



## Soft Diplomacy Efforts Through the BIPA Program from Educational and Cultural Attaché (Atdikbud) in Manila to Improve Bilateral Relations between the Philippines and Indonesia in 2021-2023

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### **Abstract**

On November 24, 2023, bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines will be 74 years old. Indonesia has shared ways to maintain bilateral relations with the Philippines. However, judging from the world political and economic upheaval after COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Indonesia must anticipate various risks that will arise. Therefore, the author will look at Indonesia's efforts, through Atdikbud Manila, to improve bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines through soft diplomacy in the education sector. The author will use qualitative research methods with a descriptive analysis research type. According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research explores and understands the meaning several individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian problems. Qualitative research can describe the speech, writing, or behavior observed by a particular individual, group, society, or organization in a particular setting, and everything will be studied from a complete, comprehensive, and holistic point of view. This qualitative approach can guide the analysis of soft diplomacy efforts to improve bilateral relations between the Philippines and Indonesia through the BIPA Atdikbud Manila program. The efforts made by Indonesia through Atdikbud Manila in implementing the BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) program are a good step in improving bilateral relations between the two countries. Even though bilateral relations have existed for 74 years, Indonesia must always maintain them through soft diplomacy. In the end, Indonesia's efforts to implement soft diplomacy through the BIPA program can be achieved in 2021–2023, as seen from the increase in applicants who want to take BIPA classes.

**Keywords:** *Soft Diplomacy; BIPA; Bilateral Relations*

### **Introduction**

Diplomacy is a form of good interaction between two countries necessary to resolve problems in a good and mutually beneficial way for both parties. Diplomacy involves two parties, primarily political, cultural, educational, and economic relations between two countries. Diplomacy is generally carried out to achieve a country's national interests. Because there are national interests that a country must carry out to gain support in the international world, various countries in the current era have used diplomatic

instruments. Therefore, bilateral relations between countries and other countries and even large world organizations in various fields will be established. For example, Indonesia with the UN (United Nations), Indonesia with the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (Ega Atika Cahayati, 2022).

The diplomacy that is most often carried out by a country is soft diplomacy. Soft diplomacy is an international relations concept that refers to a country's ability to influence and gain support from other countries through lobbying and persuasion rather than through violence or coercion. Soft diplomacy can be implemented in various ways, for example, in education. The aim in the field of education is to increase the human resources of the two countries through diplomacy and cultural exchange of learning in each country. Quoting from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) from the National Long Term Development Plan of the Republic of Indonesia 2005-2025, "To strengthen overall development by emphasizing the development of economic competitive advantages based on available natural resources, quality human resources, and science and technology capabilities." Within this framework, educational diplomacy becomes an effective strategy to open up opportunities to realize these goals (Soesilowati, 2017).

Considering the above, of course, soft diplomacy is essential to achieve the country's goals, especially in improving bilateral relations between Indonesia and other countries with diplomatic relations. Through the Education and Culture Attaché (*Atdikbud*) through its duties and functions, namely;

1. Increase bilateral cooperation in the fields of education, culture, research, science and technology;
2. Encourage and facilitate the development of Indonesian language and culture education in accreditation areas;
3. Submit suggestions and recommendations for national education policies based on observations of developments/trends in the fields of education, culture, science, and technology in the accreditation area;
4. Attend meetings regarding education, culture, science, and technology in the accreditation area;
5. Developing Indonesian society, especially students and university students, in order to improve the sense of nationality and image of the Indonesian nation;
6. Fostering, facilitating, and actively managing and administering Indonesian education in the accreditation area.

Programs run by *Atdikbud* from 2021-2023 to improve bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines, such as Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA). The BIPA program is specifically designed to educate individuals who are not native Indonesian speakers in various language skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening. This program requires a structured curriculum, educational resources (such as textbooks and dictionaries in both languages), appropriate teaching techniques, and customized audio-visual learning materials. Various institutions, including universities and language schools, are responsible for implementing this program to promote Indonesian language and culture on a global scale. The BIPA program covers essential skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking while providing knowledge about Indonesian culture. This program also functions as a diplomatic tool that allows other countries to gain insight into Indonesia and facilitate bilateral or multilateral collaboration. The programs implemented by *Atdikbud* are at the forefront of achieving the national interests of the Republic of Indonesia (Minister of Education and Culture, 2021).

