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GRASSROOTS CLIMATE DIPLOMACY: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SURABAYA'S CLIMATE VILLAGE PROGRAM TO INDONESIA'S CLIMATE FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the Kampung Iklim Program (ProKlim) in Surabaya as a form of grassroots climate diplomacy a conceptual framework that positions local communities as non-state actors in international climate governance. Although ProKlim has been extensively studied from the perspectives of environmental science and public administration, its role in shaping Indonesia's climate foreign policy and contributing to Indonesia's soft power has yet to be fully explored. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how grassroots initiatives, specifically in RW 03 Jambangan, which won the "ProKlim Lestari" award in 2021 function as Track III diplomacy, contribute to Indonesia's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and project soft power in international forums. Surabaya's outstanding performance evidenced by its designation as the "National Best City I" in 2026 with a score of 74.92 and its recognition as the recipient of the most ProKlim awards in Indonesia positions it as an extreme case for analyzing how the social capital of community cooperation, participatory planning, and multi-stakeholder collaboration transform local climate action into diplomatic bargaining power. Using a qualitative instrumental case study approach, this research integrates Track III Diplomacy theory and the framework of climate diplomacy, particularly grassroots climate diplomacy. The findings of this study indicate that ProKlim Surabaya represents a model of grassroots climate diplomacy, in which community resilience serves as both an adaptation strategy and a soft power instrument that strengthens Indonesia's credibility in international climate negotiations. It is hoped that these findings will enrich the literature on non-state diplomacy in the Global South and provide policy recommendations for integrating community-based climate action into Indonesia's foreign policy strategy.

Keywords: ProKlim, Grassroots Climate Diplomacy, Track III Diplomacy, Soft Power, Climate Foreign Policy, Surabaya.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is no longer merely an environmental issue; it has become a fundamental challenge in contemporary international politics. The wide-ranging impacts of global temperature rise, including extreme weather events, threaten not only the sustainability of ecosystems but also the economic and social stability of nations. As the largest archipelagic country in the world, Indonesia is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The Indonesian government has

committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 31.89% through domestic efforts and by 43.20% with international support by 2030, as set forth in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). This commitment has been renewed through the Second Nationally Determined Contribution (SNDC), submitted in October 2025, which adopts absolute emission targets ranging from 1.258 Gt CO_2e (low scenario) to 1.489 Gt CO_2e (high scenario) by 2035. To achieve this ambitious goal, it is essential to have policy instruments that not only operate at the national level but also mobilize action at the grassroots level. In this context, the Kampung Iklim Program (ProKlim) emerges as one strategic instrument that bridges Indonesia's global commitments with concrete actions at the community level. (Kementrian, 2016).

One of the strategic instruments launched by the government is the Kampung Iklim Program (ProKlim), a national initiative managed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) to encourage community participation in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. ProKlim aims to achieve four key objectives: enhancing community awareness and capacity to address climate change; supporting local communities in sustainable natural resource management; making a more significant contribution to Indonesia's greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts; and strengthening climate resilience in high-risk regions (Kementrian, 2016). By integrating ProKlim into its NDC, Indonesia has demonstrated its commitment to making community-based climate action an integral part of its climate diplomacy strategy.

Among the various regions in Indonesia, the city of Surabaya stands out as a positive outlier in the implementation of ProKlim. Surabaya is not merely an implementer of ProKlim; it has become a national leader in the execution of this program. In 2024,23 villages in Surabaya received ProKlim awards from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), two of which achieved the highest category ProKlim Lestari. By 2024, Surabaya had accumulated a total of 59 ProKlim awards, making it the city with the most ProKlim awards in Indonesia. This achievement continued into 2025, when East Java Province (with Surabaya as its primary contributor) once again received the highest number of ProKlim awards nationwide. At its peak, in April 2026, Surabaya secured the top position as the "Best City I National," achieving a score of 74.92 (Detik.com, 2026). In early 2026, Surabaya once again received 10 ProKlim awards from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia (KLHK), further solidifying its position as the most livable city in the country. This achievement demonstrates Surabaya's consistency and dedication to developing community-based programs that not only yield local impacts but also resonate nationally and internationally.

The uniqueness of Surabaya lies not only in the number of awards it has received, but also in its development model, which is firmly rooted in local practices. The Kampung Iklim program in RW 03 Jambangan has evolved from conventional environmental policies into an integrative and sustainable climate action model.

Since 2002 well before ProKlim was officially introduced in 2012 residents of RW 03 have independently established a waste management system, set up a Recycling Center (PDU), and developed urban agricultural land. This bottom-up initiative was subsequently recognized, formalized, and reinforced by ProKlim policies, creating a social ecosystem where active participation has become a cultural norm rather than merely an administrative obligation. This case study demonstrates that ProKlim in Surabaya is not a top-down program, but rather the outcome of community resilience that has grown organically. Such development models offer valuable lessons on how environmental policies can succeed when they align with existing social practices, rather than being imposed from above.

