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Harmonization of religious life in the community of Pegagan Julu IX Batangari Village, Jumagrat Hamlet, Sumbul Subdistrict, Dairi Regency in the experience of AFI A Stambuk 23 in community service activities

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ABSTRACT

Interfaith harmony is a key pillar in maintaining social stability in Indonesia's diverse society. The village of Pegagan Julu IX, Batangari, Jumagrat Hamlet, Sumbul Subdistrict, Dairi Regency, is a concrete example of local-based harmony practices, but the challenge of a lack of tolerance education among the younger generation is still evident. This study aims to describe the experiences of students majoring in Islamic Theology and Philosophy (AFI A) Stambuk 23 at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra in building harmony and identifying forms of harmony, challenges, and contributions of students during community service. Qualitative research methods with data collection techniques of observation and group discussions were conducted from July 7 to 18, 2025. It can be concluded that religious harmony in the village is achieved through interfaith cooperation in social activities, reinforced by the local wisdom of Batak Pakpak Sangkep Nggelgh as the primary binding force. This proves that religious differences can be a strength for sustainable unity.

Keywords: community service; harmony; tolerance

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1. INTRODUCTION

Interfaith harmony is a key pillar in maintaining social stability in Indonesia's diverse society. As a country with diverse ethnicities, religions, and cultures, harmony is key to preventing societal conflict. Without harmony in life, differences can trigger conflicts that threaten national unity and integrity (Murtopo & Adib, 2024). Therefore, fostering tolerance and mutual respect is urgently needed at every level of society. Religious harmony is not just a slogan but a real practice in everyday life. Initiatives from various parties, including academia, are key to maintaining these values. The village of Pegagan Julu IX, particularly in Batangari, Jumagrat Hamlet, Sumbul Subdistrict, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra, is one example of a pluralistic community. Religious life in this village is peaceful, despite differences in rituals and traditional customs. Interactions among residents can be observed in mutual assistance activities, celebrations of important days, and village deliberations.

The strong Batak Pakpak tradition serves as a social glue amid the diversity of beliefs in Pegagan Julu IX village. Community service activities, which are part of the *Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi* (Three Pillars of Higher Education), are a strategic means of providing education through work programs during interfaith community service in the village. Students from the Islamic Creed and Philosophy (AFI A) Stambuk 23 program at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra were directly involved in the program through various activities and interactive dialogues. Community service benefits residents and provides learning opportunities for students. This program serves as a bridge between academic theory and social reality in the field of social work. Table 1 shows the details of the period and location of the community service activities that form the basis of this research report.

Table 1. The Period and Location of the Community Service Activities

Component	Description
Main Location	Desa Pegagan Julu IX (Batangari, Jumagrat, Bunga-Bunga)
Subdistrict	Sumbul
Regency	Dairi
Province	North Sumatra
Time of implementation	Monday, July 7, 2025 - Friday, July 18, 2025
Participants	AFI A Student, Class of 23, UINSU
Focus of activities	Interfaith Harmony, Education on Moderation, Mutual Cooperation

As part of a state Islamic university, AFI A Stambuk 23 students bring the values of religious moderation to all their activities. This study aimed to describe the experiences of 23 AFI A Stambuk students in building harmony in Pegagan Julu IX Village. The main focus was to identify the forms of harmony, challenges, and contributions of students during their community service. A qualitative approach using observation and group discussion methods was employed, with the research results expected to serve as a reference for developing interfaith community service programs. Pegagan Julu IX Village has the potential to become a model of harmony based on local wisdom in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Students, as agents of social change, have a great responsibility for maintaining the value of tolerance. Reflection on this experience is an asset for strengthening character education in higher-education institutions. The harmonization of religious life in this village reflects Indonesia's diversity. This study is the first step in documenting good practices at the local level.

2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is the collection of data in a natural setting with the aim of interpreting the phenomena that occur, where the researcher is the key instrument of the study. Data sources were sampled using purposive and snowball sampling techniques,

data collection techniques using triangulation (combination), and data analysis was inductive/qualitative. Qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018).

The data collection methods used in this study were observation and group discussions, in line with those used in community service activities in Pegagan Julu IX Batangari Village, Jumagrat Hamlet, Sumbul Subdistrict, Dairi Regency, which began on Monday, July 7, 2025, and ended on Friday, July 18, 2025. This method is expected to obtain comprehensive research data and enable direct analysis of the journal title, namely, “Harmonization of Religious Life in the Community of Pegagan Julu IX Village, Dairi Regency, in the Experience of AFI A Stambuk 23 in Community Service Activities.”

