

## Indonesian Context of Health Paradiplomacy: A Bibliography

Siti Fitrah Ramadania<sup>1\*</sup>, Moh. Syafarudin A.L Gula<sup>2</sup>, Siti Febrianty Mohammad<sup>3</sup>,  
Moh Ryan YL Saad<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> *International Relations Program, Universitas Bina Mandiri Gorontalo, Indonesia*

<sup>4</sup>*Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Indonesia Jaya Palu, Indonesia*

[Sitifitra01@gmail.com](mailto:Sitifitra01@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [mohsyafarudin97@gmail.com](mailto:mohsyafarudin97@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>,  
[sitifebriyantimohamad@gmail.com](mailto:sitifebriyantimohamad@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>, [ryansaad433@gmail.com](mailto:ryansaad433@gmail.com)<sup>4</sup>

\*correspondence: [rini.asriani@ubmg.ac.id](mailto:rini.asriani@ubmg.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

This research compiles a scientific bibliography on Indonesian health paradiplomacy during 2020-2024, examining the role of sub-national actors in national health diplomacy agenda. Health issues have transformed from domestic affairs into diplomatic instruments, enabling local governments, hospitals, and universities to strengthen health capacity through international networks without complete dependence on central government. Using qualitative descriptive approach and content analysis of five selected news articles, this research identifies patterns of international cooperation by local actors during 2022-2025. Analysis results show the main focus is collaboration and services to improve regional health service quality to international standards and promote health independence. Forms of paradiplomacy include human resource exchange, research, and medical infrastructure strengthening, such as East Java Province's cooperation with LUMC Netherlands for world-class hospitals, and Bandung City's partnership with Hamamatsu Japan involving industrial and educational sectors. Local actors such as governors, secretaries, city governments, and universities play crucial and equal roles in driving these initiatives. This documentation is expected to serve as academic reference and evaluation basis for developing sustainable international health cooperation strategies in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Health Paradiplomacy, Collaboration, Services, Local Actors, Human Resources, International Relations.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the past five years, health issues have become an important part of Indonesia's international relations, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world in 2020. This situation confirms that health is no longer solely a domestic issue, but has become an instrument of diplomacy that determines a country's position and bargaining power in the global system. (Citra Widjani et al., 2023). The 2024 Indonesian Health Profile Report by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia shows that increased international cooperation is one of the key strategies in strengthening national health capacity in the face of epidemics and transnational health threats. (Finkelstein & Koplik, 1976). At the same time, Indonesia's health diplomacy is developing through collaboration with various international

actors, for example in the G20 and ASEAN forums, to fight for fair access to vaccines and strengthen global health systems, as discussed in the study. (AlKhaldi et al., 2021) regarding Indonesia's health diplomacy strategy as an instrument of foreign policy.

At the same time, there has been significant development in the involvement of sub-national actors such as local governments, cities, hospitals, and universities in building international relations and cooperation in the field of health. (Tifani, 2024). This phenomenon is known as health paradiplomacy. Paradiplomacy provides opportunities for regions in Indonesia to directly improve their health capacity through international networks without relying entirely on the central government. Examples can be seen in the health cooperation between the city of Bandung and Hamamatsu, Japan, in improving the quality of human resources in health, as well as the cooperation between the East Java Provincial Government and referral hospitals in the Netherlands to strengthen medical transplant services developed towards world-class hospitals—as shown in the results of news analysis and interviews that are part of the appendix to this study (Widyani et al., 2023). Such cooperation not only promotes the transfer of technology and expertise, but also strengthens the region's international network as part of multilevel health governance.

The urgency to produce a scientific bibliography on Indonesia's health paradiplomacy stems from the scattered nature of references and the lack of comprehensive documentation related to such cooperation practices. The last five years have been a crucial period, encompassing a global crisis and the recovery phase of the national health system. The World Health Organization (WHO), through its Country Cooperation Strategy 2023-2027, notes that Indonesia is entering a phase of health transformation that involves more focused and measurable international partnerships (Kementerian Kesehatan, 2022). However, there has not been much research specifically mapping the contribution of non-central actors in the health diplomacy agenda, even though their role is increasingly crucial in helping to achieve health development targets, especially in the context of Indonesia's decentralization.

Therefore, this bibliography on Indonesian health diplomacy has been compiled as an academic effort to collect scientific references, cooperation documents, regulations, policy data, and publications developed from 2020 to 2024. This study combines the perspectives of international relations and public health, in which the theory of health diplomacy explains how health issues become instruments of foreign policy (Iswati et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the theory of paradiplomacy emphasizes the role of local actors in external relations as part of multilevel governance. Thus, the rationale for this research is oriented toward interdisciplinary analysis that not only identifies sources of knowledge but also examines patterns, trends, benefits, and gaps in studies that still need to be explored in the field of health paradiplomacy in Indonesia.

Through the compilation of this bibliography, the research aims to contribute scientifically to the development of academic references, while supporting policymakers, academics, and practitioners to gain a clearer understanding of the development of Indonesia's health paradiplomacy, both within a national and global framework. This documentation is expected to serve as a strong foundation for further research, as well as a basis for the evaluation and development of sustainable international health cooperation strategies in Indonesia.