On November 24, 2023, bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines will be 74 years old. Indonesia has implemented various methods to maintain bilateral relations with the Philippines. However, judging from the political and economic turmoil in the world after COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Indonesia must anticipate various risks that will arise in the future. Therefore, the author will look at Indonesia's efforts through *Atdikbud* Manila to improve bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines through soft diplomacy in education.

## **Theory**

Joseph Samuel Nye (2008) states that public diplomacy is a soft power tool. It is an instrument governments or non-governmental organizations use to mobilize resources through communications to attract public attention from other countries (Nye, 2008).

Public diplomacy is defined as the process of government communication with other countries, which aims to provide an understanding of the country, attitudes, institutions, culture, national interests, and policies taken by the country. Public diplomacy is also interpreted as improving the quality of communication between the state and society. The impacts include the political, economic, and social fields, which the government no longer monopolizes. Public diplomacy requires communication skills related to changes in public attitudes and mutual understanding of foreign policy issues. In the current era, public opinion can effectively influence government actions. The characteristics of this world require information management that can unite domestic and foreign problems. Therefore, public diplomacy includes optimizing communication activities, namely collecting, processing, and disseminating information for the benefit of the state. As former US Secretary of State George Shultz said, the raw material of diplomacy is information, including how to obtain it, analyze it, and place it in the system (Princess, 2021).

According to Hennida, there are three differences between public and traditional diplomacy. First, public diplomacy is more transparent and can cover more people, while traditional diplomacy tends to be closed and has a limited reach. Second, public diplomacy involves communication between government and society, while official diplomacy only involves communication between governments. Third, official diplomacy focuses on government behavior and policies, while public diplomacy focuses more on the attitudes and behavior of the general public (Hennida, 2009).

## **Concept**

### **Bilateral Relations**

In this research, the author will use bilateral relations to help answer the problem formulation proposed by the author. Most countries need good interactions with other countries to fulfill their needs and interests. The inability of a country to meet its own needs makes these countries interdependent with other countries, so they start relations with other countries or bilateral relations. According to the view expressed by Kusumohamidjojo regarding the relationship between the two countries, namely, A form of cooperation between countries that are close or geographically far apart across the sea with the main aim of creating peace with an emphasis on paying attention to similarities in political and economic culture (Kusumohamidjojo, 2001:3). The establishment of relations between the two parties is also inseparable from the realization of several understandings between the two countries in a relationship where both countries dedicate themselves to their national interests to implement their grandmother's foreign policy. The national goals a country wants to achieve can be seen from the national interests built by a country's elite.

As stated by Plano and Olton: "The cooperative relationship that exists between any two countries in the world is inseparable from the national interests of each country. National interests are a significant factor, including the nation's survival, state, independence, territorial integrity, security, military and economic prosperity. Regarding the problems above, Kusumohamidjojo said, "Cooperation in the cultural sector is easier to establish than in the military sector" (Leonardo, 2019).

In this research, the author will focus on bilateral relations created from cultural aspects. As explained above, cooperative relations are easily established using cultural instruments and nothing more, just like the efforts of the Manila Education and Culture Office through the BIPA program to improve bilateral relations between the Philippines and Indonesia; this is the same as stated by Kusumohamidjojo.

## **BIPA**

Indonesian for Foreign Speakers, known as BIPA, is specifically designed to educate individuals who are not native Indonesian speakers in various language skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening. This program requires a structured curriculum, educational resources (such as textbooks and dictionaries in both languages), appropriate teaching techniques, and customized audio-visual learning materials. Various institutions, including universities and language schools, are responsible for implementing this program to promote Indonesian language and culture on a global scale. The main vision of this BIPA program is "To create BIPA learning that can improve the positive image of Indonesia at the international level to make Indonesian a broad language of communication at the international level", while the mission of this program is (1) introducing Indonesian society and culture at the international level. Internationally to improve Indonesia's image abroad, (2) strengthen cooperation and expand networks with institutions that organize BIPA learning, both at home and abroad, (3) provide support and facilities to institutions that organize BIPA learning, both at home and abroad, (4) improving the quality of BIPA learning, both at home and abroad, (5) improving the quality of resources that provide BIPA learning at home and abroad. (bbsulut.kemdikbud.go.id, n.d.). The author will use BIPA as a concept to help analyze efforts to improve bilateral relations between the Philippines - Indonesia through the BIPA program from *Atdikbud* Manila; this is in line with the author's aim to use soft diplomacy, which is more readily accepted in creating bilateral relations.

