

# Newsletter

Issue 9

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## MESSAGE FROM THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR



**L**ike so many of us, I am alarmed by the sharp rise in COVID-19 cases Indonesia has seen in recent weeks. The threat the Delta variant poses underscores the need for constant vigilance and a redoubling of our efforts to protect society's most vulnerable people. But as Indonesia ramps up its vaccination program with the aim of reaching 1-million shots per day by July, I have also been thinking about what it means to truly recover from the pandemic.

This is a pivotal moment for humankind. Few of us, in our lifetimes, can recall a moment when the parallel between human health and planetary health was so starkly apparent. So, as we grapple with the tragedies the pandemic has inflicted, we must also capitalize on this collective insight. We must let the window of opportunity for a truly sustainable and inclusive recovery close. Just as no country can overcome COVID-19 alone, no country can overcome the ramifications of climate change alone. So, let's ensure that together, we do things right to build a future that is clean, green, healthy, safe, and more resilient.

With 14 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals directly affected by the status of natural resources, ecosystem restoration is imperative for the world to recover better. And in the same way that investments in public health tend to yield broader economic and social benefits, investments that address the climate emergency are about more than conserving natural resources. Building systems that enable responsible production and consumption creates jobs and economic opportunities, encourages more innovation, and bolsters sustainable food systems that help end poverty and hunger.

The United Nations in Indonesia continues to work with the Indonesian Government and community leaders to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and build a healthier future for people and the planet alike. On climate change, we are protecting biodiversity hotspots in Indonesia through innovative finance mechanisms that protect forests and empower women at the same time. We are also providing financial literacy training to farmers to safeguard Indonesia's forests and foster grassroots solutions for green urban development. On health, the United Nations Chatbot continues to serve vulnerable populations with facts and resources to safeguard their wellbeing. Recently, the UN reached thousands of Indonesian youths as part of a campaign designed to discourage tobacco smoking. As devastating as the COVID-19 pandemic has been, it is responsible for fewer deaths in total than smoking causes each year.

The United Nations remains committed to various health and socio-economic outreach projects in Indonesia to empower vulnerable populations. These projects include the release of people from *pasung*, the practice of shackling people with mental health conditions at home; working to ensure equitable access to lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls' during the pandemic; and empowering transgender entrepreneurs with intensive business coaching to survive COVID-19.

Looking ahead, the task of restoring ecosystems and uplifting all people during the COVID-19 pandemic may feel like a monumental challenge, but it is not an impossible one. In fact, the scale of the world's collective mobilization against COVID-19 should inspire confidence in our ability to reverse the damage we have done on our planet, and to ensure a safe, healthy, and inclusive future for everyone.

**Valerie Julliard**

UN Resident Coordinator in Indonesia





# Blended Finance Protects Indonesia's Forests and Empowers Women at the Same Time



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The Indonesian archipelago is home to more than a third of the world's tropical peatlands and unique species, including critically endangered animals like the Sumatran Tiger and the Sumatran Rhino. Those landscapes store nearly 300 billion tons of carbon, making a massive contribution to Indonesia's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement. They also sustain human life: more than 74% of the poor across Indonesia depend on ecosystem services for their basic livelihoods.

But forests and peatlands face an existential threat. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) established the Indonesian government-supported Tropical Landscapes Finance Facility (TLFF) in 2016 to support projects that address environmental and social challenges. This innovative financing facility blends private sector funds with public sector support

towards investments in sustainable agriculture, ecosystem restoration, and renewable energy.

In May 2021, the Government of Canada contributed anchor funds worth CAD 4.8 million to TLFF. Canada's investment would not only help to ensure Indonesia's forests' survival, but also open new employment opportunities, including those with the potential to improve women's economic empowerment. All TLFF projects involve marginalized communities as active partners and seek to develop benefits for women. Protecting tropical landscapes—or "natural capital" and promoting women empowerment through decent work is the most effective way to transition to a green economy. Read the full story here: <https://indonesia.un.org/en/130274-how-blended-finance-protecting-indonesias-forests-and-empowering-women-same-time>







## Safeguarding Indonesia's Forests with a Farming Village Cooperative

Bangun village, a tiny rubber and palm oil plantation village in Indonesia's Kalimantan Island, is setting a national model of a community initiative to protect its surrounding tropical forests whilst improving livelihood on existing agricultural land. Instead of encroaching on protected tropical forest for new farming land, the residents remain firm with their commitment to conserve the surrounding lush tropical forests. The village members also set up a cooperative to boost the capacity and know-how of the local farmers in managing their farming land.

