

## Forschung und Lehre

# ***Berbahasa Indonesia di Yerusalem — Speaking Indonesian in Jerusalem — A language encounter funded by the Small Grants Programme of the DGA***

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*Kelihatannya sepele, cuma bahasa, tetapi konflik dan perang terjadi karena "lost in translation." Sewaktu acara ini dilaksanakan, saya terharu sekali bertemu orang Israel yang bisa berbahasa Indonesia. Semoga acara ini terus bisa berlanjut dan pesertanya bertambah banyak.*

It seems trivial, just language, but conflicts and wars occur because of being "lost in translation." When this event was held, I was very touched to meet Israelis who can speak Indonesian. Hopefully this event can continue, and the participants will increase.

(Arif Maftuhin, Indonesian participant in the project)

## **Introduction: Getting together in a “Warung Bahasa”**

Language can build bridges and, particularly in regions in which everything seems to be said and done, switching to a third language might open new pathways of understanding, as the quote above indicates. Speaking Indonesian in Jerusalem can broaden students’ horizons beyond their study of Indonesia in regard to transregional encounters. This was the initial thinking when planning a transcultural online encounter in the Indonesian language with Israeli, Palestinian and Indonesian students.

The special constellation of Indonesian, Israeli and Palestinian students revealed the influence of the relationship between language and power. For instance, Hebrew is seen as the “language of the occupation” by most Palestinians and Arabic is considered the holy language of the Qur’an for Muslims around the world, granting the language a superior status, including in Indonesia. Opting for Indonesian as the language of encounter created a more neutral atmosphere in a context where meeting people from the other “side” is often complicated.

During the academic year 2021/22, seventeen students and four lecturers from Israel, Palestine and Indonesia met for online encounters in the Indonesian