



The Role and Development of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah in Medan City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development and initiatives of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah in Medan City from 2016 to 2023, highlighting its significant role in the region's social and religious dynamics. Employing historical research methods, including heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation at the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership (PDM) office. Findings reveal significant progress in Nasyiatul Aisyiyah's activities, with regular events despite challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to temporary disruptions. Nonetheless, the organization remained active in disaster relief efforts, fundraising, and mask distribution. Plans for 2022-2023 include resuming programs and introducing new initiatives such as parenting classes, disaster response, leadership training, international symposiums, PASHMINA, and TOT entrepreneurship. The study explores the contributions and growth trajectory of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah in fostering community welfare and religious education, employing qualitative methodologies, including interviews and organizational document analysis. The research identifies challenges such as resource limitations and sociopolitical constraints but highlights the organization's adaptive strategies and community-centric approach in overcoming obstacles and advancing its mission. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of women's organizations in regional development and offers insights into the potential for similar initiatives in other contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of women's movements in Indonesia has highlighted the significant role played by Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, an organization inseparable from Muhammadiyah. Born as an integral part of this religious movement, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah has made substantial contributions in advocating for women's rights and promoting independence and gender equality. Medan City, as the social and cultural hub of North Sumatra, serves as an important backdrop where the role and development of this organization become an intriguing subject of analysis.

Nasyiatul Aisyiyah is the first women's organization that inspired the establishment of additional organizations, such as Dharma Pertiwi, Rukun Ibu Ampera Pembangunan, and the Indonesian Women's Movement. As a significant organization, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah aims to realize a better national life in alignment with the objectives of Indonesia's establishment. Numerous religious women's organizations have emerged in Medan City, including Islamic and Christian organizations. Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, as one of these prominent organizations, strives to fulfill its responsibilities in line with the nation's founding principles. It operates under the auspices of Muhammadiyah (Muharmina et al., [2022](#)).

Founded on May 16, 1931, in Yogyakarta, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah (NA) is an autonomous group focusing on women's, societal, and religious issues. Established at the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah on December 28, 1349, H, Muhammadiyah provided guidance, supervision, and authority for the organization to manage its affairs and members. Nasyiatul Aisyiyah's objective is to integrate Muhammadiyah's ideals, a significant Islamic organization based on da'wah and promoting good and preventing evil, sourced from the Quran and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (Rahmah, [2014](#)). This foundation aims to create a just and prosperous society blessed by Allah SWT, functioning as His servants. Nasyiatul Aisyiyah accommodates young girls to nurture intellectual and faith-based successors of the nation (Harahap et al., [2021](#)).

Nasyiatul Aisyiyah follows a trilogy: religious, women, and societal activities. In religious aspects, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah takes inspiration from Surah An-Nahl/16:125:



ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Meaning: "Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good lessons and argue with them in a good way. Verily, your Lord is the One who knows better who has strayed from His path, and He knows better those who are guided."

This verse indicates that *da'wah* is not only the responsibility of a preacher but of every Muslim. *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*, aligning with *Muhammadiyah's* understanding, does not compete with other Islamic organizations in Medan but focuses on its specific *da'wah*. The formation of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan cannot be separated from *Muhammadiyah's* history, which emphasizes the continuity of its cadres, struggling and progressing through an extraordinary historical process, addressing sexism faced by Muslim women at that time who were denied societal participation (PPM, 1997).

Nasyiatul Aisyiyah embraces young girls of various ethnicities but united in Islam, fostering the principle that everyone is equal before God, differentiated only by piety. The Regional Leadership (PD) of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan aims to nurture cadres striving to achieve the organization's and *Muhammadiyah's* goals, reflecting Indonesia's diversity within its ranks. To unify thoughts and actions, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Medan conducts cadre training, providing knowledge and loyalty to the organization (*Aisyiyah*, 2022). This training forms a familial bond among new members, guiding them to align with the organization's aspirations, enhancing its intellectual and problem-solving capabilities, and uplifting its reputation.

