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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• Social protection policy has been becoming one of Indonesia Government’s main political discourses and policy instruments, started from the earliest ones Rice for the Poor or Raskin (now Rastra) and cash transfer Bantuan Langsung Tunai (BLT) in 1999. Others include National Health Insurance (BPJS), and recently Indonesia Smart Card (Kartu Indonesia Pintar) and a conditional cash transfer Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), which have been implemented to smoothen poor households’ consumption while investing in human capital through interventions in education, health, and nutrition dimensions. However, there lacks of concern regarding social protection for citizens affected by natural disasters that cause adverse consequences, such as vanished personal property, damaged public services infrastructure, loss of sources of livelihood, and potentially risking human wellbeing caused by disasters-related family separation and trauma.

• With increasing frequency of natural disasters recently in Indonesia, there is a need to revisit the national natural disaster mitigation strategy and response as mandated on Indonesian Law Number 24 of 2007 (UU No.24/2007) as well as Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.

This paper proposes an integrated social policy as a response to the adverse socioeconomic effects of natural disasters. In the short run, institutionalized disaster relief safety nets would ease the affected households. In the medium to long run, both redevelopments of infrastructure, rebuilding of institutions, and recovery of human capital should be prioritized.

• Moreover, three principles are advised to uphold in delivering kinds of help and relief during and after the time of crisis, namely: 1) protecting citizens’ dignity; 2) promoting community-driven solutions and social inclusion, and 3) being sensitive to intersectionality aspects of the people, such as gender, ethnic groups, religion/belief system, age, and geographic location.

BACKGROUND

The Government of Indonesia has been working to deliver social protection policy since 2000s. However, several major challenges in implementing social protection policy in Indonesia have been identified, including complexities of service delivery, targeting issue (e.g. leakage and under coverage), data renewal and integration, abuse of power and elite capture, as well as mismanagement and coordination issues within intergovernmental bodies and regional governments (Bah et. al. 2018; Hardjono et al. 2018; McCarthy & Sumarto 2018; Satriawan 2016; Kwon & Kim 2015; Cameron & Shah 2014; Alatas et. al. 2013; Suryadarma & Yamauchi 2013; Dasgupta & Beard 2007; Perdana & Maxwell 2005).
We have the staple-food assistance program (Rastra), one of the most established programs on its kind, to support the poor and near-poor households having rice on their table every day. In healthcare aspect, the Indonesian Health Insurance Scheme (BPJS) aims to provide a Universal Health Coverage, which is a noble and important goal to ensure every Indonesian has right to healthcare services. The Government also launched Kartu Indonesia Pintar with intentions to improve the enrolment and attainment rates of the obligatory 12-year schooling. Conditional cash transfer program, Program Keluarga Harapan, is also applied to smoothen consumption at the household level in the short run while attempting to nudge the poor’s behaviors to generate better education, health and nutrition outcomes in the long run. At the surface, these policies appear to suggest that Indonesia is heading towards the right direction in reducing poverty and investing in human capital. However, there is one missing puzzle in this optimistic story: we are yet to count on natural disasters that would instead cause abrupt increase in poverty and hinder the human development efforts that have been invested so far.

Indonesia has encountered many natural disasters that cost lives and massive property losses, to mention some that occurred in 2018, earthquakes in Banten and Lombok, a landslide in Brebes, eruptions in Karo, and the major tsunami in Palu and Donggala (Azanella 2018). We may have underestimated the detrimental effects of natural disasters, especially on people’s life and human investment agenda. To this date, the policies and actions plans to implement UU No.24/2007 and the Sendai Framework on how to realize Sustainable Development Goals SDGs, especially to end poverty, to realize gender equality, decent work, and sustainable cities, and generally to handle mitigation and response to natural disasters are not yet touching the recovery aspect as a whole.

This policy brief discusses how social protection policy could be an option of policy instrument to deal with risks related to natural disasters in Indonesia and to accelerate the recovery resulting in a resilient society. Finally, this brief recommends an integrated social protection policy approach as part of the ex-post/response policy to natural disasters in Indonesia.

