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## Rethinking domestic politics of Indonesian SSTC in Africa and paradox of MRLs education training

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesia attempted to use its foreign policy to address domestic and international objectives in its relations with other nations. Due to Indonesia's success in the 1955 AAC and involvement in the 1961 NAM, the country's administration used the SSTC mechanism to further local goals. Indonesia often offers Muslim Religious Leaders (MRLs) international reproductive health training to bring SSTC to African nations. Analysis of domestic politics and international aid used in this research. Using secondary data from literature studies, this research employs a qualitative explanatory case study methodology. In addition, triangulation analysis based on theory and Nvivo classification based on analysis of domestic politics and foreign aid are applied. This research found Indonesia tried to project itself as a nation that successfully and consistently implements and promotes family planning worldwide. However, various paradoxes exist in how Indonesian SSTC is implemented through MRLs activities. Indonesia has a high level of foreign debt, which goes against religious belief, and the notion that a large family is necessary for success is the opposite of the success of Indonesian SSTC.



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## Introduction

Since 1955, Indonesia initiated the formation of the Asian-African Conference (AAC); the Indonesian government has actively collaborated with other developing countries to advance global development. International forums that focused on economic development programs began to be held, such as the Conference on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, attended by 138 countries with the output in the form of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). These two conferences were milestones and catalysts for forming South-South Cooperation (SSC) (Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), 2020). SSC is a platform used to exchange experiences and encourage innovative development strategies, considering that the pace of development among these countries is uneven. Given the closeness between developing countries at the same economic growth stage and background, this cooperation's cost-effectiveness ultimately provides additional benefits to SSC (Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) & South Centre, 2019). Subsequently, SSC developed into SSTC as the role of triangular actors increased in 2010.

Indonesian SSTC through education and training activities as form of increasing human resources. The quality of the human resources that are currently available will determine how far the nation can progress.

Indonesia uses equitable educational partnerships because developing nations share a common identity (Weber & Winanti, 2016). Indonesia offers high-quality basic and tertiary education. Education has a vital role in the development and progress of a country. Teaching and training can be the key to reducing poverty and social inequality levels. Having good knowledge, individuals can be more involved in the democratic process, choose wisely, and participate in the formation of their country's policies (Benawa, 2012; Makkawaru, 2019). A good education also enables everyone to develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to increase the country's productivity, economic growth, and national development (Lestari & Handayani, 2023; Qadir et al., 2022). Then, helping other countries through education has several urgent and significant benefits (Rasyid, 2015). By increasing access to education, countries can help reduce poverty, improve health, and build sustainability in countries receiving aid (Zia et al., 2021). Aid-giving countries can also secure strong partnerships, improve international reputations, and create a more stable global environment, which can ultimately benefit the country (Jiaojiao et al., 2018; Menashy, 2019; Rifaldy, 2020).

Furthermore, the Indonesian government actively promotes the independence of developing nations. Indonesia regularly conducts international reproductive health training for Muslim Religious Leaders (MRLs), organized by BKKBN and UNFPA as a form of implementing SSTC to African countries. MRLs were held consistently from 2013 to 2023 and few African nations joined the MRLs this event (Setneg, 2020). By putting this curriculum into reality, participants will learn management skills for reproductive health, including advocacy and logistical management (UNFPA, 2018). Indonesia possesses this strength is the reproductive health education programs it has hosted through MRLs over the past ten years. In comparison to other developing nations, Indonesia is experiencing a very modest population rise. This fact demonstrates how family planning initiatives have slowed Indonesia's population growth. Putting together MRLs events as a way for Indonesia to teach other developing nations about its family planning experience. In addition to practitioners and scholars, the MRLs activity draws on methods from Islamic and cultural leaders. Indonesia, a moderate Muslim nation, has had success using these two strategies to address population issues.

However, implementing Indonesia's SSTC through various training activities and assisting African countries was not fully successful (Tim Kornas KSST, 2017). Indonesia has a positive image as a developing country, a lower middle-income country that receives and actively provides aid (Sadewa & Hakiki, 2023). Even though Indonesia is active in providing grants, scholarships, training, and student exchanges to African countries, these various activities have yet to have a positive domestic impact. This contrasts with domestic demand which is still high. This research aims to explain the reorientation of Indonesia's aid and cooperation through NGO actors and academics with African countries reflecting domestic politics and explain the paradox of Indonesia's becoming a donor as a new emerging donor.