## **Soft Power in Soft Diplomacy**

In international relations, the study of soft and hard power is of interest in looking at the behavior of a country. According to Joseph Nye, a country can win over other countries or persuade them by using the appeal of political ideas, culture, and established policies. Meanwhile, hard power is the ability of a country to attract the sympathy of other countries with its military and economic strength. Soft power does not apply to any party who wants to gain domination by force. For example, soft power is exercised by Hollywood through films and South Korea through Korean dramas and K-pop. From Nye's statement, soft power can be implemented practically if its use is recognized. The existing mechanism, known as soft diplomacy, is often used (Lusiana, *Soft Power and Soft Diplomacy*, 2018).

This form of diplomacy is a tool used by governments to mobilize soft power resources to attract the attention of a country's public, not its government. In this context, soft diplomacy has the function of shaping public opinion and public image. In other words, public diplomacy is considered a public relations campaign that aims to sell a country's positive image to create long-term relationships and an environment that aligns with political direction, government values, and national interests (Iqbal, 2016).

In this research, the author will use soft diplomacy to help the author answer soft diplomacy, which is *Atdikbud's* effort to improve Bilateral Relations raised by the author in this research.

## **Methodology**

The author will use qualitative research methods with descriptive analysis research type in this research. According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research explores and understands the meaning that several individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian problems (Creswell, 2016). Qualitative research can produce a description of the speech, writing, or behavior observed from a particular individual, group, society, or organization in a particular setting, and all of this will be studied from a complete, comprehensive, and holistic point of view. This qualitative approach is expected to guide the analysis of soft diplomacy efforts to improve bilateral relations between the Philippines and Indonesia through the BIPA *Atdikbud* Manila program.

## **Bilateral Relations between Indonesia and the Philippines**

Indonesia and the Philippines are neighboring countries that geographically have connectivity in each other's territorial waters or geographical proximity and have the same position as the founding fathers of the largest government organization in Southeast Asia, namely, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which has a significant influence in improving the economy and relations between each country in Southeast Asia.

The long history of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the Philippines (Nye, 2004) officially began on November 24, 1949. Since then, the two countries have built warm and close bilateral relations in the spirit of cooperation and friendship. Initially, bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines focused more on cooperation in the political and security fields. However, as time passes, bilateral cooperation between the two countries increasingly develops in various fields, such as economy, culture, and tourism.

Diplomatic relations between two strong countries have been recorded in various fields. The following are some of the collaborations that Indonesia and the Philippines have carried out: Economic cooperation: Indonesia and the Philippines have great potential to increase economic cooperation. The two countries have trade agreements, such as the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA). Besides that, Indonesia and the Philippines also have great potential to increase cooperation in the tourism, agriculture, and energy sectors.

Military cooperation: Indonesia and the Philippines have solid military cooperation. The two countries often carry out joint military exercises and share intelligence information to improve security and defense in the region.

Cultural cooperation: Indonesia and the Philippines have rich and unique cultural diversity. The two countries often carry out cultural exchanges, such as art performances and cultural festivals, to strengthen bilateral relations.

Apart from that, Indonesia and the Philippines meet every two years to strengthen bilateral relations, including the Joint Committee on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC), which is held seven times starting April 2022. Apart from that, the two countries also have other mechanisms. They are deployed periodically, especially in the field of eradicating terrorism through GTM in eradicating terrorism, in the consular field through consular consultations, in the field of border security through coordinating patrols and Border Committee Chair Conferences, in the field of trade and investment, in the field of security through capacity building activities of Philindo MC.

