

**SEEDING HOPE, HARVESTING FAITH
Mainstreaming Moderate Religiosity
among Female Teachers of Early
Childhood Education**

**CISForm UIN Yogyakarta - PPIM UIN Jakarta
CONVEY INDONESIA**

CONVEY REPORT

SEEDING HOPE, HARVESTING FAITH:
Mainstreaming Moderate Religiosity among Female
Teachers of Early Childhood Education

Vol. 4 | Issue 2 | 2021

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Publisher:

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SEEDING HOPE, HARVESTING FAITH: Mainstreaming Moderate Religiosity among Female Teachers of Early Childhood Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Numerous studies and publications have highlighted that school-age children and youth are among the most vulnerable target groups for extremism and intolerant beliefs. Research conducted by PPIM, for example, underlines that Islamic schools are proven to be among the potential institutions targeted as breeding grounds for religious extremism or radicalism (PPIM 2018, PPIM 2019). It is alarming, moreover, as the discourse of radicalism in Islamic schools involves teachers as the main actors, their role significant in transmitting the spread of exclusivism, radicalism and violent-extremism among children in Islamic schools. Furthermore, the survey conducted by PPIM (2018) “Faded Light: A Portrait of Religious Teacher in Indonesia” shows a high level of intolerant and radical views among teachers in Indonesian, from kindergarten to high school level. The data shows that 56% of teachers disagree that non-Muslims should be allowed to establish a faith-based school in their neighborhood, while 21% of teachers believe that their neighbors of different religions should not be given permission to hold religious services in their homes. This study also shows an alarming phenomenon where teachers at the lower level of education, elementary and pre-school level, are proven to be less tolerant than those in the higher level of education, junior and senior high schools. This survey has put female teachers in the spotlight as in some variables they appear to be more intolerant than their male counterparts. Female teachers, for example, shows higher levels of intolerance against followers of other religions compared to male teachers. The survey shows that female teachers have higher levels in regards to radical views and intended radical actions.

It is unfortunate, however, that studies and projects on the issue of schools and radicalism tend to focus more on issues occurring at the high school and college level, based on the large number of youths involved in cases of violence radicalism. Little attention is given to the discourse of radicalism and violent-extremism at the elementary and pre-school level. Yet studies which have been undertaken strongly demonstrate that elementary schools and even pre-school institutions are no less vulnerable to be targeted as platforms for the development of intolerant and radical beliefs among children in the society.

The Center for the Study of Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm), based at the State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, is one among the prominent CSOs who has been working in the area of de-radicalization, employing alternative approaches, including soft-measures, focused on alleged radical institutions and other vulnerable groups. Alongside the government efforts to counter radicalism through hard-measures, it is essential for NGOs and other elements of society to be involved in such de-radicalization actions through soft-measures. In the last ten years, CISForm has been initiating various long-term projects, such as "Mainstreaming Moderate Islam among the Youth through Animated Movies" (2017) and "Enlightening Comics" (2016), as well as series of workshops involving conservative Islamic schools. In regards to the workshops with schools, CISForm focuses the projects on various issues/angles, i.e., social advocacy workshop (2014), leadership workshops (2012), active learning workshops (2011), and library improvement (2010). CISForm also continues its commitment to mainstreaming moderate Islam in all levels of education, including early childhood education (PAUD). In this regards CISForm employs various cultural approaches, as it is believed that such approaches are proven to be successful in supporting the project of countering radicalism initiated by the government and other related NGOs.

Through this project, CISForm targets female PAUD teachers. It is expected that strengthening their capacity is not only vital to transforming these teachers into active agents to promote the discourse of tolerance and peace at the school level, but also within society in general. This project also aims to strengthen the capacity of female PAUD teachers

to counter the spread of conservatism, exclusivism, intolerance, and extremism among children at the pre-school level. In addition to the lack of training and capacity building for PAUD teachers, it is the goal of this project to contribute to the production of teachers who are able to promote messages of tolerance and peace in the school environment.