The urgency of this research stems from Surabaya's achievements in ProKlim, which carry diplomatic implications that remain little explored. In the global landscape, sub-national actors particularly cities are increasingly serving as climate diplomacy actors that bridge global commitments and local implementation. The literature indicates that 80% of the NDCs currently submitted include cities and regions as key partners (Vogler, 2016). Surabaya has established partnerships with cities such as Kitakyushu and Liverpool, integrated global standards into local policies, and mobilized resources to address issues such as waste management and infrastructure development (Utomo, 2025). This collaboration demonstrates that Surabaya is not merely passively adopting policies from the central government, but is also actively building international networks to enhance its capacity to address climate challenges. In this context, Surabaya can be seen as an example of how sub-national actors can contribute to national climate diplomacy through concrete on-the-ground actions.

This study argues that ProKlim in Surabaya represents a unique form of "Grassroots Climate Diplomacy." Community-based climate initiatives at the RW level not only contribute to Indonesia's NDC targets but also serve as a soft power instrument that strengthens Indonesia's position in international climate diplomacy. In other words, the resilience of local communities is transformed into a diplomatic currency on the global stage. This research will be the first to comprehensively analyze ProKlim in Surabaya from an international relations perspective, positioning communities as diplomatic actors and integrating the Track III diplomacy framework with the concepts of soft power and community resilience. (Laqua, n.d., Scott-Brown, 2026). The novelty of this study lies in its effort to bridge community-based development research with foreign policy analysis a approach that remains relatively rare in the Indonesian international relations literature.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study formulates a central research question to be addressed through in-depth analysis which seeks to determine how ProKlim's contributions in Surabaya represent grassroots climate diplomacy practices within Indonesia's climate governance framework on the global stage? This question aims to explore how community actions at the RW (neighborhood) level can be understood as a form of engagement in international

affairs. Furthermore, it seeks to examine how *"gotong royong"* (mutual assistance), cadre development, and multi-stakeholder collaboration serve as the foundation for diplomatic efficacy, and how local achievements can be translated into diplomatic narratives on the global stage.

In line with the research problem, this study aims to achieve the following primary objective: to analyze grassroots climate diplomacy practices in the implementation of ProKlim in Surabaya, with a particular focus on how community actions can be understood as a form of non-state diplomacy. From this analysis, we will also identify the role of community social capital as the foundation for climate resilience and soft power by exploring how mutual assistance and inclusive participation can serve as collective strengths and examining the positioning of ProKlim Surabaya within the framework of Indonesian climate diplomacy, including how local achievements can be promoted in international forums as evidence of Indonesia's commitment to the Paris Agreement.

This study holds significant theoretical and practical importance. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of the literature on Track III diplomacy and transnational climate governance from the perspective of developing countries (Laqua, n.d., Scott-Brown, 2026). This study proposes a conceptual model termed "Grassroots Climate Diplomacy," which elucidates how grassroots communities in the Global South can transform local climate actions into instruments for foreign policy. This model is intended to serve as an analytical framework of value to other researchers interested in the intersection of development studies, environmental governance, and international relations. In practical terms, this research provides recommendations for municipal governments, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on how to optimize ProKlim as a tool for climate diplomacy. Furthermore, this study offers a reference for other cities in the Global South seeking to develop analogous models, emphasizing the importance of a community-based, rooted, and sustainable approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grassroot Diplomacy and Non-State Actors in International Relations

Modern diplomacy is no longer the exclusive domain of states. The concept of Track III diplomacy refers to the involvement of non-state actors, including grassroots communities, in international relations. Grassroots Diplomacy in the Face of Global Disorder defines grassroots diplomacy as "initiatives that expand opportunities for groups lacking access to conventional diplomatic channels to engage in international affairs." The authors argue that grassroots actions can serve as a barometer of social change, a process of adaptation, and a catalyst for change in a global order undergoing disruption. (Laqua, n.d., Scott-Brown, 2026). This research provides a robust conceptual foundation for understanding how communities that seem far removed from the arena of formal diplomacy can actually serve as significant actors in shaping climate diplomacy discourse and practices. In

the Indonesian context, this concept opens up avenues for analyzing ProKlim not merely as a domestic environmental program, but as a form of community engagement in global affairs.

Research on "mimicking state diplomacy" demonstrates that non-state actors frequently adopt and adapt state diplomatic practices to achieve their objectives. They argue that such actions do not constitute a form of subordination to the state system, but rather represent strategies to challenge and expand the boundaries of conventional diplomacy. (McConnell, 2012). In the context of ProKlim Surabaya, RW communities can be viewed as actors who indirectly "emulate" state diplomatic practices by promoting their achievements through various channels, including study tours and presentations at national forums. However, unlike McConnell's findings, which focused on formal nongovernmental organizations. This research positions grassroots communities as units of analysis, expanding the scope of the literature on non-state diplomacy into a largely unexplored area.

