

Ummah Solidarity to Universal Humanitarianism: Muhammadiyah's Islamic Cosmopolitanism in Global Muslim Affairs

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Abstract

This article examines the development of Islamic cosmopolitanism in Muhammadiyah's engagement with global Muslim issues up to 2022. Using qualitative historical-institutional document analysis, it investigates organizational doctrines, humanitarian programs, transnational branches, peace initiatives, and interventions concerning Palestine, Rohingya refugees, Mindanao, and Southern Thailand. The findings show that Muhammadiyah's global orientation combines three moral vocabularies: solidarity with the ummah, Indonesian civic internationalism, and universal humanitarian responsibility. This combination is institutionalized through Muhammadiyah Aid, Lazismu, the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center, universities, overseas branches, and interfaith peace forums. However, cosmopolitanism is not established merely by operating abroad or assisting Muslim populations. It becomes substantive when confessional motivation is translated into nondiscrimination, professional standards, local partnership, and accountability to affected communities. The study therefore characterizes Muhammadiyah's orientation as rooted and organizational cosmopolitanism: globally open but formed by Indonesian history, Islamic reformism, and national civic commitments. Its principal weaknesses are issue selectivity, dependence on diplomatic access, uneven transnational capacity, and limited public evidence of long-term outcomes.

Keywords: *Muhammadiyah; Islamic cosmopolitanism; global Muslim issues; humanitarianism; transnational civil society.*

INTRODUCTION

Muhammadiyah was founded in Yogyakarta in 1912 and developed primarily as an Indonesian Islamic reform movement. Its schools, hospitals, orphan care, religious councils, and philanthropic institutions were built in response to local and national problems. Yet the intellectual sources that shaped the movement were never confined to Indonesia. Reformist debates circulated through Mecca, Cairo, print networks, pilgrimage, and the broader Muslim world, while the Qur'anic language of the ummah supplied a moral horizon wider than the nation-state (Alfian, 1989; Nakamura, 2012; Peacock, 1978). The relationship between national embeddedness and transnational religious belonging therefore existed from the movement's beginning, even when its organizational resources remained domestically concentrated.

During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, this latent international orientation became more visible. Muhammadiyah leaders participated in interfaith diplomacy, conflict-resolution initiatives, global Muslim forums, humanitarian responses, and international academic networks. The organization established special branches abroad, mobilized relief for Palestine and Rohingya communities, participated in peace

concerns in Mindanao and Southern Thailand, and created Muhammadiyah Aid as an umbrella for overseas humanitarian action (Latief & Nashir, 2020). By 2022, official discussions no longer treated internationalization as incidental representation by Indonesian expatriates; they described it as a strategic dimension of Islam Berkemajuan and a responsibility to contribute to global civilization (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022a, 2022d).

The concept of Islamic cosmopolitanism offers a useful but demanding framework for interpreting this development. Cosmopolitanism generally denotes moral and political orientations that recognize obligations beyond territorial, ethnic, or national boundaries. It does not require the disappearance of particular identities. Appiah (2006) describes cosmopolitanism through the combination of universal concern and respect for legitimate difference, while Beck (2006) emphasizes the reflexive transformation of national perspectives under conditions of global interdependence. Delanty (2009) further treats cosmopolitanism as a process of self-transformation generated through encounters with other social worlds. Applied to Islamic movements, the concept asks whether universal religious claims expand moral responsibility or merely reproduce solidarity within a transnational confessional community.

This distinction is essential because solidarity with fellow Muslims is not automatically cosmopolitan. The idea of the ummah may transcend nationality, but it can remain bounded by religious membership. Aid directed exclusively to Muslims, political rhetoric that ignores non-Muslim victims, or transnational activism that treats affected communities as passive objects may be international without being cosmopolitan. Conversely, faith-based motivation can support genuinely universal humanitarian practices when it grounds equal human dignity, nondiscrimination, local agency, and cooperation across religious boundaries (Ferris, 2005; Petersen, 2016; Tønnessen, 2007). The analytical task is therefore not to decide whether Muhammadiyah is simply cosmopolitan or non-cosmopolitan, but to trace how confessional solidarity is translated, widened, constrained, and institutionalized.

