

## THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION AMBASSADOR AT *MADRASAH ALIYAH* (ISLAMIC SENIOR SCHOOL) IN PEKANBARU

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**Abstract:** *The Religious Moderation Ambassador is a very important position in schools and madrasahs that focus on religious education. The ambassador's position is to encourage religious understanding, moderation, and tolerance among the students. The research aim is to find out the roles of religious moderation ambassadors at Madrasah Aliyah Islamic Senior School) in Pekanbaru. The research was used qualitative approach. The data collection technique was interview document, text, video analysis. The data analyse by using thematic analysis approach. The sample was taken by using purposive sampling technique. Six religious moderation ambassadors were chosen as the participants of the research. The research fundings that the roles of religious moderation ambassador are promoting tolerance and pluralism, organizing interfaith activities, being conflict resolution, role model in integrating religious moderation into the school environment.*

**Keywords:** *Religious Moderation Ambassador; Role; Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah*

### INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation is a balanced and measured approach to religious beliefs, practices, and expressions. It is taking a position that is somewhere in the middle of extreme interpretations and practices. It encourages tolerance, acceptance, and understanding between people of different faiths or within the same faith community<sup>1</sup>. Religious moderation is viewed as a means to combat religious extremism and sectarianism, thereby contributing to a more peaceful and tolerant global community<sup>2</sup>. It plays a crucial role in diverse and multicultural societies by bridging the gaps between religious groups and

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<sup>1</sup> Azhar Azhar, "Promoting Religious Moderation through Islamic Education Studies Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic in Bima," *EL-HIKMAH: Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022): 115–34, <https://doi.org/10.20414/elhikmah.v16i2.6238>.

<sup>2</sup> Fakhruddin Azmi, Saripuddin Daulay, "Religious Moderation," *PENDALAS: Jurnal Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.47006/pendalas.v2i1.92>.

fostering mutual respect and understanding<sup>3</sup>. Religious moderation is not synonymous with religious indifference or the watering down of one's faith<sup>4</sup>. Rather, it is about adopting a balanced and compassionate approach while upholding one's religion's fundamental principles and values.

In today's world, which is becoming more connected and diverse, religious moderation has become an important part of schools<sup>5</sup>. A Madrasah, which is traditionally known as an Islamic school, is a very important part of teaching students about religion<sup>6</sup>. But because of changes in society and the need for religious groups to get along with each other, Madrasah Aliyah are rethinking how they teach about religion<sup>7</sup>. Madrasah Aliyah have been around for a long time, since the early days of Islam. They have been important in keeping and spreading Islamic teachings.

In recent years, calls for religious moderation at Madrasah have become more popular as societies have become more diverse and people of different faiths live together. The heart of religious moderation is finding a balance between being devoted to your faith and being open to other beliefs<sup>8</sup>. It focuses on understanding and respecting differences, encouraging people to live together, and starting open conversations<sup>9</sup>. One of the hardest parts of promoting religious moderation in Madrasah Aliyah is finding a way to combine the traditional curriculum with the educational needs of today. Religious studies are still important, but adding non-religious subjects like math, science, and languages can give students a more well-rounded and adaptable education<sup>10</sup>. This gives them the skills they need to live in a globalized world while keeping their religious identities<sup>11</sup>. Also, religious

<sup>3</sup> Tatang Sudrajat, Supiana Supiana, and Qiqi Yulianti Zakiah, "Higher Education, Nation Character, and Religious Moderation Program: A Public Policy Perspective," *Journal of Asian Social Science Research* 3, no. 1 (2021): 73–92, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jassr.v3i1.35>.

<sup>4</sup> Nuraliah Ali, "Measuring Religious Moderation Among Muslim Students at Public Colleges in Kalimantan Facing Disruption Era," *INFERENSI: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 14, no. 1 (2020): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.18326/infsl3.v14i1.1-24>.

