



During the pandemic, some schools have started learning face-to-face and are implementing strict health protocols.

COUNTRY FACTS AND FIGURES

Population:	276.446 million (Worldometers, 2021)
2021 Global Index Score:	66.34/100 (SDR 2021)
2021 Global Index Rank:	97/165 (SDR 2021)
SDG 4 Dashboard:	● Challenges remain (SDR 2021)
SDG 4 Trend:	↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement (SDR 2021)
SDG 10 Dashboard:	● Major challenges remain (SDR 2021)
2019 HDI Value/Rank:	0.718, 107 out of 189 (HDRO, 2020)
GNI per capita (PPP\$):	11,459 (HDRO, 2020)
Gini Index:	38.33 (Statista, 2020)
Income Group:	Upper-Middle Income Status (WB, 2020)
Secondary Net Enrolment:	Total: 78.7% Female: 79.9% Male: 77.6% (UNESCO, 2018)
Literacy Rate (15 years & older):	Total: 95.7% Female: 94% Male: 97.3% (UNESCO, 2018)
Out of School:	1,555,014 children- ,073,003 Female; 482,011 Male 2,299,116 adolescents- 923,944 Female; 1,375,172 Male (UNESCO, 2018)

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Civil Society Spotlight Report on SDG 4 for HLPF 2021

I. CONTEXT

Indonesia has the second-highest number of COVID-19 cases in the Asia-Pacific region, with more than 2 million confirmed cases.¹ It is certain that the ongoing surge of cases will further disrupt the lives of many and cause widespread repercussions not only on health and the economy but also on the learning continuity of all learners, especially the most marginalised. The impacts of the pandemic will derail the progress made on the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 4 on quality education and lifelong learning for all. On top of the current crisis, the country is also vulnerable to torrential rains that lead to flash floods and landslides, which more destructively affect the lives and livelihoods, as well as the education, of vulnerable groups.²

II. EQUITY AND FINANCING CONCERNS IN SDG 4 AMIDST COVID-19

Closures of some 600,000 schools affected the education of around 68 million learners³ and led to the shift to online and distance learning modalities in an attempt to continue learning.⁴ However, these large-scale school closures and the widening digital divide⁵ will further exacerbate the existing disparities in access to education, magnify learning losses, and even heighten the risk of marginalised learners dropping out of education altogether. The World Bank (2020) estimated that an additional 91,000 children will drop out of

- 1 Indonesia: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard. Retrieved 30 June 2021, from <https://covid19.who.int/region/searo/country/id>
- 2 See <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/41-killed-landslides-floods-indonesia-dozens-missing-n1262997> and <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/%E2%80%98disaster-upon-disaster%E2%80%99-children-indonesia-100000-have-exams-disrupted-flash-floods>
- 3 From <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Main-Report.pdf>
- 4 See <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/10/02/reimagining-education-in-shadow-of-covid-19-pandemic.html>
- 5 See <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/12/01/poor-internet-connection-lack-of-devices-hinder-online-learning-ministry.html> and <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/05/18/disconnected-digital-divide-may-jeopardize-human-rights.html>

school⁶, while a UNICEF survey (2021) showed that six months into the pandemic, many households in Indonesia had one or more children who had dropped out of school largely due to the inability to pay school fees.⁷

The Global System for Mobile Communications' (GSMA) Mobile Economy Asia Pacific 2020 Report revealed that about 61 million do not have access to the Internet.⁸ More than a third of students have limited or no access to the Internet, according to the Ministry of Education, and are thereby deprived of access to quality education, facilities, and resources during the pandemic.⁹ These learners are more likely to come from poor households¹⁰ and rural and remote areas,¹¹ religious minorities,¹² and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community,¹³ who, even in normal circumstances, face obstacles to education access.