Muhammadiyah's own discourse contains resources for such widening. The Statement of Muhammadiyah Thought for the Second Century linked Islamic reform to enlightenment, peace, justice, environmental responsibility, and universal humanity (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2010). The formulation of Indonesia as *Dar al-'Ahdi wa al-Shahadah* combined national covenant with the obligation to demonstrate Islamic values through constructive citizenship (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015). *Fikih Kebencanaan* interpreted disaster response through protection of life, scientific knowledge, organized action, and equal service to affected persons (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2016). The 2022 *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* then placed universal humanity, peace, and global civilization within the movement's explicit ideological vocabulary (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022d).

Organizational capacity is as important as doctrine. Global moral concern becomes socially consequential only when organizations can raise funds, recruit professionals, negotiate access, coordinate with governments and international agencies, and remain accountable across borders. Muhammadiyah possesses unusual resources for this

purpose: hospitals and health professionals, universities and researchers, a nationwide philanthropic network, disaster-management structures, youth and women's organizations, and overseas branches. Latief and Nashir (2020) argue that international engagement has required internal coordination among these specialized bodies and has stimulated the creation of new organizational arrangements. This means that Muhammadiyah's cosmopolitanism is not merely an intellectual disposition. It is mediated through institutional infrastructures accumulated during a century of domestic service.

Several global Muslim issues reveal the scope and limits of this orientation. Palestine carries exceptional religious, anti-colonial, and political resonance in Indonesia. Rohingya displacement raises questions of statelessness, refugee protection, ASEAN diplomacy, and the relation between Muslim solidarity and universal humanitarian law. Mindanao and Southern Thailand concern minority rights, separatist conflict, and peacebuilding within neighboring states. Global humanitarian disasters also require Muhammadiyah to serve populations whose religious identity may be mixed or irrelevant to need. Each issue activates different combinations of theology, national foreign-policy traditions, public emotion, organizational expertise, and diplomatic constraint.

Existing scholarship has made major contributions. Studies of Muhammadiyah's modernism, pluralism, moderation, philanthropy, and disaster response explain the doctrinal and institutional foundations of its public action (Baidhaw, 2015a, 2015b; Burhani, 2018; Fauzia, 2013; Latief, 2016). Latief and Nashir's (2020) study directly demonstrates the movement's growing international exposure through humanitarian and peace activities. Work on Islamic humanitarianism also highlights tensions between universal aid norms and ummah-oriented giving (Benthall, 2016; De Cordier, 2009; Petersen, 2016). Nevertheless, the specific relationship between Islamic cosmopolitanism and Muhammadiyah's responses to global Muslim issues remains underdeveloped. International presence is often treated as evidence of cosmopolitanism without examining moral boundaries, institutional translation, or outcome accountability.

This article asks three questions. First, what theological and political vocabularies have enabled Muhammadiyah to frame obligations toward global Muslim communities? Second, through which institutions and practices were these obligations translated into humanitarian, educational, peacebuilding, and diplomatic action up to 2022? Third, where do the movement's cosmopolitan claims encounter limits created by issue selectivity, state sovereignty, organizational capacity, and confessional boundaries? The article argues that Muhammadiyah has developed a form of rooted organizational cosmopolitanism. It is rooted because global engagement remains shaped by Indonesian nationalism, reformist Islam, and the movement's domestic service tradition. It is organizational because universal concern depends on institutional mechanisms that convert moral claims into professional action. Its cosmopolitan quality is real but conditional, uneven, and incomplete.

METHOD

This study employs qualitative historical-institutional document analysis. It is not a systematic literature review and does not claim exhaustive retrieval of every publication

or organizational activity. The method was selected because the research question concerns the formation and institutional translation of concepts across time rather than the aggregated effect size of a standardized intervention. Historical analysis identifies changes in discourse and organizational repertoire, while institutional analysis examines how ideas become embedded in bodies, procedures, professional roles, partnerships, and recurring programs.

The documentary corpus covers materials published no later than 2022. It combines four source categories. The first consists of Muhammadiyah's ideological and jurisprudential texts, including the Statement of Muhammadiyah Thought for the Second Century, *Dar al-'Ahd* wa al-Shahadah, *Fikih Kebencanaan*, and the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*. The second includes official organizational reports and statements concerning internationalization, overseas branches, Palestine, Rohingya, regional peace, World Peace Forum activities, and humanitarian deployments. The third comprises peer-reviewed studies and scholarly books on Muhammadiyah, Islamic civil society, philanthropy, humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism, and Indonesian Islam. The fourth contains contextual scholarship on global humanitarian governance, faith-based aid, refugee response, and peacebuilding.