<sup>5</sup> Abdurrahman Adi Saputera, "Tingkat Pemahaman Moderasi Beragama, Integrasi, Dan Internalisasi Pengembangan Nilai-Nilainya Di Ma.Alkhairaat Kota Gorontalo," *Moderatio* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–23.

<sup>6</sup> Hasanuddin and Nurman Ginting, "Strengthening Religious Moderation Literacy For Muhammadiyah Citizens, In The Leaders Of The Muhammadiyah Branch, Medan City, North Sumatera Indonesia," *International Journal Of Community Service* 1, no. 3 (2021): 217–24, <https://doi.org/10.51601/ijcs.v1i3.49>.

<sup>7</sup> Achmad Anwar Abidin and Muhammad Ali Murtadlo, "Curriculum Development of Multicultural-Based Islamic Education As an Effort To Weaver Religious Moderation Values in Indonesia," *International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and Multiculturalism (IJIERM)* 2, no. 1 (2020): 29–46, <https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v2i1.30>.

<sup>8</sup> Ekawati Ekawati et al., "Moderation of Higher Education Curriculum in Religious Deradicalization in Indonesia," *TARBIYA: Journal of Education in Muslim Society* 6, no. 2 (2019): 169–78, <https://doi.org/10.15408/tjems.v6i2.14886>.

<sup>9</sup> Sigit Priatmoko, Wiku Aji Sugiri, and Rizki Amelia, "Profil Moderasi Beragama Mahasiswa Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang," *Awwaliyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 5, no. 1 (2022): 29–42, <https://doi.org/10.58518/awwaliyah.v5i1.922>.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Idris and Alven Putra, "The Roles of Islamic Educational Institutions in Religious Moderation," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 25, <https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v6i1.2555>.

<sup>11</sup> Senata Adi Prasetya et al., "EPISTEMIC RATIONALITY IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: The Significance for Religious Moderation in Contemporary Indonesian Islam," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 22, no. 2 (2021): 232–63, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v22i2.12771>.

moderation calls for a change in how people are taught. Instead of rote learning, which is common in some Madrasah Aliyah, teachers should encourage students to think critically, analyze, and look at things from different points of view<sup>12</sup>. This method can help students learn more about their own faith and learn to respect the faiths of others.<sup>13</sup> Another important part of religious moderation is promoting diversity and openness<sup>14</sup>. Institutions should accept students from different cultures, economic backgrounds, and religious backgrounds<sup>15</sup>.

By doing this, Madrasah Aliyah become places where people of different faiths can talk to each other. This creates an environment where students from different backgrounds can respect and understand each other. Misconceptions and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims need to be corrected as a big part of religious moderation. Madrasah Aliyah are very important for spreading accurate information about Islam and its teachings, busting myths, and fighting Islamophobia. By doing this, these institutions can help build bridges between different groups and make society more peaceful<sup>16</sup>. In order to strengthen the understanding of religious moderation for Madrasah students, the Directorate of KSKK Madrasah Directorate General of Islamic Education is holding activities to strengthen the character development of madrasa students in religious moderation through the election of Religious Moderation Ambassadors in 2021<sup>17</sup>.

Particularly in Islamic schools such as Madrasah Aliyah Aliyah (Senior Islamic School), religious education plays a critical role in shaping the values and beliefs of students. In the diverse and multicultural environment of Pekanbaru, fostering religious moderation is essential for promoting harmony, understanding, and peaceful coexistence among students from various backgrounds. A noteworthy initiative in this regard is the establishment of the "Ambassador of Religious Moderation" program at Madrasah Aliyah Ibtidaiyah, which aims to cultivate ambassadors who can advocate for religious moderation within and beyond the school<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Moch. Tolchah et al., "The Contribution of The School of Peace as A Religious Moderation Implementation," *Al-Ulum* 21, no. 1 (2021): 50–68, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v21i1.2199>.