Analysis

Generally, Indonesia is known to be prone to natural disasters as the country lays on the seafloor landslides and is situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire. Although the Disaster Mitigation Law No.24/2007 has mandated the country to have a set of strategies and designated-institutions for mitigation, emergency relief, and rehabilitation, proper policy and implementation actions to deal with these risks still lacking concern on middle- to long-term recovery responses. Moreover, preparedness to natural disasters is crucial to protect human capital and wellbeing, especially in natural disaster-prone country like Indonesia. Though Sulistyaningrum (2015) argues that there was no significant effect of disasters on total household expenditure in disasters affected areas (except for a major case of the tsunami in Aceh in 2004), there was a
significant reduction on educational expenditure, where girls were more likely bearing the cost. Further, a World Bank study (2016) suggests that ineffective disaster emergency response would lead to prolonged destructions and could hamper efforts for rehabilitation.

On this regard, social protection policy could be a decent option to pursue. Social protection policy is a set of policy instruments to alleviate poverty, while dealing with risks and vulnerability, including disabilities, sickness, normal life cycles (childhood, adolescent, and aging), and of course natural disasters (Barrientos and Hulme, 2008). This discourse is close to concept of ‘resilience’ which is defined as “the ability of a system, community and society exposed to hazards to resists, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structure and functions.” (UNISDR 2009).

Thus far, responses towards consequences of disasters were under-maintained warning system technology, by-request disaster funds, ad hoc training for rescuers and front line providers, and the Presidential Instruction to develop and implement curricula on the mitigation and readiness of natural disasters. Yet we know that there is no single silver bullet to manage and deal with vulnerability and risks, especially considering the uncertainty and complexity natures of natural disasters. Social Risk Management, a framework introduced by Robert Holzmann & Steen Lau Jorgensen in 2000 and then developed further by Rasmus Heltberg, Paul Bennett Siegel, and Steen Lau Jorgensen in 2008, had shed light to approach this complex issue through layers of unit of analysis both for ex-ante (prevention and mitigation) and ex-post (coping strategies). Some examples of ex-ante policies that have been employed in many countries are policies in the areas of health, education, technology adoption, investment in soft and hard infrastructures, migration, and labor market policies, which aim for sustainable and resilient communities. Backed by strong fiscal condition, Scandinavian countries are able to provide a generous social protection expenditure. However, some countries with less strong fiscal condition were also able to make incremental progress in implementing Sendai Framework, for instances by creating mini nurseries in landslide-prone areas and emergency preparedness training for children in Tajikistan, safe schools’ infrastructures in Kazakhstan and Japan, and grassroots community training for disaster readiness in Kyrgyzstan (UNISDR 2006).

Without undermining the urgency of ex-ante policies, this paper focuses on discussing ex-post social policies given it has been rarely discussed and rather mostly based on sporadic responses and relied on international humanitarian aid. If we reflect on how we respond to natural disasters other than ‘ad hoc emergency disaster relief funds’, we still rely on informal and community-based short-term solutions, such as public donations, crowdfunding, and voluntarism. Though international actors often step in to offer helping hands but a sovereign country
should not rely on foreign aid in the long run. Moreover, recently, two out of three most generous countries in giving out foreign aids, the US and the UK (Harris, B et al. 2017; McVeigh 2018), already signalled to cut their budget for aids and disaster reliefs. Further, the frequency and magnitude of natural disasters increase in the past few years, emerging economy countries need to ‘compete’ for a shrinking pie of natural disaster relief aids. Therefore, a good disaster relief strategy should be taken more seriously.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

A set of ex-post policy options (summarized in Figure 1) could be considered, given Indonesia social policy’s path, socio-economic and political contexts. The integrated approach towards disaster-relief safety nets includes recovery of human capital through provision of basic services and skills-based trainings; recovery of infrastructure and institutions through, but not limited to, rebuilding hard infrastructure, adequate capacity building for civil servants and front line social workers; and strengthened cooperation, coordination, and knowledge sharing among regional, provincial, and central governments, as well as intragovernmental agencies on natural disaster preparedness and responses.