Documents were included when they illuminated at least one of five analytical dimensions: normative justification, definition of beneficiaries, organizational mechanism, transnational relationship, or evidence of operational consequence. Mere references to 'global Islam' without identifiable implications were not treated as evidence of engagement. Official news items were used to reconstruct organizational positions and reported activities, not as independent proof of social impact. Academic studies were given greater weight when interpreting historical patterns, institutional tensions, or external constraints. This distinction reduces, but cannot eliminate, the self-representational bias of organizational sources.

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, sources were coded for the principal moral vocabulary used to justify action: ummah solidarity, rahmatan lil-'alamin, universal humanity, Indonesian constitutionalism, anti-colonialism, peace, or humanitarian necessity. Second, the study coded institutional carriers, including central leadership, Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid, Lazismu, Muhammadiyah Aid, MDMC, hospitals, universities, overseas branches, and interfaith forums. Third, activities were classified by modality: public advocacy, fundraising, relief delivery, medical service, scholarship, peace diplomacy, knowledge production, diaspora organization, or interreligious cooperation.

Cosmopolitanism was assessed through five criteria. The first is boundary extension: whether responsibility reaches beyond national citizenship and immediate organizational membership. The second is nondiscrimination: whether assistance and moral concern are defined by need rather than confessional identity. The third is dialogical openness: whether external communities are treated as partners with knowledge and agency rather than recipients of a predetermined project. The fourth is institutional responsibility: whether programs adopt professional standards, coordination, and accountability. The fifth is reflexivity: whether engagement changes

Muhammadiyah's own understanding, organizational practices, or relationship with difference. These criteria distinguish substantive cosmopolitanism from geographical expansion alone.

The approach has limitations. Public documentation is uneven across countries and programs, and successful activities are more likely to be recorded than failed or discontinued initiatives. Financial figures and beneficiary counts are not consistently reported in comparable form. The voices of Palestinian, Rohingya, Filipino, Thai, and other partner communities are underrepresented in Muhammadiyah's public archive. Moreover, the analysis ends in 2022 and therefore does not evaluate later developments. The findings should consequently be read as an analysis of discourse and institutional trajectory, not a comprehensive impact evaluation of all international activities.

Table 1. Analytical dimensions of Muhammadiyah's Islamic cosmopolitanism

Dimension	Institutional expression	Cosmopolitan test	Main risk
Moral horizon	Ummah, rahmatan lil- alamin, universal humanity	Obligations extend beyond nationality and organizational membership	Confessional solidarity remains exclusive
Humanitarian practice	Lazismu, Muhammadiyah Aid, MDMC, hospitals	Need-based, nondiscriminatory, professional assistance	Symbolic aid or donor- centered programming
Peace and dialogue	World Peace Forum, CDCC networks, regional mediation	Recognition of religious difference and local agency	Elite dialogue without community effects
Diaspora organization	PCIM and PCIA, universities, student networks	Mutual adaptation in host societies	Indonesian enclave reproduction
Knowledge and reflexivity	Tarjih, universities, policy discourse	External encounters reshape internal concepts and practice	Exporting fixed doctrine without learning

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. From Transnational Ummah to Universal Humanity

Muhammadiyah's earliest transnational horizon was supplied by Islamic reformism and the concept of the ummah. Ahmad Dahlan's intellectual world was connected to pilgrimage, Middle Eastern scholarship, and debates about Muslim decline and renewal, although his organizational response was concentrated on Indonesian education and welfare (Alfian, 1989; Nakamura, 2012). The ummah gave local reform a universal religious reference, but it did not produce a detailed foreign program. The movement's practical modernism was initially cosmopolitan in source and aspiration rather than in organizational reach.

A broader ethical language became increasingly explicit as Muhammadiyah interpreted its second century. The 2010 Statement described Islam as a source of enlightenment for humanity and linked reform to peace, justice, knowledge, and civilizational responsibility. Its significance lies in shifting the object of service from the internal community toward humanity as a normative category. This did not erase the ummah. Instead, it repositioned Muslim solidarity within a wider account of public benefit and human dignity (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2010; Nashir, 2015).

Dar al-'Ahdī wa al-Shahadah added a national layer to this development. Indonesia was framed as a political covenant and a field in which Muslims demonstrate ethical responsibility. At first glance, this formulation is national rather than cosmopolitan. Yet it prevents transnational Islamic identity from delegitimizing the nation-state and supports engagement through constitutional, peaceful, and civic channels. Muhammadiyah's internationalism therefore does not seek escape from Indonesia. It projects an Indonesian model of Muslim civic action into global arenas (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015; Brown, 2019).