To support the farmers in Bangun village on their mission to safeguard their forests and livelihoods, UNDP's KALFOR Project in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry delivered financial literacy training to members of the cooperative and their family members to help raise their standard of living. Full story here: <https://www.id.undp.org/content/indonesia/en/home/presscenter/articles/2021/030621.html>

## Adolescents Commit to Quit on World No Tobacco Day

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Smoking among youth and adults is a serious public health issue. Between 1990 and 2019, the number of deaths in Indonesia linked to tobacco increased by 118%, causing over 246,000 tobacco-related deaths in 2019. Although the legal minimum age for smoking is 18 years old in Indonesia, more than a third of adolescent boys aged 15-19 currently smoke cigarettes, with over

half having started before the age of 15. Easy access to cigarettes from shops and ads on TV help fuel the decision to start smoking and make it difficult to stop.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently launched the global "Commit to Quit" campaign to support 100 million people to give up tobacco. In Indonesia, UNICEF launched the #KerenGakSih (Ain't that Cool) campaign in May 2021 on social media to redefine social attitudes towards smoking and make quitting cool among young people. More than 3,700 youths engaged in a poll on non-communicable diseases through the U-Report youth engagement platform. 91.3% of Indonesian youth considered tobacco bad for health and should be avoided, even more than alcohol (85.7%) and air pollution (76.2%). Meanwhile, more than 42,000 youths accessed UNICEF's U-Report chatbot as a tool to educate and encourage thousands of adolescents to join the Commit to Quit campaign. Read more on UNICEF's effort to end the tobacco epidemic in Indonesia here: <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/stories/adolescents-commit-quit-world-no-tobacco-day>





## Advocating for the End of Shackling People with Mental Health Conditions in Indonesia

Pasung is the practice of shackling and confining people with mental health conditions at home because of the misconception that they are physically aggressive or dangerous. Even though pasung is now illegal, it is still a common practice in Indonesia. Dr. Heni, a university lecturer at Brawijaya University in East Java, made it her life mission to release people from pasung. She says that pasung would not exist in the first place if mental health services were available, accessible and if communities were well-informed about mental health. Dr. Heni learnt that most families did not want to shackle their family members but felt society and the lack of mental health services left them with no options.

UN agencies support the mental health work of the government and partners in Indonesia. For example, UNICEF and UNFPA work on mental health with adolescents and new mothers, respectively. Dr. Heni and WHO Indonesia collaborate on various mental health projects, including guidance on releasing people from pasung and building a support system for the whole family. Dr. Heni's leadership, collaborative, and compassionate approach has so far released 600 people from pasung. Today, she continues to advocate the need for the government to bring mental health services closer to the community. To learn more: <https://indonesia.un.org/en/131932-pasung-means-shackling-people-mental-health-conditions-home-meet-psychiatric-nurse-working>



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## Report: Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on People Living with HIV and Key Populations



RAPID ASSESSMENT REPORT  
Socio Economic Impact  
of COVID-19 towards  
People Living with HIV  
and Key Population

© ILO

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused heavier burdens to vulnerable groups in fulfilling their basic needs, such as access to health and the economy. Moreover, people living with HIV and key populations go through stigma and discrimination, making it more difficult to access social assistance due to administrative matters.

A rapid assessment report from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Indonesia AIDS Coalition (IAC), and UNAIDS found that most respondents

have experienced income reduction and loss of job. As most of the respondents work in the informal sector, the report provided recommendations for leveraging social protection schemes to alleviate the socio-economic impact felt by people living with HIV and the key populations in Indonesia. The ILO supports promoting social protection through continuous advocacy actions to help people living with HIV/AIDS and key affected populations. Access the report here: [https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_794829/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_794829/lang-en/index.htm)







## Grassroots Solutions Provide a Determined Path for Urban Development in Indonesia

There's nothing 'typical' about East Java's Glintung Village, as the area is now well-equipped with a community-based recycling system and absorption wells to mitigate flooding. The gritty walls of the narrow lanes have also been upgraded with a vertical garden. However, it wasn't always like this until Bambang Irianto became the village chief in 2012, who turned the village from crime and flood-ridden into a green urban development model in Indonesia.

At the heart of this transformation is Irianto's collaborative and holistic approach or 'cross-pollination' model of putting the community's needs at the center in urban planning. UNDP Indonesia's Accelerator Lab considers cross-pollination as

essential for breakthroughs in urban development – often identified as one of the top challenges faced by communities worldwide. Such experiments can help communities to innovate using local sources. Therefore, replicating cross-pollination solutions in urban villages is a viable path to empowering communities for better and sustainable living. Indonesia's Accelerator Lab is currently exploring environmental threats and inequality, technology, and governance impact urbanization and small interventions towards sustainable and livable cities. Full story here: <https://www.id.undp.org/content/indonesia/en/home/presscenter/articles/2021/190521.html>



# Report: Methamphetamine Trafficking Has Surged in East and Southeast Asia, Despite COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has limited the movement of people and goods across national borders and slowed economic growth in East and Southeast Asia. But it has not halted the production or trafficking of synthetic drugs like methamphetamine. A [new report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#) released in June 2021 confirms that the synthetic drug market in East and Southeast Asia has proven highly resilient to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report details how crime syndicates continue to find ways to exploit new and existing transit routes for illicit drugs, including via Indonesia's Andaman Sea and Malacca Strait.

