

Chapter 17

Navigating Post-Pandemic World: A Final Note

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The book generally has contributed to the development of literature in Indonesia in the post-COVID-19 pandemic that is primarily focused on the economic dimension of the pandemic (see Lewis & Witoelar, 2021; Ing & Basri, 2022) by offering generous exploration to scrutinize the pandemic from a politico-socio-education view. The inquiry began with scanning the undeniable impact of the pandemic from the global, national, and grassroots levels. The worldwide impact of the pandemic is multisectoral and requires prolonged recovery time. The pandemic has damaged the health system, even for wealthy nations. The global economic growth was crippled, and the national economy suffered. States become more selfish and over-protective, undermining multilateral cooperation. The restriction during the pandemic has pulled the low-economic society into deeper poverty

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Hidayatulloh, M. A., Jati, I., & Sumardani, D. (2022). Navigating post-pandemic world: A final note. In M. A. Hidayatulloh, I. Jati, & D. Sumardani (Eds.), *Indonesia post-pandemic outlook series: Social perspectives* (347–352). BRIN Publishing. DOI: 10.55981/brin.536. c476 ISBN: 978-623-7425-84-7 E-ISBN: 978-623-7425-88-5

at the grassroots level. The economic havoc at the family level also heightened the risk of domestic violence against women. Additionally, the pandemic enabled the re-enactment of traditional gender roles, affecting women from diverse groups, including those with high academic qualifications. Sadly, a particular group of people who suffer the pandemic's most challenging impact is the person with disabilities. People with disabilities are already more vulnerable to diseases like diabetes and cancer than ordinary people. During the pandemic, it would be challenging for them to access health facilities because of the overwhelmed cases of COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic also impacts other professionals like female academics, migrant workers, and traditional artists. The pandemic has forced us to turn down conventional face-to-face class meetings in the education sector. In response, technology-based teaching through online learning emerged as the alternative. However, numerous challenges, such as internet access and the online learning platform, decelerated the effectiveness of the learning process.

Considering this crisis, the contributors of this book offered various recommendations that are relevant for Indonesia's efforts to recover after the pandemic. From an international political economy lens, there are a few notes made by the contributors in the first part of the book. The Indonesian government is encouraged to maximize the opportunity of Indonesia's presidency in the G20 this year. Indonesia should take the lead in promoting the mechanism for mitigating such pandemic impacts. In this regard, Indonesia could propose that G20 members adopt the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) mechanism as a collaborative solution to mitigate the pandemic. The G20 can observe a similar mechanism framing the state's commitment under UNFCCC. Domestically, Indonesia's efforts to recover its socio-economic structure, as outlined in the National Economic Recovery program (PEN), would require a heavy financial burden. Indonesia could utilize the newly implemented carbon tax revenue to finance the recovery programs. The government may "recycle" back the income to support public spending. All these efforts should be

confined to the green recovery bracket. The green recovery aimed to achieve long-term human prosperity without scarifying the environment. This 'green economy' approach indeed has been echoed by Indonesian scholars who see the urgency of transitioning to a more environmentally friendly economy post-COVID-19 pandemic (see Martawardaya et al., 2022). For instance, the Indonesian government should immediately start to deliver the stimulus funds for a greener transportation system and green energy initiative. Indonesia should reach recovery better than the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the contributors in the book's second part offer several recommendations for the Indonesian government to recover from the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. One sound advice is that the Indonesian government must improve its social protection programs for the most vulnerable social groups. To do so, not only must the government increase the amount of budget allocated for social protection programs, but the government also must ensure that they are effectively implemented from their planning stage (available up-to-date data of the beneficiaries) to their distribution stage. This is evident in the case of urban slums community, migrant workers, people with disabilities, and traditional artists.