In their 1998 classic work "Activists beyond Borders", Keck and Sikkink introduced the concept of "transnational advocacy networks," which explains how non-state actors can mobilize information and shape global discourse. Although this theory was originally developed to analyze human rights and environmental movements at the international level, a similar framework can be applied to understand how the ProKlim community operates in a local context yet with global implications (Keck, 1998). The network established between RW 03 Jambangan and various stakeholders including the Environmental Agency, universities, companies engaged in corporate social responsibility (CSR), and the city government exhibits the characteristics of a transnational advocacy network, albeit on a more limited scale. Thus, this research contributes to the literature on how advocacy networks can operate at the grassroots level and how local achievements can be elevated into a global narrative.

The Kampung Iklim Program (ProKlim) from a Policy Perspective

ProKlim in RW 03 Jambangan employs William N. Dunn's six criteria for policy evaluation. The research found that ProKlim in RW 03 is highly effective in independent waste management (5–7 metric tons/day), renewable energy development (solar panels in RT 05), and food security. The rate of resolution for environmental issues reached 70–80%, far higher than in other areas of Surabaya. These findings provide strong empirical evidence of the success of the community-based ProKlim model; however, they are limited to domestic policy analysis without exploring the international implications of this success. This research aims to fill that gap by analyzing how local success can be translated into diplomatic leverage.

Riani, Suwitri, and Kurniasih, in their research on the implementation of ProKlim in Sambak Village, Magelang Regency, found that the program's success depends heavily on community participation and support from the local government. They emphasized the importance of a bottom-up approach that involves residents in

program planning and implementation (Riani, 2024). These findings align with the experience of RW 03 Jambangan, where residents' initiatives were already underway long before ProKlim was officially introduced. However, the research by Riani et al. did not address how such local successes could be communicated at national or international levels as part of climate diplomacy. Accordingly, this research expands the scope of its analysis from merely evaluating domestic policies to examining how local successes can serve as instruments of diplomatic engagement.

In their evaluation of ProKlim in Margo Mulyo Village, Shaqnasia found that although the program was operating effectively, there were still aspects of adequacy, equity, and responsiveness that required optimization. This study provides insights into the implementation challenges of ProKlim across diverse local contexts. Meanwhile, Indriyani et al., in their 2024 study on ProKlim in RW 09 of Pucangsawit Village, concluded that the program's effectiveness fell within the moderate category and recommended collaboration with external stakeholders, the formation of volunteer groups, and the development of infrastructure (Indriyani, 2024). An evaluation of ProKlim in Kampung Airport found a decline in program implementation due to a lack of institutional capacity, limited resources, and low community participation (Farid, 2025). These findings indicate variations in ProKlim’s success across different locations, with RW 03 Jambangan standing out as an exceptional success story. This study will analyze the factors that set RW 03 Jambangan apart and how its success can be replicated and promoted as a model for climate diplomacy.

Social Capital and Community Resilience

Studies on community resilience show that social capital plays a crucial role as a coping mechanism against the impacts of climate change. In the Indonesian context, gotong royong is a key form of social capital that strengthens collective action. Kasus et al. 2026 documented how the inclusive participation of the PKK and Karang Taruna in RW 03 Jambangan created a social ecosystem where active participation became a cultural norm. The waste bank system managed by PKK members enabled residents to accumulate savings of up to 6–7 million rupiah per year, providing tangible economic benefits while strengthening social cohesion (Kasus et al., 2026). These findings indicate that social capital is not merely an abstract asset but has concrete manifestations in measurable economic and social forms. This study will analyze how such social capital can be understood as a form of soft power that strengthens Indonesia’s position in climate diplomacy.

Putnam defines social capital as social networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation to achieve common goals. He distinguishes between bonding capital (bonds within homogeneous groups) and bridging capital (cross-group networks) (Putnam, 2000). In the context of RW 03 Jambangan, bonding capital is evident in the solidarity among residents within a single RW, while bridging capital

is evident in collaboration with various external parties, including the city government, universities, and private companies. The combination of these two types of social capital enables the community not only to survive but also to thrive and serve as a model for other communities. This study will explore how these two types of social capital contribute to the community's ability to function as an actor in climate diplomacy.

In their research on community empowerment through waste bank initiatives, Rusdiyana found that cross-group engagement, particularly by positioning women as key actors, significantly enhances program sustainability and strengthens social bonds among residents. This finding aligns with the experience of RW 03 Jambangan, where women from the PKK played a central role in managing the waste bank (Rusdiyana et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Rinwantin (2025), in a study on the optimization of waste banks, stated that efficiency in community-based waste management is influenced more by the quality of human participation than by the sophistication of the technology used (Rinwantin, 2025). These findings are relevant to the experience of RW 03 Jambangan, where the use of modern technologies, such as plastic shredding machines, proved inefficient due to high operational costs. This study will analyze how the choice to rely on human labor alongside appropriate technologies reflects local wisdom that can serve as a model for other communities.

