

## INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC STUDIES AS A FOUNDATION FOR PEACE EDUCATION: EXAMINING *RAHMATAN LIL* *'ALAMIN* VALUES THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF UNESCO'S GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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### Keywords:

*Introduction To Islamic Studies, Peace Education, Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin, Global Citizenship Education, UNESCO.*

### Abstract

*This article examines Introduction to Islamic Studies as a foundation for peace education by analyzing the values of rahmatan lil 'alamin through the perspective of UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education. The study is based on the idea that Islamic education should not only transmit religious knowledge, but also shape students' moral awareness, tolerance, social responsibility, and commitment to peaceful coexistence. Introduction to Islamic Studies plays a strategic role because it introduces Islam comprehensively through the study of faith, sharia, ethics, and Islamic civilization. The concept of rahmatan lil 'alamin, as stated in Qur'an Surah Al-Anbiya' verse 107, emphasizes that Islam is a mercy for all creation. This value is highly relevant to UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education, which aims to empower learners to take active roles locally and globally in building a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable world. This research uses a qualitative library research method by analyzing Qur'anic verses, Islamic studies literature, and UNESCO documents related to peace education, human rights, sustainable development, and global citizenship. The findings show that Introduction to Islamic Studies can become a foundation for peace education through the internalization of compassion, justice, tolerance, cooperation, human brotherhood, and protection of human dignity. The study concludes that Islamic Studies should be developed as a transformative course that forms students who are religiously grounded, ethically responsible, globally aware, and committed to peace.*

## INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Islamic Studies is one of the fundamental courses in higher education that provides students with a comprehensive understanding of Islam. This course does not merely introduce Islam as a system of ritual worship, but also as a system of values that regulates human relations with God, other human beings, society, nature, and civilization. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies has an important role in shaping students' religious, moral, social, and intellectual perspectives (Parawansah & Sofa, 2024).

In the contemporary global context, education faces various challenges, including intolerance, social conflict, religious exclusivism, violence, discrimination, environmental crisis, and weak global solidarity. These challenges require religious education to move beyond doctrinal teaching and become a medium for developing peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, and responsible human beings. Islamic education, particularly Introduction to Islamic Studies, has great potential to answer these challenges because Islam contains strong values of mercy, justice, peace, and humanity (Ramadani & Sofa, 2025).

The concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* is central to this discussion. It refers to Islam as a mercy for all creation. This concept is based on the Qur'anic verse:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

*Wa mā arsalnāka illā rahmatan lil- 'ālamīn.*

“And We have not sent you, O Muhammad, except as a mercy to the worlds.”  
QS. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 107

This verse indicates that Islam should be understood as a religion that brings compassion, peace, benefit, and moral goodness to all human beings and the universe. Therefore, Islamic Studies should not be taught in a narrow, rigid, or exclusive way. Instead, it should be taught as a field of knowledge that promotes peace, justice, tolerance, and social harmony (Alfaozi & Kurniawan, 2026).

This idea is closely related to UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education, commonly known as GCED. UNESCO explains that global citizenship responsibilities invite individuals to take active roles locally and globally in solving global challenges and becoming contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable world. UNESCO also emphasizes that education for peace, human rights, international understanding, cooperation, global citizenship, and sustainable development is an important global framework for building lasting peace and human development (NURUL, 2024).

Based on this background, this article discusses Introduction to Islamic Studies as a foundation for peace education by examining *rahmatan lil 'alamin* values through the perspective of UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education (Laili et al., 2026). This study focuses on two main research questions. First, how can Introduction to Islamic Studies become a foundation for peace education through the values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*? Second, how are the values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* relevant to UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education in shaping tolerant, inclusive, and globally minded students?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction to Islamic Studies

Introduction to Islamic Studies is a basic academic discipline that introduces students to the main teachings of Islam. It usually covers the study of faith, sharia, ethics, sources of Islamic teachings, Islamic history, Islamic civilization, and the role of Islam in social life. Through this course, students are expected to understand Islam not only as a set of religious rituals but also as a comprehensive worldview that guides personal and social life (Farahat, 2026).