The *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* in 2022 consolidated this orientation by presenting progressive Islam as committed to universal humanity, peace, knowledge, women's dignity, environmental responsibility, and cooperation across difference. Official discussions of *wasathiyah* and internationalization similarly described global involvement as contribution to civilization rather than competition for sectarian influence (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022a, 2022d). The resulting moral grammar has three layers: loyalty to Islamic revelation, responsibility within the Indonesian civic covenant, and obligation to the wider human community.

This layered grammar makes Muhammadiyah's cosmopolitanism 'rooted.' Appiah's (2006) account of cosmopolitanism rejects the assumption that universalism requires cultural detachment. Muhammadiyah likewise approaches the world through a particular tradition. The relevant question is whether the particular tradition remains open to correction, reciprocity, and equal concern. Official doctrines provide such resources, but their meaning depends on implementation. Universal terminology can coexist with selective attention, paternalism, or organizational self-promotion.

2. Institutionalizing Global Engagement

The transition from discourse to practice accelerated after 2000. Muhammadiyah's international exposure expanded through peace initiatives, humanitarian missions, overseas education, and special branches. Latief and Nashir (2020) show that these activities required coordination among units previously oriented toward domestic functions. International engagement became an institutional problem: which body would represent Muhammadiyah, manage funds, deploy medical personnel, negotiate with governments, and maintain standards? Muhammadiyah Aid emerged as an umbrella identity for international humanitarian projects, while *Lazismu*, MDMC, hospitals, and universities supplied finance and expertise.

Overseas branches, known as *Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah* (PCIM), form a second infrastructure. By October 2022, Muhammadiyah reported 27 PCIM and eight special 'Aisyiyah' branches. Their activities varied across national contexts and included worship, study circles, student and professional networks, social service, legal registration, and attempts to establish educational or philanthropic programs (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022b). The branches connect Indonesian diaspora communities to the central organization, but their cosmopolitan function depends on whether they build reciprocal relations with host societies rather than merely reproduce Indonesian associational life abroad.

The 2022 global PCIM meeting recognized this difficulty. Participants called for a clearer theological and organizational framework, sustainable institutional status, multisectoral coordination, and procedures for including non-Indonesian members. These demands reveal that internationalization remained organizationally unfinished. The network had expanded geographically faster than its membership rules, legal forms, financial base, and program evaluation (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022c; Satriawan et al., 2022). Expansion therefore generated a reflexive effect: operating abroad forced Muhammadiyah to reconsider who can belong and how an Indonesian movement can become locally embedded elsewhere.

Universities have also served as transnational nodes. Scholarships for international students, academic exchanges, peace studies, public-health cooperation, and humanitarian expertise create channels that differ from missionary outreach. The 2022 scholarship program for Palestinian students illustrates a long-term capacity-building approach alongside emergency aid (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022e). Education can support cosmopolitan reciprocity when students are treated as intellectual partners and future professionals, although the available documentation focuses more on Muhammadiyah's contribution than on graduates' experiences or institutional outcomes.

Interfaith networks provide another organizational bridge. Muhammadiyah actors participated in the Humanitarian Forum Indonesia, developed after the Aceh tsunami to reduce mistrust and coordinate religious humanitarian organizations. The forum supported a common humanitarian code and cooperation among Muslim, Christian, and other agencies (Latief & Nashir, 2020). World Peace Forum activities similarly assembled religious and civic leaders from different countries. In 2022, the eighth forum gathered representatives from 21 countries under the theme of human fraternity (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022f). Such arenas extend engagement beyond Muslim issues and prevent internationalization from being confined to intra-Muslim solidarity.

Table 2. Principal institutional channels of global engagement up to 2022

Channel	Primary function	Illustrative engagement	Institutional limitation
Muhammadiyah Aid / MDMC	Humanitarian coordination and deployment	Rohingya response; Pakistan floods; disaster relief	Access, certification, and continuity depend on external systems
Lazismu	Fundraising, relief, scholarships, development	Palestine, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon, Rohingya	Donor attention may produce issue selectivity
Hospitals and universities	Professional staff, education, research, scholarships	Medical teams and Palestinian student support	Uneven capacity and limited outcome reporting
PCIM / PCIA	Diaspora organization and local representation	Branches across Asia, Europe, Middle East, Australia, and North America	Risk of remaining Indonesian social enclaves
Peace and interfaith forums	Dialogue, public diplomacy, conflict-resolution networks	World Peace Forum and Humanitarian Forum Indonesia	Elite-level declarations may lack implementation mechanisms

