication

Informing about risk and uncertainty is necessary to be clear and systemized as it could ignite the significant change of attitude and behaviour of the public which is more likely to emerge public disorder. Vaccination is considered as urgency in minimizing the risk of Covid-19 even though the knowledge and information related to it have not been constructed perfectly among the public as various information and rumours against it are spreading among societies. As this paper will assess Nahdathul Ulama's public risk communication system,<sup>48</sup> in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of public risk communication will be employed and contextualized toward the action of Nahdatul Ulama in managing vaccination information to the public. First, the communication should be conducted frequently related to the process and its outcomes using an empathic approach to ensure that the information can be processed by the audience cognitively and emotionally. Second, the messages should be clear,

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<sup>47</sup> Claire Hooker and Julie Leask, "Risk Communication Should Be Explicit about Values. A Perspective on Early Communication during COVID-19," *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (November 9, 2020): 581–89, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-020-10057-0>.

<sup>48</sup> Julie Leask et al., "Communicating with Patients and the Public about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety: Recommendations from the Collaboration on Social Science and Immunisation," *Medical Journal of Australia* 215, no. 1 (June 16, 2021): 9, <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.51136>.

accurate, and down-to-earth which means that the audiences can absorb and practice them immediately without confusion. Third, in promoting vaccination, over-reassuring should be avoided to make the public anticipate the change and prevent their extreme behaviour toward the information. Fourth, diversifying platforms is necessary as the people are selective in receiving the information from particular channels. Also, it is important to ensure the messages are pervasive and any population can reach the information. It needs to be conducted in traditional and new media as both have their own audiences. Fifth, the credibility of the platform itself is not sufficient without the integrity of the spokesperson. The media sometimes portrays people who are not experts talking about it. Medical professionals or vaccinology are the preference as the source of information.

### Communicate Frequently about the Process and Outcomes

According to the findings of several articles, NU has played a significant role in the socialization of COVID-19. As one of Indonesia's largest mass organizations, NU is involved in a variety of activities to explain vaccines, from the vaccination process to the results and side effects that will be obtained. This can be seen in a variety of collaborative health socialization activities with the government. This information explanation has also been done multiple times with different sources and platforms. For example, the East Java Regional Administration collaborated with the medical faculty of Nahdlatul Ulama University to explain the process and safety of vaccines.<sup>49</sup> There are still many special vaccine socialization programs run by NU administrators on their own or in collaboration with other institutions in order to reduce the high death rate in Indonesia caused by infection with the Covid-19 virus.<sup>50</sup> The main concern of the Muslim-majority community is, of course, the halalness of the vaccine. As a result, the Bahtsul Masail Institute, which operates under the auspices of NU, responded and issued a fatwa for the widely used Sinovac, Pfizer,

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<sup>49</sup> Humas UNUSA, "Dukung Pemerintah, PW Muslimat NU Jatim Gandeng FK Unusa Sosialisasi Vaksin Covid 19 - Universitas NU Surabaya," Universitas NU Surabaya, March 27, 2021, <https://unusa.ac.id/dukung-pemerintah-pw-muslimat-nu-jatim-gandeng-fk-unusa-sosialisasi-vaksin-covid-19/>.

<sup>50</sup> Momentum Editorial Team 1, "Forkopimka Panji Gandeng MWC NU Panji Situbondo Sosialisasi Percepatan Vaksin," Memontum.Com, August 15, 2021, <https://memontum.com/150780-forkopimka-panji-gandeng-mwc-nu-panji-situbondo-sosialisasi-percepatan-vaksin>.

and AstraZeneca vaccines.<sup>51</sup>

As a result, the main focus of the socialization is, of course, explaining and convincing the public that the vaccines distributed are safe from a health standpoint and are halal according to Indonesian Islamic legal standards. Although they work closely with the government, NU's socialization activities are not based on political relations, but on the fact that the government recruits all community organizations in Indonesia. Several organizations are and NU is one of them because it is already known as the largest organization and is expected to reach more people.

### Use Clear, Accurate, Actionable Messages

Nahdlatul Ulama, as a community Islamic organization, undoubtedly has a place in many circles of Indonesian society, ensuring that fatwas and information issued are accepted and believed by the general public. The government is well aware of this, which is why Indonesia's President, Joko Widodo, specifically invited NU and other Islamic organizations to participate in socializing the COVID-19 vaccine, particularly in explaining the benefits of vaccines and convincing the public of their halal status.<sup>52</sup> The socialization process is also carried out in a very precise manner because it pays close attention to the audience who would be the target. NU party members from a variety of backgrounds used a persuasive approach to provide correct understanding by engaging in dialogue and exchanging ideas. By selecting people who are knowledgeable in their fields, such as submitting medical explanations to medical workers and fiqh laws related to halal status to local religious leaders, the information conveyed becomes clear and accurate.<sup>53</sup>

NU members contributed to the success of the vaccination program not only by sharing information but also by taking action.