However, it cannot be denied that problems will occur that will damage the relations that have been built between the two countries. As was the case during the MNLF conflict, the Philippine government asked for help from Indonesia, which President Soeharto led then. At that time, Indonesia was considered to have similarities in social, cultural and political aspects, which was the reason the

Philippine government asked Indonesia for help. President Soeharto, at that time, made the following suggestions:

1. Islamic groups in the Southern Philippines receive guarantees to maintain their desired beliefs and develop a culture free from government restrictions that violate Human Rights;
2. All Philippine society and government generally respect Islamic traditions and culture;
3. Moro ancestral land returned to residents;
4. The Islamic community can participate in the national development of the Philippines.

In reality, the Philippines only complied with some of President Soeharto's proposals, which resulted in estrangement in relations between Indonesia and the Philippines. In addition, Indonesia helped Malaysia with the Sabah problem, initiated badly by the Philippines, which was considered too meddling in the Philippines' internal affairs.

In fact, in the 2021-2023 period, the world will have to face Russia's invasion of Ukraine which has caused a prolonged global economic crisis, as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of course the crisis between Russia and Ukraine impacted the economic sector, and of course this conflict led to the restructuring of international trade. However, it is still unclear when the restructuring will take place. Countries that have relations with Russia or Ukraine have a significant impact on national interests. This protracted conflict will majorly impact Southeast Asia, where Russia has become its ninth trading partner since 2019. Russian trade in the Southeast Asia has reached 17 billion euros, and some of Russia's large investments could be threatened by heavy European sanctions imposed on the Russian economy.

### **Cultural Attractions That Influence Filipino Society**

Indonesia has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, making it a special attraction on the international stage. The country's rich culture, including traditional arts, customs and indigenous culture, has the potential to have a strong impact on the world stage. The diversity of Indonesian culture, including language, race, ethnicity, cuisine and religion, makes Indonesia its own attraction in the international world. This cultural wealth can be promoted through international trade and cultural diplomacy to further increase Indonesia's global appeal. In addition, the country's cultural landmarks, such as Borobudur Temple and Prambanan Temple, have become national symbols and prominent religious monuments in Southeast Asia, attracting international attention and recognition. In addition, Indonesia's cultural missions and diplomatic efforts, including promoting traditional arts and music on the world stage, have contributed to Indonesia's cultural influence and international profile. Overall, Indonesia's cultural appeal and efforts to promote its cultural riches play an important role in shaping Indonesia's international relations and global appeal.

Indonesian activities that have attracted international attention include:

1. **Tourism:** Indonesia has many beautiful and unique natural tourist destinations, including Bali, Komodo National Park, Lake Toba, and Borobudur Temple. Indonesia's natural beauty and cultural diversity attracts tourists from all over the world.
2. **Environmental Policy:** Indonesia is one of the countries with the richest tropical forests in the world. The Indonesian government has taken important steps to protect the environment, including imposing a moratorium on new forest permits and involving local communities in sustainable forest management programs. These measures are internationally recognized for their contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preserving biodiversity.

3. Vaccination Program: During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia had the highest vaccination rate in the world. The Indonesian government has launched a mass vaccination program, which has successfully vaccinated millions of people in a relatively short time. Indonesia's participation in the global vaccination program has also attracted international attention.
4. Cultural Diversity: Indonesia has rich cultural diversity, with more than 300 ethnic groups and 700 regional languages. Indonesian culture, including batik, wayang, traditional dance and regional songs, has attracted the world's attention. Cultural festivals such as the Lake Toba Festival and the Yogyakarta Palace Cultural Performance also attract foreign tourists
5. Sports Success: Indonesia's achievements in sports, especially badminton, have attracted international attention. The gold medals won by Indonesian athletes at the Olympics and Badminton World Championships have made Indonesia a country with many outstanding athletes

Overall, these things help Indonesia gain international attention and show a positive face for the country.