3. Palestine: Moral Diplomacy, Relief, and Education

Palestine occupies a distinctive place in Muhammadiyah's global engagement. The issue

combines religious attachment to Jerusalem, solidarity with a predominantly Muslim population, Indonesian anti-colonial nationalism, and concern with occupation and civilian suffering. This convergence gives Palestine exceptional mobilizing capacity. It also complicates analysis: public support may be motivated by universal human rights, Muslim identity, geopolitical opposition to Israel, or combinations of all three. Muhammadiyah's official language generally connects Palestinian independence with justice, peace, and humanity rather than framing it solely as a conflict between religions.

Institutionally, the response developed beyond statements. Lazismu mobilized donations for food, health, education, and reconstruction, while Muhammadiyah universities supported scholarships. In July 2022, official reports described educational support for Palestinian students and noted that Muhammadiyah philanthropy had also reached Rohingya communities, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon, and the Philippines (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022e; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022g). In October 2022, representatives reaffirmed support during engagement with the Palestinian prime minister and reported substantial fundraising in 2021 (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022h). These activities show a repertoire that combines emergency relief, political recognition, and human-capital development.

The scholarship component is especially important for cosmopolitan analysis. Emergency donations respond to immediate suffering but can leave donor and recipient separated. Education creates longer relationships and the possibility of knowledge exchange. It may also avoid the political and logistical barriers that restrict direct operations in conflict zones. Nevertheless, scholarships remain cosmopolitan only when recipients retain agency and when programs cultivate mutual learning rather than treating students as symbols of the organization's generosity.

Palestine also demonstrates moral diplomacy. Muhammadiyah is not a state and cannot negotiate recognition, borders, or ceasefires. It can, however, shape Indonesian public discourse, mobilize resources, meet diplomatic actors, and connect civil-society legitimacy to foreign-policy concerns. This form of diplomacy operates through moral authority and institutional credibility. Its advantage is flexibility; its limitation is weak enforcement power. It can express sustained solidarity but cannot guarantee access, protection, or political settlement.

A further limitation is asymmetry. Palestine receives much greater public visibility than many other crises involving Muslim or non-Muslim populations. The asymmetry is understandable because of history and symbolic significance, but it tests universalism. A cosmopolitan institution requires principled criteria for attention and resource allocation, not only responsiveness to the most emotionally resonant issue. Public documentation up to 2022 does not provide a transparent comparative framework explaining how Muhammadiyah prioritizes among global emergencies.

4. Rohingya, Refugees, and the Politics of Humanitarian Access

The Rohingya crisis presents a different configuration. Rohingya communities are a persecuted Muslim minority without secure citizenship, displaced across borders and dependent on complex arrangements involving Myanmar, Bangladesh, ASEAN states, the United Nations, and humanitarian agencies. Indonesia's response has been shaped by

Islamic humanitarianism and quiet diplomacy within ASEAN constraints (Smith & Williams, 2021). For Muhammadiyah, the crisis activates Muslim solidarity but also requires engagement with refugee protection, host-community relations, licensing, and international humanitarian coordination.

Following the mass displacement of 2017, Muhammadiyah joined Indonesian humanitarian mobilization and deployed medical and relief personnel to Cox's Bazar through Muhammadiyah Aid and the Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance. Teams drew professionals from Muhammadiyah hospitals and universities. The operation demonstrated how domestic institutional assets could be converted into cross-border capacity (Latief & Nashir, 2020). It also revealed severe constraints. The mission faced visa and licensing difficulties, and continuation depended on diplomatic permission and recognition within an international aid architecture that privileges certified organizations.

These constraints are analytically significant. Cosmopolitan intention does not override sovereignty. Humanitarian actors must negotiate entry, professional authorization, security, and coordination. Muhammadiyah's experience contributed to later attention to professionalization and emergency medical standards. The encounter therefore produced organizational learning: moral urgency had to be translated into credentials, procedures, partnerships, and compliance. This is a clear example of reflexive cosmopolitanism in which external engagement changes the actor itself.

The Rohingya case also exposes the limits of an exclusively victim-centered narrative. Humanitarian action can generate unintended effects in refugee-hosting regions, including inequality, dependency, tension, and displacement of local capacity. Research on Cox's Bazar emphasizes the importance of localization, host-community inclusion, and the do-no-harm principle (Khaled, 2021; Roepstorff, 2022). Muhammadiyah's public accounts emphasize delivery and solidarity but provide less evidence about participation by Rohingya organizations, feedback mechanisms, or long-term effects on host communities. A cosmopolitan approach must include these questions because universal concern without local accountability can reproduce hierarchy.