Target and Aims of the Project

For the reasons noted above, it is intended that this project targets mainly female teachers at the level of early childhood education (Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini/ PAUD), especially Kindergarten (Taman Kanak-kanak/TK and Raudhatul Athfal/RA) in 3 (three) cities; Yogyakarta, Solo Raya, and Salatiga. Among the criteria in which these three cities have been selected for this project, are the proximity of these cities to various religious movements in Indonesia, and also the fact that these cities – especially Solo Raya – are noted in the data of BNPT (National Counter-terrorism Agency) as among the country's red zone areas. Yogyakarta, for example, despite its various attributes of multiculturalism, is ranked in the top 10 cities with the lowest tolerance level (Setara, 2018). Solo Raya has long been in the spotlight due to various cases of terrorism. This city is one of the red zone areas, not only in Central Java but also in Indonesia in general, for spreading radicalism and terrorism. A number of perpetrators of radical acts and terrorism are linked to Solo Raya, such as Slamet Pilih, Nuim Baasyir, Ibrahim, and David (2013), Abdul Rochim, and Sugeng Riyadi (2019). These figures are linked to Islamic organizations which lean toward radicalism, such as the Jamaah Ansharud-Daulah (JAD) and Islamic State of Iraq and Suriah (ISIS). In comparison, Salatiga is selected as it is a city included in the top 10 cities in Indonesia with the highest level of tolerant. It is expected that the diverse backgrounds of these three cities will provide a comprehensive picture of the circumstances of pre-school institutions in Indonesia, especially as they relate to the capacity of their teachers.

The project focuses on examining the resilience of female PAUD teachers towards radicalism and intolerant beliefs at the early childhood education. It is the aim of the project to strengthen the capacity of female PAUD teachers to counter the spread of conservatism, exclusivism,

intolerance, and extremism among children at the pre-school level. As a long-term goal, it is expected that this project will contribute to the government's agenda to transform the significant role of female PAUD teachers to be active agents in promoting the discourse of tolerance, inclusive Islam, and peace in the society.

Assessment

An intensive assessment was conducted as one of the most important activities of the project, aimed to explore the views of female PAUD teachers and to examine further their resilience towards issues of exclusivism, intolerance, radicalism and violent-extremism at the early childhood education in Indonesia. The data for the assessment was collected by employing mixed-methods; online survey, interview/focused group discussion (FGD), and participatory observation.

Online Survey

The online survey was conducted between 15 to 31 December 2020, involving 631 female teachers, who were recruited from more than 3,000 randomly contacted teachers from the three cities; 218 participants from Yogyakarta (Kotamadya Yogyakarta, Sleman and Bantul), 262 participants from the greater Solo areas or Solo Raya (Kotamadya, Surakarta, Sukoharjo, Boyolali, and Karanganyar), and 151 participants from Salatiga (all sub districts in Salatiga city and some other districts of Semarang). The respondents include those who are from Kindergarten/Taman Kanak-kanak (401), Raudlatul Athfal (223), and Bustanul Athfal (2). These early childhood education institutions are mainly (615) private, with very few (16) of them being public. The private institutions are affiliated with various Islamic organizations including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah/'Aisyiyah, Al-Irsyad, Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an, as well as Tarbawi and Salafy.

The teachers' views and attitudes towards the issues were examined based on Bassam Tibi's (2012) theory of Islamism, which outlined six criteria, namely: 1) Islamic purification, 2) formalization of Islamic Shari'a, 3) anti-democracy, 4) anti-other religion, 5) anti-Western

and 6) application of violence. Variables related to gender sensitivity were also included as a cross-cutting theme.

Referring to the the above-mentioned Bassam Tibi's six variables of Islamism, the online survey found that in general the vast majority of teachers are in the medium level in regards to their score of Islamism (74.2%), 12.4% of the respondents in the low level, and those who are identified to have high level of Islamism 13.5%. Such trend in the level of Islamism among teachers appears to be similar across all three cities; Yogyakarta, Solo and Salatiga, in which the vast majority of teachers in these three cities are in the medium level in regards to their score of Islamism.