The attraction that Indonesia built towards the Philippines did not appear instantly, from a historical perspective there are many similarities between the two countries. In a historical context, there are several similarities between Indonesia and the Philippines, some examples of these similarities are Colonization: Both Indonesia and the Philippines were once foreign colonies. Indonesia was under Dutch rule for more than 300 years, while the Philippines was a Spanish colony for almost 400 years before finally became colonies of the United States, Independence Struggle: Both Indonesia and the Philippines gained independence from colonialism, Indonesia gained independence from the Netherlands in 1945, and the Philippines gained independence from the United States in 1946. Preservation of language and culture: Both Indonesia and the Philippines attempted to preserve language and their respective cultures. Although external influences influence cultural development, the people of both countries are proud of their cultural heritage. Political System: Both Indonesia and the Philippines have democratic political systems. Both countries are trying to hold elections and form representative and accountable governments. Regional Cooperation: Indonesia and the Philippines are active members of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), an association of countries in the Southeast Asian region. Both countries play an important role in maintaining regional stability and cooperation. Even though Indonesia and the Philippines have similarities in history and several cultural aspects, of course, differences in language, religion, and history also characterize each country.

The attraction made by Indonesia is a conscious decision carried out by the government to win the competition on a global scale. The reputation that is built will significantly influence public opinion, which will linearly have an impact on the country. Similar to marketing strategy, nation branding from a diplomatic perspective aims to improve a country's status through a strong brand based on a competitive identity. Competitive identity integrates brand management and public diplomacy with promoting trade, investment, tourism, and exports. A professionally managed place brand can attract people. Business people, investors, professionals, and the general public are more than just visitors.

Through the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in Manila, Indonesia always carries out routine activities that increase nation branding by promoting culture in Indonesia. Just like the Indonesian Embassy in Manila will promote Indonesian culinary and culture at the "Asian Eats" festival held in Mandaluyong City, Philippines from 28 to 30 April 2023. The Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines, Agus Widjojo, said that serving typical Indonesian food in Indonesian food stalls is part of cultural diplomacy (Cindy Frishanti Octavia, 2023). Furthermore, in the same year, the Indonesian Embassy carried out an activity initiated by *Atdikbud* Manila, namely the international bazaar, where the main aim of this activity, according to the Ambassador of the Indonesian Embassy in Manila, was "to strengthen people to people relations and also increase the trust and image of Indonesia abroad (Indonesian Embassy in Manila, 2023).

## Soft Diplomacy Efforts Through The BIPA Program

Joseph Nye states that a country that makes efforts to attract ideas, politics, and policies to win over other countries is an element of soft power. Just like Indonesia's dominance in attracting the international world, which uses the tagline wonderful Indonesia, Indonesian culture is associated with understanding the concept of cultural history. The diversity of Indonesian culture is its attraction and a source of pride for the Indonesian people. Further cultural development is carried out through Wonderful Indonesia, thereby creating a process of progress and efforts to introduce Indonesian culture domestically and internationally as a form of preservation. Through the Ministry of Tourism, the Indonesian government is trying to utilize the national brand "Great Indonesia" and preserve existing culture. This is done through various initiatives, ranging from participation in international activities to collaboration with foreign actors (Simanjuntak, 2018)

Moving on from how Indonesia dominates the international world with soft power, in this case, the government uses tools to mobilize a form of diplomacy that refers to a country to attract attention. In this context, soft diplomacy creates public opinion and builds a good image for the country that does it. This is what the Indonesian government did to the Philippines. To build relationships and improve Indonesia's image in the eyes of the Philippines, especially its people. According to Joseph Nye, Indonesia uses its policies without military elements to achieve state interests.

The policy carried out by the Indonesian government is through soft diplomacy, which is integrated into the BIPA program, commonly known as Indonesian for Foreign Speakers. The attraction that Indonesia has built in the cultural aspect and the tagline Wonderful Indonesia have made Filipinos increasingly interested in joining the BIPA program.

The BIPA program is a flagship program from *Atdikbud*, handed down directly from the central government. This program introduces Indonesians to the Filipino people, and of course, not only Indonesians but students will be introduced in more depth to Indonesian culture and traditions that many foreigners may need to learn about. The communication between the teacher and the students being taught indirectly results in an exchange of culture, attitudes, and images related to the institution, in this case, the country. So here it is perfect for Indonesia where it will be straightforward for Indonesia to get a good image and good relations will be established too.

