



Chapter 1

Introduction: Strategies to Recover Ahead of the Curve in Health and Economics

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“Health is wealth” is a maxim we often hear. Never has this been truer than when the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic started in late 2019, altering our ways of life dramatically ever since. Not only overwhelming the health system, but COVID-19 has also disrupted the growth trajectories of many economies and brought numerous businesses into insolvency as well as families to fall below the poverty line at a micro-level.

COVID-19 has, however, presented opportunities to start afresh and allow innovation and positive disruption to flourish. Governments, health systems, industries, and other sectors could push forward transformations, including shifting digital in ten months on what would have usually taken ten years. In line with Indonesia’s

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Group of 20 (G20) Presidency theme in 2022, which is to recover stronger and achieve Indonesia's golden age in 2045, learnings from the pandemic need to be reflected upon and, when forward moving, institutionalized into policies for Indonesia to recover ahead of the curve, both in health and economics.

The Overseas Indonesian Student Association Alliance (OISAA or PPI Dunia in Indonesian), the largest overseas student organization with chapters across 60 countries and over 75 thousand individuals, aims to do this mission through this book. OISAA has a long history of contributing to nation-building and was inspired by *Indonesische Vereeniging*, which in 1921 was led by Mohammad Hatta, a medical doctor who studied in the Netherlands and became Indonesia's inaugural Vice-President, as well as a key figure in Indonesia's independence movement.

Chapters in this book are divided into three main themes, which we find pertinent to Indonesia's and the global response going forward. They are Digital Transformation, Building Future Ready and Resilient Societies, and Equitable, Sustainable, and Green Development. In selecting and constructing these themes, we sought alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations COVID-19 Recovery Roadmap, World Health Organization reports, and others.

Section one posits the digitalization theme where authors discuss how digital transformation has provided new ways of working in health, Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), financing, and the tourism industry. COVID-19 has exposed vulnerable areas in the health sector that jeopardize human capital and long-term economic growth. On the other hand, it has been proved that digital health works can substantially improve the health and well-being of Indonesians. Readers would be able to reflect upon what has been done by Indonesia and other countries, as well as future projections on what digital health might look like in Indonesia.

This theme also explores opportunities for Indonesia's growing e-commerce and digital financing space, currently the largest in Southeast Asia. By analyzing recent data, the authors provide evidence

of the rapid rise of financial technology (fintech) in Indonesia, despite the pandemic and their likely impacts on economic growth. Financiers and economists would find it interesting to be updated on current regulations regarding fintech in Indonesia.

Tourism has long contributed to Indonesia's employment, income, and foreign exchange. "*Visit Indonesia*", and "*Wonderful Indonesia*" were some of the government's programs to promote the beauty of Indonesia's diversity. However, lockdowns and border restrictions have made this condition untenable. In light of this, the authors of chapter five explored opportunities for virtual tourism to bring in revenue and raise awareness of new sights for people to visit once the tourism industry is recovered.

Section two of this book raises the critical question: how can the Indonesian society be more resilient and future-ready to face a future that changes more rapidly than before? Authors of this theme attempt to answer this question through the lens of food systems, mental health, culture, collaborative leadership, communities, and global supply chains.

The authors explored the slew of issues on our food and nutrition resilience that surfaced due to the pandemic. They discussed strategies for mitigating this situation and strengthening human capital during the post-pandemic recovery process, including reinforcing the agricultural and food sector and developing a strategy for mainstreaming essential nutrition.

Aristotle noted that "*Man (and woman) is by nature a social animal*". The pandemic has challenged the notion of connectedness and communities. While social (physical) distancing has become the norm, for some, we have become more connected than ever through technology. The authors of chapter seven argued why this might not be enough, questioned how pandemic burnout remains looming and discussed strategies to improve resilience through improving mental health literacy. These arguments are followed by discussions on fostering collaborative leadership to promote sustainable development with an Indonesian city as a case study, and also discussions on how

reinforcing the development of a creative economy to support the formation of community resilience, maintaining the cultural capital, and building a sense of identity for many Eastern cultures, which has dramatically shifted in this increasingly fluid world.

Globalization has brought supply chains to be longer than ever before. For the past few decades, it has been unsurprising to have most products manufactured in the People's Republic of China, packaged in Europe, branded with an American label, and sold in Indonesia and other countries worldwide. While COVID-19 has brought this into question, authors of the chapter on global value chains presented opportunities that remain present, including in newer fields such as vaccine manufacturing for Indonesia's emerging pharmaceutical sector.

Another global phenomenon covered in this book is climate change. The world is warming, an irrefutable fact presented in the 6th Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report in 2021 and 2022. At the same time, the world is becoming more divided and inequitable, with vaccine distribution during the pandemic between countries and within countries being a case in point.

Section three of the book thus presents ideas on what it takes to build a more equitable, sustainable, and greener future without sacrificing prosperity. Economists and health researchers share reflections on how reforms are needed to rebuild the society to be better from the current disruption by looking at the present, reflecting on the past, and supporting research to create future breakthroughs.

The section provides potential scenarios to revert Indonesia's current budget deficit due to COVID-19 through issues of green bonds, implementation of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS), and strengthening Indonesia's role as a global manufacturing hub, including through integration with global supply chains. Beyond ideas, the authors also modeled the potential impact of such policies on Indonesia's economic state.

The past few years have shown that evidence-informed decisions are required to be the norm rather than the outlier in developing policy

decisions. We have also seen firsthand how, through rapid research translation such as vaccines, lives, livelihoods, and economies can be saved. The last chapter of this section explores the current landscape of health research in Indonesia, existing gaps, and the various opportunities to support a sustainable health system that can support Indonesia's human development and drive it to achieve prosperity for all as enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution.

In closing, the Editors would like to thank all authors currently undertaking their higher studies worldwide, reviewers, and advisors, both internal and external, who have contributed to making this book a reality.

We hope this book enlightens the readers to be optimistic about our shared future and reflect on the learnings we have gained from the pandemic. As the saying goes, everything happens for a reason. This pandemic might be a blessing in disguise, pushing us to leap forward and recover ahead of the curve towards a more resilient and sustainable future.