	Frequency	Percentage
Low	78	12.4
Medium	468	74.2
High	85	13.5
Total	631	100.0

Figure 1. Respondents' Islamism score distribution

In more detail, the survey highlights the response of female teachers relating to some items from the six variables of Islamism. For example, even though these female teachers are noted to be moderate in their response to the variables of Islamic purification and formalization of Shari'a, the data shows different findings in other aspects, where the mean score is relatively high. Regardless of the fact that they appear to be moderate, for example, 25,99% of them have reservations to opening a conventional bank account due to the halal issue of interest (*riba'*). This could be attributed to the anti-*riba'* and ex-bank movements that have been popular in recent years in Indonesia. In addition, 58,16% of these teachers endorse a long style head covering for children. Furthermore, on the topic of anti-democracy, the survey reveals that their level of anti-nationalism is quite high as shown by the following responses: (1) Pancasila is not compatible with Islam (6,66%), (2) the government is thoghut and therefore not to be obeyed (5,55%),

(3) flag-raising ceremonies could damage our faith (5,07%), and (4) every Muslim is responsible to ensure that the khilafah system is adopted because others are perceived as kafir (un-Islamic) (19,33%).

In terms of their relationships with the religious other, the following survey data shows their level of Islamism: even though the percentage of the teachers who teach students to not interact with non-Muslims is relatively small (7,61%), there are 56,1% who adhere to the view that conveying greetings to non-Muslims on their holy days means affirming their belief. In addition, there are 62,7% who forbid their students to convey holy days greetings to non-Muslims. The teacher's perceptions on the West/foreign display a significant level of Islamism. There are 36,13% who believe that all Western countries are against Islam. In addition, 32,33% suggest boycotting Western products, and 49,76% argue that Chinese immigrants to Indonesia might incite the revival of communism and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

Our survey also affirms a high level of perception on the use of violence. 77,34% state that they support Islamic mass organizations to raid against places deemed as immoral, and 11,41% agree that equipping children with guns during the PAUD parade could enhance

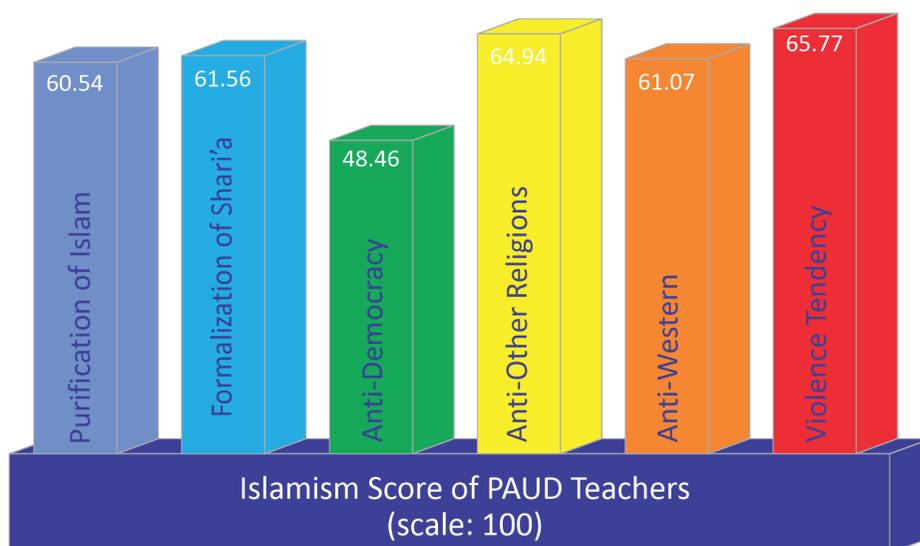


Figure 2. The Islamism Score of PAUD Teachers

their enthusiasm for jihad. In line with other findings, our survey reveals that on the one hand the teachers are highly gender sensitive because 91.6% of them state that women should have the same opportunity as that of men to become leaders. However, on the other hand, 33,12% argue that when they have male and female students in a class, the leader should be a male student. This is an important finding because where gender equity and gender justice is not present, the values of tolerance do not develop.

In regards to the curriculum, the majority (99,21%) of PAUD teachers have learned and claimed to understand the government curriculum. However, 7,77% believe that the teaching and learning process at TK/RA should not follow the government curriculum. In addition, 11,25% of them argue that the government curriculum is insufficient to be implemented as guidance for religious education at TK/RA, and 14,42% state that the reference to tolerance in the curriculum is not in line with Islamic belief.