The course also functions as a foundation for developing moderate and contextual religious understanding. By studying Islam through various dimensions, students can avoid partial, literalistic, or exclusive interpretations. They are encouraged to understand Islam as a religion that promotes balance between spirituality, morality, social responsibility, and civilization (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025).

### **The Concept of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin***

The phrase *rahmatan lil 'alamin* means “mercy for all worlds.” This concept emphasizes that Islam is not intended to bring harm, hatred, or violence, but mercy, peace, justice, and benefit. In Islamic thought, mercy is not limited to personal kindness. It also includes social justice, protection of life, respect for human dignity, care for the environment, and commitment to public welfare (Firdausiyah & Sofa, 2025).

The values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* can be seen in several Islamic principles. *Rahmah* means compassion. *Tasamuh* means tolerance. *Ta'awun* means cooperation in goodness. *'Adalah* means justice. *Ukhuwah insaniyah* means human brotherhood. *Hifz al-nafs* means protection of human life. These principles are important foundations for peace education because they teach students to respect diversity, reject violence, and contribute to social harmony.

### **Peace Education**

Peace education is an educational process that develops knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills needed to prevent violence, resolve conflict peacefully, respect differences, and build harmonious social relations. Peace education is not only about teaching the meaning of peace (Zuhriyah et al., 2026). It also forms students' character so that they become individuals who are empathetic, fair, dialogical, and responsible (Hosniati & Sofa, 2026).

In Islam, peace education has strong theological and ethical foundations. The Qur'an teaches that human beings were created into nations and tribes so that they may know one another, not hate one another. This is stated in QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13. The Qur'an also commands justice, even toward groups that one may dislike, as stated in QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 8. These teachings show that peace in Islam is built on recognition, justice, respect, and moral responsibility.

### **UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education**

UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education aims to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles locally and globally in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, and secure societies (Putri & Sofa, 2026). GCED is also related to cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral dimensions of learning. The cognitive dimension develops knowledge and critical thinking; the socio-emotional dimension develops empathy and a sense of common humanity; and the behavioral dimension develops active participation for positive social transformation (Haqqi & Sofa, 2026).

UNESCO's framework is relevant to Introduction to Islamic Studies because both emphasize the formation of ethical and responsible human beings (Wulandari & Sofa, 2026). While Islamic Studies grounds peace in divine values and religious morality, GCED frames peace in relation to global responsibility, human rights, diversity, and

sustainability. Both perspectives can complement each other in forming students who are religiously faithful and globally responsible (Asia & Sofa, 2026).

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. This method is appropriate because the research focuses on conceptual analysis of Introduction to Islamic Studies, *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, peace education, and UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education.

The primary sources of this study are Qur'anic verses related to mercy, justice, tolerance, and peace, especially QS. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 107, QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13, and QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 8. The study also uses UNESCO documents and explanations related to Global Citizenship Education, education for peace, human rights, and sustainable development (Moh Hazin Ubaidillah Abd Salam, Zainullah & Sofa, 2026).

The secondary sources include books, journal articles, and academic literature related to Islamic Studies, Islamic education, peace education, religious moderation, and global citizenship. The data were collected through documentation by identifying, reading, selecting, and analyzing relevant literature. The data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical techniques by classifying key concepts, interpreting their meanings, comparing Islamic and UNESCO perspectives, and drawing systematic conclusions (Putri et al., 2026).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Introduction to Islamic Studies as a Foundation for Peace Education

The findings show that Introduction to Islamic Studies can become a foundation for peace education because it introduces Islam as a comprehensive system of values. The course contains essential themes that support peace education, namely faith, sharia, ethics, and Islamic civilization (Sa & Sofa, 2026).

The study of faith develops awareness that all human beings are created by God and possess dignity. This awareness is important because peace begins with the recognition that human beings should not be humiliated, oppressed, or treated unjustly. The study of sharia introduces justice, public welfare, and protection of rights. The study of ethics forms noble character, tolerance, forgiveness, humility, and respect for others. Meanwhile, the study of Islamic civilization shows that Muslims have historical experiences in building plural, civilized, and socially responsible communities.