<sup>13</sup> Ulfatul Husna and Muhammad Thohir, "Religious Moderation as a New Approach to Learning Islamic Religious Education in Schools," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 1 (2020): 199–222, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2020.14.1.5766>.

<sup>14</sup> Zulkipli Lessy and Miftahur Rohman, "Muslim Millennial Youths Infusing Religious Moderation: A Case Study Approach to Investigate Their Attitude," *Dialogia* 20, no. 1 (2022): 1–27, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v20i1.3791>.

<sup>15</sup> Faisal S. Kamaludin, Tata S. Purnama, and Zirmansyah, "Religious Moderation Strategy in the Virtual Era and Its Implication To Improving the Quality of Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2021): 205–16, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v7i2.14944>.

<sup>16</sup> Ngainun Naim, Abdul Aziz, and Teguh Teguh, "Integration of Madrasah Diniyah Learning Systems for Strengthening Religious Moderation in Indonesian Universities," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education* 11, no. 1 (2022): 108–19, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i1.22210>.

<sup>17</sup> Sumarto Sumarto, "Implementasi Program Moderasi Beragama Kementerian Agama Ri," *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru* 3, no. 1 (2021): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.47783/jurpendigu.v3i1.294>.

<sup>18</sup> Abu Kasim, "Enam Siswa MAN 4 Pekanbaru Jadi Duta Moderasi Beragama," [www.riapos.jawapos.com](http://www.riapos.jawapos.com), 2022, <https://riapos.jawapos.com/pekanbaru/24/11/2022/288594/enam-siswa-man-4-pekanbaru-jadi-duta-moderasi-beragama.html>.

Religious education is crucial in shaping the minds and beliefs of young students, particularly in a society as diverse and multicultural as Indonesia<sup>19</sup>. Madrasah Aliyah Ibtidaiyah, or the Islamic Senior School in Pekanbaru, accepts the responsibility of fostering religious comprehension, tolerance, and moderation among its students. To accomplish this essential objective, the school has created the position of Religious Moderation Ambassador<sup>20</sup>.

In a pluralistic society like that of Pekanbaru, religious moderation is essential for fostering mutual respect and tolerance among people of different religious affiliations. Religious moderation encourages students to focus on values shared by all religions and fosters an environment of acceptance and tolerance. By recognizing and respecting differences, the Ambassador of Religious Moderation program seeks to foster an environment that promotes peaceful coexistence and reduces the likelihood of religiously-motivated conflicts.

Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru recognizes the significance of cultivating future religiously moderate leaders. The "Ambassador of Religious Moderation" program is a proactive measure taken by the school administration to equip students with the skills necessary to become advocates of peace, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue. Students with leadership potential and a commitment to promoting positive change within the school community are targeted by the program. The researchers conducted research about the Ambassador of Religious Moderation in Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru.

## METHODS

The research is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is an effective method for gaining in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences and complex social phenomena. It provides a more nuanced and contextual understanding of the investigated topic, complementing the quantitative research method in the broader research landscape. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that seeks to comprehend and interpret social phenomena from the participants' perspectives. It focuses on investigating the richness and complexity of real-world human experiences, emotions, behaviours, and interactions. The research sampling method was Purposive Sampling. The research participants are 6 students who had chosen as religious moderation ambassador in Pekanbaru. Methods for collecting data, such as semi-structured interviews, and document, text, video analysis. The data analysed was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a common qualitative research technique for identifying, analysing, and reporting data patterns (themes). It entails systematically organizing and interpreting textual or visual data in order to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, perspectives, or phenomena being investigated<sup>21</sup>. Thematic analysis is particularly helpful for researchers who wish to

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<sup>19</sup> Nurman Ginting et al., "Memperkuat Nalar Teologi Islam Moderat Dalam Menyikapi Pandemi Covid-19 Di Pimpinan Ranting Pemuda Muhammadiyah Bandar Pulau Pekan," *Martabe : Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (2021): 30, <https://doi.org/10.31604/jpm.v4i1.30-40>.