Focused Group Discussion and Observation

To maintain the validity and reliability of the data findings from the online survey, the project employed focused group discussion, interviews and observation. In general, the qualitative data from FGD and observation emphasizes the findings from online survey, while some provide further exploration and clarification to some issues highlighted in the survey. For example, as noted above, some schools segregate female and male students, which might be identified as an issue related to gender bias. However, some teachers clarify that the gender segregation does not necessarily means gender bias as in some cases it is merely based on pragmatic issues as to minimize bullying against female students. The survey also did not capture any indication that female teachers condone violence in their learning process, yet the fact that some schools include sirah nabawiyah, stories from the life of the Prophet, in their curriculum with high emphasis on stories of violence and war. Such findings provide alternative insight in the ways the project analyzes the numeric data from the survey.

The differences in curriculum between general PAUD under the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) and Islamic-based

PAUD under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) is another factor identified from FGD to have an impact on teachers' approaches in their learning process. In the general Kindergarten, Islamic education is placed under the subject of Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI). Whereas Islamic-based Kindergarten offers more subjects related to Islam and therefore its curriculum is more similar to RA, with an emphasis on the integration of science and religion. These differences are reflected in the religious milieu of the schools. In the general Kindergarten, religious subjects are delivered within the frame of nationalism, especially when there are non-Muslim students in the class. It is for this reason that religious tolerance within such school develops quite well. The celebration of religious holy days, for example, becomes the medium to introduce different religions. However, there is an increasing emphasis on religious teaching (PAI) at the general Kindergarten based on demands from the parents. There is an increasing trend for parents to send their children to Islamic-based Kindergarten due to the belief that the children will have better knowledge and practices of Islamic teachings, in addition to being smart. For this reason, in some general Kindergarten PAI is given a greater portion in addition to the wearing of Muslim dress and memorizing Qur'anic verses at school. This has led to the demand of PAI teachers with related backgrounds. In reality however, some non-specialist PAI teachers are forced to teach the subject due to the lack of such teachers at the schools.

In Raudhatul Athfal, Islamic subjects are central, whereas in Islamic-based Kindergarten, especially TK Islam Terpadu (Islamic Integrated Kindergarten), the curriculum integrates science and Islamic teachings, even though Islamic teaching materials and approaches are also inserted within secular subjects. The teaching on nationalism at Islamic-based Kindergarten and RA is conducted through various means, including: (1) Introducing Pancasila and memorizing it as well as conducting the flag-raising ceremony; (2) Introducing Pancasila, but not memorizing it, and conducting the flag-raising ceremony, with or without honoring the flag; (3) Does not introduce Pancasila but Islamic values instead, arguing that Islamic values are in line with Pancasila. Quite often they do not conduct the flag-raising ceremony.

Teachers' Level of Islamism and Its Impact on the Learning Process

	B	Std. Error	t	P-Value
Constant	13,096	1,236	10,593	0,000*
Pandangan Islamisme Guru	0,624	0,025	25,316	0,000*
Model Regresi				
	Pembelajaran = 13,096 + (0,624* Pandangan Islamisme Guru) + Error			
Uji F	F = 640,886		P-value=0,000*	
Adjusted R Square	Adj R2 = 0,504			
Korelasi	R = 0,710			

*Signifikan pada $\alpha=0,05$

Figure 3. The Influence of Teachers' Level of Islamism on Teaching-Learning Process

It is the aim of the assessment, as noted above, to explore religious views and attitudes of female PAUD teachers towards issues of exclusivism, intolerance, radicalism and violent-extremism. Furthermore, the assessment aims to examine the extent to which their personal views and attitudes of these teachers impact the learning process in PAUD.

The data from the survey shows that the teachers' religious views and attitudes significantly influence their teaching method and the content of teaching ($F=640,886$; $p<0,05$). This means that students' religious understanding is greatly influenced by their teachers (50,5%). This is supported by the number of teachers who shared their stories during FGD and interviews on how students reminded their parents at home on the obligation to wear Muslim dress as prescribed by their school teachers. This point emphasises to us the importance of providing a progressive understanding of Islam to the teachers, especially in relation to moderate religiosity and religious tolerance.