Learners with disabilities may be the worst affected because they will be unable to get in close contact with a teacher and access more specialised support. Even before the pandemic, learners with disabilities face many vulnerabilities. Nearly 140,000 children aged 7-18 years with disabilities were out of school (Susenas, 2018)¹⁴ and close to 3 in 10 children with disabilities in Indonesia had never been to school.¹⁵ Unfortunately, it remains unclear how the government will reach out to marginalised groups and address their specific needs.¹⁶ Aside from the device and technology constraints, other challenges include the lack of parents' time and capacity to support their children, behavioural issues such as psychosocial and mental stress,¹⁷ poor digital skills to navigate online learning platforms, and the limited capacity of teachers to teach online or remotely, among many others. The inequitable access to education can be also attributed to the consequent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the 5.3 per cent contraction of Indonesia's economy.¹⁸

The national education budget also decreased because some was realigned to mitigate the crisis.¹⁹ The Indonesian government focuses on three aspects to deal with COVID-19 and its impacts, namely ensuring public health and safety, providing social safety to affected communities, and maintaining the sustainability of the business sector. Meanwhile, the education sector, which

was also heavily affected during the pandemic, did not receive serious attention.²⁰

The government plans to reopen schools in July 2021. However, many schools are unprepared for face-to-face learning and implementation of health protocols. This is due to a lack of understanding of the health protocols, inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, and insufficient budget allocations to support the school reopening programme. The government also did not provide adequate assistance and support for the reallocation of emergency funds to prepare for school reopening. The health of learners, teachers, and other school staff will be placed at risk in the absence of a comprehensive school reopening plan. Moreover, learners who come from low-income families as well as marginalised groups will not be able to return to school and pay because of job, livelihood, and income losses.

Impact of the Pandemic on Girls and Women

Girls and women continue to face some of the most formidable barriers to quality education. With the rise of distance learning, girls are not able to access quality education due to the lack of access to a stable Internet connection and the necessary devices to continue learning, and a conducive physical space to study effectively at home, as well as digital skills. This increases their risk of dropping out of school and suffering the long-term consequences on their economic and social empowerment, and ultimately, their lives.

Girls are also held back by increased domestic responsibilities and unpaid care work²¹ and are disproportionately affected by the surge in early marriages during the pandemic as a result of economic pressure.²² According to women's rights groups, including the National Commission on Violence Against Women and Legal Aid Foundation of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice, domestic violence against women remains prevalent in Indonesia and the number of cases was reported to have doubled²³ in light of the pandemic and restrictions posed on girls' and women's mobility.

Many girls are also forced into marriage by their families. The number of underage or child marriages surged to 300 per cent during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The National Commission on Women collected data from the Supreme Court in the last five years, which showed that the number of marriage dispensations that were granted in 2019 was 23,126, while in 2020, it was 64,211. Unless adequate and targeted actions are taken, girls and women will be among the many marginalised groups whose safety and security will be threatened, and will likely fall behind.

6 From <https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/covid-19-and-learning-inequities-indonesia-four-ways-bridge-gap>

7 See UNICEF, (2021). Analysis of the Social and Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Households and Strategic Policy Recommendations for Indonesia. From <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/media/9411/file/Analysis%20of%20the%20Social%20and%20Economic%20Impacts%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20Household%20and%20Strategic%20Policy%20Recommendations%20for%20Indonesia.pdf>

8 From <https://www.gsma.com/mobileeconomy/asiapacific/>

9 From <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/05/world/asia/coronavirus-indonesia-school-remote-learning.html>

10 See <http://sdgs.bappenas.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Thinking-Ahead-Indonesia%E2%80%99s-Agenda-on-Sustainable-Recovery-from-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf>, 38

11 See UNICEF, Analysis, 33.

12 See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/24/religious-minorities-indonesia-face-discrimination>

13 See https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/global_covideducation0521_web.pdf, p. 38

14 From <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/media/2716/file/Children-with-Disabilities-and-Education-2020.pdf>