## Method

This study collected exceptional case studies based on reality and combined contextual case study methodology with explanatory quantitative methodologies. It underwent thorough description phases to get the right findings. Deepening the problem, reviewing the literature, gathering data, evaluating descriptive data, and compiling in a sequential manner are only a few of the research procedures. Analytical descriptions, tables, and graphs are examples of data analysis. This research generates conclusions by analyzing the data and connecting the facts to theory. The application of research through data collection, analysis, interpretation, comparison with theory, and production of conclusions that can be understood (Winarni, 2018).

This technique's choice is based on gathering good data from official reports, sources, scholarly publications and descriptions and research results based on case analysis from already published works. To prevent oversimplifying efforts, this research can also be gained through data analysis, providing an impartial scientific explanation of the reality of current difficulties (Yusuf, 2014). The relationship between the concept and several factual facets of the case study is demonstrated by this research. Ultimately, this study will yield precise and coherent findings.

Methods used in this research: a review of the literature, which consists of interviews with individuals who are directly involved in Indonesian cooperation aid, such as academics, businesspeople, government officials, and foreign organizations. Furthermore, the procedures for gathering data are founded on several publications and official declarations about this study; a chronological sequence is a systematic and comprehensive occurrence. Existing statistics refers to organizing pertinent data that is directly relevant, followed by an investigation to determine whether there is a relationship or link between one set of data and another or vice versa. To be clear and simple enough for readers to comprehend; and Analysis: research triangulation through international cooperative assistance and domestic political analysis to examine empirical data. Through an

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analysis process, research in explanatory qualitative form can provide an explanation, test hypotheses, and solve problems as formulated (Abdussamad, 2022).

## Results and Discussions

### The Development of Indonesian SSTC towards Developing Countries

During the Cold War, many nations remained under colonial rule. Concurrently, nations that have achieved independence also wish to be in a position where can avoid becoming embroiled in disputes between the two major hegemon. Because of the power disparity between colonial and former colony countries, developing nations are especially concerned about the possibility of a return to colonialism or neo-colonialism. Indonesia, a recently independent nation, wants to avoid hostilities with the US and the USSR. However, Indonesia employs "Free and Active Politics," which allows it to take advantage of two rival hegemon nations without being impacted by or embroiled in Cold War polarization.

Indonesia proposed the notion of the 1955 Asian-African Conference (AAC) to achieve solidarity among developing nations. The First President of Soekarno aspired for Indonesia to be a global leader in promoting peace through an anti-colonial. Indonesia also initiated the development of the 1955 AAC into the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961. During the era of President Soekarno, through the 1955 Asian-African Conference and the 1961 Non-Aligned Movement, Indonesia gained international recognition and a reputation as a free and active country (Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2017). Free because it was not tied to alliances of big countries when the Cold War was underway. While actively contributing to international political needs. Indonesia emphasizes its leadership role as a newly independent country and fights against colonialism. By playing an essential role in facilitating the meeting, Indonesia demonstrated its strong commitment to solidarity between the nations of Asia and Africa. Through this conference and movement, Indonesia could establish close diplomatic relations with various countries in Asia and Africa without being tied to a particular bloc. Both activities help create mutually beneficial cooperation and strengthen Indonesia's position in the international arena (Iswardhana, 2021).

In the reign of the Second President of Soeharto, Indonesia showed solidarity with developing countries. Indonesia assists many developing countries, especially in Southeast and Central Asia. This assistance includes food, health, education, and agricultural assistance, which aims to improve community welfare and strengthen regional cooperation (Akbar et al., 2020). During this period, Indonesia actively encouraged cultural, artistic, and educational exchanges with other developing countries. This public diplomacy is done through student exchanges, sending teaching staff, and promoting Indonesian arts and culture at various international events and festivals. Through participation in various international forums, including the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Indonesia is encouraging a peaceful resolution of the conflict and fighting for Bosnia's interests on the international stage. The solidarity shown by Indonesia towards Bosnia reflects Indonesia's commitment to supporting peace and stability in countries affected by conflict. It confirms Indonesia's role as a country that cares about humanitarian and peace issues at the global level (Bramasta, 2020). Indonesia's support for Bosnia as a member of the NAM during its war with Yugoslavia/Serbia was demonstrated by the visit. Indonesia then tried to move beyond becoming a recipient country, as demonstrated at the 1992 NAM Summit through the Non-Aligned Movement Center for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM-CSSTC) three years later. In establishing the NAM-CSSTC, Indonesia is trying to support the TCDC, which the G77 has formulated. Moreover, at that time, Indonesia had great strength in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and education, which could be used as a strength in implementing the NAM-CSSTC. This transition aligns with the increase in Indonesia's status as a middle-income developing country that wants an increased role in south-south development. Considering that President Soeharto had no intention of visiting and that it took place during a conflict, the unexpected visit was deemed "historic and reckless". Indonesia, the movement's creator, has attempted to contribute to the 1961 NAM's existence actively and significantly from its founding, as seen by the numerous points mentioned above. Despite the lack of attention given to the NAM at the time, Indonesia remained involved in the movement, as seen by its appointment as chairman, its role as host nation, and its unexpected visit to Bosnia (Hananto, 2018).