In regards to the six variables of Islamism, 1) Islamic purification, 2) formalization of Islamic Shari'a, 3) anti-democracy, 4) anti-other religion, 5) anti-Western and 6) application of violence, the analysis notes that

teachers' level of Islamism as it relates to the fourth variable (anti-other religion) appears to have the highest influence (33.7%) to the way they deliver learning activities at school. The influence of the variable of anti-democracy noted to be in the level of 6.7%, variable of Islamic purification (2.2%), variables of anti-Western (0.8%), variable of formalization of Sharia (0.3%), while variable of condoning violence appears to have no impact the teachers' learning process. It is important to note that variables related to gender sensitivity, which is a cross-cutting theme, appear to have influence (12.6%) in the learning activities performed by female PAUD teachers.

Development of Module, Training and Evaluation

Based on the survey findings and FGD for the teachers, CISForm has developed a training module which has received feedback from various stakeholders, including: Sub Directorate of PAUD, Directorate of PAI MORA, Directorate of GTK PAUD MONE, local education authorities (Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten/Kota), provincial and district offices of MORA (within which our research is conducted), associations of TK and RA teachers (IGABA, IGRA, IGTKI), Communication Forum of PAI teachers at TK (national, province, and districts levels), as well as academics (Study programs of PIAUD at IAIN/UIN).

The module consists of seven important themes, namely: (1) Returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah; (2) Creating a religious atmosphere at school; (3) Seeding the kernel of Indonesian nation; (4) Islam as the religion of mercy; (5) Embracing the other; (6) Reviving religious values at early childhood education. CISForm have also conducted a series of try-out programs before finally applying the module as intensive training for female teachers of TK/RA. The training was organized in the three target cities, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Salatiga on the 12 and 13 February 2021. The training involved 100 female teachers who have previously participated in our survey and FGD. The training, which applied andragogical method, was enthusiastically welcome by the participants.

A pre-test and a post-test was conducted as part of the evaluation process for the training. Both tests affirmed that the training was significantly effective in enriching the perspective of the participants

Aspects of Islamism	Average Score		Decreasing Value (%)
	Pre-test	Post-test	
Purification of Islam	7.644	7.34	3.966
Formalisation of Shari'a	7.574	7.085	6.458
Anti-Democracy	5.554	5.117	7.875
Anti-Other Religions	6.634	6.149	7.307
Anti-Western	5.149	4.713	8.464
Violence Tendency	6.644	6.128	7.765
Gender Insensitivity	6.931	5.926	14.503
Total/Average	46.129	42.457	7.959

Figure 3. Pre-Test and Post-Test Islamism Scores

toward a more inclusive and moderate understanding of Islam. A significant positive change was witnessed in the views of the female teachers on religion and nationalism.

Recommendations

- 1) The data from the survey shows that teachers' religious views and attitudes significantly influence the method and the content of their teaching ($F=640,886$; $p<0,05$), which means that students' religious understanding is greatly influenced by their teachers (50,5%). This fact urges the government and all related stakeholders to provide training aimed at broadening their religious perspective and nationalism. Such training could be most beneficial if compulsory for all PAUD teachers, not only those who teach religious subject but also others who teach general subjects, because at Islamic-based Kindergarten, general subjects are also integrated with Islamic teachings.
- 2) Trainings on moderate religiosity for TK/RA teachers using andragogical method, which at the same time strengthens wasathiyah Islam and nationalism stated in point 1 above could be conducted by involving moderate Islamic mass organizations and Islamic higher educational institutions (STAIN, IAIN, UIN). While acknowledging that

training is not the sole means to enhancing moderate religiosity, we argue that with the right training materials these methods have been proven to be effective.