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Humans are one of the living creatures that have inhabited Earth for thousands of years. In this process, the development of human personality is influenced by the environment and supported by human nature factors from birth. Related to this, humans, as social creatures, cannot be separated from social life values. Therefore, values will always arise when humans establish social relationships or interact with one another. Religion has existed in society since ancient times when humans were still in their primitive phase. Although it was only at a very simple level in accordance with the simplicity of society at that time, religion has continued to be known and embraced in different variations from the simplest societies to modern societies. Thus, religion cannot be separated from human life at any time or place (Nizar, 2018). For more details, see Figure 1.



Figure 1. Togetherness as a Mark of AFI Students' Service at Activity Locations

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

For more details, see [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Village Information

Category	Description of Social and Religious Conditions
Primary Ethnicity	Pakpak Batak (dominant), Toba Batak (minority)
Majority Religion	Protestant Christians (80-90%)
Minority Religion	Islam (approximately 10%), Local Beliefs
Primary Language	Pakpak language (daily communication)
Community Center	Churches and Mosques

Source: Data processed from [Dairi Regency Population Aggregate \(2018\)](#) and Field Observations

The village of Pegagan Julu XI Batangari, Jumagrat Hamlet, Sumbul Subdistrict, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra is an interesting example of harmonious social and religious life amid diversity. Most villagers are from the Pakpak Batak tribe and uphold the values of mutual cooperation and solidarity in their daily lives. Local traditions are still very much alive, with traditional leaders acting as guardians of cultural values and liaisons between older and younger generations. In the context of religion, although the majority of the population is Christian, the spirit of tolerance is maintained, and churches are not only places of worship but also centers of social and community activities. The presence of students from UIN North Sumatra in the community service program enriches the dynamics of the village, opening up space for interfaith and intercultural dialogue that strengthens understanding and unity. Life in Pegagan Julu XI reflects how local values and spirituality can work together to form an inclusive and empowering community.

This Profile section discusses the residents of Pegagan Julu IX Village, Dairi Regency, where there is something interesting in terms of the language used by the local community, which is still heavily influenced by the regional language Pakpak. There, they use the regional language more often than Indonesian. Language plays an important role in the identity of a community in a particular region. In the current era of globalization, global developments have a major impact on life, including language and culture. Many regional languages are being replaced by Indonesian or foreign languages due to social and environmental changes that no longer use regional languages as a means of communication. Environmental factors are one of the causes of the decline in local language use. The preservation of regional languages is important because it is closely related to the continuity of culture and traditional values. If regional languages continue to be used, cultural identity will be preserved and passed on to future generations as part of the nation's cultural wealth ([Manurung et al., 2025](#)).

However, there is certainly a place for using regional languages, such as in informal situations, where people should be more prudent in their communication and adapt their language use to the appropriate environment. Nevertheless, speaking Indonesian is also important for those from various regions who strongly identify with their regional languages. This is where the challenge lies for those who are fluent in regional languages to express themselves in Indonesian. Indonesian will be needed when a person leaves their region or meets and communicates directly with people who are different from them. Therefore, to learn to distinguish when someone wants to speak a regional language or Indonesian, it can be seen through that person's narrative. It can be seen that there are factors that influence teenagers' narrative ability.

First, formal education plays a significant role in developing a person's narrative skills. The Indonesian language curriculum in schools is designed to train students in various forms of writing and in storytelling. Through writing, reading, and speaking activities guided by teachers, students can hone and strengthen their narrative-writing skills. Second, the family environment significantly influences the development of this skill. The tradition of storytelling at home, the habit of discussing various topics, and parental encouragement to read can foster narrative skills in adolescents. In line with [Bronfenbrenner's \(1979\)](#) ecological theory of child development, microenvironments such as the family have a direct influence on individual development. Third, media and technology play a role in shaping teenagers' narrative abilities. Mass and social media provide platforms for them to express and hone their storytelling skills. However, uncontrolled access to low-quality content can negatively impact users. [McLuhan \(1964\)](#) argues that media is an extension of the human senses, and the way a person uses media will influence the way they think and communicate. Fourth, social and cultural contexts are important factors in the development of narrative skills. Indonesian society has a strong tradition of storytelling, both oral and written, which provides an important foundation for young people to develop these skills in the digital age. However, globalization and social change present new challenges that must be addressed.