Rohingya engagement nevertheless widens the meaning of Indonesian Muslim citizenship. Donors and volunteers act beyond formal national responsibility, while the organization cooperates with state and international actors without becoming subordinate to either. Latief (2016) describes philanthropy as a practice through which Muslim citizenship is constructed. In the Rohingya response, this citizenship becomes transnational: religious giving is linked to humanitarian norms and regional diplomacy. Yet the reach remains episodic unless sustained by long-term partnerships and institutional presence.

5. Regional Peace, Muslim Minorities, and Interfaith Engagement

Muhammadiyah's engagement with Mindanao and Southern Thailand differs from humanitarian relief because the central problem is protracted political conflict. Muslim minorities in both regions have experienced contested sovereignty, violence, socioeconomic marginalization, and difficult relations with central governments. Muhammadiyah leaders have reported involvement in conflict-resolution and peace

concerns in Mindanao and Pattani, presenting regional peace as part of the movement's ASEAN responsibility (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2021; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022i).

The movement's potential contribution derives less from formal mediation power than from its social model. Muhammadiyah can offer experience in combining Islamic identity with schools, health services, civil-society organization, and national citizenship. This makes it relevant to post-conflict questions concerning education, welfare, and peaceful participation. However, models cannot simply be exported. Muslim communities in the Philippines and Thailand possess distinct histories, ethnic identities, languages, legal arrangements, and political aspirations. Cosmopolitan engagement requires listening and adaptation rather than presenting Indonesian reformism as a universal template.

Peace initiatives also connect Muhammadiyah to interfaith diplomacy. The World Peace Forum, organized through networks associated with Muhammadiyah leaders and the Cheng Ho Multi-Culture Education Trust, has convened religious figures to discuss peace and human fraternity. The 2022 forum's international and interreligious composition indicates that Muhammadiyah's global discourse is not limited to defending Muslim interests (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022f). Dialogue can challenge civilizational narratives that portray religious communities as homogeneous blocs.

At the same time, elite dialogue should not be confused with peace outcomes. Conferences can generate declarations, networks, and symbolic legitimacy while leaving structural drivers of violence unchanged. Their effect depends on sustained relationships, local participation, policy access, and follow-up mechanisms. Muhammadiyah's public documentation contains strong statements about peace but limited systematic evidence connecting forums to changes in conflict behavior or institutional policy. The gap does not make dialogue meaningless; it identifies the difference between diplomatic output and social outcome.

Interfaith humanitarian cooperation provides a more operational form of pluralism. Humanitarian Forum Indonesia established shared standards among faith-based organizations and reduced suspicions that aid was a vehicle for conversion (Latief & Nashir, 2020). Here cosmopolitanism appears as practical coordination around vulnerable human life rather than agreement on theology. The experience is important because it shows how a strong religious identity can coexist with common rules, reciprocal trust, and non-proselytizing service.

6. Organizational Tensions and Uneven Cosmopolitanism

The findings indicate that Muhammadiyah's cosmopolitanism is uneven across issues and institutions. Central leaders, universities, international-relations bodies, and humanitarian professionals often articulate broader global perspectives than local branches whose resources are devoted to immediate domestic needs. Overseas branches vary in legal recognition, membership diversity, and program capacity. This unevenness is not merely administrative. It affects whose interpretation of global responsibility becomes authoritative and whether internationalization penetrates organizational culture beyond a relatively small transnational elite.

A second tension concerns da'wah and humanitarian neutrality. Muhammadiyah's global action is religiously motivated and contributes to the public image of Islam Berkemajuan. Visibility is legitimate, but assistance can become ethically problematic when beneficiaries are treated as instruments of religious branding or when service is linked to conversion. Muhammadiyah's disaster jurisprudence and interfaith cooperation support nondiscrimination, while professional humanitarian standards reinforce separation between aid and coercive proselytization (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2016; Ferris, 2005). The challenge is to maintain this separation consistently across decentralized programs.

A third tension lies between solidarity and impartiality. Muslim communities affected by occupation, persecution, or conflict understandably attract Muhammadiyah's attention. Confessional networks can mobilize resources quickly and create trust. Yet humanitarian ethics require need-based assistance. If similar suffering among non-Muslims receives less attention, universal claims weaken. The available evidence shows inclusive principles and participation in mixed humanitarian forums, but it does not allow a comparative assessment of resource allocation by beneficiary religion.