Nasyiatul Aisyiyah actively engages in social activities and contributes to *Muhammadiyah's* organizational struggles. According to public perception, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Medan is supportive and helps relatives in distress, such as natural disasters or severe illnesses, leading to fundraising initiatives. This research focuses on the specific actions undertaken by *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*, particularly in Medan from 2016 to 2023, aiming to analyze and present these actions in a thesis on the organization's development and programs during this period, which remains largely unknown.

METHODS

To produce credible historical writing, this research employs critical historical methods. Daliman (2018) states that historical methodology involves systematically combining and critically examining historical materials to produce coherent writing (Daliman, 2018). This study uses a historical approach, facilitating the examination of sources related to the research title, systematically reviewing past information, thereby simplifying the writing process. The research covers the development and programs of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan from 2016-2023. Kuntowijoyo (2010) outlines five stages in historical research: topic selection, heuristics, verification, interpretation, and writing (Kuntowijoyo, 2010). Informants for this research include key figures in *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*, as detailed below:

Table 1. Data of Research Informants

No.	Name	Term	Position
1.	Endah Wiguna, S.Pd	2016-2023	General Secretary, PD <i>Nasyiatul Aisyiyah</i> Medan City
2.	Eva Yunita Khairani, M.Pd	2016-2023	General Treasurer, PD <i>Nasyiatul Aisyiyah</i> Medan City
3.	Khairunnisa Utami Syarifah	2016-2023	Social and Economic Department, PD <i>Nasyiatul Aisyiyah</i> Medan City
4.	Nurhamidah Khairina Ardian	2016-2023	Education Department, PD <i>Nasyiatul Aisyiyah</i> Medan City
5.	Nurhayati Harahap, S.Pd.I	2016-2023	Cadre and Alumni Department, PD <i>Nasyiatul Aisyiyah</i> Medan City

Source: Processed by the author

The reason why researchers chose 5 (five) informants in this study is to improve the accuracy of the research results. This is because the informants chosen by the researcher for this study are very instrumental in the implementation of the work program carried out by *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Regional Leadership (PD) Medan City every year. In this study, data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan, 2016-2023

The *Muhammadiyah* organization in Medan was established on November 25, 1927, three years earlier than the *al-Washliyah* organization. Its founding involved small and medium-sized traders and was first chaired by Hr. Mohammad Said, who was previously involved with *Sarekat Islam*. Initially, its members were Minang, Javanese, Malay, and others (Steenbrink, 1986).

Initially, Muhammadiyah was a small study group. Over time, membership grew, transforming it into an organization. Its first initiative was establishing a school on Nagapatan Street, Kampung Keling, inaugurated by the Crown Prince of Deli. Somodirdjo, a teacher at the Muhammadiyah Standard School, first conceived the idea of forming *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*. He implemented his ideas through practical lessons and group activities in his classes. By 1919, Somodirdjo had successfully established a youth organization with Hadjid's help, a primary religious teacher. The organization, named Praja Students (SP), aimed to foster unity and religious values. SP Women participated in religious studies, lectures, morning gatherings, and other activities. In 1923, Praja Students became involved in *Aisyiyah*'s affairs, and by 1924, they initiated *Bustanul Athfal*, a movement to care for children aged 4-5, teaching them Islamic basics.

Formation of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan

The origins of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan are primarily sourced from oral history rather than written records. Nonetheless, these sources remain credible (Interview with Endah Wiguna, July 18, 2023). Muhammadiyah was legally recognized in East Sumatra on July 1, 1928, but its da'wah activities began on November 25, 1927, at 44 Nagapatan Street (now Kediri Street) in Medan, at the house of a noodle seller named Entong Sahar, as per Pak Kalimin Sunar in a one-day workshop at Muhammadiyah East Sumatra. Regular khutbahs and discussions about the Indonesian Islamic movement were held at their homes, attended by people from Java, Mandailing, and Minangkabau.