The report on Paradiplomacy and International Climate Cooperation in Surabaya

By Utomo in 2025 analyzes how Surabaya has leveraged paradiplomacy to address global sustainability challenges (2016–2020), highlighting the city's use of international partnerships with Kitakyushu and Liverpool to integrate global standards into local policies. The Surabaya-Kitakyushu cooperation has resulted in a threefold expansion of mangrove forests and a 20% reduction in waste volume (Utomo, 2025). This research provides evidence that Surabaya possesses the capacity to operate as an actor in transnational climate governance. However, this study focuses on municipal government actors rather than grassroots communities. This research will complement Utomo's analysis by exploring how RW communities as non-state actors also contribute to Surabaya's paradiplomacy through their climate initiatives, which serve as part of the city's success narrative in international forums.

Kuznetsov, in Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy, explains that subnational actors engage in international relations for a variety of reasons, including promoting economic interests, accessing resources, and building identity (Kuznetsov, 2015). In the context of Surabaya, international cooperation aims not only to address environmental challenges but also to cultivate the city's image as a leader in sustainability. The achievement of ProKlim forms an integral part of this narrative, with RW 03 Jambangan and other villages serving as tangible evidence of Surabaya's commitment to the global climate agenda. This research will analyze

how the accomplishments of grassroots communities contribute to shaping Surabaya's identity as a city dedicated to sustainability, and how this identity, in turn, strengthens Indonesia's position in climate diplomacy.

In his research on regions and international affairs, Keating argues that sub-national actors participate in international relations when they possess both the capacity and the motivation to do so. In the case of Surabaya, this capacity was built through extensive experience in managing environmental programs, while the motivation stems from the need to address complex urban challenges (Keating, 1999). ProKlim serves as a vehicle for Surabaya to articulate this capacity and motivation within a nationally and internationally recognized framework. This research will explore how ProKlim functions as a platform for grassroots communities to contribute to Surabaya's paradiplomacy, while also analyzing how these contributions can be understood within the framework of Track III diplomacy.

Surabaya's ProKlim Policy

Surabaya Mayor's Regulation No. 92 of 2024 on the Climate Village Program provides the legal basis for the implementation of ProKlim at the city level. This regulation emphasizes the active participation of the community and all stakeholders in enhancing resilience to the impacts of climate change, with funding sources including the city budget (APBD), corporate social responsibility (CSR), and community self-help initiatives. (Surabaya, 2024). This regulation demonstrates the city government's commitment to supporting and expanding the ProKlim program, while also providing a clear framework for the participation of various stakeholders. In the context of this study, the Mayor's Regulation serves as a key document for understanding how the city government views and positions ProKlim within a broader policy framework, including how the program can contribute to the sustainable development agenda and city diplomacy.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, through Ministerial Regulation No. P.84/MENLHK-SETJEN/KUM.1/11/2016 on the Climate Village Program, established a national framework for the implementation of ProKlim. This regulation governs the program's processes, applications, guidelines, evaluations, and categorization, including the Madya, Utama, and Lestari categories (Kementrian, 2016). The "Lestari" category is the highest honor awarded to a village that has not only succeeded in environmental management but also demonstrated the capability to develop other villages. RW 03 Jambangan secured this category in 2021, signifying that this community has met the highest standards in implementing the ProKlim initiative (Kasus et al., 2026). This research will analyze how the achievement of the Sustainable category positions RW 03 Jambangan as a replicable and promotable model, and how this contributes to Indonesia's climate diplomacy efforts.

An integrative review of environmental policies in Indonesia highlights the importance of a multi-level approach to addressing climate change. The authors

argue that effective environmental policies require coordination among national, regional, and local levels, as well as the involvement of diverse stakeholders (Hayatulah et al., 2023). ProKlim serves as a concrete example of this multi-level approach, featuring a national framework that is implemented locally through community participation. This research will analyze how such multi-level coordination functions in the case of Surabaya, and how local-level successes can be elevated into a national narrative that strengthens Indonesia's position in international climate negotiations.

Factors Contributing to the Success of ProKlim in Surabaya

In his research, Safir found that communication from the Surabaya Environmental Affairs Agency (DLH) and the simultaneous participation of environmental cadres had a positive and significant impact on the success of ProKlim, with a coefficient of determination of 73%. These findings underscore the importance of synergy between the government and the community in the implementation of such programs (Safira, 2026). Effective communication from the DLH ensures that information about ProKlim is effectively conveyed to residents, while the participation of environmental cadres ensures that the program can be implemented at the grassroots level. The combination of these two factors creates an ecosystem that supports the program’s success, as seen in RW 03 Jambangan, where residents had independently launched environmental initiatives long before ProKlim was introduced.