Good narrative skills provide many benefits to teenagers. In academics, these skills help students write essays, reports, and other assignments in a more structured manner. In a social context, these skills

support effective communication with peers, teachers, and other adults. In the professional world, narrative skills are an important asset in presentations, negotiations, and various forms of business communication (Selly et al., 2024).

Then, in terms of religion, the majority of the people in Pegagan Julu IX village, especially in Batangari, Jumagrat Hamlet, Sumbul Subdistrict, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra, are Protestant Christians, comprising approximately 80-90 percent of the population, as reflected in the 2018 population data for Dairi Regency. A Muslim minority of approximately 10 percent and followers of local beliefs are also present, creating harmonious diversity amid the dominance of the Batak Pakpak ethnic group (Pemerintah Kabupaten Dairi, 2018).

The church is the center of religious activity, where weekly services are well attended and integrated with Christian values that emphasize love and compassion. However, the presence of mosques in this village also demonstrates the adaptation of a religion that enriches ritual practices in the religious life. Overall, this composition reflects a value of tolerance that is also evident in daily practices, where the Muslim minority and Christian majority attend each other's weddings or funerals, which truly reflects the spirit of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) at the local level. Therefore, it is this interaction that can form a resilient society in which differences are not barriers but rather strengths for sustainable togetherness.

3.1. Experience of AFI A Stambuk 23 UIN North Sumatra Student in Community Service Activities

Figure 2 depicts a collective community service activity involving students and residents cleaning interfaith places of worship. This activity reflects the values of cooperation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining communal spaces. More importantly, the joint participation of individuals from different social and religious backgrounds indicates the presence of interfaith tolerance and social solidarity in the community. This activity serves as a practical representation of harmonious coexistence and a collective commitment to preserving unity in diversity.



Figure 2. The Collective Community Service Activity of Cleaning Interfaith Places of Worship

Figure 3 presents harmonious social interactions and informal dialogues between students and the residents of Jumagrat Hamlet. The image demonstrates a warm and communicative relationship that develops through everyday encounters and direct engagement. Such interactions illustrate the formation of mutual understanding, trust, and social closeness between the two groups. This also suggests that informal communication plays an important role in strengthening community ties and fostering a sense of inclusiveness during the implementation of community-based activities.



Figure 3. Harmonious Social Interaction and Casual Dialogue between Students and Residents of Jumagrat Hamlet

Figure 4 presents documentation of the unity and close collaboration between students and all village officials throughout the community engagement activities. The images reflect a strong sense of togetherness, mutual respect, and shared commitment to carrying out programs for the benefit of the village community. They also illustrate the establishment of positive institutional and social relationships, showing that cooperation between students and village authorities played an important role in the successful implementation of the activities.



Figure 4. The Process of Instilling Values of Tolerance from An Early Age through Learning Assistance for Rural Children

Figure 5 presents documentation showing the unity and close collaboration between students and all village officials. The images reflect a spirit of togetherness, mutual support, and harmonious cooperation, which contributed to the successful implementation of community activities.



Figure 5. Documentation Showing the Unity between Students and All Village Officials

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

Observations during the community service program in Pegagan Julu IX Village, Batangari, Jumagrat Hamlet, Sumbul Subdistrict, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra, provided practical insights into the application of communal and religious values. Rather than relying on theoretical studies, the program facilitated direct engagement to observe how social harmony is maintained. Key activities, including religious dialogues, collaborative maintenance of places of worship, and daily social interactions, served as primary mechanisms for tolerance education and bridging interfaith communication barriers.

A central observation was the collaborative cleaning of mosques and churches. This activity functioned as more than physical maintenance; it acted as a practical method for strengthening communal ties. Observational data indicate that individuals from diverse religious backgrounds engage in collective tasks, such as sweeping, painting, repairing facilities, and preparing refreshments, without exhibiting discriminatory behavior. This active participation demonstrated that mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is not merely a passive tradition but a tangible framework for togetherness and mutual care that effectively facilitates tolerance education.