As a result, Muhammadiyah became a legal entity on July 1, 1928. Mas Pono served as the first secretary along with members St. Djuin and Haji Syaib. The development of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan from 2016-2019 showed rapid progress compared to previous years. Various activities were regularly conducted annually, including religious studies, cadre training, leadership training, nature retreats, entrepreneurship training, beauty product making, and more. However, from 2020 to 2021, the spread of the Covid-19 virus in Medan hindered and temporarily halted some activities due to the unfavorable situation. Nonetheless, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* continued to assist the affected community through donations and fundraising efforts and distributing masks.

Due to the numerous activities postponed during the Covid-19 pandemic, from 2022 to 2023, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* resumed its programs and introduced new ones. Consequently, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* is currently undergoing more rapid development than in previous years. One of the challenges faced by *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in carrying out its activities is the cadre crisis. The number of active cadres in *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan is limited. For instance, there are approximately 30 active members in the Medan Tembung branch.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that the development of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* in Medan from 2016 to 2023 has experienced ups and downs. Before the Covid-19 pandemic spread in Indonesia, several activities carried out by *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* developed rapidly. However, they were hindered in 2020 and 2021. Subsequently, from 2022 to 2023, with the addition of new programs, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*'s development accelerated significantly.

- 1) Vision: *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*'s vision is that true Islamic civilization can only be realized through the formation of Islamic girls who represent family, nation, and religion.
- 2) Mission:
 - To realize a truly Islamic society, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* practices Islamic da'wah and promotes good and prevents evil through the development of Islamic women who are valuable to faith, homeland, and nation.
 - To develop a society that upholds morality and human dignity in accordance with Islamic teachings by educating and empowering women.
 - To coordinate corporate philanthropy and elevate *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*'s position as a pioneer, executor, and mastermind of Muhammadiyah's struggle.

Nasyiatul Aisyiyah's Work Program in Medan 2016-2023

Nasyiatul Aisyiyah's work program in Medan from 2016-2023 is a detailed and focused long-term program for seven years. The flagship programs implemented by *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* since 2016 are derived from the latest issues related to women (interview with Endah Wiguna, July 18, 2023).

The initiative aims to enhance and develop networks and organizations to become a modern, skilled, and advanced Islamic movement. Additionally, this initiative seeks to expand and create superior and independent movement and philanthropy networks that will support the conditions and advocates necessary for the establishment

of a legitimate Islamic state. Ultimately, the initiative focuses on the development and expansion of Muhammadiyah's strategic position in the dynamics of society, nation, and region to ensure significant and sustainable contributions in various aspects of social and political life.

In this discussion, the researcher will elaborate on the flagship programs implemented by Nasyiatul Aisyiyah in Medan from 2016 to 2023. There are six flagship programs still being carried out by Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan from 2016 to 2023. These programs include:

Parenting Class

The Parenting Class is one of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah's flagship programs in Medan, implemented from 2016 to the present. This program is still actively conducted at the Aisyiyah girls' orphanage on Jalan Santun, Medan City, every month. Parenting classes instruct participants on how to educate children both generally and specifically. Additionally, this course helps parents create and maintain a healthy bond with their children (interview with Nurhamidah, July 19, 2023).

This program was created due to the rampant cases of violence and neglect against minors. Thus, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, especially in Medan, runs the Parenting Class program to prevent the increase in cases of child violence and neglect. Through this program, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah teaches parents different approaches to effective child-rearing, effective ways to interact with their children, and how to handle any changes or growth in their children. This parenting course also gives parents the confidence they need to raise their children without worry (interview with Nurhamidah, July 19, 2023).

Development of the Parenting Class Program

This program has developed over four years, indicated by the division into childcare classes and special classes for parents of children with special needs. Parents learn techniques for newborn care, breastfeeding, and even providing first aid for children with diarrhea or fever in these sessions. Additionally, in the special seminars, parents learn how to interact effectively with children and manage their physical and mental development and changes (interview with Khairani Ardian, July 19, 2023).