Similarly, in their 2022 research on ProKlim in Muda Setia Village, Pelalawan Regency, Dailiati et al. found that the success of ProKlim was greatly influenced by the extent of the community’s pre-existing understanding and awareness. This finding aligns with the experience of RW 03 Jambangan, where environmental awareness was already deeply ingrained even before the program was officially launched (Dailiati, 2022). Residents of RW 03 have been managing their waste independently since 2002, and when ProKlim was introduced, they responded enthusiastically and took the initiative to sign up without needing additional encouragement from outside. This shows that ProKlim’s success is determined not only by external factors such as government support, but also by internal factors such as community awareness and initiative.

In their 2021 study on collaborative governance in the implementation of ProKlim in Talangbubuk Village, Hudaya and Dewi found that programs involving various stakeholders in the budgeting process proved to be more sustainable and less prone to disruption despite leadership changes or shifts in government policy (Hudaya, 2021). These findings are relevant to the experience of RW 03 Jambangan, where a collaborative funding model combining community self-funding, CSR initiatives, and government assistance has established financial stability, enabling the program to operate for over two decades. This study will analyze how this collaborative funding model and multi-stakeholder governance contribute to the

sustainability of ProKlim, and how such sustainability serves as the foundation for the community to function as an actor in climate diplomacy.

At the International Forum in Indonesia, ProKlim has promoted its initiatives within the BRICS forum as a community-based environmental management practice. ProKlim has also become part of the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) cooperation in Banda Aceh. At COP30 in Belém, Brazil (November 2025), the Minister of Environment emphasized Indonesia's commitment to integrating climate action with sustainable development, including through community-based programs such as ProKlim. (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup, 2025). Deputy Minister Diaz presented two flagship programs that directly involve village communities: Desa Mandiri Peduli Mangrove and the *"Program Kampung Iklim"* (ProKlim). This presentation demonstrates that ProKlim has become an integral part of Indonesia's climate diplomacy on international forums, with grassroots communities serving as key actors promoted on the global stage.

The Ministry of Environment reported that at COP30, the Indonesian Pavilion served as an instrument of "soft diplomacy" that complements formal negotiations. The successful case of ProKlim Surabaya such as achieving an 80% resolution rate for environmental issues in RW 03 Jambangan and its integrated bank system can be presented as concrete examples of how Indonesia is translating its climate commitments into tangible results. As stated by Special Envoy Hashim Djojohadikusumo, the pavilion is "a space where the government, businesses, and civil society collaborate to turn visions into reality." (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup, 2025). This demonstrates that grassroots climate diplomacy is not merely a theoretical concept, but rather an operational component of Indonesia's soft power strategy.

In 2026, ANTARA News reported that Indonesia has been incorporating community-based practices into its climate action efforts at BRICS forums, emphasizing the importance of a community-driven approach to addressing climate change. The report indicates that ProKlim has become an integral part of Indonesia's diplomatic narrative across various international forums, not only at COP but also at BRICS (ANTARA News, 2026). Consequently, communities such as RW 03 Jambangan indirectly contribute to Indonesia's climate diplomacy by achieving outcomes that align with the narratives promoted by the government in international forums. This study will analyze how local achievements are transformed into diplomatic narratives and how grassroots communities function as actors in this process.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using an instrumental case study design (Yin, 2018). The city of Surabaya was selected as the extreme case due to its leadership in the national ProKlim initiative and its active involvement in international climate cooperation. An instrumental case study design was chosen

because this research aims to understand broader phenomena regarding grassroots climate diplomacy through the specific case of ProKlim Surabaya (Yin, 2018). The qualitative approach enables researchers to conduct in-depth exploration of how grassroots communities function as actors in diplomacy, how social capital contributes to resilience and soft power, and how local achievements are transformed into diplomatic narratives. The case study design also allows for the use of diverse data sources including interviews, observations, and document analysis which are essential for understanding complex and multidimensional phenomena.

This research is limited to the period 2024–2026, for the following reasons: first, 2024 was the year RW 03 Jambangan received the "ProKlim Lestari" award from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), marking national recognition of the community-based model and establishing it as a benchmark for other communities (Kasus et al., 2026). Second, 2024 was the year Surabaya Mayor's Regulation No. 92 of 2024 on ProKlim was enacted, providing a clearer legal basis and policy framework (Surabaya City Government, 2024). Third, 2026 was the year Surabaya received the title of "National Best City I" (score of 74.92) and East Java Province once again received the most ProKlim awards nationwide, marking the pinnacle of recognition for ProKlim's success in Surabaya (Topberitanusantara.com, 2026). These boundaries allow for an analysis focused on the period when Surabaya's ProKlim program reached maturity and gained recognition, as well as when the diplomatic implications of that success became increasingly relevant.