## METHOD

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding how paradiplomacy practices, particularly in the health sector, are reported and practiced by various parties in Indonesia in the period 2022–2025. This approach was chosen because the study does not focus on measuring numbers, but rather on interpreting the meaning, context, and patterns of communication that emerge in news reports on paradiplomacy. The research

objects consisted of a number of articles and online news reports discussing the topic of paradiplomacy in the health sector. Data were collected through online media searches using the keywords "*paradiplomacy*" and "*health paradiplomacy*." From the search results of 49 articles, a screening process was carried out to determine the data relevant to the research theme, leaving five articles that directly highlighted the issue of paradiplomacy in the context of health.

The data collection technique used documentation and literature study methods. The researcher identified, downloaded, and reviewed online news articles related to the implementation of paradiplomacy by local governments. A content analysis sheet was used as a research instrument to record and categorize important information from each article, such as the actors involved, the form of cooperation, and the results achieved.

The research procedure was conducted in stages. The first stage involved searching for initial data using the general keyword "*paradiplomacy*." The second stage was screening using the additional keyword "*health paradiplomacy*" to narrow the focus of the research. The final stage was an in-depth analysis of five selected articles to identify practices, policies, and dynamics of international cooperation that describe the form of paradiplomacy in the health sector.

The collected data was then analyzed using content analysis techniques. This process was carried out by thoroughly reading each article to find patterns, meanings, and main themes related to the implementation of health paradiplomacy. The results of the analysis were then interpreted descriptively to provide a comprehensive picture of how local governments in Indonesia play a role in supporting health diplomacy through paradiplomacy activities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

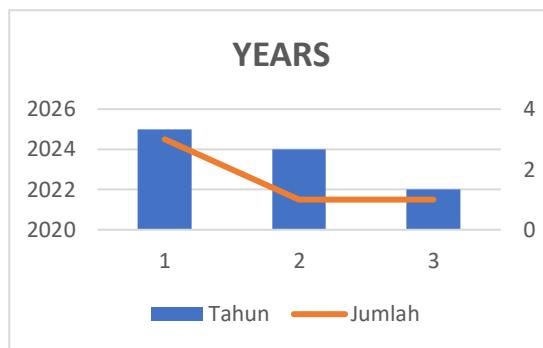


Figure 1.1 Years

Based on the graph, it shows the relationship between Year (displayed in bars) and Number (displayed in lines). In the first year (2025), the number value appears to be the highest. Then in the second year (2023), the number value decreases significantly. In the third year (2022), the number value remains the same as in the second year, with no increase or decrease. This graph illustrates a downward trend in quantity as the year decreases over the three periods shown.

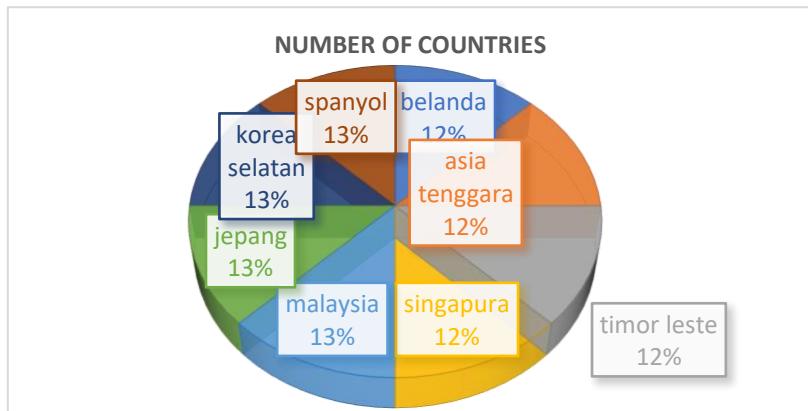


Figure 1.2 Countries

This pie chart shows the distribution of countries based on percentage. There are several countries and regions with relatively balanced percentages. Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea each have the largest share, at 13%. Meanwhile, Singapore, East Timor, Southeast Asia in general, and the Netherlands each have a percentage of 12%, followed by Spain, which is also in the range of 13%. Overall, this pie chart illustrates the distribution of contributions or the number of countries that is almost evenly spread across the categories shown.

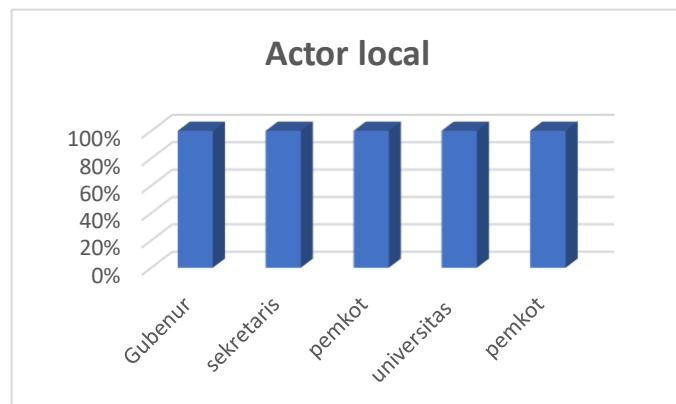


Figure 1.3 Local actors

This 3D bar chart displays information about the local actors involved, namely the Governor, Secretary, City Government, and University. All actors shown have the same level of involvement or percentage, which is around 100%. This means that the four local actors have a very high and equal role in the context described in the chart.