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<sup>51</sup> Abdul Rahman Ahdori, "Satgas NU Dorong Pemerintah Sosialisasikan Legalitas Dan Efektivitas Vaksin Covid- 19," NU Online, December 9, 2020, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/125180/satgas-nu-dorong-pemerintah-sosialisasikan-legalitas-dan-efektivitas-vaksin-covid-19>.

<sup>52</sup> Dewi Nurita, "Jokowi Minta MUI, NU, Dan Muhammadiyah Dilibatkan Di Sosialisasi Vaksin Covid-19," Tempo (TEMPO.CO, October 26, 2020), <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1399607/jokowi-minta-mui-nu-dan-muhammadiyah-dilibatkan-di-sosialisasi-vaksin-covid-19>.

<sup>53</sup> Darmadi Sasongko, "Kiai NU Siap Bantu Pahamkan Masyarakat Tolak Vaksin Dengan Alasan Dalil," Merdeka.com, August 11, 2021, <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/kiai-nu-siap-bantu-pahamkan-masyarakat-tolak-vaksin-dengan-alasan-dalil.html>.

This is demonstrated by the participation of 100 religious school leaders in being injected with the AstraZeneca vaccine to validate and prove to the public the safety and halal status of the vaccine program.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, in collaboration with the government and other institutions, NU perfected the action by holding dozens of vaccinations in various regions throughout Indonesia. Because it will be easier to gain public trust in vaccines if messages are clear, accurate, and actionable.

### Promote Vaccination but Do Not Over-Reassure

The issue of vaccination in Indonesia has brought about the pros and cons among the Indonesian citizens. Some of them rejected the vaccine as they assumed that it has not fulfilled the Halal requirement and some of them promoted the vaccination as it fastens the herd immunity in Indonesia which will save human life. Nahdlatul Ulama is a model of most communities in Indonesia that strongly holds Islamic principles such as human rights, freedom, tolerance, and justice concerns about the issues. The government also believed that NU will help them in achieving the target of vaccination by cooperating with the National Police and Armed Forces and this project was agreed by the PBNU chairperson, Said Aqil.<sup>55</sup> However, there are still some people that reject vaccination by conducting an anti-vaccine campaign. In response to it, NU encouraged society to not join this campaign and re-assure the benefit of vaccines as a solution to solve the crisis caused by this outbreak.<sup>56</sup> Also, they emphasized the purity of vaccines to assure society about vaccination. Instead of forcing the society to vaccinate, NU promoted the vaccine by making Islamic scholars (kyai) as the example for the society to do vaccination, there were hundreds of kyai that were vaccinated in

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<sup>54</sup> C. N. N. Indonesia, "Ratusan Kiai NU Jatim Disuntik Vaksin AstraZeneca," nasional, accessed September 30, 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210323141408-20-620992/ratusan-kiai-nu-jatim-disuntik-vaksin-astrazeneca>.

<sup>55</sup> Andita Rahma, "Nahdlatul Ulama Involved in Accelerating Covid-19 Vaccinations," TEMPO.CO, July 8, 2021, <https://en.tempo.co/read/1481015/nahdlatul-ulama-involved-in-accelerating-covid-19-vaccinations>.

<sup>56</sup> Eko Ari Wibowo, "Tolak Kampanye Anti-Vaksin Covid, PBNU: Pemerintah Tak Akan Mencelakakan Rakyat," TEMPO.CO, January 13, 2021, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1422721/tolak-kampanye-anti-vaksin-covid-pbnu-pemerintah-tak-akan-mencelakakan-rakyat>.

East Java.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, some NU Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) agreed to conduct vaccination and they were strict in screening the eligibility of the students to be vaccinated.<sup>58</sup> It shows that NU are not over reassuring people in vaccination, instead they are concerned about the health condition of the people before vaccination to prevent the side effect after vaccination that will harm the body.

### Diversify Communication Channels and Platforms

In this current situation, socialization through online platforms is the best way to easily reach audiences from all over the world. As for NU, the organization has held various online meetings for discussions pertaining to the importance of vaccines using the Zoom Meeting platform, which can be visited via the organization's social media accounts. It does not stop there; members also use other platforms because they understand the limitations of using Zoom among parents and some parties who have difficulty accessing the internet. Kyai Waled NU, the leader of one of Aceh's Islamic boarding schools, conducted socialization about the importance of vaccines via Whatsapp questions and answers.<sup>59</sup> This is considered as a method of communication that brings the community closer together, with the hope that it will be easier to build trust in vaccines.

Furthermore, NU members chose to conduct direct socialization in order to reach people who do not have internet access due to economic or geographical constraints. As a result, direct explanations via various agencies are also used as a method of interacting with the community. The Office of Religious Affairs for the Province of South Sulawesi, which normally handles marriage and divorce cases, also

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<sup>57</sup> JPNN.COM, "Ratusan Kyai Dan Tokoh NU Disuntik Vaksin Astrazeneca, Pak Budi Jadi Saksi," JPNN.COM, March 24, 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210323141408-20-620992/ratusan-kiai-nu-jatim-disuntik-vaksin-astrazeneca>.