Furthermore, religious dialogues conducted with community leaders and village youth yielded qualitative evidence regarding the maintenance of interreligious harmony. During these discussions, the participants reported that harmony is seamlessly integrated into their daily lives. Residents highlighted specific patterns of cross-religious support, noting that when Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, Christians actively assist by preparing food and managing traffic around places of worship in Yogyakarta. Conversely, during Christmas, Muslim residents contribute to the church decorations and local security. These accounts indicate that tolerance in Pegagan Julu IX Village is an active intergenerational tradition rather than an abstract slogan (Djuniasih & Kosasih, 2019).

Further observations of daily interactions revealed a consistent pattern of mutual respect that successfully transcended the differing belief systems. Residents demonstrated harmonious coexistence, characterized by regular amicable communication devoid of apparent suspicion or hostility. This culture of tolerance is demonstrably transmitted to the younger demographic, who frequently participate in interfaith social activities, including sports, environmental cleanups, and cultural events. Such practices illustrate that the village's strong values of mutual cooperation and tolerance serve as a practical reflection of Pancasila, specifically the principles of "Indonesian Unity" and "Belief in One God," where communal harmony is sustained through active respect for differences (Kholish et al., 2023).

These observed behaviors align with the framework outlined by the [Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia \(2019\)](#) in the book *Moderasi Beragama* (Religious Moderation), which emphasizes the necessity of balancing faith with social tolerance in diverse societies. Additionally, harmony is achieved when individuals remain open, seek mutual understanding, and respect the beliefs of others, values demonstrably practiced by the Pegagan Julu IX community. From an educational standpoint, exposing participants to community dynamics effectively dismantled perceived communication barriers, fostering a deeper, evidence-based understanding of cultural sensitivity and practical service application.

Overall, establishing direct communication and cooperative initiatives with the community proved essential for maintaining social harmony. Observational patterns confirmed that minor, consistent interactions, such as routine greetings, joint labor, and voluntary environmental maintenance, had a significant impact on bridging social divides. Consequently, the activities in Pegagan Julu IX Village functioned as an effective model of social and spiritual learning. The documented practices of mutual cooperation and respect provide empirical support for the idea that diversity, when navigated through active tolerance education, acts as a unifying strength to be applied in broader academic and societal contexts (Kholish et al., 2023, p. 75).

3.2. Forms of Religious Harmony in Pegagan Julu IX Village

The Jumagrat Hamlet community in Pegagan Julu IX Batangari Village demonstrates a high level of religious tolerance through consistent interfaith cooperation. Evidence from field observations during community service programs conducted by students from UIN North Sumatra indicates that religious differences do not impede social cohesion in the village. Instead, the residents engage in reciprocal exchanges, such as sharing agricultural produce with visiting groups. This social harmony suggests that

intolerance often stems not from theological doctrines but from a lack of religious literacy or the interference of external interests among followers (Octavia et al., 2022). Furthermore, the collective maintenance of mosques and churches by diverse community members serves as a practical mechanism for overcoming potential communication barriers. This established local wisdom ensures that pluralism functions as a complementary force in daily life, where mutual respect is manifested through shared labor rather than through mere abstract discourse.

Below is an example of religious harmony, as evidenced by the joy and enthusiasm of elementary school students participating in a series of educational competitions and the Philosophy Festival. The excitement and enthusiasm of elementary school students in participating in a series of educational competitions and the lively Philosophy Festival as a means of instilling the value of inclusivity from an early age are shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Documentation of the Philosophy Festival and Educational Competition with Elementary School Students in Pegagan Julu IX Village

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

Evidence of interfaith tolerance was observed during the implementation of educational competitions, such as drawing and quizzes, in local schools. Observations indicated that children did not merely participate individually but actively encouraged peers from different religious backgrounds to join, suggesting that tolerance is ingrained in family and communal structures. This social cohesion is rooted in local wisdom, specifically the Batak Pakpak value of “Sangkp Nggelh,” and the Batak Toba concept of “dalihan na tolu.” These kinship systems, which prioritize respect, compassion, and collective deliberation, function as the primary mechanisms for overcoming potential communication barriers in a diverse religious landscape. By framing social interaction through these ancestral values, the community maintains a solid foundation for harmony, where individual religious identity is secondary to the collective responsibility of maintaining village stability.