After the economic collapse, which caused a multidimensional crisis in Indonesia at the end of Soeharto's reign, there was a change in era to reform. At the start of reform under the Fourth President of Abdurrahman Wahid and the Fifth President of Megawati Soekarnoputri, Indonesia was less active in international politics. This reality is because Indonesia is experiencing several internal political challenges, including political tensions, horizontal conflicts, and security and political stability problems. The government's focus on handling internal problems can reduce the attention and resources allocated to international political affairs (KKP, 2017). Overcoming domestic instability requires significant efforts from the government, both in terms

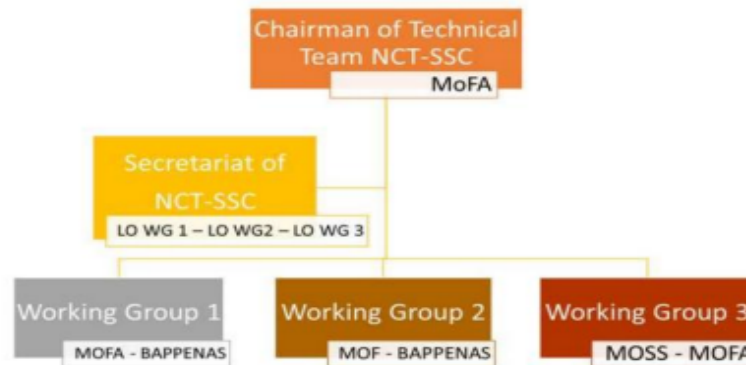
of economic and social recovery, especially after the 2003 Bali Bombings (Lumbangaol, 2021). This necessary focus on improving the domestic situation can limit Indonesia's ability to engage in international politics at the global level actively. Political instability at the domestic level often results in policy uncertainty at the national level. This uncertainty can affect Indonesia's ability to formulate and implement consistent and effective foreign policy, resulting in a lack of clarity in foreign policy and direction. During the administration of these two presidents, Indonesia's solidarity with developing countries was not very visible (Hermawan & Kasim, 2013).

Then, during the Sixth President of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration, since 2008, Indonesia has had a lower-middle income level. Indonesia used this position by establishing South-South Cooperation (SSC) to communicate with other nations—developing nations. Additionally, since 2010, Indonesia's SSC has shifted its focus from originally aiding more in the Asia Pacific region to the African continent (Apresian, 2017). Indonesia attempted to develop an alternative approach to SSTC implementation between 2010 and 2013, emphasizing providing technology, education, and training. This approach differs from other SSTC host nations, which emphasize financial instruments like loans and debt. Indonesia strengthened and developed cooperation with developing countries through the South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) program (Hutabarat, 2023). The Indonesian SSTC aims to exchange knowledge and experience to increase development capacity and achieve sustainable development goals. Indonesia's SSTC in the SBY era demonstrated Indonesia's commitment to building global partnerships and solidarity with other developing countries. This activity is part of Indonesia's actions to become a global actor that plays a role in advancing sustainable development and overcoming global challenges together with other countries (Iswardhana et al., 2022). It is essential to realize that Indonesia possesses excellent human resources that, via SSC, may help other developing nations. Experts from the training program are sent to Madagascar, Tanzania, and other African countries, among other nations. Furthermore, Indonesia offers educational opportunities to people from the Asia-Pacific region, with the goal of enabling scholarship applicants to learn more about Indonesian culture in various pre-arranged venues. The effect of Indonesia's support to other nations will have been that the nations it has helped will trust Indonesia more. President Yudhoyono used this chance to establish ongoing collaboration with developing nations. As Indonesia joined the SSC, its approach to interacting with nations in the south has evolved. This emphasis on other developing nations is exemplified by Indonesia's creation of a comprehensive blueprint and design from SSC to understand future SSC policies, strategies, and execution. Four institutions currently oversee government program management at SSC: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of State Secretariat, and the Ministry of National Development Planning/BAPPENAS. While other ministries serve as the programs' implementing actors.