The main normative foundation for this finding is QS. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 107, which states that the Prophet Muhammad was sent as a mercy for all worlds. This verse becomes the theological basis that Islam should be understood as a religion of mercy and peace. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies should guide students to understand Islam as a source of compassion, not hostility; as a source of justice, not oppression; and as a source of social harmony, not conflict.

In addition, Introduction to Islamic Studies contributes to peace education by shaping students' religious understanding in a moderate and contextual manner. Through this course, students are encouraged to read Islamic teachings not only from a doctrinal perspective, but also from moral, social, and humanitarian perspectives. This approach is important in preventing narrow religious understanding that may lead to exclusivism, intolerance, and social conflict. By understanding Islam through the values of *rahmah*,

justice, brotherhood, and public welfare, students can develop a peaceful religious attitude that respects diversity and promotes constructive dialogue.

Furthermore, Introduction to Islamic Studies can strengthen students’ awareness of global citizenship by connecting Islamic values with universal humanitarian principles. Peace education requires learners to recognize differences in religion, culture, ethnicity, and social background as part of human reality. In this context, Islamic Studies provides a strong foundation for building empathy, social responsibility, and ethical participation in society. Therefore, the course should not only transfer Islamic knowledge, but also transform students’ attitudes so that they are able to become agents of peace, tolerance, and harmony in local, national, and global communities.

The following table explains the relationship between Introduction to Islamic Studies, *rahmatan lil ‘alamin* values, and peace education.

**Table 1.** Integration of Introduction to Islamic Studies, Rahmatan lil ‘Alamin Values, and Peace Education Principles

| Aspect of Introduction to Islamic Studies | Value of <i>Rahmatan lil ‘Alamin</i>   | Islamic Normative Basis           | Relevance to Peace Education                |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Faith                                     | Awareness of human dignity before God  | QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13           | Builds respect for human equality           |
| Sharia                                    | Justice and public welfare             | QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 8              | Prevents discrimination and oppression      |
| Ethics                                    | Compassion, tolerance, and forgiveness | QS. Al-Anbiya’ [21]: 107          | Forms peaceful and respectful behavior      |
| Islamic Civilization                      | Social harmony in plural society       | Experience of Muslim civilization | Provides historical examples of coexistence |

Table 1 illustrates the integration between Introduction to Islamic Studies, *rahmatan lil ‘alamin* values, and peace education principles. The table shows that the main aspects of Islamic Studies faith, sharia, ethics, and Islamic civilization—contain essential values that support the formation of peaceful attitudes among students. Faith builds awareness of human dignity before God, sharia emphasizes justice and public welfare, ethics develops compassion and tolerance, while Islamic civilization provides historical examples of social harmony in plural societies. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies can serve as a foundational course for peace education by guiding students to understand Islam as a source of mercy, justice, respect, and coexistence. This table shows that Introduction to Islamic Studies has strong potential to support peace education. It can shape students who understand religion not only as doctrine, but also as moral guidance for building peaceful social relations.

**Relevance of *Rahmatan lil ‘Alamin* to UNESCO’s Global Citizenship Education**

The findings also show that the values of *rahmatan lil ‘alamin* are highly relevant to UNESCO’s Global Citizenship Education. Both emphasize the formation of individuals who are peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, responsible, and committed to the common good (Sofa & Qomariah, 2026).

The value of *rahmah* is related to empathy and care for others. In the context of GCED, this value supports the development of learners who are sensitive to human suffering and global problems. The value of *tasamuh* is related to respect for diversity. This is in line with UNESCO's emphasis on tolerance and inclusion. The value of *ta'awun* is related to cooperation in goodness, which supports the GCED principle of active participation in solving local and global challenges. The value of *'adalah* is related to justice and human dignity, which is relevant to human rights education. The value of *ukhuwah insaniyah* is related to common humanity, while *hifz al-nafs* is related to peace and non-violence.

