

# *The Role of Technology in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era: A lesson learned from Indonesia in Increasing Access to Legal Aid*

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 Pandemic has increased the prevalence of legal problems, such as criminality, massive unemployment, domestic violence, and inequality in society. This condition further causes legal aid services to be progressively needed. Meanwhile, many people still do not know about free legal assistance from the Government through legal aid organizations or lawyers through pro bono legal services. Moreover, the global policy encouraging social and physical distancing makes it difficult for people to access the legal aid service provider office directly. Therefore, an accessible and comprehensive platform that provides information and free legal aid services is very much needed in this COVID-19 situation for justice seekers—as internet use is growingly massive during the pandemic. This article shows why and how technology expands access to legal Aid, explained through interviews with legal aid providers and desk review. With the Indonesian case, this study argues that optimizing technology's role does not necessarily involve creating a massive and complicated technological system but rather ensuring the current or existing platform can fulfill justice seeker needs and be inclusively accessible to vulnerable groups. Legal needs assessment and a multistakeholder approach must be encouraged sustainably to ensure the platform can achieve those goals.

**Keywords:** Access to Justice, Covid-19 pandemic, Free Legal Aid, Technology, Vulnerable Groups.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The covid-19 pandemic has increased legal problems in some countries, including Indonesia. For example, domestic violence has increased since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Indonesia National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) (2020), the reported violence against women is increasing by 60% more than in the previous year – 2019.<sup>2</sup> LBH Apik – the legal aid institution which focuses on protection for women and girls – also stated that they should handle 110 domestic violence cases in the first three months since the Large-Scale Social Restriction (PSBB) in Indonesia. Within these three months, the number of cases has reached half the total number of domestic violence cases in 2019.<sup>3</sup> Indonesian National Police also declared that the crime rate in Indonesia was up to 7.04 percent in the first five months of the Covid-19 pandemic –street crimes, cybercrimes, and kidnapping.<sup>4</sup> Indonesian criminal law expert, Suparji Ahmad, argued that restrictions in the Covid-19 pandemic influenced the increasing crime rate in Indonesia. He assessed that the number of layoffs and desperation to meet their basic needs strongly influence people to commit crimes to survive during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.<sup>5</sup>

According to those findings, most people potentially face legal processes to solve their legal problems as suspects, witnesses, or victims. However, this situation needs the role of legal aid services to give legal assistance to the people dealing with the legal process. The right to legal Aid is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indonesian Government through Indonesian law. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which the Indonesian Government has ratified, states that every citizen shall be treated equally in the eyes of the law and court system. In any legal proceedings, such as a criminal trial or a civil suit, each person shall have the right to a fair, open, and unbiased trial before a tribunal established by law and is independent and impartial.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, it is also mentioned that, in any criminal proceedings, every person shall have the right to a minimum set of guarantees, including the right to receive free legal assistance or representation.<sup>7</sup> The Indonesian Government also ensures the availability of legal Aid for the poor through

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<sup>2</sup> Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan, 'CATAHU 2020 Komnas Perempuan: Lembar Fakta Dan Poin Kunci (5 Maret 2021)', Komnas Perempuan, 5 March 2021, <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/siaran-pers-detail/catahu-2020-komnas-perempuan-lembar-fakta-dan-poin-kunci-5-maret-2021>.

<sup>3</sup> Ayesha Nadya Muna, Diva Tasya Belinda Rauf, and Ika Krismantari, 'Angka KDRT Di Indonesia Meningkatkan Sejak Pandemi COVID-19: Penyebab Dan Cara Mengatasinya', *The Conversation*, 6 August 2020, <http://theconversation.com/angka-kdrt-di-indonesia-meningkat-sejak-pandemi-covid-19-penyebab-dan-cara-mengatasinya-144001>.

<sup>4</sup> Yakub Pryatama Wijayaatmaja, 'Lima Bulan Pandemi Covid-19, Kriminalitas Naik 7 Persen', *Media Indonesia*, 18 May 2020, <https://mediaindonesia.com/megapolitan/314036/lima-bulan-pandemi-covid-19-kriminalitas-naik-7-persen>.