Meanwhile, under the Seventh President, Joko Widodo, the Indonesian government continues to encourage the improvement of SSTC through collaboration between Indonesia and other developing countries, both at regional and global levels (Pujayanti, 2015). Through SSTC, Indonesia remains committed to sharing human resource management experiences with partner countries through assisting in the form of training, grants, and investment (Sari, 2022). This SSTC is done through meetings, conferences, and cooperation in various sectors, including the economy, infrastructure, and human resource development. SSTC in the Jokowi era also aims to strengthen sustainable partnerships between Indonesia and other developing countries by exchanging knowledge, technology, and best practices in social, economic, and environmental development (Sofjan et al., 2014). International organizations and the private sector are also involved as executors of the National South-South Cooperation Coordination Group (NCT-SSCG). The NCT-SSCG was established in 2010 to address and resolve the many stakeholder issues and complex institutional structures of SSC in Indonesia (Pamasiwi & Arsyani, 2020). The implementation of the Indonesian SSTC National Coordination Team in NCT-SSCG involved four (4) ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-MoFA), Ministry of Finance (Ministry of Finance-MoF), Ministry of State Secretariat (Ministry of State Secretariat-MoSS), and the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS). The four institutions are led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as can be seen by establishing a structure following the procedural rules in the PKST, as shown in the figure 1.

Indonesia provided USD 42 million (Rp 420 billion) to 700 projects run by 15 ministries between 2000 and 2010. After that, through 130 activities, it rose to USD 30 million (IDR 193 billion). Following its creation, the LDKPI rose to USD 211 million or IDR 3 trillion annually (Sumodiningrat, 2023). It remains less than the SSTC of USD 2 billion in China, USD 680 million in India, USD 500 million in Brazil, and USD 118 million in South Africa in 2010 (Iswardhana, 2021; Pujayanti, 2015). It makes sense that Indonesia's policy was centered on assisting academics to increase their knowledge in Africa and entrepreneurs to grow (Nauli, 2021). The budget has increased by 1,310% to USD 141-211 million (Rp 1-3 trillion). These diverse items demonstrate a clever strategy by which developed nations and non-state entities are included in Indonesian foreign aid. Also, Indonesia is known as implemented other educational and training activities in Africa,

including scholarships for Libya and Sudan at Brawijaya University (2018-2022) (Wicaksono, 2023), scholarships and joint research at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (2021-2023), fisheries training in Libya (2022), and development of Transportation Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast (2023) (Nurtrisianti et al., 2023).



**Figure 1.** National Coordinator of SSTC Team Structure  
Souce: (Pamasiwi & Arsyani, 2020)

### Reproductive Health with Muslim Religious Leaders (MRLs) Education Training

A nation's ability to flourish and advance depends heavily on its educational system. The solution to decreasing poverty and social inequality could be found in education and training. With adequate knowledge, people may make informed decisions, take part in the democratic process, and influence the policies of their nation (Muvid, 2022; Yayan Alpian et al., 2019). Each person can acquire the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to boost the nation's productivity, economic growth, and advancement with the help of a quality education. Then, there are numerous important and urgent advantages to assisting other nations through education (Indy et al., 2019). Countries can assist in decreasing poverty, enhancing health, and fostering sustainability in aid-receiving nations by expanding access to education. Aid-giving nations can profit from improved international relations, solid partnerships, and a more stable international environment (Benavot et al., 2010; Mamoon, 2017; Mukaddas, 2019). International assistance in the field of education can take various forms. Some provide funds for educational infrastructure development, training programs, scholarships, school equipment, facilitators designing curricula, exchange programs, and training for teachers, lecturers and trainers (Riddell & Zarazúa, 2016; Tomory, 2018).

One form of successful implementation of Indonesia's SSTC that has been running successfully for a long time is educational training about reproductive health activities for various developing countries which has been running for ten years.. Through the Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional (BKKBN) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA), the Indonesian government provides educational training to other developing nations in population and development and reproductive health. UNFPA is in charge of establishing information about the context of issues related to population and creating strategies to address issues related to population.