15 See <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/stories/building-back-better-towards-disability-inclusive-accessible-and-sustainable-post-covid-19>

16 See <https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/analytics/indonesia-covid-19-pandemic-hurts-poor-women-most>

17 See UNICEF, Analysis, 37.

18 From https://anggaran.kemenkeu.go.id/assets/FTPPortal/Peraturan/NK%20UU%20APBN%20Lapsem/03c%20ENG_ADVERTORIALRAPBN2021.pdf

19 From <https://fiskal.kemenkeu.go.id/publikasi/kem-ppkf>

20 From <https://setkab.go.id/menkeu-tekanan-fokus-pemerintah-pada-kesehatan-bantuan-sosial-dan-dunia-usaha/>

21 See UNICEF, Analysis, 37.

22 From https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/18993/pdf/child_marriage_briefing_2021_indonesia_eng_3rd.pdf

23 See <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/indonesia>



NEW Indonesia and a CSO network provide assistance and capacity building for teachers in developing online and offline learning methods during the pandemic.

III. EMBEDDING SDG 4 IN OTHER SDGS

The measures to control the pandemic have widespread impacts on the daily lives of all students and learners. The government must recognise that learners, especially from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are the worst hit, yet largely hidden victims of this pandemic with immediate and long-term impacts on their health, well-being, and development. More than ever, the interconnection of SDG 4 and SDG 3 in efforts such as, promotion of healthy lifestyles and mental health has become indispensable for all ages.

COVID-19 has also proven to have a massive impact on jobs and livelihood. An online survey found that increases in unemployment have been highest in urban areas. Fifty-five per cent of men and 57 per cent of women who were previously employed reported losing their jobs during the pandemic.²⁴ At the same time, marginalised women who are mostly in the informal sector were hardest hit.

The sudden loss of household income creates economic instability and depletes savings that can push families into poverty and hunger. New research by the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) warns that the economic fallout from the global pandemic could increase global poverty by as much as half a billion people, or 8 per cent of the global population.²⁵ Projections by Bappenas show that the likelihood of Indonesians slipping into poverty has increased by 55 per cent and that approximately 27 per cent of the aspiring middle class is expected to face severe income insecurity.

The rapid impoverishment of families and learners has a tremendous impact on food security, limiting the accessibility, availability, and affordability of nutritious food items. Loss

of household income creates a high risk for a surge in wasting and micronutrient deficiencies among children. Severe wasting is a particularly dangerous form of undernutrition, increasing children's risk of death by nearly 12 times compared to well-nourished children.²⁶

IV. ROLE OF EDUCATION IN SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT RECOVERY

School closures contributed to the widening social and economic inequalities. Escalating gender-based violence, rising child marriage rates, and the burden of increased household responsibilities and unpaid care work have disrupted the lives of numerous girls and women and narrowed their opportunities to pursue other life-fulfilling options. These greatly hinder progress towards the achievement of the full 2030 Agenda. Education has an important role in sustainable and resilient recovery. But unfortunately, the Indonesian government has not looked at improving human capabilities through education, as a strategic step in sustainability and resilient recovery. The government is focused more on improving the economy and neglecting education.

Against this sobering backdrop, it is important that all countries avoid thinking in terms of a business-as-usual policy package for recovery because it will result in a decade of lost development. Rather, governments should take exceptional and urgent actions to tackle the combined impact of the cascading crises, from the pandemic to climate change, and recognise the interlinkages between people, the planet, and the economy, all while adapting to post-pandemic realities. Some urgent priorities include recovering from weakened human capabilities in the wake of the pandemic, and building new capacities for a resilient and sustainable recovery.

²⁴ Hanna, R. and B. Olken, 'Current Results of Online Survey on Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Indonesia', Findings from week 2: 6–8 April, 2020, J-PAL Southeast Asia (J-PAL SEA).