<sup>20</sup> Kasim, "Enam Siswa MAN 4 Pekanbaru Jadi Duta Moderasi Beragama."

<sup>21</sup> Farah Ahmed, "Exploring Halaqah as Research Method: A Tentative Approach to Developing Islamic Research Principles within a Critical 'indigenous' Framework," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 27, no. 5 (2014): 561–83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2013.805852>.

investigate the richness and complexity of their data and uncover their underlying meanings and patterns.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Religious Moderation Ambassador**

The Religious Moderation Ambassador is an important and unique position within the school community. This position is assigned to a responsible and knowledgeable individual, typically a teacher, who has a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings and values and the ability to communicate effectively with students, faculty, and parents. The primary objective of this position is to promote religious moderation and tolerance among students, thereby fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and inclusiveness.

When the participants were asked “What is the religious moderation ambassador?” They answered, P1: “The Religious Moderation Ambassador is a very important position in schools and madrasahs that focus on religious education. They promote the religious moderation. P2: “The Religious Moderation ambassadors are the students who deal with religious tolerance, understanding, and moderation.” P3: “The Religious Moderation Ambassador are students who are very important to making sure that students from different religious backgrounds can live together peacefully. P4: “The Religious Moderation Ambassador is students who are in charge of a lot of different things. Their job is to encourage religious tolerance among students through different activities, workshops, and talks. The goal is to show how important it is to understand and respect different religious beliefs. P5 and P6: “The ambassador also encourages dialogue between different religions by setting up meetings where students from different faiths can share their ideas, experiences, and beliefs. These talks help people from different religions appreciate and understand each other's beliefs.”

From the interviews concluded that the Religious Moderation Ambassador is a prominent position within educational institutions, especially in schools or madrasahs that emphasize religious education. The ambassador is responsible for promoting religious tolerance, understanding, and moderation among the students. They play a vital role in fostering an environment in which students from diverse religious backgrounds can coexist peacefully. The Religious Moderation Ambassador has multiple responsibilities. Through various activities, workshops, and discussions, they are tasked with promoting religious tolerance among students. The objective is to emphasize the significance of understanding and respecting diverse religious beliefs. Moreover, the ambassador promotes interfaith dialogue by organizing sessions in which students from diverse religious backgrounds share their perspectives, experiences, and beliefs. These dialogues promote mutual appreciation and understanding of diverse religions.

An essential aspect of the ambassador's role is to dispel myths and generalizations about different religions. They provide accurate information and address prejudices that may result from ignorance or lack of exposure to different religions. In addition, the ambassador is responsible for organizing and celebrating religious events and holidays of

various faiths within the school community. This enables students to appreciate the cultural diversity and significance of various religious rituals. In times of interreligious conflict or misunderstanding, the Religious Moderation Ambassador acts as a mediator, promoting peaceful resolution and fostering empathy.

The ambassador engages with parents, families, and the broader community to spread the message of religious moderation beyond school grounds. Community service activities strengthen the institution's commitment to religious harmony. The Religious Moderation Ambassador is also expected to serve as a role model for students by demonstrating religious moderation in their behavior, language, and interactions. The Religious Moderation Ambassador has a significant impact. They contribute to a culture of respect and acceptance within the school community by promoting religious tolerance and understanding. Through interfaith dialogues and activities, students build strong interpersonal relationships, thereby dismantling barriers and fostering a sense of unity. The ambassador's efforts reduce religious prejudice and stereotypes, fostering an environment that is more inclusive and tolerant. By empowering students with religious moderation lessons, the ambassador contributes to the development of future community leaders who promote peace and harmony. Engaging with parents and the larger community reinforces the significance of religious harmony by strengthening ties between the school and society.

In conclusion, the Religious Moderation Ambassador plays a crucial role in promoting religious understanding, tolerance, and moderation in educational institutions. Students from diverse religious backgrounds can flourish and coexist peacefully as a result of their efforts to foster an environment that is harmonious and inclusive.