Indonesia has routinely implemented International Training with Muslim Religious Leaders (MRLs) about Reproductive Health arranged by BKKBN and UNFPA. Some African and Asian countries, such as Egypt, Mali, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Niger, Sudan, and Sri Lanka joined the MRLs. The MRLs were placed continuously between 2013 to 2023. By putting this curriculum into practice, participants will gain management skills for reproductive health, including advocacy and logistical management, which will be applied in their home countries. This activity was held in several cities, such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Surabaya, to show that Indonesia is a moderate Muslim country. With the help of ulema, the Islamic community leaders, the government has successfully combined the reproductive health program with a cultural and religious approach. This activity can demonstrate how crucial Islamic academics and organizations are to accomplishing reproductive health initiatives in Indonesia. The substantial population expansion in developing Asian and African nations that is linked to poverty and malnutrition will be the focus of this program.

Reproductive health education activities through MRLs, show that this is a strength that Indonesia has. Indonesia's population growth is relatively small compared to India, Nigeria, and Pakistan. This reality shows that family planning activities have reduced population growth in Indonesia. As a moderate Muslim country, Indonesia has experience successfully combining religious and cultural approaches in dealing with population problems. Organizing MRLs activities as a means for Indonesia to provide its experience through family

planning to other developing countries. Moreover, many developing countries face serious problems related to population because it causes an increase in demand for housing, work, schools, and daily needs.

During the implementation of MRLs education, there was some contradictory situation that implementing family planning using a religious approach was considered detrimental at the domestic level. In Islam, experiencing pregnancy and having children is a gift from God. Meanwhile, the use of certain contraceptives can be considered haram in some interpretations of Islam because it is considered interference with God's will. Family planning can be considered to reduce the number of children God gives (Sahbana & Dinata, 2023). Since President Soeharto's regime, the Indonesian government has encouraged family planning programs to control population growth since the New Order era (Putri et al., 2019). However, the implementation of this policy was different during President Megawati's period, which supported gender equality and the use of contraception rather than promoting family planning activities. Along with changes in government in the reform era, the focus on family planning programs may experience a decrease in priority (Maulana, 2021). Lack of funding for the training of medical personnel and distribution of contraceptives, as well as support for the family planning program, can hinder the success of the program. This factor decreases public awareness of the benefits and importance of family planning, thereby reducing the program's success. Increasing population helps encourage economic growth and social prosperity. In contrast, a decrease in population can cause social and economic problems, while family planning is the opposite (Listyaningsih & Satiti, 2022). Moreover, MRLs activities with family planning activities that focus more on reproductive health encourage the use of contraceptives and allow promiscuity.

In addition, in the conception of Islam and many developing countries, an increase in population will help encourage economic growth and social prosperity. In contrast, a decrease in population can cause social and economic problems, especially in societies that rely on population growth for economic progress, while family planning is the Moreover, MRLs activities with family planning activities that focus more on reproductive health encourage the use of contraceptives and allow promiscuity. However, there are different interpretations; some groups or religious figures in Indonesia oppose contraception and birth control, which are considered to be contrary to religious teachings. However, other groups are more open to the use of contraception in the context of family and health needs.

### **Domestic Policy Analysis**

In formulating and implementing foreign policy, a country's government often faces tug-of-war dynamics between various interests. This process involves complex considerations between public interests, politics, economics, and regulatory mandates. Thomas Oatley explains that domestic institutions can determine the outcome of policies toward the international world. There is a preference for domestic actors trying to integrate into the global economy. Furthermore, the existence of foreign aid and foreign investment encourages the private sector to join global forces. Next, the interests of the domestic private sector will develop into state policies submitted to the international community. As a result, developing countries' governments will support free trade to gain maximum profit. The existence of globalization also encourages interaction with the global economy, which offers a variety of choices. Oatley added that there is a close correlation between democratic developing countries and the high desire to join the regime of international organizations. Furthermore, when developing countries follow the international regime, the countries bargain according to country conditions. The regime will become a forum that mediates between developing countries and a means of interaction with developed countries. Furthermore, it can result in domestic policies that have an international impact by accommodating private interests and bargaining with international law (Raess, 2021).

When formulating domestic policies with an international influence, dominant political interests play an important role. Ministerial leaders as political leaders often consider public opinion, political support, and the maintenance of their political power in the decision-making process (Trager, 2016). Then, civil society groups and non-governmental organizations often play a role in encouraging the government to focus on environmental issues, human rights, health, and other social issues. The society strives to ensure that the policies formulated consider the aspirations and needs of society as a whole. Then, image interests influence a country's position and reputation concerning domestic and international stakeholders. On the other hand, the government must focus on and fulfill domestic public interests to fulfill national interests.