Administrative support and intensive coordination between students and Pegagan Julu IX Village officials in planning inclusive work programs are shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Coordination and Documentation of AFI A Stambuk 23 Students with Village Officials at the Pegagan Julu IX Village Head Office

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

As a form of respect and to strengthen ties, students presented certificates of appreciation to religious leaders who had facilitated religious moderation during the activities (see [Figure 8](#)).



Figure 8. Presentation of Appreciation Charters to Religious Leaders as a Symbol of Successful Interfaith Collaboration

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

Observations in the Jumagrat Hamlet, Pegagan Julu IX Batangari Village, indicate that traditional and community leaders function as central figures in practical tolerance education, particularly during communal service activities. These leaders consistently impart local wisdom aimed at maintaining social cohesion and actively mitigating communication barriers that could otherwise lead to religion-based conflict. This local dynamic aligns with the established concept of religious harmony as a social condition in which distinct groups coexist without compromising each other's fundamental rights to worship (Tokoi et al., 2024). Furthermore, this practical application reflects the broader national framework of the Trilogity of Harmony, encompassing internal religious harmony, inter-religious harmony, and harmonious relations between religious communities and the government (Hasanah et al., 2023). In the observed village, these theoretical concepts are actively transformed into actionable communication strategies that bridge potential intergroup divides.

Field observations revealed specific structural directives from the village head and traditional leaders designed to enforce inclusivity. Leaders explicitly instructed participating students to avoid exclusivity, mandating that work programs such as social service and religious dialogues must involve all demographic layers rather than favoring the Muslim community. One local leader emphasized this inclusive protocol by stating that community programs “must not take sides, but must involve all levels of society.” This top-down directive operated as a direct method of tolerance education, establishing a standard of mutual respect that younger demographics consciously emulated. A notable pattern of reciprocal interfaith communication emerged during a localized social service initiative focused on cleaning a local church. Observational data showed that local church leaders did not exhibit resistance or skepticism; instead, they actively facilitated the initiative with enthusiastic support, effectively dismantling inter-group communication barriers.

Through these observable actions, community and traditional leaders utilize their authority to bridge differences and act as mediators when potential social friction arises in the community. By prioritizing transparent dialogue, inclusive deliberation, and joint socio-religious activities, these leaders establish an educational framework in which tolerance is actively practiced. Consequently, their presence transcends symbolic unity and serves as an active pillar that maintains social stability.

Overall, the patterns of harmonization observed in Jumagrat Hamlet demonstrate that successful tolerance education relies on synthesizing inclusive leadership directives and active, cross-cultural community participation. Evidence gathered from the field confirms that tolerance in this region

operates not merely as a theoretical concept but as an applied, daily practice. The observed interfaith cooperation proves that structured communication and inclusive guidance can successfully transform religious diversity into a unifying asset, providing a highly effective, evidence-based model for overcoming interreligious communication barriers in other regions across Indonesia.

3.3. Challenges and Obstacles in Religious Life in Pegagan Village Julu IX

The prevalence of embedded social stereotypes is a primary structural obstacle to religious harmony in Pegagan Julu IX Village. Rather than functioning merely as abstract concepts, these stereotypes act as tangible barriers that restrict intergroup dialogue. Field observations indicate an underlying “us” versus “them” dichotomy, particularly concerning how residents respond to non-local individuals and community service participants engaging in local mosques or social activities. As noted by [Sy and Subaidi \(2023\)](#), such labeling frequently stems from minimal intergroup interaction and the perception that one’s own understanding is the only “correct” standard.

In Pegagan Julu IX, these preconceived perceptions, defined by Gordon Allport as exaggerated assumptions used to justify behavior, actively hinder the goal of strengthening *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and tolerance ([Harahap & Pasaribu, 2019](#)). Addressing these barriers requires a shift from theoretical analysis to targeted interventions, such as utilizing local figures as mediators and promoting inclusive religious narratives. This is crucial because stereotypes often arise when one group labels others as “foreigners” or “outsiders” who do not belong to their class ([Hidayat, 2017](#)).

While the community, particularly in the Batangari and Jumagrat hamlets of the Sumbul Subdistrict, generally upholds tolerant values, minor tensions occasionally emerge from differing religious interpretations. Within the Christian community, intergenerational discussions frequently reveal a contrast between the older generation's textual approach and the younger generation's contextual interpretation of teachings. Similarly, within the minority Muslim demographic, observational data highlight the distinct need for foundational religious education. For instance, observations during *perwiridan* (religious study gatherings) in Batangari and Bunga-Bunga demonstrated high community engagement, with female participants actively seeking practical knowledge regarding fundamental practices such as fasting and prayer. These patterns underscore that social harmony relies on continuous dialogue and targeted education on religious moderation to harmonize understanding, without compromising individual beliefs.