The research location is the City of Surabaya, with a focus on RWs that have achieved the ProKlim Lestari (highest) category, namely RW 03 Jambangan (2021 ProKlim Lestari recipient), RW 01 Banjarsugihan, and RW 09 Rungkut Kidul (the only neighborhood in Surabaya participating in the ProKlim Lestari category in 2026). The selection of these locations was based on the criteria that these RWs have achieved the highest standards in ProKlim implementation and have become models for other communities. Research subjects included officials from the Surabaya Environmental Agency (DLH), ProKlim environmental cadres (RW administrators, PKK, and youth organizations), city government representatives handling international cooperation, as well as academics and practitioners involved in ProKlim advocacy. Research participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that informants possessed knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic.

This research employed three primary data collection techniques. First, participatory observation at ProKlim sites to gain firsthand insight into how the program operates and how social interactions occur among residents. The second, document analysis covering Mayor's Regulation No. 92/2024, NDC/SNDC documents, ProKlim reports, and Indonesia's presentation materials at international forums such as COP30 and BRICS. The combination of these two techniques allows

for data triangulation and provides a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves the following stages: data familiarization, preliminary coding, theme identification, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility in identifying patterns of meaning within complex qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Source triangulation was used to ensure the validity of the findings by comparing data from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Additionally, member checking was conducted by asking informants to verify the researchers' interpretations of the collected data. The analysis process was conducted iteratively, with the researchers moving back and forth between the data and theory to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

This research integrates three main analytical frameworks. First, the Track III Diplomacy framework (Laqua & Scott-Brown, 2026; McConnell et al., 2012) to analyze community actions as non-state diplomacy. This framework allows the researcher to understand how grassroots communities, despite lacking access to formal diplomatic channels, can act as actors in international affairs through their actions and narratives. Second, the Social Capital framework (Putnam, 2000) to analyze community resilience. This framework helps researchers understand how social networks, norms, and trust facilitate cooperation and enable communities to survive and thrive in the face of challenges. Third, the Climate Diplomacy framework (Vogler, 2016) to analyze ProKlim's positioning within foreign policy. This framework enables researchers to understand how local climate action can contribute to global climate governance and how local achievements can be translated into diplomatic narratives. The integration of these three frameworks allows for a comprehensive analysis of how ProKlim Surabaya functions as a form of grassroots climate diplomacy.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

ProKlim Surabaya as a Grassroots Climate Diplomacy Initiative

The findings of this study indicate that ProKlim Surabaya represents a form of grassroots climate diplomacy in which grassroots communities independently develop adaptation and mitigation capacities that contribute to Indonesia's global commitments. The achievement of 23 ProKlim awards in 2024, 10 ProKlim awards in 2026, and the title of National Best City I in 2026 serve as "diplomatic currency" that strengthens Indonesia's position in international climate negotiations. This aligns with the findings of Laqua and Scott-Brown in 2026 that grassroots action can serve as a barometer of social change and a catalyst for global restructuring. In the context of ProKlim Surabaya, RW communities not only implement environmental programs but also create development models that can be replicated

and promoted in international forums, thereby contributing to Indonesia's climate diplomacy narrative (Laqua & Scott-Brown, 2026).

A discussion of these findings suggests that ProKlim Surabaya can be positioned as Track III Diplomacy, where community action transforms into a diplomatic narrative. The RW 03 Jambangan community, for example, has become a benchmark site for various government agencies and educational institutions, meaning they are indirectly involved in the exchange of knowledge and best practices typically associated with diplomacy. McConnell et al. (2012) argue that non-state actors often "mimic" state diplomatic practices to achieve their goals, and in the case of RW 03 Jambangan, these practices are evident in how the community promotes its achievements and builds networks with various stakeholders. Thus, ProKlim Surabaya is not merely a domestic environmental program but also a form of community engagement in international affairs through their actions and narratives (McConnell et al., 2012).

These findings also indicate that the success of ProKlim Surabaya is inseparable from the support of the city and national governments, which have created an ecosystem enabling the community to thrive. Surabaya Mayor's Regulation No. 92 of 2024 provides a clear legal foundation and policy framework, while the national ProKlim program offers recognition and legitimacy through awards and categories (Surabaya City Government, 2024). This combination of top-down support and bottom-up initiatives creates a unique development model, in which government policies and community actions reinforce one another. In the context of climate diplomacy, this model demonstrates that Indonesia is not only formally committed but also implements these commitments through concrete actions that involve the broader public.