Initially, there was disagreement over whether domestic political foreign policy was sufficient. Is there a relationship between domestic actors influencing foreign policy and the international community, or is it the other way around. This expanded into a follow-up discussion about the degree of reliance domestic actors have on foreign actors and vice versa. These three discussions suggest that globalization has given local actors more chances to participate internationally. Additionally, as democracies grow, more domestic actors are encouraged to assert themselves internationally. Instead, international norms aim to persuade nations to

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adhere to their principles. Then, to defend their interests, many developing nations use international organizations and platforms for global collaboration (Chaudoin et al., 2014).

### **Foreign Aid**

International aid has typically taken the shape of financial contributions and loans from foreign nations and international organizations. In the current era of global aid, a nation might demonstrate an equal pattern of cooperation by integrating the political and economic spheres to pique other nations' interests (Robledo, 2015). Changes in how the world views the nation demonstrate the effectiveness of national branding (Prabowo, 2021). National branding can be done through diplomacy (Pribadi, 2021). Diplomacy is an essential instrument in building good relations between countries. Through effective diplomacy, countries can strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations with other countries, promote global peace and security, and strengthen cooperation in various fields (Kurniadi, 2020). The country can strengthen its position as a responsible global leader by taking a proactive role in various international forums.

In implementing foreign policy, this can be done through foreign aid (Yiew & Lau, 2018). A country implements politics and foreign policy through foreign aid to gain a positive image (Hamonangan, 2020). Foreign aid can strengthen a positive image by building mutually beneficial cooperation and partnerships with other countries, which can help a country strengthen its image as a reliable and reliable partner in economic, political, and social cooperation (Martinez-Zarzoso, 2019). By building strong and mutually beneficial relationships, a country can expand its influence at the international level and strengthen its position as a significant player in the international system.

### **Rethinking Domestic Politics of Indonesian SSTC in Africa**

As one of the main tenets of its international relations with other nations, Indonesia attempted to satisfy domestic and global needs through its foreign policy. Along with becoming a more middle-class nation, Indonesia aspires to play a larger role in international affairs than only being dependent on aid and loans from wealthy nations. Indonesia's participation in and performance in the 1955 AAC and the 1961 NAM prompted the government to use the SSTC mechanism to advance local agendas. Based on requests from domestic players, the government, as a domestic institution, decides how to implement policies to integrate into the global economy. The domestic government's attempts to meet domestic demands through interactions and relationships demonstrate the tight link between domestic and international politics (Walter, 2015). In the framework of achieving national objectives, the government formulates political policies to implement foreign policy while attempting to consider domestic actors' interests.

The Indonesian government intends to support other developing nations through SSTC in Africa. However, Indonesia has chosen not to accept foreign aid in the form of debt, loans, or capital due to its limited national financial resources and emphasis on internal growth. Because many wealthy nations have started cutting back on their foreign aid, we should support and aid other southern nations internationally. Since the 2011 G20 Summit in Los Cabos, emerging nations have begun to join the G7 meetings formerly attended by developed nations. As part of the global sustainable development agenda, Argentina, Mexico, Russia, and Indonesia are among the nations that want to offer Official Development Assistance (ODA) to poor nations. The SSTC concept a form of cooperation between developing countries where these countries share knowledge, resources, and skills to achieve sustainable development. In the Indonesian context, SSTC, under the administration of President Yudhoyono, involves collaboration with other countries to advance development in various sectors, including education, health, and agriculture. Under SBY's leadership, Indonesia strengthened its collaboration with other developing countries, especially in Asia and Africa (Niman, 2022).

The role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and academics in influencing and determining a country's policies. This role shows that these two non-state actors shape the public agenda, mobilize community support, and provide input to the government. NGOs help raise public awareness of important issues and mobilize public support to pressure governments to take appropriate action. Academics are also often involved in data collection, analysis, and in-depth research on various social, economic, and political issues. Through well-organized campaigns, NGOs can mobilize strong public support to support specific policies and influence government decision-making processes.