In the short run, institutionalized disaster relief safety nets would be a starting point to help to directly smoothen the affected households’ consumption as emergency reliefs while preparing survivors to be ready to re-enter to the labor market force. Disaster relief safety net can be of a cash transfer or in-kind, or combination of both, which needs to be studied further systematically.

*Figure 1. Integrated approach of ex-post social protection policy to respond natural disasters’ adverse effect.*
To date, based on humanitarian activists from Aksi Cepat Tanggap, Dompet Dhuafa, and Forum Indonesia Muda, who worked on the ground during the crisis, the emergency reliefs were extremely important to directly sustain survivors’ livelihoods and their dignity (e.g. avoiding them beg for help). Humanitarian volunteers also suggested that not only basic necessities were important, but also provision of necessities sensitive to people’s needs such as pads/tampons for women on their period; infant food and formula milk (and clean boiled water) for babies, nappies, sanitary bag, clothes, as well as storybooks, toys, schoolbooks, and stationaries for children. The variety of the specific needs brings a sense where emergency cash transfer can be an option, i.e. let them decide what they need the most at particular times. What the regional government needs to undertake is ensuring that there is enough supply for these products in the market to avoid sudden price hike (i.e. local inflation) thus ‘wasted’ relief money.

In medium run, recovering human capital would be the key to ensure that no one is left behind. This objective can be achieved by providing emergency schools and health facilities, as well as skill-based training. Emergency schools should be considered if situations will likely take time to be fully recovered. Insights from humanitarian volunteers who worked in the ground indicate that emergency school and health facilities remained heavily rely on voluntarily basis, which is very informal and temporary, i.e. depending on volunteers’ availability. Employment and skill-based training could be another policy to pursue in order to prepare survivors re-enter the workforce. In the long run, redevelopment of infrastructure and rebuilding of institutions should be prioritized to ensure rehabilitation enable people to return to their ‘normal’ live and livelihoods.

In addition, along with applying the integrated social policy proposed, there should be at least three principles upheld in designing and implementing policy and service delivery system during-crisis and rehabilitation. Firstly, the principle of putting victims/survivors’ best interests and protect their rights at the heart of the operation, including to avoid any forms of exploitation, violence, and abuse. This principle aims to avoid jeopardizing citizens’ dignity as per duty-bearers and rights-holder mandates of human rights. Secondly, the whole operations also should promote community-based solutions, while ensuring social inclusion. It means that no one feels left behind in the process of emergency response and rehabilitation, and genuine community participation and engagement are ensured. Thirdly, the social protection response should be designed and delivered in an intersectionality-sensitive way, as the impacts of natural disasters on women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly, from specific ethnic groups, religions from specific locations differ. These three principles would guide the whole strategy and implementations to not only deliver right response, but also the smart ones.
CONCLUSION

With natural disasters occasionally ‘disrupt’ the implementation of the poverty reduction policies, the election year is a perfect timing to raise this issue. Despite decentralization, the central government should take the lead to create a solid national level plan on natural disaster mitigation and response, including rehabilitation policies, while giving authority to the regional governments to implement the plan based on their capacities, resources, and contextual needs.

Finally, as Indonesia has been attempting to cover several important dimensions of human life, such as nutrition, health, and education, it would not be too much to ask to extend the conversation on response/ex-post policy of natural disasters. An integrated approach of social protection policy highlights three continuous ex-post stages to respond to emergency and rehabilitations, which are emergency safety net/cash transfer; recovery of human capital; and rebuilding of infrastructure and institutions. This integrated approach would only deliver expected outcomes if complemented by three guiding principles, which are protecting citizens’ dignity; promote community-based solutions and social inclusion; and put intersectionality sensitiveness in mind. Responding effectively to natural disasters would be a daunting task politically, financially and technically, but effective response to natural disasters are not only less costly for the country’s future, but also a right political call to deliver social justice to Indonesian citizens a whole.
ABOUT AUTHOR

Naimah Talib obtained her degree in Master of Public Policy from the Australian National University (ANU) in late 2018. Naimah is currently working at the Children’s Policy Centre ANU, where she involves in the exploration to develop children-centric multidimensional poverty measure. She is keen to bring social inclusion, intersectionality, and community participation in public policy discourse and practice.

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