<sup>5</sup> Suparji Ahmad, 'Pakar Hukum: Penyebab Kejahatan Meningkatkan Akibat Banyaknya PHK Di Tengah Pandemi COVID-19', *Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia* (blog), 30 April 2020, <https://uai.ac.id/en/pakar-hukum-penyebab-kejahatan-meningkat-akibat-banyaknya-phk-di-tengah-pandemi-covid-19/>.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights' (n.d.), Article 14 (1).

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, Article 14 (3).

Indonesian Law Number 16/2011 which guarantees funding support for legal aid services to the poor.

Accordingly, there is a big challenge regarding access to legal Aid for people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The restriction of outdoor activities directly impacts people getting access to legal aid services. Moreover, many institutions also issued a policy for working at home during the Covid-19 pandemic. It makes any difficulties to organize face-to-face meetings between legal aid providers and clients. Investigating an alternative method for giving legal aid services during the COVID-19 pandemic would be necessary. As the utilization of the internet and technology becomes more widespread, providing legal aid services through online platforms and information services can serve as a means to improve accessibility for people seeking legal assistance. Some legal aid organizations have tried using technology to provide accessible platform information and legal aid services in this pandemic situation. Therefore, this paper analyzes technology's opportunity and impact on increasing access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper also shows how technology plays a vital role in increasing access to legal Aid through qualitative methods using desk research and in-depth interviews.

## II. LEGAL AID IS ONE OF THE KEY ELEMENTS OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Legal Aid guarantees fair trial and non-discrimination principles within the criminal justice system.<sup>8</sup> The representation of counsel is essential for ensuring equality before the trial, especially for people with neither knowledge nor strong power relation.<sup>9</sup> The legal counsel, in this sense, should provide the best-qualified service to ensure that all the defendant's rights are fully protected.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, counsel representation is important in ensuring justice for all will be implemented for all people regardless of their economic and social status. John S. Bradway argued that legal aid work is essential to implement the fundamental legal principle.<sup>11</sup> This concept is a mutual relationship between the client and the lawyer, in which the client always asks for help, and the lawyer gives it back.<sup>12</sup> However, people should emphasize that the client possibly has a different economic condition – many people cannot afford to pay for the service of a lawyer. Those people often do not realize that they have a legal problem. They may not know the lawyers, but they are probably ready and willing to

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<sup>8</sup> Asian Lawyers Committee for Human Rights., 'Amicus Curiae Brief Before the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia on the Constitutional Review of the Law No. 16/2011 Regarding Legal Aid (App. No.88/PUU-X/2012)', 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *What Is a Fair Trial? A Basic Guide to Legal Standards and Practice* (New York: The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 2000), 6.

<sup>10</sup> Martin V. Callagry, 'Legal Aid in Criminal Cases', *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 42, no. January-February (1951-1952) (1952).

<sup>11</sup> John S. Bradway, 'Legal Aid: Its Concept, Organization, and Importance', *Louisiana Law Review* 14 (1954): 554.

<sup>12</sup> Bradway, 554.

help them without charges.<sup>13</sup> It should be understood that legal aid work is related to a lawyer professional's obligation to the individual client and the public.<sup>14</sup> Lawyers' works are related to the principle of *Officium Nobile* (the honorable profession), and they obligate to give *pro bono* legal services to honor the public good. It is the provision of services that are free to safeguard the public interest. In terms of operational, there is no single definition of *pro bono*, but there is a similar conception in some country that it is focusing on the legal aid service to the poor people and marginalized group which has difficulties accessing legal Aid.<sup>15</sup>

Legal Aid is one of the critical elements of access to justice as a manifestation of the fulfillment of justice in a judicial process. Legal Aid is a free service offered to individuals who cannot afford legal representation in the criminal justice system. This legal Aid includes those detained, arrested, or imprisoned and those suspected, accused, or charged with a criminal offense. Additionally, legal Aid can also be provided to victims and witnesses.<sup>16</sup> The United Nations General Assembly acknowledged the crucial significance of legal Aid in 2012 when it adopted the Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems. According to this guideline, all member states of the United Nations must establish accessible, sustainable, effective, and trustworthy legal aid systems which provide specialized services for vulnerable groups, particularly children and women.<sup>17</sup> In this sense, every state should ensure access to justice for all citizens without barriers.<sup>18</sup> Legal Aid is essential since it is considered a means for people who need legal consultation and representation to resolve their injustice experiences. Indonesian Government, in this sense, has considered legal Aid as one of the essential aspects of the implementation of the access to justice agenda in Indonesia. According to the Indonesian Access to Justice Index 2019, legal Aid is one of the main aspects of the assessment in fulfilling access to justice for the community.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bradway, 555.