Social Capital as the Foundation of Resilience and Soft Power

Social capital within the Surabaya ProKlim community primarily mutual aid, leadership renewal, and multi-stakeholder collaboration serves as the foundation for climate resilience and a source of Indonesia's soft power. A 2026 case study et al. in RW 03 Jambangan showed that the rate of resolution for environmental issues reached 70–80%, with inclusive participation from the PKK, youth organizations, and all residents. Practices such as waste banks (5–7 metric tons/day), urban farming, and renewable energy have become "success stories" promoted at BRICS and COP30 forums (Kasus et al., 2026). These findings indicate that social capital is not only a domestic asset but also a "diplomatic asset" that can be used to build a positive image of Indonesia as a country that takes climate change seriously. In other words, the social strength of the community transforms into soft power that strengthens Indonesia's position on the global stage.

In 2000, Putnam distinguished between bonding capital and bridging capital, and in the context of RW 03 Jambangan, both types of social capital are clearly evident. Bonding capital is evident in the solidarity among residents of a single RW,

which enables them to collaborate on activities such as community service projects and the management of a waste bank. Bridging capital is evident in collaboration with various external parties, including the Environmental Agency, universities such as UNAIR and UNESA, as well as private companies like Unilever and state-owned enterprises such as BNI, BRI, PLN, and Pertamina (Putnam, 2000). The combination of these two types of social capital enables the community not only to survive but also to thrive and serve as a model for other communities. In the context of climate diplomacy, the community's ability to build and maintain these cross-sectoral networks demonstrates that they have the capacity to function as actors in multi-level climate governance.

Rusdiyana (2024) found that cross-group engagement particularly by positioning women as key actors significantly enhances program sustainability and strengthens social bonds. This finding aligns with the experience of RW 03 Jambangan, where PKK mothers play a central role in managing the waste bank, from weighing and recording waste to managing the waste savings fund. The waste savings system, which enables residents to accumulate up to 6–7 million rupiah per year, provides tangible economic benefits while strengthening social cohesion (Rusdiyana et al., 2024). In the context of climate diplomacy, the success of this system serves as evidence that community-based climate action not only benefits the environment but also yields significant economic impacts, which in turn reinforces Indonesia's narrative on inclusive sustainable development.

ProKlim Surabaya within the Framework of NDCs and Indonesia's Climate Diplomacy

ProKlim Surabaya is positioned as a "bridge between global commitments and local actions." The integration of ProKlim into NDCs and SNDCs (to be submitted in October 2025) reflects a strategic climate diplomacy approach: leveraging community actions as tangible evidence of Indonesia's credible commitment to the Paris Agreement. Achieving this status for Surabaya would establish it as a "best practice" to be promoted at international forums such as COP30 and BRICS. These findings align with existing literature on multi-level climate governance, where 80% of NDCs now encompass cities and regions (Vogler, 2016). Surabaya can thus serve as a model for other cities in the Global South. In this context, the success of ProKlim Surabaya is not only relevant to domestic policymaking but also to Indonesia's position in international climate negotiations, as concrete field actions bolster the credibility of Indonesia's commitments.

The global impact of local grassroots actions in Surabaya can be measured both empirically and theoretically. Empirically, the data from RW 03 Jambangan is compelling: the community manages 5 to 7 tons of waste per day, reducing significant methane emissions that would otherwise contribute to global warming (Ardiani et al., 2026). Furthermore, the community's waste bank system has enabled residents to accumulate savings of up to 6-7 million rupiah per year, demonstrating

that climate action is inextricably linked to economic resilience. When aggregated, the 59 ProKlim awards across Surabaya represent a massive localized contribution to Indonesia's NDC target of reducing emissions by 31.89% by 2030. Theoretically, this phenomenon is best explained by Keck and Sikkink's (1998) "boomerang model" of transnational advocacy (Keck, 1998). When local communities face structural challenges or lack direct access to high-level policy-making, they engage in information politics sharing their success stories with external allies, NGOs, and international forums (such as COP30 and BRICS). This external recognition (the 74.92 score as Best City I) creates external pressure and legitimacy, which "boomerangs" back to reinforce national climate foreign policy. Furthermore, building on Putnam's (2000) concept of bridging capital, the network built by RW 03 with universities, CSR programs, and international observers transforms community social capital into soft power. As Vogler (2016) argues, in contemporary climate diplomacy, credibility is the ultimate currency. Indonesia's ability to showcase RW 03 Jambangan as a living, breathing model of community resilience at the COP30 Pavilion provides the nation with the moral leverage and diplomatic credibility required to demand stronger global climate action.