<sup>58</sup> Nuril Shiami Indiraphasa, "Santri Mahasina Bekasi Antusias Ikuti Vaksinasi Untuk Jaga Kiai Sumber: <https://www.nu.or.id/Post/Read/131179/Santri-Mahasina-Bekasi-Antusias-Ikuti-Vaksinasi-Untuk-Jaga-Kiai>," NU Online, September 6, 2021, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/131179/santri-mahasina-bekasi-antusias-ikuti-vaksinasi-untuk-jaga-kiai>.

<sup>59</sup> Redaksi, "Waled NU : Sosialisasi Vaksinasi Masih Kurang | Rakyat Aceh," *Harianrakyataceh.com*, September 29, 2021, <https://harianrakyataceh.com/2021/09/29/waled-nu-sosialisasi-vaksinasi-masih-kurang/>.

took part in community outreach events.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, several hospitals collaborate with NU organizations, as do government agencies in each region. The use of various communication methods and platforms is intended to reach more people throughout Indonesia, rather than focusing solely on online platforms that may only be accessed by a subset of society. With this, the level of public awareness in rural and remote areas is also increasing, which will help the government achieve its goal of achieving herd immunity of 70%.

### Use Credible Spokespeople

There is various information that are contradicting each other due to the hoax spread in media. This case made people do not easily believe the information. Nahdlatu Ulama has various platforms for sharing their thoughts especially about the current situation regarding vaccination. However, the anti-vaccine campaign especially among the Muslim community in Indonesia become a challenge for NU in promoting vaccination. For this reason, NU used the credible spokespeople to spread public awareness regarding vaccination in Indonesia such as Kyai Ma'ruf Chozin one of the NU members who is also head of the fatwa division of MUI ensured the purity and credibility of vaccine to influence the Indonesian citizens in vaccination.<sup>61</sup> Other than that, Said Aqil as a chairperson of NU actively encourages society to vaccinate themselves.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, dr. Syifa Mustika as a doctor who is also the head of NU task force of Malang educated the society through a book entitled "Kupas Tuntas Vaksin Covid- 19". This book discussed the vaccine in all aspects including the aspect of religion.<sup>63</sup> In addition, NU Muslim scholars including KH Jazuli Sholeh Qosim (Sidoarjo), KH Muhammad

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<sup>60</sup> Ulya Sunani, "KUA Cenrana Bersama Penyuluh Agama Intensifkan Sosialisasi Vaksinasi," Kementrian Agama RI Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, July 30, 2021, <https://sulsel.kemenag.go.id/berita/berita-wilayah/kua-cenrana-bersama-penyuluh-agama-intensifkan-sosialisasi-vaksinasi>.

<sup>61</sup> Hisam Malik, "Fatwa MUI Jawa Timur, Vaksin AstraZeneca Halal," NU Online, March 22, 2021, <https://jatim.nu.or.id/read/fatwa-mui-jawa-timur--vaksin-astrazeneca-halal>.

<sup>62</sup> Syifa Arrahmah, "Ketua Umum PBNU: Jangan Benturkan Keimanan Dan Vaksinasi Sumber: [Https://Www.nu.or.id/Post/Read/130337/Ketua-Umum-Pbnu-Jangan-Benturkan-Keimanan-Dan-Vaksinasi](https://www.nu.or.id/Post/Read/130337/Ketua-Umum-Pbnu-Jangan-Benturkan-Keimanan-Dan-Vaksinasi)," NU Online, July 24, 2021, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/130337/ketua-umum-pbnu-jangan-benturkan-keimanan-dan-vaksinasi>.

<sup>63</sup> Madchan Jazuli, "Ketua Satgas NU Malang Terbitkan Buku 'Kupas Tuntas Vaksin Covid-19,'" NU Online, August 26, 2021, <https://jatim.nu.or.id/read/ketua-satgas-nu-malang-terbitkan-buku-kupas-tuntas-vaksin-covid-19->

Muslich (Lumajang), KH Ainul Mubarak (Pacet), and KH Lukmanul Hakim from Bahth al-Masā'il Institution in East Java branch have been vaccinated for being a role model of society in vaccination.<sup>64</sup> Those actions showed that NU used the credible spokespeople to influence more Indonesian citizens regarding vaccination as a solution to achieve herd immunity.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Nahdlatul Ulama greatly did their actions in promoting vaccination such as establishing the task forces, conducting the education regarding vaccination through the various platforms, using the credible spokespeople in spreading the information. Therefore, it can be understood that NU as the largest civil society in Indonesia plays a significant role in strategizing vaccination communication in Indonesia based on the theory of public risk communication. However, due to the plethora of actions held by NU in Indonesia regarding vaccination promotion, it is suggested for future researchers to be more focused on a kind of action held by the members in specific places with a more detailed analysis.

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<sup>64</sup> Lely Yuana, "Menkes RI Saksikan 116 Kiai Dan Tokoh NU Jatim Jalani Suntik Vaksin AstraZeneca" (<https://www.timesindonesia.co.id/read/news/335870/menkes-ri-saksikan-116-kiai-dan-tokoh-nu-jatim-jalani-suntik-vaksin-astrazeneca>: Times Indonesia, March 23, 2021).

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