

2018 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

We Are Stronger Together

(Original)

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On the 13th of May 2018, just a week after I celebrated my 12th birthday, I lost a dear friend in a suicide bombing incident involving young children. He was holding hands with his younger brother, about to enter a church in Surabaya for a Holy Mass on a bright Sunday. In the eyes of the world, this is tears and tragedy, innocent children becoming victims of hatred. A sorrow that forever needs to be healed. In this moment of silence and grief, I realize that the modern world is at war, between good and evil, between humanity and cruelty. The world is in dire need of compassion, peace and kind acts.

The one thing I would like to change the most is the way I want to live my life. I want to share love and care in this precious life. Nelson Mandela wrote in his book titled "Long Walk to Freedom", "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

We should not leave the urgency for having a peaceful world in the hands of adults. As a citizen of the world, we have responsibilities beyond studying and our daily routines. The world needs us, young people like you and I, to participate, take action and lead the changes in our communities. We should have the courage and confidence to make a positive difference in building a better and peaceful world.

The initial step is to be connected with our surroundings. In this digital era, we tend to be less conscious of our environment, spending most of our time on our gadgets. We need to change this and start building better relationships with our family and friends. We are stronger together with love and care.

As we build communication and network of friendships, we need to embrace differences and be respectful of others. I would like to share with you the national motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in Indonesia. The term can be translated as unity in diversity. Unity in diversity is a concept that encourages us to have tolerance towards different cultures, religious

beliefs and appearances. Unity in diversity brings us together without uniformity. We are stronger together despite our differences on faith, background and culture.

We should make use of our talents, knowledge and interests to establish the chain of kind acts in the community. We should also work together and aim for collaboration as kind acts are contagious. For me, writing is my passion. I want to share love and peace through my poems, essays and stories. I joined this competition as an opportunity to share my thinking, expand my network of friendships and to exchange ideas.

We can also express our support for a peaceful world through art, music and social activities. In short, we can make positive impact through caring towards the community and actively exchanging ideas with others to do more kind acts. As young people of the world, we need to be integrated with each other.

We are stronger together in all aspects of our life. We are united in our communities and values of life. Together, we strive for one peaceful world.