²⁵ Sumner, A., C. Hoy, and E. Ortiz-Juarez, 'Estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty', WIDER Working Paper 2020/43, UNU-WIDER, Helsinki, 2020.

²⁶ Black, Robert E., et al., 'Maternal and Child Undernutrition: Global and regional exposures and health consequences', *The Lancet*, 371, 9608, 19 January 2008, pp. 243–260.

Education is critical for resilient and inclusive sustainable development. It should foster the creation of learners and leaders who have a holistic set of socio-emotional and life skills that are not only required by the evolving labour market but are also needed to become creative, passionate, empathetic, and socially and economically empowered individuals who can navigate and contribute to an ever-changing world.

Education for women and girls, together with family planning, comprehensive sexuality education, and meaningful economic opportunities will have a positive impact on resource use and the environment. Those who have good health and nutrition, adequate education, savings, and alternative livelihoods, as well as a safety nets for when things go wrong, can cope with and weather a climate shock or pandemic far better than how they fare in the current crisis. For growth to be truly inclusive, good quality and accessible education, health care, social protection and safety-net programmes must reach the poorest and address the needs of the most vulnerable, including women and girls and persons with disabilities.

Education systems that enable learning to happen anywhere will be more resilient to future crises. Building such systems requires expanding accessible digital learning platforms at schools, and investing in information systems to track the enrolment and retention of at-risk students, and to engage relevant stakeholders, such as parents, guardians, and civil society groups. In a resilient system, teachers need to know how to employ distance-learning platforms and tools to reach students in their households.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Secure increased and targeted education budget through mobilising resources and expanding domestic financing to be able to implement inclusive education policies with the aim of addressing the equity concerns in public education and the massive gaps in formal, informal, and non-formal education during and beyond the pandemic.
2. Establish regular and robust data collection that are disaggregated by age, gender, disability, migration, location, among other factors, and conduct in-depth analysis to reveal discrepancies and make the needs and situations of marginalised groups more visible.

3. Integrate into stimulus packages support for skills education and financial subsidy for livelihoods and decent work for women who are in the informal economy who comprise 56 per cent of the nation's workforce (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020).²⁷
4. Provide effective distance learning solutions, both online and offline delivery, that address the specific learning needs of all learners, especially marginalised groups, and provide quality informal and non-formal education to enable school dropouts and adult learners to continue learning.
5. Build the capacities of teachers and parents to aid learners in adapting to the shift to online and distance learning, ensuring its integration in the curriculum and certification assessments of prospective educators.
6. Improve cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination to ensure the quality of digital access and minimise disparities in access to educational facilities, infrastructure, and technology.
7. Strengthen policy support to address the impact of the pandemic on mental health on learners, teachers and parents. The need for inter-ecosystem channels in education and the development of a network of counselling and health facilities from educational institutions to professionals are also required to strengthen channels between the ecosystems in schools.
8. Institutionalise government's collaboration with CSOs working in grassroots communities in planning, and implementing and monitoring appropriate education programmes designed for marginalised learners, such as women illiterates, out-of-school children, indigenous learners, learners with disabilities, and vulnerable groups. •

27 The Jakarta Post. (2021). A year in COVID-19: Women in informal work prove mettle against pandemic blues. From <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2021/03/03/a-year-in-covid-19-women-in-informal-work-prove-mettle-against-pandemic-blues.html>.



Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning.

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NEW Indonesia is a coalition of several civil society institutions that have a concern to strengthen access and quality of education for all Indonesian citizens. Established in 2010, the coalition was under the name Civil Society Organization Initiative for Education for All (CSOIEFA). To reinforce the position and focus of coalition work, then on November 2, 2012 the coalition has been officially renamed the Network for Education Watch Indonesia (NEW Indonesia) or the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI). NEW Indonesia is currently a member of ASPBAE and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) by UNESCO. In addition, at the national level, it also entered the Civil Society Coalition for Educational Transformation (KMSTP) network.