<sup>14</sup> Bradway, 556.

<sup>15</sup> Aradila Caesar Ifmaini Idris et al., *Pro Bono Prinsip Dan Praktik Di Indonesia (Principle of Pro Bono and Practice in Indonesia)* (Depok: Faculty of Law University of Indonesia, 2019), 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> Idris et al., 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Idris et al., 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Ernest Ojukwu, *Access to Justice, Chapter 5, Handbook on Prison Pre-Trial Detainees for Law Clinics* (Nigeria: Network of University Legal Aid Institutions, 2012), 121-52.

<sup>19</sup> American Bar Association, *Penilaian Akses Terhadap Keadilan Untuk Indonesia Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan (Evaluation on Access to Justice for South Sulawesi Province in Indonesia)* (Washington DC: the American Bar Association, 2012), 29.

### III. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL AID IN INDONESIA

In Indonesia, the Indonesian Government guarantees that all persons shall be entitled to recognition, protection, fair trial, and equality before the law through the Indonesian Constitutional Law.<sup>20</sup> To implement that provision, the Indonesian Government enacted the Indonesian Law Number 16/2011 regarding Legal Aid to ensure the availability of legal Aid for all persons, particularly the poor.<sup>21</sup> The Indonesian Government is fully committed to supporting funding for the qualified legal aid organization by implementing the Legal Aid law.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, poor people and people with weak power relations still have access to legal aid services in their cases. Although the Indonesian Government is already dedicated to supporting and enhancing access to obtain legal Aid in Indonesia, implementing access to justice in legal Aid still has several problems. The Indonesian National Legal Aid Conference in 2019 stated that the implementation of legal aid policy in Indonesia is still not implemented well to ensure all access to justice. The main problems of legal aid service provision are related to both the quantity and distribution of legal aid service providers in Indonesia, which are highly correlated with the budget and the number of clients.<sup>23</sup>

The first problem of implementing legal Aid in Indonesia is correlated with the number of Legal Aid Organizations (LAO) and the number of poor people in Indonesia. As we mentioned before, the primary focus of Indonesia Law Number 16/2011 is supporting access to legal Aid for poor people. However, the number of qualified LAO in Indonesia only reached 524 in 2021.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, many poor people need legal assistance – this paper will take an example from two provinces of Indonesia. According to the Indonesian Judicial Research Society (IJRS), 44.5% of respondents in Lampung provinces had experienced legal problems during 2017-2018, and 74.5% of them earned less than the Provincial Minimum Wage.<sup>25</sup> Another example South Sulawesi Provinces highlighted that 77.2% of the respondents had experienced disputes for the last two years.

According to those data, the majority of people who experience legal problems had a background as poor people. Meanwhile, 51.9% of them earned less than the Provincial Minimum Wage. Furthermore, IJRS also projected the number of accredited LAO and the

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<sup>20</sup> Indonesia, 'Constitutional Law 1945' (1945), Article 27(1).

<sup>21</sup> Indonesia, 'Act Number 16/2011 Regarding Legal Aid' (2011), Article 19(1).

<sup>22</sup> Indonesia, Article 6(3) and 9.

<sup>23</sup> Asfinawati et al., *Rekomendasi Konfrensi Nasional Bantuan Hukum: Perluasan Akses Keadilan Melalui Optimalisasi Layanan Bantuan Hukum Yang Berkualitas (Recommendation of National Legal Aid Conference: Expanding Access to Justice through Optimize the Good Quality of Legal Aid Service)* (Jakarta: YLBHI, ILRC, Apik Association, LBHJ, LBHM, LBH Apik, MaPPI-FHUI and PBHI, 2019), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Based on Decree of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights Number M.HH-01.HH.07.02 Year 2018 about Legal Aid Institution/Organizations that Pass Verification and Accreditation as Legal Aid Providers for Period 2019 to 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Choky Risda Ramadhan et al., *Legal Needs Survey in Indonesia 2019 (Lampung and South Sulawesi Provinces)*. (Jakarta: Indonesia Judicial Research Society, 2020), 30–31, <http://ijrs.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Buku-Survei-Kebutuhan-Hukum-IJRS.pdf>.

number of poor people who potentially need legal assistance. The projection showed that one accredited LAO in Lampung province should possibly handle 30,371 poor people who need legal assistance within 2 (two) years.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, in the Province of South Sulawesi, one accredited LAO will possibly handle 27,465 poor people who need legal assistance within 2 (two) years.<sup>27</sup> It means that the capacity of LAO in those provinces will be overwhelmed in handling all possible legal cases.