In 2016, Vogler argued that contemporary climate diplomacy involves diverse actors and levels of engagement, extending beyond merely the participating states in formal negotiations. In this context, ProKlim Surabaya can be seen as an example of how grassroots initiatives contribute to global climate governance not only through emission reduction but also by establishing norms and practices that can be replicated. The Ministry of Environment (2025) reported that at COP30, Indonesia's pavilion served as an instrument of "soft diplomacy," complementing formal negotiations. The successful case of ProKlim Surabaya achieving an 80% resolution rate for environmental issues in RW 03 Jambangan and establishing a waste recycling system serves as a concrete illustration of how Indonesia is translating its climate commitments into tangible outcomes. This demonstrates that grassroots climate diplomacy is not merely a theoretical concept but an operational component of Indonesia's soft power strategy (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup, 2025).

In 2026, ANTARA News reported that Indonesia has been incorporating community-based practices into its climate action efforts within the BRICS forum, emphasizing the importance of a community-driven approach. This report indicates that ProKlim has become part of Indonesia's diplomatic narrative across various international forums, not only at COP but also at BRICS (ANTARA News, 2026). Consequently, communities such as RW 03 Jambangan indirectly contribute to Indonesia's climate diplomacy by achieving outcomes that align with the narratives promoted by the government in international forums. This study analyzes how local achievements are transformed into diplomatic narratives and how grassroots communities function as actors in this process.

The Role of ProKlim in Indonesia's Soft Diplomacy at COP30: At COP30, Indonesia emphasized that its pavilion serves as an instrument of "soft diplomacy"

that complements formal negotiations. The successful case of ProKlim Surabaya such as achieving an 80% resolution rate for environmental issues in RW 03 Jambangan and its waste management system serves as a concrete example of how Indonesia is translating its climate commitments into tangible results. As stated by Special Envoy Hashim Djojohadikusumo, the pavilion is "a space where the government, businesses, and civil society collaborate to turn visions into reality" (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup, 2025). This demonstrates that grassroots climate diplomacy is not merely a theoretical concept, but rather an operational component of Indonesia's soft power strategy.

In 2025, the Ministry of Environment reported that Deputy Minister Diaz presented two flagship programs that directly involve village communities: Desa Mandiri Peduli Mangrove and the “Program Kampung Iklim” (ProKlim). This presentation demonstrated that ProKlim has become an integral part of Indonesia's climate diplomacy on international forums, with grassroots communities serving as key actors promoted on the global stage. (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup, 2025). In this context, ProKlim Surabaya can be seen as an example of how local achievements can be elevated into a national narrative that strengthens Indonesia’s position in international climate negotiations. By showcasing communities such as RW 03 Jambangan, Indonesia is not only speaking about its commitments but also demonstrating concrete and measurable evidence of implementation.

The Indonesian Pavilion at COP30 serves as a platform for various stakeholders including government, business, and civil society to collaborate and share experiences. In this context, ProKlim Surabaya functions as a case study demonstrating how community-based climate action can achieve significant results. This success story not only reinforces Indonesia’s narrative on climate commitment but also provides inspiration for other countries in the Global South facing similar challenges. Thus, ProKlim Surabaya contributes to Indonesia’s climate diplomacy not only through emissions reduction but also through the development of norms and practices that can be replicated globally.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that ProKlim Surabaya is not merely a domestic environmental program but a grassroots climate diplomacy instrument that links the resilience of local communities with Indonesia’s global commitments. The community’s social capita manifested in mutual aid, the regeneration of community leaders, and multi-stakeholder collaboration serves as soft power that strengthens Indonesia’s position in international climate diplomacy. Surabaya’s achievements in ProKlim, including 23 awards in 2024 and the title of National Best City I in 2026, demonstrate that grassroots action can serve as the foundation for credible climate diplomacy. In this context, ProKlim Surabaya can be understood as a form of Track III Diplomacy, in which grassroots communities despite lacking access to formal

diplomatic channels act as actors in international affairs through their actions and narratives.

This research offers a conceptual model of "Grassroots Climate Diplomacy" that can be replicated by other communities in the Global South. This model explains how grassroots diplomacy can transform local climate action into a foreign policy instrument through a combination of social capital, policy support, and effective communication strategies. Policy implications include the need to integrate ProKlim into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' climate diplomacy strategy and to strengthen community capacity in international climate cooperation. Municipal and national governments need to recognize and support the role of grassroots communities as diplomatic actors, not merely as beneficiaries of programs. Additionally, communities need to be provided with training and resources to promote their achievements in international forums, so they can contribute more effectively to Indonesia's climate diplomacy.

Future research should conduct a quantitative analysis of the specific GHG emission reductions resulting from ProKlim and explore comparative studies with other cities in the Global South. Quantitative analysis will provide stronger evidence of ProKlim's impact on Indonesia's climate targets, while comparative studies will reveal the factors enabling success across various contexts. Furthermore, research on how ProKlim communities interact with international actors including donor agencies and nongovernmental organizations will offer insights into how local actions can connect with global networks. Thus, this research not only contributes to our understanding of ProKlim but also to the broader literature on non-state diplomacy and multilevel climate governance in the Global South.

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