A critical vulnerability identified in this study is the lack of equitable tolerance education, particularly among the youth. Field observations have documented explicit exclusionary behavior among children, highlighting how easily stereotypes can be internalized. For example, children as young as ten were observed asserting that local mosques were strictly “owned by local residents.” Consequently, peers from neighboring hamlets within the same village (such as Batangari, Bunga-Bunga, and Jumagrat) are explicitly prohibited from entering based on territorial claims. This assumption of exclusive ownership of houses of worship highlights a profound deficit in understanding public religious inclusivity. Such incidents demonstrate that without prioritizing early childhood tolerance education, the younger generation remains highly susceptible to perpetuating social fragmentation.

Furthermore, intergenerational communication barriers complicate the dissemination of these inclusive values. The older generation predominantly employs the traditional Pakpak language, which is rich in symbolic meaning, whereas the younger demographic and non-local participants favor modern Indonesian language. Initial field interactions revealed that traditional religious guidance and instructions from community leaders were often lost in translation because of these strong local dialects. However, observational data also highlight the community's strong linguistic adaptability. Upon recognizing the comprehension difficulties of non-local participants, local residents and community leaders readily transitioned from Pakpak to fluent Indonesian language. This linguistic accommodation not only facilitated effective communication but also served as a practical demonstration of the community's intrinsic openness to diversity. The data suggest that when navigated with mutual empathy, language differences function less as isolating barriers and more as mechanisms for building intergroup trust.

3.4. AFI Students' Contribution to the Harmonization of Religious Life in Pegagan Julu IX Village

Community service (PKM) requires addressing social, ethical, and religious issues through a focused theological (Aqidah) and philosophical framework. Rather than merely treating the symptoms of societal conflict or moral crises, this epistemological approach enabled AFI students to analyze the root causes. By actively acknowledging the community's diverse traditions, mass organizations, and religious schools (*Mazhab*), students avoided imposing singular viewpoints. This strategic neutrality ensured that the PKM program was accepted across varying social strata, effectively functioning as an applied mechanism for moderation (*wasathiyah*) at the grassroots.

The success of utilizing religious dialogue as a mechanism for tolerance education was directly tied to the facilitators' applied ethics. Observational data indicate that maintaining strict neutrality by focusing on impartial facilitation rather than dictating theological conclusions is crucial for building trust, particularly among vulnerable and minority groups. Furthermore, the facilitators' capacity for empathy and emotional resilience proved essential in managing the tensions inherent in sensitive discussions, allowing interventions to remain constructive and safely guided (Setianto & Anandhita, 2017).

Operating as representatives of a state Islamic university, AFI A Stambuk 23 students embedded the values of religious moderation directly into their pre-dialogue ethics and program design to guarantee an inclusive approach. Fieldwork initiatives are structurally designed to mandate interfaith engagement (Hasyim, 2025). Directed by village and traditional leaders who emphasized comprehensive inclusivity, the resulting programs, such as cross-faith childhood education and joint clean-ups of both mosques and churches, deliberately engaged the entire social spectrum. This structural openness actively dismantles the negative stigmas often attached to specific religious demographics.

Field observations during religious dialogues with community leaders and village youth revealed patterns of deep-seated, communal harmony. When students encountered significant communication barriers, specifically the thick local Pakpak dialect, they adapted their facilitation strategy, utilizing the linguistic challenge as an organic exercise in tolerance education. By prioritizing active listening and mutual understanding over immediate comprehension, students demonstrated respect for local customs. Recognizing this effort, the residents reciprocated by adjusting their communication. As one anonymous youth participant noted, "When we saw the students trying so hard to understand us, we naturally switched to Indonesian to make them feel welcome." Subsequent observations of collaborative activities, such as cross-religious groups collectively cleaning local places of worship, provide tangible evidence of interfaith unity transcending theological differences.