### **The Roles of Religious Moderation Ambassador**

The ambassador encourages students to embrace diversity and respect the beliefs of others. The ambassador helps students understand the significance of religious tolerance and unity by organizing workshops, discussions, and cultural events. Selected students within the Ambassador of Religious Moderation program assume a variety of responsibilities in order to effectively fulfill their roles. Importance of the role of a Religious Moderation Ambassador in promoting tolerance and pluralism in a community or society. These ambassadors serve as influential agents of change, fostering an atmosphere of tolerance, respect, and coexistence among individuals of various religious backgrounds. Through their efforts, they seek to create a world in which people of different faiths can coexist peacefully, respect one another's differences, and work toward common goals. Their primary duties consist of:

#### **A. Promoting Tolerance and Pluralism**

By instilling values of tolerance and moderation, the Religious Moderation Ambassador fosters a sense of unity and harmony among students of different religious backgrounds, thereby strengthening the school's social environment.

When the participants were asked “what is the rules of religious moderation ambassador” they answer; P2: “religious moderation ambassadors play a key role in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding.” P1: “religious moderation ambassador

help set up interfaith and interfaith dialogues to help people learn more about religions and dispel myths. They work with religious leaders to make sure that different points of view are respected and given a voice.” P4: “religious moderation ambassadors also try to clear up misunderstandings and stereotypes between religious groups.” P5: religious moderation ambassador act as mediators in conflicts and try to make the world a better place for everyone.” P6: As the religious moderation ambassadors fostering tolerance and pluralism as part of our mission.”

From the interview concluded that the promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding is central to the ambassador's role. They initiate and facilitate interfaith and intrafaith dialogues, providing individuals with a safe and respectful environment to discuss their beliefs, traditions, and practices. By encouraging open dialogue, they promote a deeper understanding of various religions and dispel myths that may have persisted for generations. These conversations help individuals find common ground and build bridges of empathy and trust, laying the groundwork for a society that is harmonious and inclusive. Furthermore, Religious Moderation Ambassadors advocate for inclusion in their communities. They work with religious and community leaders to ensure that diverse religious perspectives are respected and represented. By collaborating to eliminate discrimination based on religious differences, they hope to create an environment where people of all faiths feel welcome. Their dedication to fostering inclusivity helps combat prejudices and stereotypes, thereby dismantling barriers that may have hindered the development of meaningful relationships between religious communities.

In their efforts to promote tolerance and pluralism, ambassadors address possible misconceptions and stereotypes between religious groups. They serve as mediators in conflicts caused by misunderstandings, pursuing peaceful resolutions and reconciliation. Their role in defusing tensions through dialogue and mutual understanding is essential for preventing the escalation of conflicts and fostering an environment of mutual respect.

## **B. Organizing Interfaith Activities**

When the participant ask “What is the activity that The Religious Moderation Ambassador does to promote religious moderation?” They answer P1: The Religious Moderation Ambassador make a religious activity in Rohis or Rohani islam organization. It is also helped by teacher and OSIS ” P2, P3, P6: “The religious moderation Ambassador promotes tolerance by establishing community outreach programs, fostering religious harmony, and organizing events, workshops, and seminars for diverse faiths. The school, teacher, and OSIS organization help us to make the activity. “ P4; By making events and cooperation among diverse communities, parents, School and etc.”

From the interview concluded that by organizing community outreach programs, the Religious Moderation Ambassador extends the message of tolerance beyond the school's walls. These initiatives reinforce the importance of religious harmony by building bridges between the school, families, and the greater community. The ambassador must also organize interreligious events, workshops, and seminars. These

events provide opportunities for people of various faiths to come together, share their experiences, and build relationships based on mutual tolerance and respect. By demonstrating the power of unity and cooperation, these events highlight the underlying values and principles shared by diverse religious traditions

### **C. Conflict Resolution**

When the researcher asked the participants “What will the religious moderation ambassador do in religious conflict? ” They answer P2: “ Religious moderation Ambassadors help settle religious disputes peacefully.” P1; “Religious Moderation Ambassadors encourage interfaith cooperation on social issues.” P3; Religious Moderation Ambassadors encourage religious communities to work together the problems.” P5: “Religious Moderation Ambassadors show the power of collaboration in solving shared problems.”