### The Distribution of Accredited Legal Aid Organizations in Indonesia<sup>28</sup>



The implementation of legal Aid involves more than just the quantity of legal aid organizations; distribution is also a concern. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights shows that most accredited legal aid organizations are concentrated in Java Island, specifically in Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, and East Java. Unfortunately, the number of accredited LAO is still exceedingly small for other regions.

The second problem of implementing legal Aid in Indonesia is related to culture and knowledge in society about legal Aid. According to the Indonesian Access to Justice Index 2019, 53% of Indonesian people do not know about the existence of free legal Aid.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, 64% of Indonesian people did not seek formal legal assistance when facing

<sup>26</sup> Indonesia Judicial Research Society, 'The Condition, and Need Projection of Legal Aid Organization in Lampung', *IJRS* (blog), 22 December 2020, <https://ijrs.or.id/kondisi-dan-proyeksi-kebutuhan-obh-di-provinsi-sulawesi-selatan/>.

<sup>27</sup> Indonesia Judicial Research Society.

<sup>28</sup> Formulated by authors based on Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights, 'Ministerial Decree Number M. HH-01.HH.07.02-Year 2018 Regarding Verified and Qualified Legal Aid Organization in 2019-2021' (n.d.).

<sup>29</sup> Dio Ashar Wicaksana et al., *Indonesian Access to Justice Index in 2019* (Jakarta: Indonesian Civil Society Consortium for Access to Justice, 2020), 104.

legal problems.<sup>30</sup> The index also found that most people think the process will be more complicated if they are assisted by formal legal Aid.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, most people felt more comfortable seeing informal legal assistance—such as family members, friends, local figures, or prominent people of their communities—rather than using formal legal assistance like an advocate or LAO.<sup>32</sup>

COVID-19 has unprecedentedly impacted every aspect of life, including legal aid practice. The main concern of these findings is that if the justice seekers only rely on informal assistance who has no basic information or legal knowledge, they will face difficulties in handling the situation (based on the procedure) in the justice process and possibly gain more injustice or unsolved problems at the end of the legal process. In correlating toward each other, we can see that because of the lack of number and distribution of LAO, the affordability of legal Aid is getting narrower, which can cause a lack of knowledge regarding free legal Aid—which is further compounded by the difficulty to obtain information to comprehensively explained free Legal Aid. As a result of this condition, many people tend to be unable to fulfill their right to get free legal Aid. However, this problem is probably getting worse because of this pandemic. To see the problem of legal Aid during the pandemic will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### IV. OBSTACLES IN LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROVISION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In March 2020, COVID-19 struck many countries, including Indonesia. Responding to this pandemic, the Government of Indonesia implemented physical distancing and work-from-home policies, which required people to stay at home and reduce activities that caused crowds to prevent COVID-19 spread.<sup>33</sup> The existence of a pandemic condition and these restrictions have caused various impacts in various sectors, which are related to health, the economy, and even legal impacts. For instance, the crime rate shows an increase during this pandemic—during February 2020, there were 17,411 cases, while it significantly increased on March 2020, reaching 20,845 cases.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, vulnerable groups such as women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and children appear to be affected and increasingly vulnerable by this pandemic. It was stated that of the 24.5 million elderly, more than 80

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<sup>30</sup> Wicaksana et al., 92.

<sup>31</sup> Wicaksana et al., 91.

<sup>32</sup> Wicaksana et al., 92.