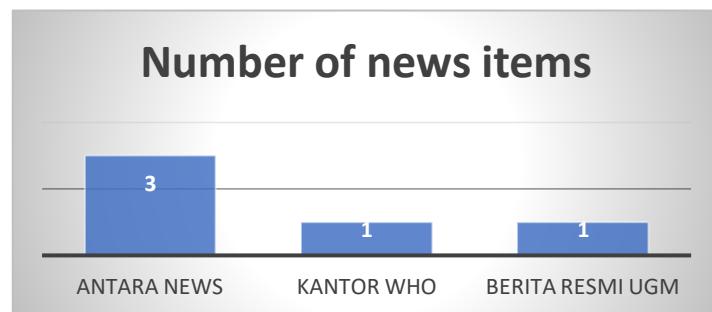


Figure 1.4 items

Based on this graph, it shows the number of news articles sourced from three different entities. Overall, ANTARA NEWS dominates by contributing the highest number of news items, namely three. This number is far greater than the other two sources. Meanwhile, both the WHO OFFICE and UGM OFFICIAL NEWS each have the same number of news items, namely one. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the context of this data, ANTARA NEWS is the most productive source in terms of generating or reporting information.

## Discussion of Research Results



Figure 1.4 Word Cloud

Based on word cloud analysis, the central issues dominating the news coverage are Collaboration and Service. This indicates a policy trend at the local level to aggressively improve the quality of health services through intensive cooperation. The main objective of these improvement efforts is to achieve higher standards, even international standards, which ultimately aim to increase regional health independence and reduce the community's dependence on seeking treatment abroad. Key actors, such as regional heads and institutional leaders, are the driving force behind this initiative.

One of the most concrete examples of strategic collaboration is the paradiplomacy initiative carried out by the East Java Provincial Government with LUMC Netherlands. Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa explicitly stated that this collaboration is a strategic foundation for realizing the East Java World Class Hospital program. This cooperation is not merely ceremonial, but comprehensive in scope, ranging from improving medical services and exchanging knowledge in the field of research to exchanging human resources with all their competencies. This shows that improving the quality of health services requires the integration of medical innovation and the development of expert human resources.

Another example of regional collaboration can be seen in the exploration of cooperation between the city of Bandung and Hamamatsu, Japan. Interestingly, this initiative is not limited to the health sector alone, but also extends to the industrial and education sectors. This underscores the understanding that improving medical facilities and services cannot stand alone, but must be supported by adequate industrial infrastructure and ecosystems, such as the provision of medical equipment or technology. Members of the Hamamatsu City Council even have roles in the Japanese Ministry of Economy, which strengthens the focus on economic cooperation while also helping young Indonesian talent to pursue careers in

Japan, demonstrating the synergy between health and economic diplomacy (Burhan & Sulistiadi, 2022).

Human resources (HR) is the main focus of collaboration between UGM and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste has consistently sought to improve the quantity and quality of its health workforce since regaining independence. This collaboration is not limited to the medical field, as UGM offers more than 280 study programs. UGM Rector, Prof. dr. Ova Emilia, emphasized the double degree scheme and the development of an online education platform (ugm online), which is expected to be a more flexible and economical solution for HR development, especially for low- and middle-income countries. This demonstrates the vital role of higher education institutions in meeting the need for health human resources in the region.

Although the focus is on international collaboration, dynamics at the local level also play an important role. The receipt of the WHO Healthy City Award by the City of Makassar and Wajo Regency is a tangible recognition of the hard work of the community, government, and private sector in creating a healthy urban environment. This award serves as an incentive to continue innovating and collaborating in order to maintain global health standards. On the other hand, local challenges also arise that require unique solutions, such as in Merangin, where the regent offered regional hospital honorary staff the opportunity to become medical personnel abroad, which can be interpreted as an effort to facilitate career advancement or address the issue of excess non-civil servant labor in the region.

## CONCLUSIONS

Health paradiplomacy has emerged as a crucial strategy driven by sub-national actors in efforts to strengthen Indonesia's health capacity post-2020. The central issues driving this initiative are Collaboration and Service, with the collective goal of improving the quality of regional health services to meet international standards. The most prominent forms of cooperation include the exchange of human resources, research, and the strengthening of medical infrastructure, as seen in the cooperation between East Java Province and LUMC Netherlands and UGM with Timor-Leste. Local actors, including governors, regional secretaries, city governments, and universities, have shown a high and equal level of involvement in implementing this paradiplomacy. Therefore, health paradiplomacy has become an effective instrument that enables regions to build external networks, facilitate the transfer of expertise, and ultimately promote independence and a more resilient and globally competitive health system.

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