The contributor's second recommendation is that the human rights approach must focus on the government's policy development and implementation. In other words, the needs and interests of marginalized populations must be well considered; an argument also echoed by Bessel and Bexley (2021). The contributors observe that such an approach has been absent in the case of gender-based violence and migrant workers' protection. It is evident in both cases that women victims of sexual violence and illegal migrant workers do not have equal access to justice and protection from the state. Indonesian women's movements and the Migrant Workers Alliance have taken a critical role in making sure that the government hears the voices of these socially vulnerable groups. To address these concerns,

the Indonesian government may (or should) refer to international norms and legal frameworks relevant to each group. In this case, the Indonesian government's achievement in establishing a national mechanism for promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities needs to be appreciated. However, as one contributor noted, ratifying international regulatory frameworks into national legislation is insufficient for disability rights' promotion and protection without putting it into practice.

The last recommendation made by contributors to this part is that the Indonesian government must *revalue* work that has been considered 'subordinate' or 'informal' within a capitalist political-economic lens. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of capitalism as an economic structure and polity (Nelson, 2020). In this book, it has been shown that these 'subordinate' and 'informal' work, such as care work of Indonesian female academics (and Indonesian women in general), 3D 'dangerous, dirty, and difficult' jobs of the Indonesian migrant workers, and arts and cultural preservation carried out by traditional artists, have been sidelined by the state in the COVID-19 recovery programs. Revaluing these types of work in the future benefits these vulnerable groups and the state's economic development.

In the last part of the book, the contributors offer important insight into Indonesia's future education. Clearly, the COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest challenge in education; thus, educators must find flexible ways to repair the damage to students' learning trajectories once the pandemic is over (Daniel, 2020). The contributors highlighted that teachers from rural and non-rural areas shared a similar opinion and experience that online learning was challenging in many aspects of learning, such as teaching, social, and cognitive domains. However, teachers from rural areas highly mentioned limited infrastructure as the most challenging factor in facilitating learning. In contrast, teachers from non-rural areas mentioned selecting instruction methods that will stimulate social and cognitive presence in learning as the most difficult one. In this vein, the Indonesian government needs to

establish a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder plan to narrow the digital divide, including internet and cellular connection access, to provide equitable access to everyone, including those in rural areas. It should also offer zero-rating services, expand and invent connections, provide free and subsidized equipment, and promote digital literacy to address concerns such as cost, dysconnectivity, illiteracy, discrimination, and diversity. Doing so will enable hybrid teaching as a new alternative to recover students' learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another futuristic yet feasible idea for Indonesian education is developing the metaverse teaching-learning method. The role of technology in instruction methods is essential to improve technology-based teaching-learning, not only using the available technology that exists today but also the upcoming technology such as metaverse. Although the collaboration between cross reality through virtual and physical worlds in the classroom has never been implemented before, it is hoped that this new alternative method can be applied in emergency classes.

Furthermore, literacy-based education is another important issue in education to face the digital era because it develops vastly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Training students to become good digital citizens to have certain qualities to be digitally literate is needed. Parents must support this at home by patrolling their children's digital activity and emphasizing technology's benefits and risks. Other literacy skills such as reading and scientific literacy are contributed massively to society to end the pandemic era and prevent the same problem from arising in the future global crisis. Finally, perhaps, more importantly, returning to our opening theme of the role of policymakers, the policy is not the only driver of these innovations. Instead, progress is driven by the cultural and commercial technology ecosystem (Thomas & Rogers, 2020).

Examining the various recommendations above, there are some noteworthy conclusive points. Firstly, despite the dire socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, Indonesia possesses the ability and

opportunity to recover. All chapters of this book clearly express this *optimistic* tone. With tangible and intangible resources, Indonesia can overcome the pandemic. At the global level, Indonesia can utilize its political status in the multilateral forum, especially in the G20, to ‘recover together’ and ‘recover stronger’ from the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, Indonesia’s capacity to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic opens possibilities for eliminating the pervasive social injustices and inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic and its dire socio-economic consequences have given vulnerable social groups—including low-income populations, women, people with disabilities, and those in the intersections of these social markers—growing *recognition* and *visibility* to be seen, heard, and considered in policy development and implementation. Lastly, as all the contributors to this book have consistently demonstrated, what matters in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts is the willingness and ability to *re-imagine* how we *collectively* navigate the world post-pandemic.

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