<sup>33</sup> Gemma Holliani Cahya, 'Stay Home, President Says', The Jakarta Post, 16 March 2020, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/03/16/stay-home-president-says.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Ahsan Ridhoi, 'Kriminalitas Meningkat Selama Pandemi Corona, Sebanyak Apa? (Crime Increases During Corona Pandemic, By How Much?)', Katadata.co.id, 22 April 2020, <https://katadata.co.id/muhammadrighoi/berita/5e9ffbc527b98/kriminalitas-meningkat-selama-pandemi-corona-sebanyak-apa>.

percent of them still do not have access to minimum income/pension assistance, so they have the potential to become more vulnerable because of economic deterioration from COVID-19.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the disability group in Indonesia mentioned having a higher poverty rate than households without disabilities.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, with this pandemic, access to job opportunities, life protection, health care, and education is becoming increasingly limited for this group of people with disabilities.

In addition, informal sector workers are also the most affected in this pandemic due to massive layoffs in various sectors because of economic changes in society. According to the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak/Kemen PPPA), on April 2020, there were around 2,385 workers who were laid off due to the pandemic—of which around 762 people or 31% were female workers.<sup>37</sup> Also, 4,144 Indonesian Migrant Workers (Pekerja Migran Indonesia/PMI) had been repatriated from countries affected by COVID-19—among these, 83% were women.<sup>38</sup> This situation has a significant impact on the growing number of individuals in poverty who require government assistance. If left unaddressed, poverty can become a root cause of conflicts and civil unrest.

Along with the increasing poverty and crime rates that also do not show a decline, access to justice for marginalized communities is much more needed than before the pandemic.<sup>39</sup> In other words, legal assistance could be needed in this situation. However, this pandemic condition has hampered the implementation of legal assistance services. One of the interviews with the public lawyers in the Legal Aid Organization of the Community (LBH Masyarakat) stated that this pandemic had limited the mobility for legal assistance.<sup>40</sup> The Government's policy regarding the restrictions on people's movement and the total shutdown of various non-essential sectors, including legal aid services<sup>41</sup>, cause the provision

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<sup>35</sup> The National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (TNP2K), 'Vulnerable Groups in the Covid-19 Outbreak', 4 September 2020, <http://tnp2k.go.id/articles/vulnerable-groups-in-the-covid-19-outbreak>.

<sup>36</sup> The National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (TNP2K).

<sup>37</sup> Indonesia Ministry of Woman Empowerment and Protection of Child (Kemen PPPA), 'Pentingnya Peran Perempuan Sebagai Kekuatan Bangsa Perangi Covid-19 (The Importance of Women's Roles as National Strength in Fighting Covid-19)', 24 April 2020, <https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/index.php/page/read/29/2646/pentingnya-peran-perempuan-sebagai-kekuatan-bangsa-perangi-covid-19>.

<sup>38</sup> Indonesia Ministry of Woman Empowerment and Protection of Child (Kemen PPPA).

<sup>39</sup> Hukum Online, 'Wabah Covid-19 Mencekik Masyarakat, Apa Kabar Pro Bono Advokat? (The Covid-19 Outbreak Strangles the Community, How Is the Existence of Pro Bono Advocates?)', 20 July 2020, <https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/a/wabah-covid-19-mencekik-masyarakat--apa-kabar-pro-bono-advokat-lt5f150a50e8615>.

<sup>40</sup> Komnas Perempuan, IJRS, and MaPPI FHUI, 'Laporan Penelitian Kualitatif: Tinjauan Penerapan Peraturan Mahkamah Agung Ri Nomor 3 Tahun 2017 Tentang Pedoman Mengadili Perkara Perempuan Berhadapan Dengan Hukum Di 5 Mitra Wilayah Sistem Peradilan Pidana Terpadu Penanganan Kasus Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan (SPPT-PKKTP)' (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2022), 42.