Ultimately, the observational data from Pegagan Julu IX Village confirm that local tolerance operates not as a theoretical slogan but as an applied tradition. A consistent pattern emerged, in which the Muslim minority and Christian majority actively participated in each other's life events, including weddings and funerals. The findings indicate that local Batak Pakpak values, specifically the philosophy of Sangkep Nggeluh, function as the primary sociocultural glue sustaining this interfaith harmony. The PKM outcomes demonstrate that effective community service is fundamentally experiential: it requires learning from the community, developing sensitivity to differences by overcoming communication barriers, and empirically validating the community's ingrained practices of togetherness (see Table 3).

Table 3. Summarizes the Main Contributions of Students during Community Service Activities

Field of Contribution	Form of Activity	Measurable Impact
Religious Moderation	Interfaith dialogue with village youth.	A decrease in social prejudice and an increase in mutual trust.
Environmental Health	They work together to clean mosques and churches.	The creation of physical cleanliness in places of worship and the strengthening of relationships.
Academic Education	Learning assistance and children's competitions.	Increasing the motivation of rural children to learn and instilling the values of tolerance.

Women's Empowerment	Education on faith and practical worship in the perwiridan.	Increased religious understanding among Muslim minorities at the grassroots level.
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4. CONCLUSION

Religious harmony in Pegagan Julu IX Village is not merely a social condition but is shaped through interrelated mechanisms. First, local Batak Pakpak wisdom, such as (*Sangkep Nggelb*), serves as a foundation of values that emphasizes solidarity, deliberation, and mutual respect among individuals. Second, the leadership roles of traditional leaders, religious figures, and the village government serve as primary guides in maintaining social balance through inclusive policies that do not favor any particular group. Third, routine interfaith interactions, such as mutual aid, major holiday celebrations, and social activities, provide practical spaces that continuously reinforce the value of tolerance in daily life. Fourth, the active involvement of the younger generation in social and cultural activities indicates a process of regenerating the value of harmony, although it still faces challenges in the form of stereotypes and a lack of education on the tolerance.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that efforts to strengthen interfaith harmony be carried out through the development of tolerance education programs rooted in local wisdom starting from an early age, more systematic involvement of youth in interfaith activities, and capacity building for community leaders to serve as facilitators of inclusive dialogue. Additionally, replication of this harmonization model is needed in other regions through a contextual approach tailored to each local culture, as well as further research to test the effectiveness of social interventions in strengthening interfaith harmony in a sustainable manner, because this study has several limitations that should be noted. First, this was a single-case study focused on a single location; therefore, the findings cannot be broadly generalized. This study is a single-case study focused on the community of Pegagan Julu IX Village; therefore, the findings are highly contextual and cannot yet be generalized to other regions with different socio-religious characteristics. Second, the relatively short data collection period may not have fully captured the community's social and religious dynamics in depth. Third, there is a possibility of observer bias because the researcher was directly involved in community service activities; therefore, data interpretation may be influenced by subjective experience. Fourth, the use of focus group discussions has limitations in capturing diverse perspectives, as not all community members were actively involved in the discussions. Therefore, future research should test the effectiveness of interfaith tolerance education programs more systematically, conduct comparative studies across regions, extend the duration of observation, and combine qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable results.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted as part of a community service program integrated into the curriculum of the Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy Study Program at UIN North Sumatra. The researchers followed social research ethics protocols, including maintaining data integrity and respecting local cultural norms applicable in Pegagan Julu IX Village. Verbal approval from the village head and traditional leaders was obtained before the data collection began.

Informed Consent Statement

All informants and participants in the group discussions were provided with an explanation of the research objectives. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained verbally before the observation and interview activities were conducted. The confidentiality of the informants' identities was maintained in accordance with the requests of the relevant parties to maintain harmony in the village environment.

Authors' Contributions

HN and HS contributed to the conceptualization, supervision, and overall direction of this study. LAS contributed to the development of the research design, coordination of field activities, data analysis, and primary drafting of the manuscript. NA and PYBG contributed to data collection, observation, group discussions, and the preparation of the initial research materials. All authors participated in the interpretation of the findings, revision of the manuscript, and approval of the final version.

Disclosure Statement

There are no potential conflicts of interest, either financial or personal, with the parties involved in this research. All data are presented objectively based on field findings during the period of service.

Data Availability Statement

Primary data in the form of field notes, photographic documentation of activities, and summaries of group discussions are available upon request from the lead author's correspondent, considering the privacy of the villagers. Some population data can be accessed through official documents from the Dairi Regency Government.

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