BIPA is a program eagerly awaited by Filipino people in various circles, both students and workers. Therefore, BIPA opened two classes, namely for general classes and student classes, specifically for several universities in the Philippines. How could it not be a long-awaited program, because there will be a competition related to Indonesian culture and language at the end of each lesson? That is where BIPA students will immediately practice their learning results and for prizes since the creation of the BIPA program within the scope of *Atdikbud* Manila, they have always donated prizes which have always been an attraction for the Filipino people, for example, in 2021 1st place will get a PP ticket to Indonesia.

### ***Atdikbud* Manila Soft Diplomacy Efforts to Improve Bilateral Relations Between the Philippines and Indonesia**

Since 1995, the first time an Education Attache was placed at the Indonesian Embassy in Manila, followed by several Attaché assignments until 2010, there was no MoU in the field of Education. LBPP Ambassador Mr. Y. Kristiarto S. Legowo and Minister of National Education Mr. Mohammad Nuh made the history of Indonesia-Philippine educational cooperation with the first MoU in Basic Education, signed on March 8, 2011.

The Philippines has become an educational destination for Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and New Zealand citizens. It is proven that in the Philippines, many foreign students come from 73 countries. Until 2023, the education system in the Philippines adheres to a 10-year basic



education pattern (6 years of elementary school and 4 years of high school). Since April 2012, the Philippine Government has implemented a 12-year basic education pattern (6 years elementary, 4 years Secondary and 2 years Vocational/2 years High School).

In an effort to improve Bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines, *Atdikbud* Manila, based on the Decree of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Number SK. 00203/B/KP/01/2021/24 of 2021 concerning the placement of the Education Attaché at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Manila, the Republic of the Philippines has routine duties which become the reference axis for *Atdikbud* in carrying out activities aimed at achieving the national interests of the Republic of Indonesia, especially in the field of Education.

*Atdikbud* has 6 (six) duties and functions, namely as follows:

I. Increasing bilateral cooperation in the fields of education, culture, research, science and technology;



Image 1.1

On January 24, 2022, *Atdikbud* held an online meeting with 7 (seven) Developing Countries Partnership (KNB) scholarship recipients from Philippines-accredited countries who were going to Indonesia.

II. Encouraging and Facilitating the Development of Indonesian Language and Culture Education;



Image 1.2

On February 9, 2022, *Atdikbud* coordinated with representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture's Language Development and Development Agency (BPPB) together with Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) teachers in preparation for the opening of BIPA classes in 2022.

III. Providing suggestions and recommendations for national education policies based on observations of developments/trends in the fields of education, culture, science and technology in the Philippines;



Image 1.3

On February 9, 2022, *Atdikbud* attended an invitation from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law (FISH) Unesa as a keynote speaker in an international webinar with the theme, "Higher Education in the Philippines and The Prospects of Academic Activities Related to Tri Dharma Involving Students and Lecturers".

IV. Attend meetings regarding education, culture, science, and technology;



Image 1.4

On January 24, 2022, *Atdikbud* attended the 2022 International Education Day commemoration program. International Day of Education was organized by the International Cooperation Office (ICO) Department of Education (DepEd).

V. Developing Indonesian society, especially pupils and students, in order to improve the sense of nationality and image of the Indonesian nation;



Image 1.5

On January 12, *Atdikbud* attended an online meeting with the Papua Provincial Government's BPSDM regarding efforts to repatriate native Papuan students to accredited countries.

VI. Fostering, facilitating, and actively managing and administering Indonesian education in accreditation areas.



Image 1.6

On April 1, 2022, *Atdikbud* held a preparatory meeting for the visit of the Ambassador of the Indonesian Embassy in Manila to the Indonesian Consulate General in Davao City and the Indonesian School of Davao (SID) from April 8 to April 10, 2022. The preparatory meeting was held with the Head of SID, Deputy Heads, and Staff. The plan is for the Ambassador to guide SID students in the "Inspirational Talks" program.