<sup>41</sup> Putri Safira Pitaloka, 'Ini Cakupan Sektor Kritis, Esensial, Dan Non-Esensial Selama PPKM Darurat (This Is the Coverage of Critical, Essential, and Non-Essential Sectors during Emergency Policy for Restricting



of legal Aid directly or through face-to-face meetings to be impossible or not effectively conducted. In practice, some legal aid providers are still obliged to give legal aid services outside their homes, making them experience vulnerability, as in the potential for contracting COVID-19. Meanwhile, there are no health guarantees for legal aid providers, such as mass COVID-19 swab tests or reimbursement of rapid/antigen test costs due to the lack of budget within the legal aid institution.<sup>42</sup>

Difficulties are experienced not only by legal aid providers but also by justice seekers in accessing legal aid services during a COVID-19 pandemic. According to the public lawyers in the Legal Aid Organization of the Community (LBH Masyarakat)<sup>43</sup>, clients come to the office or meet with legal aid service providers from outside the region or even outside Java Island. This situation is partly due to the region's limited access to legal Aid; as previously mentioned, the availability of legal aid services is not evenly distributed throughout the country. In addition, they often have to come more than once to take care of their legal process. Moreover, clients often come with their families or relatives in groups because, for example, the cases they experience are collective problems. This arrangement, of course, becomes difficult and even impossible to do when the COVID-19 pandemic hits all regions in Indonesia.

These difficulties are compounded by the fact that, as previously mentioned, many individuals tend to avoid seeking help when facing legal issues, making it harder to provide legal aid services in such conditions.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has also led to an increase in cases of domestic violence. The increasing number of domestic violence is caused by a condition where most of the time, people are spending their time at home, which results in increasing tension, conflict, and frustration, which in the past could be overcome by leaving the house currently challenging to do.<sup>45</sup> It was also shown that during the COVID-19 pandemic, women in Indonesia spend more than three hours a day on household chores, which is four times longer than men spend on similar tasks.<sup>46</sup> The existence of a

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People's Activity)', Tempo, accessed 23 July 2021, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1481559/ini-cakupan-sektor-kritikal-esensial-dan-non-esensial-selama-ppkm-darurat>.

<sup>42</sup> Wide Afriandy et al., *Panduan Bantuan Hukum Selama Pandemi Covid-19 (Legal Aid Guideline During the Covid-19 Pandemic)* (Jakarta: LBHM, 2020), 33, [https://lbhmasyarakat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Layout-Panduan-Bantuan-Hukum\\_LBHM.pdf](https://lbhmasyarakat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Layout-Panduan-Bantuan-Hukum_LBHM.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Public Lawyers of LBH Masyarakat on July 2020

<sup>44</sup> Wicaksana et al., *Indonesian Access to Justice Index in 2019*, 91.

<sup>45</sup> National Commission on Violence Against Woman, *Melayani Dengan Berani: Gerak Juang Pengada Layanan Dan Perempuan Pembela HAM (PPHAM) Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 (Serving Courageously: The Fighting Movement for Service Providers and Women Human Rights Defenders during the Covid-19 Pandemic)* (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2020), 12.

<sup>46</sup> Komnas Perempuan, *Kajian Dinamika Perubahan Di Dalam Rumah Tangga Selama Covid 19 Di 34 Provinsi Di Indonesia (Study of the Dynamics of Change in the Household During Covid 19 in 34 Provinces in Indonesia)* (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2020), 3.

quarantine period at home causes the loss of barriers to domestic work and public work.<sup>47</sup> If a change does not follow in gender roles between men and women in the family, it will double the burden on women. This change can cause a crisis in a family, which will make a family firm, but it can also make the family weak and conflicted.

Nevertheless, the increase in domestic violence is worsened by the reluctance of women to report their cases.<sup>48</sup> It was explained that it is difficult for them to report their cases because they must be at home with the perpetrator, so they cannot report and will constantly be monitored by the perpetrator.<sup>49</sup> Komnas Perempuan's study showed that of all victims who experienced violence during COVID-19—of which 88% were women—80.3% did not report to the service institutions.<sup>50</sup> In its conclusion, it was mentioned that the efforts to report violence to service institutions decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic due to silence or the decision to tell relatives, friends, and neighbors about women's choices.<sup>51</sup> This condition could hinder the efforts and access to provide legal protection and assistance to vulnerable groups in need.