Indonesia is now serving as a trafficking route from synthetic drugs produced in West Asia, as well in Southeast Asia's "Golden Triangle", en route to New



Zealand, Japan and South Korea. Collyer F. Brown, Country Manager to UNODC Indonesia and Liaison to ASEAN stressed, "The targeting of Indonesia by these criminal groups highlights the need for a comprehensive strategy that includes reducing demand through increased investment in drug treatment and rehabilitation." Despite the decline in synthetic drug seizures in Indonesia in 2020, the report underscores the need for an inclusive approach to both supply and demand. Valerie Julliard, the UN

Resident Coordinator for Indonesia, added "at a time when the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and worsened poverty, evidence-based drug treatment and rehabilitation programs must be an integral part of our commitment to recover better." Click here to learn more: <https://indonesia.un.org/en/132545-methamphetamine-trafficking-has-surged-east-and-southeast-asia-despite-covid-19>

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## Protecting and Maintaining the Dignity of Women and Vulnerable Groups in COVID-19 Response

The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, combined with natural disasters in different parts of Indonesia, has taken a heavy toll on women and vulnerable populations facing increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV) and greater barriers to their access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and other essential services. To protect and maintain the dignity of women and vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Indonesia received US\$ 2,863,636 from the Government of Japan towards UNFPA's work in the country.

This partnership between UNFPA and Japan will ensure continued and equal access to lifesaving SRH services and outreach to vulnerable populations bearing the brunt of the pandemic, including pregnant women, GBV survivors, people living with HIV, older persons, and persons with disabilities. The funds will also help provide dignity kits to women and other vulnerable populations and service providers, including midwives, GBV first responders, and social workers. UNFPA and

the Government of Japan, in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia and civil society organizations, are committed to protecting women and vulnerable populations in Indonesia during the pandemic to ensure no one is left behind during COVID-19 response as well as Indonesia's pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Full story here: <https://indonesia.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-and-japan-commit-%E2%80%9Ccleaving-no-one-behind%E2%80%9D-covid-19-response>



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# Business Coaching Helps Entrepreneurs from Vulnerable Communities Survive the Pandemic



The majority of transgender persons rely on their livelihoods on entrepreneurship. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit small and medium enterprises the hardest. While business coaching can be a powerful tool for entrepreneurs to improve their business strategies and management, unfortunately, business coaching is not easily accessible by transgender entrepreneurs. Coaching sessions require a significant financial commitment, and transgender entrepreneurs lack opportunities to interact with other entrepreneurs.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with Action Coach and Business and Export Development Organization (BEDO), selected

12 transgender entrepreneurs to participate in the intensive business coaching to survive the COVID-19 pandemic for three months in late 2020. The goal was to build capacity through new business techniques and strategies to help them review their own business and learn how to prioritise, strengthen and improve participants' businesses. From the coaching sessions, participants learned good practices to replicate to other transgender communities and are more empowered to become role models to those who choose entrepreneurship as the source of income and to advocate for equal employment opportunities. See the full story: [https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/info/public/pr/WCMS\\_795435/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/info/public/pr/WCMS_795435/lang-en/index.htm)



## Empowering Girls to Take Control of Their Periods During the Pandemic



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As the COVID-19 pandemic brings new challenges to everyday life, many girls and women are being affected in a personal and often unspoken way: their ability to manage their menstrual hygiene and health. In a UNICEF U-Report poll conducted with over 5,800 female respondents last year, one in six said they experienced some difficulty handling their menstruation during the pandemic. More than half (55%) reported that their menstruation cycle had become irregular. According to the poll, girls and women reported a need for reliable information to manage their menstruation, with most respondents saying they preferred to find information via the Internet.

To help adolescent girls take control of their periods and their lives in fun and engaging ways, UNICEF introduced Oky, a period tracker application for mobile phones. In Papua, UNICEF collaborated with local influencers to promote Oky and access reliable menstrual health and hygiene information to girls and women. Jeni, a local influencer involved in this partnership, shared that girls in Papua often never discuss menstruation. Since learning about Oky, Jeni was impressed by Oky, and encouraged young people in Papua – including boys – to download the app. To date, Jeni's videos featuring the Oky app have received more than 5,000 views, and will continue to ensure that girls know more about their health. Read more: <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/stories/empowering-girls-take-control-their-periods-during-pandemic>