Over four years, the Parenting Class program run by Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan received positive responses from the community. Many parents are interested in participating, especially in special classes. However, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan faces challenges in running this program, such as the crisis of members and cadres who fully understand handling and caring for children with special needs. Additionally, the spread of Covid-19 from 2020 to 2021 prohibited gatherings, causing some parents to stop attending the Parenting Class (interview with Khairani Ardian, July 19, 2023).

Disaster Response by Nasyiatul Aisyiyah

Disaster Response by Nasyiatul Aisyiyah is the longest-running flagship program to date. Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, particularly in Medan, responds quickly to natural disasters in the region and beyond. The program aims to assist the government in providing clothing, food, and shelter for disaster victims to lead a more decent life. Moreover, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan provides educational assistance to children affected by disasters, taught directly by its members and cadres (interview with Khairul Utami, July 20, 2023).

Those directly involved in running the Disaster Response program in Medan are members and cadres from the Social and Education Departments. The program is carried out by fundraising among all members and cadres of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan. Additionally, they post several pamphlets at each Nasyiatul Aisyiyah branch in Medan and announce it through the organization's Instagram and Facebook (interview with Khairul Utami, July 20, 2023).

Development of the Disaster Response Program

One indicator of the success of the Disaster Response program in Medan is the active involvement in various emergency situations. During the spread of Covid-19 in Medan from 2020 to 2021, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan distributed masks to motorcyclists and people who went out without masks. Furthermore, during the flash flood in Sembahe, Sibolangit sub-district in April, they responded by organizing fundraisers and collecting usable clothes to donate to

affected victims. They also went directly to Sembaha to distribute the collected clothes and funds, demonstrating their commitment and care for the community in need (interview with Syarifah, July 20, 2023).

Leadership Training

The Leadership Training program has been implemented since the establishment of Nasyyatul Aisyiyah in Yogyakarta until its formation in Medan. This activity is routinely conducted monthly at each Nasyyatul Aisyiyah branch in Medan. One of the locations for this program is the PDM office on Jalan Mandala Bypass, Medan Tembung sub-district. This program, managed by the Cadre and Alumni Department, aims to produce Islamic girls who benefit faith, nation, and state towards a true Islamic society. Activities are designed to help Nasyyatul Aisyiyah cadres become more skilled and effective leaders through various forms such as public lectures, discussions, practice, and outbound activities (interview with Nurhayati Harahap, July 17, 2023).

Development of the Leadership Training Program

The success and development of this program are marked by the numerous members, cadres, and alumni of Nasyyatul Aisyiyah who now serve as leaders in daily life, whether in the community or schools. For instance, some become recitation leaders, class leaders, or OSIS leaders, and some have become preachers (interview with Nurhayati Harahap, July 17, 2023).

International Symposium for Young Muhammadiyah Women

Since 2016, the International Symposium for Young Muhammadiyah Women has been held annually on March 8, coinciding with International Women's Day, which honors women's struggles and achievements in various fields, including politics, health, and education. The symposium is conducted virtually through a forum attended by all cadres and members of Nasyyatul Aisyiyah and Aisyiyah at regional, branch, and sub-branch levels. The forum features young women delegates from Muhammadiyah's international branches. Debates focus on how women's activism during Muhammadiyah's historical reconstruction. The program targets young Muhammadiyah women activists in Indonesia and abroad. The program aims to highlight the historical-sociological process by which the concept of progressive young Muslim women developed and became a mental model for Muslim women worldwide (interview with Endah Wiguna, July 18, 2023).

Development of the International Symposium Program

The development of the International Symposium for Young Muhammadiyah Women is marked by the expanding discussion on the historical reconstruction of Muhammadiyah women's activists to an international level. Initially, this discussion involved all Aisyiyah and Nasyyatul Aisyiyah cadres across Indonesia. Over time, in early 2019, the International Symposium program began to spread internationally (interview with Eva Yunita Khairani, July 18, 2023).