A fourth tension concerns professionalization and grassroots participation. International operations require technical standards, financial controls, risk management, and diplomatic coordination. These improve quality but can centralize authority among experts and reduce the role of volunteers or local partners. Global humanitarian research warns that international systems frequently marginalize local actors even while celebrating localization (Roepstorff, 2022; Wilkinson et al., 2022). Muhammadiyah must therefore avoid reproducing within transnational action the same hierarchy it criticizes in global institutions.

Finally, evidence remains output-centered. Organizational reports record funds raised, missions dispatched, meetings held, and scholarships awarded. These are meaningful outputs, but they do not by themselves demonstrate durable improvements in health, education, protection, peace, or institutional capacity. Substantive cosmopolitanism requires accountability to affected communities and public reporting of outcomes, failures, and learning. Up to 2022, this dimension was less developed than the movement's normative vocabulary and mobilization capacity.

Discussion

1. Rooted and Organizational Cosmopolitanism

The evidence supports the concept of rooted organizational cosmopolitanism. Muhammadiyah is rooted in a specific theological, national, and institutional history. Its global engagement is not based on detached universal reason or a rejection of national belonging. It emerges from Qur'anic reformism, the social theology of al-Ma'un, Indonesian anti-colonial memory, Pancasila citizenship, and a century of organized service. These roots provide motivation and capacity. They also shape selectivity, especially the strong resonance of Palestine and Muslim-minority crises.

The organizational dimension is equally decisive. Cosmopolitanism is often discussed as identity, consciousness, or discourse. Muhammadiyah demonstrates that cross-border responsibility depends on infrastructures. Donors need trusted channels; volunteers need training; medical teams need credentials; universities need agreements; diaspora branches need legal status; and peace forums need networks. Without these mechanisms, universal concern remains declarative. With them, religious ethics can enter global governance through civil-society practice.

This perspective also clarifies why scale is not sufficient. A larger overseas network can increase visibility without producing openness. PCIM branches may function as diaspora enclaves, and humanitarian operations may remain donor-centered. The cosmopolitan test lies in how institutions manage difference and power: whether non-Indonesian participants can become members, whether beneficiaries influence programs, whether aid is impartial, and whether encounters alter Muhammadiyah's own assumptions. The 2022 PCIM discussions about local membership and organizational adaptation indicate awareness of these issues, but not their resolution.

Muhammadiyah's experience therefore challenges a binary between religious particularism and secular universalism. Faith supplies moral energy, social trust, and narratives of obligation. Professional standards and interfaith cooperation widen and discipline that energy. Cosmopolitanism emerges from the translation between these domains rather than from the elimination of religion. This finding is consistent with scholarship showing that faith-based humanitarian actors can combine confessional identity with universal service, while remaining vulnerable to mission-centered bias and accountability deficits (Ferris, 2005; Petersen, 2016).

2. Global Muslim Issues as Sites of Moral Translation

Palestine, Rohingya displacement, and regional Muslim conflicts are not interchangeable cases. Palestine activates anti-colonial justice and sacred geography. Rohingya displacement foregrounds statelessness, refugee protection, and humanitarian access. Mindanao and Southern Thailand concern minority citizenship and conflict transformation. Treating them under a single banner of Muslim suffering obscures different causal structures and policy requirements. Muhammadiyah's most constructive responses occur when solidarity is translated into the specialized language appropriate to each issue: education and political advocacy for Palestine, protection and medical coordination for refugees, and dialogue and institutional development for regional conflict.

The translation process creates moral diplomacy. Muhammadiyah cannot substitute for states or international organizations, but it can mobilize public legitimacy, provide technical capacity, and sustain issues that diplomatic institutions neglect. Its social institutions give credibility beyond rhetorical activism. The organization can meet officials while also raising donations, educating students, or sending medical personnel. This combination distinguishes it from both protest movements without service capacity and charities without public-policy voice.

Moral diplomacy nevertheless carries risks. Public emotion can drive short-term fundraising without strategic assessment. Political symbolism may overshadow

beneficiary priorities. Organizations may claim representation of distant Muslim communities without mechanisms of consent. The remedy is not neutrality toward injustice but stronger participatory governance. Partnerships with local civil society, transparent needs assessment, independent evaluation, and public reporting would make solidarity more accountable and less paternalistic.