- 3) The findings that 7,77% PAUD teachers believe that the teaching and learning process at TK/RA should not follow the government curriculum and that the government curriculum is insufficient to be implemented as guidance for religious education at TK/RA (11,25%), and that the reference on tolerance in the curriculum is not in line with Islamic belief (14,42%), underlines further the need of intensive dissemination of the national curriculum. There needs to be an official procedure and mechanism to monitor the implementation of the curriculum that could be monitored, which could also be connected to school accreditation system as well as teacher's certification process.
- 4) This calls for a specific regulation issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which underlines the embedding of nationalist values at PAUD. This could at least be done through revising the existing Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic Indonesia, Number 146/2014 about "Curriculum 2013 for Early Childhood Education/PAUD," article 5, verse 1 by inserting "nationalist values" within the PAUD curriculum. Alternatively, this could also be conducted through the revision of the existing Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic Indonesia, Number 18/2018 on "Provision of services for PAUD," article 11 by inserting control over curriculum on nationalism as part of the national and local government responsibilities.
- 5) In regards to the issues of nationalism and Pancasila, the government needs to be more explicit in enforcing PAUD students to receive an introduction to Pancasila, memorizing its principles, values, and conducting flag-raising ceremonies once a week minimum, in addition to memorizing songs that could enhance nationalism.
- 6) The inclusion of Sirah Nabawiyah (The history of the Prophet) in the curriculum in order to learn from the prophet's good deeds as well as the history of Islam in Indonesia. This should underline the narratives which reflect social ethics, humanity, harmony, cooperation,

tolerance, and not on the narration of wars.

- 7) The data related to teachers' gender sensitivity urges the need of building strong perspective on gender equity and justice among female teachers, which will strongly influence their concept of tolerance. There needs to be comprehensive trainings on gender equity and justice that are based on Islamic foundation texts, the Qur'an and Sunnah. This could be conducted in collaborations with various Centers for Gender Mainstreaming and Children Rights at Islamic higher education institutions.
- 8) Our research also finds that teachers often do not have sufficient teaching materials on inclusive interpretations of religion and materials on nationalism that are attractive for PAUD students. Because of this, teaching materials, including videos, and methods of teachings must be developed which could be easily disseminated through social media.
- 9) Some local education authorities (Dinas Pendidikan) could require PAUD teachers and students, including Islamic-based Kindergarten to wear traditional dresses on certain days in the week. This could be duplicated in RA under Kemenag and be implemented nationally. Schools could be provided space to accommodate this request by, for example, combining the traditional dress with head covers to comply with the school's uniform.

TENTANG CISFORM

Center for the Study of Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm) adalah lembaga penelitian di Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta yang bergerak di bidang studi Islam dan transformasi sosial. Sebagai lembaga penelitian, CISForm mengembangkan penelitian interdisipliner dan mengkaji berbagai isu-isu aktual dalam konteks Indonesia, khususnya yang terkait dengan proses modern-transformasi sosial yang terus bergulir. Laju modernisasi dan globalisasi disertai pergeseran keragaman dan rasionalitas telah membuka ragam peluang bagi kemajuan sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya.

CISForm memposisikan diri sebagai pusat penelitian interdisipliner yang berminat pada isu-isu multikulturalisme, dialog antar agama, radikalisme, ekstremisme serta pertentangan antara Islam dan budaya lokal. CISForm juga sangat memperhatikan keragaman permasalahan sosial yang menghantui lingkup luas dalam masyarakat muslim di Indonesia, seperti: kemiskinan, keterbelakangan, dan kekerasan.

CISForm terus berkontribusi dalam menjadikan Islam sebagai agama mayoritas di Indonesia agar mampu berkiprah dalam mengarungi dan mengatasi permasalahan tersebut. Lembaga ini juga mengembangkan program-program yang menghasilkan publikasi berupa buku, jurnal, dan karya-karya lain yang dapat diakses para akademisi secara luas, baik dalam maupun luar negeri. Publikasi tersebut diharapkan dapat memperkuat studi keislaman secara umum dan UIN Sunan Kalijaga secara khusus dalam percaturan wacana agama dan proses transformasi sosial. Pemahaman yang komprehensif dan mendalam mengenai isu-isu tersebut akan memberikan landasan yang kukuh bagi lahirnya solusi alternatif melalui berbagai program advokasi, pembelajaran, dan pemberdayaan komunitas. Sebagai upaya pengembangan program dan kegiatan, CISForm juga membangun kerja sama yang solid dengan pusat dan lembaga riset, LSM, instansi pemerintah, dan lembaga-lembaga internasional lainnya. Perhatian yang penuh dari lembaga-lembaga tersebut terhadap isu-isu terkini di Indonesia akan menjadi modal penting bagi CISForm dalam membangun kerja sama yang saling bermanfaat.



Empowering Educational Actors and Institutions
to Promote Religious Moderation in PVE

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