NGOs and academics seek to increase the application of Indonesian expertise across various domains. Academics call for other nations to benefit from Indonesia's expertise and experience in disaster relief, agriculture, and education. Because several of these initiatives are well-known and valuable internationally, the booth will help to improve the perception of Indonesian science and technology. But Indonesia's position can also be strategically advantageous because, by international standards, its science and technology are on par with those of industrialized nations. Moreover, because the equator crosses Indonesia and Africa,



Indonesia has comparable physical and climatic characteristics. The demographic and cultural features are similar because of its vast population and broad, multicultural heritage, encouraging the application of Indonesian science and technology. In addition, compared to African nations that currently struggle with these issues, Indonesia has a long history of success and expertise in managing disasters, poverty, and conflicts (PKSLN Kementan, 2015). Scholars and NGOs agree that Africa presents Indonesia with enormous opportunities. Indonesia can gain from its wide size and people if the nation is committed to working in the region. Academics advocate for the application of Indonesian science and technology abroad.

Through triangular foreign assistance, Indonesia can be focused on SSTC in Africa more easily because of the assistance and financial support from developed countries or international organizations. However, it has to adjust to the needs of recipient countries. Indonesia has succeeded in simultaneously engaging donor agencies and developed countries by demonstrating traditional donor support as it increasingly provides international assistance to other developing countries. The African region was chosen to respond to the aspirations and needs of Indonesian NGOs and scholars who need expansion to new market opportunities, especially since this region has a large area and a large population and vice versa. It is still in the condition of developing countries, which tend to be poor.

Indonesian SSTC is a method of collaboration used to forge alliances between southern Asia-African nations. Indonesia can enhance its internal economy by means of investment, exports, imports, training, and mentoring from African countries (Nchofoung et al., 2022). About Indonesia at the same year that international organizations joined as triangular partners, SSC changed its name to SSTC and broadened its reach to include Africa (Achsin & Sisilia, 2020). In Africa, SSTC employs a triangular model that includes conventional contributors from international organizations, developed nation institutions, developed nation institutions, and even worldwide partners. The Indonesian government hopes to enable their nation to support other developing nations through SSTC in Africa (Abate, 2022).

The SSTC that Indonesia is conducting in Africa follows a triangular model, involving established international agencies as conventional contributors, developed countries' institutions, and even foreign partners. The government that initiated and is currently in charge is Indonesia, although it still "holds up" the third party. For SSTC to be a clever means of balancing the interactions between the northern and southern nations, facilitating the implementation of the activities. Indonesia collaborates with the World Bank, FAO, IMF, and UN to conduct the South-South cooperation program and provide various forms of foreign aid to Africa. Ultimately, developed nations like Indonesia may share management methods and experiences and help oversee the execution of foreign aid through international organizations.

With the help of established international agencies, developed nations' institutions, and even international partners, Indonesia is implementing a triangle approach in its SSTC efforts in Africa. The government that initiated and is currently in charge is Indonesia, although it still "holds up" the third party. In order to facilitate the implementation of the activities, Indonesian SSTC may be a clever strategy for balancing the interactions between the southern and northern nations. Indonesia works with the World Bank, FAO, IMF, and UN to carry out the South-South cooperation program in various foreign aid programs for Africa. Ultimately, developed nations like Indonesia may share management methods, experiences, and help in overseeing the execution of foreign aid through international organizations.

### **Paradox of MRLs Education Training**

As an Indonesian government program, Family Planning (KB) aims to control population growth by regulating pregnancy and birth. Based on the explanation above, MRLs training is a form of national branding. Through implementing MRLs activities, Indonesia seeks to show a positive image by fighting for equality, inclusion, and justice in multilateral diplomacy. This shows Indonesia's commitment to egalitarian and inclusive values in international relations. By fighting for fair representation and equal opportunities for all countries through population training, Indonesia is strengthening its positive image as a major supporter of global development. In this case, the Indonesian government is trying to present a positive image of the success of population management, even though it has not been fully implemented, and there are various challenges. MRLs training, which is routinely implemented by the government even during the COVID-19 pandemic, is intended to direct information to emphasize certain achievements through specific programs. The image that we want to build is that Indonesia consistently implements family planning and disseminates it to various countries worldwide.

Even though this program has had a positive impact in reducing the population growth rate in Indonesia, various contradictions occur in its implementation. Not only about contradictory religious views, and the awareness of family planning is still low in some areas. Furthermore, Indonesia has a large amount of foreign debt. Indonesia depends on foreign loans as an essential source of funds for development projects, including



infrastructure, education, and health. However, as a new emerging country, we have a responsibility to help other countries. This obligation also supports the paradox because Indonesia has yet to be entirely able to resolve domestic problems. However, providing this assistance causes Indonesia to allocate funds, plan activities, establish cooperation, and assist other countries. There are concerns that Indonesia's aid is used to help other countries rather than fully meeting domestic needs.