The cases further reveal a tension between universal humanity and unequal visibility. Cosmopolitan ethics do not require identical responses to every crisis, which is impossible. They require defensible principles for difference. Muhammadiyah can legitimately prioritize issues connected to its history and constituency, but it should explain how severity, vulnerability, access, comparative advantage, and existing partnerships shape decisions. Such criteria would transform moral selectivity from an unexamined bias into an accountable strategy.

Table 3. Evaluation of selected global engagements through a cosmopolitan lens

Issue/arena	Dominant moral frame	Institutional response	Cosmopolitan achievement	Unresolved problem
Palestine	Justice, anti-colonialism, ummah solidarity	Advocacy, fundraising, scholarships, diplomatic engagement	Combines relief with education and public diplomacy	Exceptional visibility and limited outcome evidence
Rohingya	Protection of persecuted Muslims and vulnerable refugees	Medical relief, aid coalitions, diplomacy	Professional cross-border service and organizational learning	Access constraints; weak beneficiary and host-community voice
Mindanao/Pattani	Peace, minority dignity, regional responsibility	Dialogue, peace networks, educational and social exchange	Moves beyond relief toward conflict transformation	Limited public documentation of sustained local outcomes
World Peace Forum	Human fraternity and interfaith peace	International religious dialogue	Extends concern beyond Muslim beneficiaries	Elite declarations may not alter structural conflict
PCIM/PCIA network	Global da'wah and diaspora service	Branches, study, social service, local partnerships	Creates durable transnational infrastructure	Membership and local embeddedness remain uneven

3. Implications for Muhammadiyah and Islamic Civil Society

Three implications follow. First, internationalization should be evaluated by local embeddedness rather than the number of countries in which Muhammadiyah is present. A branch becomes cosmopolitan when it learns the host society's legal and cultural environment, includes local participants, and addresses locally defined needs. Organizational replication without adaptation risks turning global expansion into diaspora maintenance.

Second, humanitarian professionalism should be integrated with theological education. Technical standards alone can produce efficient but morally thin administration; religious enthusiasm alone can produce poorly coordinated intervention. Muhammadiyah's comparative advantage lies in connecting both. Fikih Kebencanaan already demonstrates

this model by bringing revelation, science, rights, and organized response into one framework. Similar guidance could address refugee protection, peacebuilding, humanitarian diplomacy, and accountability to affected populations.

Third, global engagement should generate institutional learning at home. Encounters with statelessness, religious minorities, interfaith cooperation, and international standards can inform Muhammadiyah's domestic treatment of migrants, minorities, and marginalized communities. Cosmopolitanism is weak when compassion operates only at a distance. It is stronger when global commitments change local practice, including school curricula, public communication, philanthropy, and relations with non-Muslim citizens.

For scholarship, the case shows the need to move beyond celebratory inventories of international activity. Future research should compare programs across countries, interview partner communities, examine financial and decision-making structures, and measure medium-term outcomes. It should also investigate internal disagreement. Muhammadiyah contains plural religious and political orientations (Burhani, 2018); global issues may expose different understandings of universalism, nationalism, and Muslim solidarity. Studying these debates would reveal cosmopolitanism as contested organizational practice rather than official consensus

CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah's engagement with global Muslim issues up to 2022 reflects a substantial expansion of an organization historically built around Indonesian reform and social service. Palestine advocacy and education, Rohingya humanitarian relief, regional peace concerns, overseas branches, and interfaith forums demonstrate that the movement's moral and institutional horizon extends beyond national territory. This expansion is supported by a layered normative framework that combines ummah solidarity, Indonesian civic responsibility, and universal humanity.

The analysis, however, rejects the assumption that cross-border activity is sufficient evidence of cosmopolitanism. Muhammadiyah's engagement becomes cosmopolitan when religious motivation is translated into nondiscrimination, professional standards, dialogue, local partnership, and accountability. Its strongest practices combine faith-based mobilization with hospitals, universities, philanthropy, disaster expertise, and interfaith cooperation. Its weaknesses include selective visibility, dependence on diplomatic access, uneven branch capacity, centralized professional authority, and limited evidence of long-term outcomes or beneficiary participation.

Muhammadiyah is therefore best understood as developing rooted organizational cosmopolitanism. The movement does not abandon Islamic or Indonesian identity; it uses those identities as resources for global responsibility. The future quality of this orientation will depend less on rhetorical internationalization or geographical expansion than on whether distant communities become genuine partners, whether universal principles guide allocation across crises, and whether global encounters transform the organization itself.

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