Of the six duties and functions of *Atdikbud*, the author chose one that will be discussed comprehensively, namely Duties and Functions (TUSI) Encouraging and Facilitating the Development of Indonesian Language and Culture Education or TUSI 2. In the duties and functions of this second *Atdikbud*, one of the programs used is the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA).

In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia no. 24 of 2009 concerning the Flag, Language, and National Emblem, as well as the National Anthem, Article 44 Paragraph 1, The Government is increasing the function of Indonesian to become an international language in a gradual, systematic and sustainable manner, Paragraph 2 Increasing the function of Indonesian becoming an international language as intended in paragraph (1) is coordinated by a linguistic institution. Paragraph 3 Further provisions regarding increasing the function of Indonesian to become an international language as intended in paragraph (1) are regulated in a Government Regulation. In *Atdikbud's* efforts to improve

relations with the Philippines, of course, so that national interests are carried out per Indonesian law, using soft diplomacy through the BIPA program to show national identity and increase the nation's competitiveness, which is also taken into account in article 31 of the Republic of Indonesia government regulation No. 57 2014 concerning the development, guidance and protection of language and literature, as well as improving the function of the Indonesian language. On the one hand, bilateral relations between the two will continue to improve due to the inclusion of soft diplomacy without using coercive force when approaching the target country, specifically the Philippines (Gilang Nur Alam, 2022).



Image 1.7

The table above shows the nominal data on students who took part in the BIPA program organized by *Atdikbud* Manila. The comparison of numbers participating in the program for the 2021-2022 period has increased. *Atdikbud* can attract interest from students, the community, and even government agencies in its accreditation area. Their enthusiasm in participating in the BIPA program can be said to be a significant achievement that will provide benefits for Indonesia when the basic law mentioned above is successfully implemented, and on the one hand, it can attract the interest of the Filipino people to learn more about Indonesia. The advantage of soft diplomacy is that it attracts the Filipino people to lean towards Indonesia. This can direct their government's policies by encouraging their people as promoters who move a new policy that benefits Indonesia. Therefore, Indonesia does not need to encourage the Philippines to maintain good relations between the two countries.



Image 1.8

Furthermore, from the table above, the distribution pattern of the BIPA program covering almost all countries in the world can be seen. The Philippines, as the author's reference country, is one of the countries that has the largest number of students. *Atdikbud*, as an instrument extending the Indonesian government's hand in carrying out national interests, is categorized as successful with supporting data from the enthusiastic number of people who register for the BIPA program (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).





Image 1.9

Then, to strengthen the achievements built through the BIPA program, *Atdikbud* is opening itself to carry out corporate programs for several universities where a curriculum related to Indonesian language learning will be created at their universities. The author sees that the efforts made by *Atdikbud* Manila to improve relations between the Philippines are categorized as victorious. Even though at the beginning of 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, it did not reduce the enthusiasm of Filipino citizens to learn about Indonesia.

Soft diplomacy efforts through the BIPA *Atdikbud* Manila program in improving bilateral relations between the Philippines and Indonesia, based on this theory, the author sees that the elements are related to the phenomena that occur. Through *Atdikbud* Manila, Indonesia seeks to improve bilateral relations between the two countries but uses soft diplomacy practices using the BIPA program. Just as explained above, the theory of public diplomacy has basic assumptions regarding the belief in moving the public or society of a country through communication that provides information in the international arena and encourages attention from other countries, in line with the research raised by the author regarding the efforts of the Manila Education and Culture Attachment in BIPA program which has become Indonesia's soft diplomacy idea.

The purpose of communication, which aims to provide an overview of the country, attitudes, institutions, culture, and national interests adopted by the state, is the output provided by the BIPA program in which individuals and community groups will know all the information packaged through instruments that are readily accepted. Remember that the attitude of the Philippine government in making state policies can be influenced by public opinion, which is the result of soft diplomacy according to public diplomacy theory. Furthermore, information, which is the critical master in public diplomacy, is optimized through communication activities, namely collecting, processing, and disseminating information, where diplomatic tools sell state policies issued by the government, for example, providing an understanding of state attitudes, institutions, culture, and national interests which are packaged into the BIPA program and The target audience is the Filipino people, the two government policies being sold, must remain within the authority to condition the model and content of its foreign policy. This is the same as the program run through *Atdikbud* Manila namely the government, through its power of attorney, gives full rights to *Atdikbud* Manila to coordinate the running of the BIPA program. , thirdly, placing the BIPA program as a policy tool.