UNESCO states that GCED empowers learners to assume active roles in creating more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies. This aim is very close to the Islamic value of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which teaches that Muslims should bring mercy and benefit to all creation. Moreover, the relevance between *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education can be seen in their shared concern for ethical awareness and social responsibility. The concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* teaches that religious understanding should produce kindness, compassion, and constructive action in society. Similarly, GCED encourages learners to develop a sense of belonging to a wider humanity and to participate responsibly in addressing social, cultural, and environmental problems. Therefore, Islamic values and global citizenship values are not contradictory, but can complement each other in building peaceful and responsible individuals. In the context of Islamic higher education, the integration of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and GCED can strengthen the role of Introduction to Islamic Studies as a transformative course. Students are not only expected to understand Islamic teachings textually, but also to apply them in real social life through tolerance, dialogue, cooperation, and respect for human dignity. This integration provides an important framework for developing Muslim students who are rooted in Islamic values while also being open to global humanitarian issues. Thus, *rahmatan lil 'alamin* becomes a theological and ethical foundation for forming global citizens who promote peace, justice, and social harmony.

**Table 2.** *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Values, UNESCO GCED Principles, and Student Character Formation

| Value of <i>Rahmatan lil 'Alamin</i> | Meaning in Islamic Studies             | UNESCO Principle         | GCED   | Student Formed               | Character |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Rahmah</i>                        | Compassion for humans and nature       | Empathy and care         | global | Caring and sensitive         | socially  |
| <i>Tasamuh</i>                       | Tolerance in social and religious life | Respect for diversity    |        | Open-minded and inclusive    |           |
| <i>Ta'awun</i>                       | Cooperation in goodness                | Local and participation  | global | Collaborative responsible    |           |
| <i>'Adalah</i>                       | Justice in thought and action          | Human rights and dignity |        | Fair and anti-discrimination |           |
| <i>Ukhuwah Insaniyah</i>             | Human brotherhood                      | Common humanity          |        | Globally minded              |           |
| <i>Hifz al-Nafs</i>                  | Protection of human life               | Peace and non-violence   |        | Rejects extremism and hatred |           |

Table 2 explains the relationship between the values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, their meaning in Islamic Studies, UNESCO Global Citizenship Education principles, and the

student character expected to be formed. The table shows that Islamic values such as *rahmah*, *tasamuh*, *ta'awun*, *'adalah*, *ukhuwah insaniyah*, and *hifz al-nafs* are closely aligned with global citizenship values, including empathy, respect for diversity, cooperation, human dignity, common humanity, peace, and non-violence. This indicates that *rahmatan lil 'alamin* can serve as an Islamic ethical foundation for developing students who are caring, inclusive, collaborative, fair, globally minded, and committed to rejecting extremism and hatred.

Based on this analysis, Introduction to Islamic Studies can be developed as a course that supports global citizenship from an Islamic perspective. Students are not only expected to become Muslims who are obedient in ritual worship, but also individuals who contribute to peace, justice, tolerance, and humanity.

In practical learning, this integration can be applied through several strategies. Lecturers can use case studies on religious tolerance, conflict resolution, environmental ethics, digital ethics, and social justice. Students can also be encouraged to analyze Qur'anic verses on peace and justice, discuss examples of pluralism in Islamic civilization, and conduct community-based projects that promote social harmony. Through these approaches, Introduction to Islamic Studies becomes more contextual, transformative, and relevant to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

## CONCLUSION

Introduction to Islamic Studies has a strategic position as a foundation for peace education because it contains basic Islamic values related to faith, sharia, ethics, and civilization. The concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* provides a strong theological foundation that Islam is a religion of mercy, peace, justice, and benefit for all creation.

The findings show that *rahmatan lil 'alamin* values are highly relevant to UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education. Both perspectives emphasize compassion, tolerance, justice, cooperation, human dignity, and responsibility for the common good. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies should be developed not only as a theoretical course, but also as a transformative educational space that forms students who are religiously grounded, morally mature, socially responsible, and globally aware.

This study concludes that integrating *rahmatan lil 'alamin* values with UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education can strengthen the role of Islamic Studies in building peace education. Such integration is important to prepare Muslim students who can live peacefully in diverse societies and contribute positively to local and global civilization.

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