## V. ADAPTATION IN LEGAL AID SERVICES COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The current pandemic has proven to be a challenge for the public to access legal Aid and for legal aid providers to deliver their services due to the difficulties caused by the pandemic. Legal aid providers are trying to solve this problem by adapting and optimizing online consulting and assistance services<sup>52</sup> by minimizing activities outside the home and taking advantage of technological and internet developments, which are at 93% for coverage throughout Indonesia.<sup>53</sup> For example, LBH Jakarta offers consultation or complaint reports via WhatsApp number and also email address. Online service allows people who need legal assistance or report a complaint not only through the phone number or hotline but also through WhatsApp chat and forms in the website institutions.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, LBH APIK

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<sup>47</sup> Rifka Annisa, 'Akses Keadilan Perempuan Korban Di Tengah Pandemi Pandemi (Access to Justice for Women Victims in the Midst of a Pandemic)', 30 June 2020, <https://www.rifka-annisa.org/id/berita/blog/item/718-akses-keadilan-perempuan-korban-di-tengah-pandemi>.

<sup>48</sup> Komnas Perempuan, *Kajian Dinamika Perubahan Di Dalam Rumah Tangga Selama Covid 19 Di 34 Provinsi Di Indonesia (Study of the Dynamics of Change in the Household During Covid 19 in 34 Provinces in Indonesia)*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Komnas Perempuan, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Komnas Perempuan, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Komnas Perempuan, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Rifka Annisa, 'Dinamika Layanan Konseling Online Di Masa Pandemi (Dynamics of Online Counseling Services in a Pandemic Period)', 30 June 2020, <https://rifka-annisa.org/id/berita/berita-umum/item/715-layanan-konseling-online-di-masa-pandemi>.

<sup>53</sup> Ayu Andini, 'Kesenjangan Sinyal Dari Indonesia Timur (Signal Gap in Eastern Indonesia)', Kanal Desa, 29 September 2021, <https://kanaldesa.com/artikel/kesenjangan-sinyal-dari-indonesia-timur>.

<sup>54</sup> LBH Jakarta, 'LBH APIK Jakarta's Public Announcement: Cara Mendapatkan Bantuan Hukum Gratis', *LBH Jakarta (blog)*, accessed 7 July 2021, <https://bantuanhukum.or.id/persyaratan-untuk-mendapatkan-bantuan-hukum-lbh-jakarta/>.

Jakarta, which focuses on assisting women, provides email addresses, WhatsApp numbers, and telephone numbers for women with legal problems.<sup>55</sup> LBH APIK even opens longer service hours than before the pandemic, usually limited to office working hours between 09.00 am to 05.00 pm, and during the pandemic, extended until 09.00 pm to maximize consultation and give the victim the right time to report or consult when the victim is not with the perpetrator or the perpetrator is not at home.<sup>56</sup> In an interview with a legal counselor from Rifka Annisa, it was also stated that providing essential legal assistance services such as reporting, legal consultation, and even simple psychological recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic can now be done online, such as consultation via WhatsApp or chat to clients when the client has the right time for consultation.<sup>57</sup>

LBH Masyarakat and LBH Jakarta also carried out the form of adaptation regarding the provision of legal aid services. They made several documents regarding their institutions' case assistance protocols during the Pandemic and COVID-19 prevention protocols. This protocol contains various guidelines for legal aid providers to provide maximum and safe services for legal aid providers and clients. Not only that, legal aid providers in Indonesia, consisting of LBH Masyarakat, LBH APIK Jakarta, LBH Pers, LBH Jakarta, and the Forum for Providing Legal Aid for Equality (Forum Pemberi Bantuan Hukum untuk Kesetaraan/FBHUK)—which are spread throughout Indonesia, issued a guide book providing legal assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>58</sup> This book describes the good practices, challenges, and strategies used by legal aid providers in handling cases during this pandemic regarding sexual minorities, gender, violence against women, the press, narcotics, to human rights issues.<sup>59</sup> Thus, other legal aid providers can adapt and understand lessons learned from providing legal Aid online.

This adaptation certainly positively impacts providing legal assistance to vulnerable groups in Indonesia. One of the women's assistance institutions, Rifka Annisa, said that in April—the first-month Rifka Annisa's online service was opened, there was an increase in the number of daily complaints which usually ranged from 40 complaints, now it reached up to 53 complaints per day.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the Jakarta office of LBH APIK (Legal Aid Institute for the Press and Women) also saw a significant rise in reported violence against women during the first five months of 2020, with 464 cases reported, representing a significant

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<sup>55</sup> As cited in LBH APIK Jakarta's public announcement, accessed in <https://twitter.com/lbhapik?lang=en> on 7 July 2021

<sup>56</sup> Afriandy et al., *Panduan Bantuan Hukum Selama Pandemi Covid-19 (Legal Aid Guideline During the Covid-19 Pandemic)*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Legal Counsellor of Rifka Annisa on July 2021

<sup>58</sup> Afriandy et al., *Panduan Bantuan Hukum Selama Pandemi Covid-19 (Legal Aid Guideline During the Covid-19 Pandemic)*, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Afriandy et al., 1.