The National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN), as a government agency responsible for implementing population and family planning programs in Indonesia, has a big interest in implementing MRLs training. But it also cannot run optimally due to funding constraints. The government's focus on infrastructure, health, and education—causes BKKBN to not focus attention on budget allocations from the central and regional governments, especially if there are more urgent budget priorities in other sectors, a lack of proper planning, and adequate budget allocation for family planning. The budget challenge of the family planning program limits BKKBN's ability to provide quality and sustainable services to the community. Regarding the case of MRLs training for ten years, Indonesia did not assist in the form of funds or loans. However, the costs of accommodation and holding the event for hundreds of participants from various Asian and African countries came from foreign loans. Compared to implementation through MRLs activities for ten years, it would be better if it was allocated to improve BKKBN's performance in promoting family planning at the sub-district level around Indonesia.

In addition, implementing MRLs cannot ensure that the knowledge and experience gained in Indonesia can be implemented in their country. Technical and financial support is still needed for MRLs participating countries that need to strengthen their capacity to implement the knowledge at the domestic level. This technical and financial assistance may include funding, technology, and advanced training necessary to implement the results obtained in MRLs activities effectively. Moreover, there needs to be an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that African countries implement the training results obtained through regulations and activities. Additional supervision is still needed from international organizations, regional institutions, NGOs, and the Indonesian government to ensure that MRLs participants also implement family planning. Besides, UNFPA as BKKBN's partner in MRLs activities faces obstacles in the form of complex cultural and social issues in developing countries. Cultural differences and social norms can often hinder local communities' acceptance and adoption of these programs. This reduces the effectiveness of implementing programs related to population and reproductive health. Moreover, in implementing MRLs, evaluating and measuring the programs' impact is a challenge for UNFPA. This is mainly related to the complexity of population and reproductive health issues and challenges in collecting accurate and representative data for partners to implement domestically.

## Conclusions

Indonesia provides foreign aid in Africa through SSTC to accommodate domestic needs and political demands. Providing foreign aid tends to increase the political image and domestic economic acceleration. The reorientation of Indonesian SSTC tends to be different from the pattern of traditional donor countries because of the pattern of relations between countries that were previously unequal. As a new donor country, Indonesia allows for accelerating global sustainable development, which fills the space that previously tended to be filled only by traditional donor countries and agencies by assisting in investment, cooperation, and training. Indonesia's foreign policy toward other countries was its attempt to use foreign policy to meet local and global demands. Indonesia wants to become a more middle-class country and participate more in international issues rather than relying solely on loans and aid from wealthy countries. Indonesia's administration used the SSTC mechanism to further local agendas because of the country's success and participation in the 1955 AAC and the 1961 NAM. Scholars are urging other countries to use Indonesia's knowledge and experience in agriculture, education, and disaster relief. The international recognition and significance of numerous of these activities will enhance the image of Indonesian science and technology. However, Indonesia's position might also be strategically favorable because its science and technology are comparable to those of industrialized nations globally. The equator passes through Africa and Indonesia. The demographics and cultural traits are comparable because of its large population and diverse, multicultural past, which promotes Indonesian science and technology utilization. Furthermore, Indonesia has a long history of success and experience in handling conflicts, poverty, and disasters. NGO's and academics alike concur that Africa offers Indonesia a wealth of prospects. Academics support utilizing Indonesian science and technology overseas. The implementation of Indonesian SSTC through MRLs training that was held for ten years is a type of Indonesian national branding to present as a country that successfully and regularly adopts family planning and spreads it to the international community. The government of Indonesia endeavors to provide a favorable impression of the effectiveness of population control, even though it remains partially implemented and faces several obstacles.

However, implementing Indonesian SSTC activities demonstrates several paradoxes. First, Indonesia is heavily indebted to foreign countries. The contradiction is further supported by the fact that Indonesia is still incapable of handling internal issues. Foreign loans used to cover accommodation costs and organize the event for hundreds of attendees from different African and Asian nations. It would be preferable if the funds were given to enhance BKKBN's performance in promoting family planning at the sub-district level throughout Indonesia instead of implementing through MRLs activities for a decade. Second, contrary to popular belief, family planning with an Islamic method was deemed harmful on a local level. Some interpretations of Islam hold that the use of some contraceptives is haram because it interferes with God's plan for the creation of life. Third, family planning programs may become less of a priority because of changes in the administration and laws during the reform era. Fourth, there is societal pressure in rural areas to have a large family to succeed, which contradicts family planning's goal of slowing population growth.

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