## **Conclusion**

Diplomacy is often carried out by a country, one of which is soft diplomacy, the same as the BIPA program. The program uses structured educational resources (such as textbooks and dictionaries in both languages), appropriate teaching techniques, and customized sound-visual learning materials. The

programs implemented by *Atdikbud* are at the forefront of achieving the national interests of the Republic of Indonesia (Minister of Education and Culture, 2021). Indonesia has implemented various methods to maintain its relations with the Philippines. However, judging from the political and economic turmoil in the world after COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Indonesia must anticipate various risks that will arise in the future. Joseph Samuel Nye (2008) states that public diplomacy is a soft power tool. It is an instrument governments or non-governmental organizations use to mobilize resources through communications to attract public attention from other countries. Public diplomacy is defined as the process of government communication with other countries, which aims to provide an understanding of the country, attitudes, institutions, culture, national interests, and policies taken by the country. The characteristics of this world require information management that can unite domestic and foreign problems.

According to Hennida, there are three differences between public and traditional diplomacy. First, public diplomacy is more transparent and can reach more people, while traditional diplomacy tends to be more closed and limited in scope. In this research, bilateral relations are a tool to help answer the problem formulation proposed by the author. As stated by Plano and Olton, The collaborative relationship that occurs between two countries in the world is inseparable from the national interests of each country. Bilateral relations are created from cultural aspects. According to Joseph Nye, a country can win over other countries or persuade them by using the appeal of political ideas, culture, and/or established policies. Soft power does not apply to any party who wants to gain domination by force. This form of diplomacy is a tool used by the government to mobilize soft power resources, which are more aimed at attracting the attention of the general public of a country rather than the government of the country.

Furthermore, the attraction that Indonesia has built towards the Philippines took time; from a historical perspective, there are many similarities between the two countries. Both countries are trying to hold elections and form representative and accountable governments. The attraction made by Indonesia is a conscious decision carried out by the government to win the competition on a global scale. The reputation that is built will significantly influence public opinion, which will linearly have an impact on the country. Through the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in Manila, Indonesia always carries out routine activities that increase nation branding by promoting culture in Indonesia. Moving on from how Indonesia dominates the international world with soft power, the government uses tools to mobilize a form of diplomacy that refers to a country to attract attention.

In this context, soft diplomacy creates public opinion and builds a good image for the country that does it. The policy carried out by the Indonesian government is through soft diplomacy, which is integrated into the BIPA program commonly known as Indonesian for Foreign Speakers. The BIPA program is a flagship program from *Atdikbud*, handed down directly from the central government. BIPA is a program eagerly awaited by Filipino people in various circles, both students and workers. Therefore, BIPA opened two classes, namely for general classes and student classes, specifically for several universities in the Philippines. In *Atdikbud*'s efforts to improve relations with the Philippines, of course, so that national interests run in accordance with Indonesian law, using soft diplomacy through the BIPA program to show national identity and increase the nation's competitiveness, which is also taken into account in article 31 of Indonesian government regulation No. 57 of the year 2014 concerning the development, guidance, and protection of language and literature, as well as improving the function of the Indonesian language.

On the one hand, bilateral relations between the two will continue to improve due to the inclusion of soft diplomacy without using coercive force when approaching the target country, specifically the Philippines. Then, to strengthen the achievements built through the BIPA program, *Atdikbud* is opening itself to carry out corporate programs for several universities where a curriculum related to Indonesian language learning will be created at their universities. The author sees that the efforts made by *Atdikbud* Manila to improve relations between the Philippines are categorized as victorious. The purpose of

communication, which aims to provide an overview of the country, attitudes, institutions, culture, and national interests adopted by the state, is the output provided by the BIPA program in which individuals and community groups will know all the information packaged through instruments that are easily accepted. Remember that the attitude of the Philippine government in making state policies can be influenced by public opinion, which is the result of soft diplomacy according to public diplomacy theory.

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