PASHMINA

The PASHMINA program in Medan began about two years ago, from early 2021 to the present, and is conducted monthly (interview with Endah Wiguna, July 18, 2023). Based on educational strategies, this program is carried out by youth cadres tailored to the needs and potential of youth in Medan, both male and female. The slogan/tagline used by PASHMINA is "Healthy Youth, Great Generation." This slogan developed because young people have more opportunities to reach their full potential and grow into an excellent Indonesian generation if they are physically and mentally healthy. The necessity of Nasyyatul Aisyiyah's da'wah, driven by the needs and concerns of young women, led to the establishment of PASHMINA. Based on needs and problem mapping, one issue of adolescent reproductive health stems from their inability to access sources for advice and information about reproductive health. Seeing this condition, Nasyyatul Aisyiyah was tasked with making reproductive health information and consultations accessible in various places easily reached by adolescents. Before being renamed PASHMINA, which stands for "Nasyyatul Aisyiyah Youth Health Service," the original name of the program was "Youth Posyandu."

Development of the PASHMINA Program

The PASHMINA program in Medan has not yet experienced significant development. This is because the program has only been implemented for two years. Additionally, PASHMINA Medan is not yet open to the public, so many people in Medan are unaware of the program's existence. The PASHMINA program is conducted by visiting Muhammadiyah schools throughout Medan. They provide information and consultation services tailored to the needs of adolescents (interview with Endah Wiguna, July 18, 2023). The challenges faced by *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Medan in running the PASHMINA program include the crisis of members and cadres who fully understand how the PASHMINA works.

TOT Entrepreneurship (BUANA)

The BUANA program in Medan began in 2019 and is still active until 2023. The program is conducted at various *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* branches in Medan, such as at the residence of one *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* member, Sister Utami, in Medan Tembung. The program is managed by all *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* members and cadres led by the Economic and Organizational Development Departments. The program advocates to all women in Medan through social media like Instagram and Facebook (interview with Eva Yunita Khairani, July 18, 2023). The program was initially created due to the high costs of running an organization. However, at the right time, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* still had many branch areas and divisions without independent funding. To encourage the financial independence of the organization, *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Medan developed economic independence through the "*Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Business Agency" (BUANA).

Development of the TOT Entrepreneurship Program (BUANA)

According to statistical data from the Regional Leadership of the *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Economic Department, BUANA in Medan has experienced significant growth both in quantity and quality. However, this growth is not statistically significant. The *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* organization in Medan has made annual progress in increasing the collective knowledge of the community about the value of local economic development. *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* Medan received a positive response from the community, with many women in Medan interested in participating in the BUANA program. Below is an image of the products produced by the *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah* organization in Medan.



Figure 1: BUANA fabric softener products Medan City
Source: Author's collection

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the development of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah in Medan from 2016 to 2023 discussed in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that: The development of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah (NA) in Medan from 2016–2023 has shown significant improvements. The numerous activities conducted monthly or even annually are evidence of this. However, due to challenging circumstances, several activities had to be temporarily halted during the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to mid-2021. Nevertheless, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah continued to assist affected communities by raising funds, providing aid, and distributing masks. From 2022–2023, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah resumed its programs, including several new initiatives in the last two years. As a result, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah is currently experiencing more rapid development than in previous years.

The research suggests that Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan continues to expand to remain relevant and attract new cadres and members. The organization must consistently adhere to its principles to stay true to its ideology. Additionally, in cadre training, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah must maintain its educational role to prevent members from deviating from the organization's teachings and to be the spearhead of its future journey, especially as many young women are no longer interested in joining. Members of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah also need to understand the organization's history and respect its founders to strengthen their commitment to advancing the organization and ensuring its sustainability in Medan. Furthermore, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Medan should collaborate with other organizations to create a conducive environment among them, setting an example of tolerance and unity among various groups in society.

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