Ambassadors serve as mediators in potential religious disputes, assisting in the resolution of misunderstandings and conflicts through peaceful means. Religious Moderation Ambassadors also promote interfaith cooperation in addressing societal issues. They encourage religious communities to collaborate on shared social issues, such as poverty alleviation, education, and environmental protection. They demonstrate the transformative impact of collective action and the strength of unity in addressing shared challenges by collaborating.

### **D. Role Model**

When the researchers asked the participant “What should religious moderation do to be to give an example of ideal students in implementing religious moderation?” they answer P5: ” Religious moderation ambassadors has model religious moderation and inspire others.” P1: “Religious Moderation Ambassadors model tolerance, respect, and pluralism.” P2 Religious Moderation Ambassadors encourage religious moderation. P3: “Religious Moderation Ambassadors must be causing a community-wide positive change. P3: Religious Moderation Ambassadors must have commitment to their values inspires others to be more accepting of religious moderation.” P4, P6 : “must be a good role models. “

From the interview concluded that as role models, ambassadors exemplify religious moderation in their actions and behaviors, inspiring others to do the same. Religious Moderation Ambassadors serve as role models by embodying the values of tolerance, respect, and pluralism through their actions and behaviors. They motivate others to embrace religious moderation, causing a ripple effect of positive change throughout the community. Their genuine dedication to the values they advocate serves as motivation for others to adopt a more open and inclusive mindset.

The ambassador collaborates with teachers to incorporate lessons on moderation and tolerance into the curriculum of the school. This strategy ensures that religious values are taught in a manner that fosters a balanced and tolerant perspective. Ambassadors actively engage with schools and educational institutions, recognizing the importance of education in shaping the next generation. They conduct workshops, seminars, and



awareness campaigns to instill moderation and respect in children at a young age. Ambassadors foster a generation that embraces diversity and actively contributes to a harmonious and inclusive society by instilling these values in young minds.

Establishing trust and meaningful relationships among religious leaders, community members, and institutions is an additional crucial aspect of the ambassador's role. These ties create a network that reinforces the message of religious moderation and its significance for promoting peaceful coexistence. By collaborating, religious leaders and community members can use their combined influence to promote tolerance and pluralism in society as a whole

## CONCLUSION

The Ambassador of Religious Moderation program at Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru is an admirable effort to instill tolerance, respect, and understanding in the hearts and minds of young people. By cultivating a new generation of religiously moderate leaders, the school plays a crucial role in fostering a harmonious and cohesive society in Pekanbaru in which differences are celebrated and mutual respect reigns. The establishment of the Religious Moderation Ambassador position at Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru demonstrates the institution's dedication to cultivating students who exemplify the values of religious moderation, tolerance, and inclusiveness. By promoting interfaith dialogue, addressing misconceptions, and fostering open-mindedness, the ambassador plays a crucial role in molding the minds of young people to become responsible and compassionate citizens. This role has a positive influence on the larger community and contributes to a more harmonious and peaceful Pekanbaru society.

In conclusion, the role of a Religious Moderation Ambassador is multifaceted and essential for the promotion of tolerance and pluralism. Through the promotion of dialogue, inclusiveness, and interfaith collaboration, ambassadors seek to break down barriers and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. By addressing misconceptions, setting an exemplary example, and collaborating with educational institutions, they contribute to the formation of a future generation that embraces diversity and strives to build a harmonious and inclusive society. Their efforts to build bridges between religious communities and promote peaceful coexistence are essential to the creation of a world in which people of all faiths can coexist in unity and harmony

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