<sup>60</sup> Annisa, 'Dinamika Layanan Konseling Online Di Masa Pandemi (Dynamics of Online Counseling Services in a Pandemic Period)'.

increase compared to the same period in 2019.<sup>61</sup> The double burden women can cause the increase in women's violence cases reported to have when they have to be at home for a long time, which triggers violence and the availability of reporting mechanisms that are more accessible to the public. Although the method changed to decrease the complaints in the early weeks, since the introduction of the online counseling service, many people who use the central hotline are from outside the region.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the utilization of technology in providing legal aid services is also shown through free online legal consultation services owned by the Government, namely the National Law Development Agency (Badan Pembinaan Hukum Nasional/BPHN), which shows an increase of almost ten times compared to before the pandemic.<sup>63</sup>

One of the good practices in adapting technology is carried out by Rifka Annisa. It can be said to be one of the best technological adaptations during the pandemic. From the interview results, it was mentioned that Rifka Annisa opened a hotline via WhatsApp to facilitate reporting of clients in need. In practice, many clients come from various regions, so Rifka Annisa makes referral systems or recommendations for other legal aid services that are appropriate, available, and close to the client's location. Although Rifka Annisa also handles and receives consultations from outside her area, it was stated that the existence of a referral system according to the client's location can also provide information and raise awareness to the public that there are legal aid services or assistance around the community in those areas that can also help. Because it not only makes it easier for clients to report their cases but also disseminates information regarding the existence of other legal aids. So that public access and awareness of legal Aid will increase.

Another adaptation to deal with the increased complaints or reports to legal aid providers is to provide legal assistance through the ghost lawyer system.<sup>64</sup> LBH Pers, the institution that implements this system, stated that the number of complaints would not be maximized if all of them were accompanied by legal aid providers. Therefore, the ghost lawyer system is a defense effort, as well as community empowerment with legal problems, where the community is the one who becomes a lawyer for themselves. This method is done by providing guidance and direction to clients remotely (via telephone or Whatsapp chat) to handle their cases and the client being at the forefront of the legal process, such as by providing draft legal documents, advising on steps that need to be taken and also giving encouragement in the process. Further, implementing this ghost lawyer requires a

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<sup>61</sup> Afriandy et al., *Panduan Bantuan Hukum Selama Pandemi Covid-19 (Legal Aid Guideline During the Covid-19 Pandemic)*, 13.

<sup>62</sup> Annisa, 'Dinamika Layanan Konseling Online Di Masa Pandemi (Dynamics of Online Counseling Services in a Pandemic Period)'.

<sup>63</sup> Lisa Noviana, 'Konsultasi Hukum Gratis Bagi Masyarakat Indonesia', kumparan, 20 January 2021, <https://kumparan.com/lisanov19/konsultasi-hukum-gratis-bagi-masyarakat-indonesia-1v0xDDPP5cN>.

<sup>64</sup> Afriandy et al., *Panduan Bantuan Hukum Selama Pandemi Covid-19 (Legal Aid Guideline During the Covid-19 Pandemic)*, 41.

commitment from the victim to advocate for themselves. In addition, the victim's basic skills in the legal process are also needed, as well as the availability of monitoring and evaluation by the legal aid providers.

Moreover, during this pandemic, legal aid providers routinely and massively carry out online campaigns to empower the community and socialize access to complaints and legal problem report services. These online campaigns can disseminate information on social media, provide online discussions and seminars, and recruit prospective volunteers or paralegals for the community. Even though there are still victims' needs that cannot be fully met with online methods, such as recovery need<sup>65</sup>, the adaptation, and use of this technology has been proven to expand the access of the people, especially vulnerable groups, to report, complain and even consult with legal aid providers.

## VI. THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LEGAL AID PROVISION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This pandemic shows the increasing use and innovation of technology in the form of social media platforms and internet sites where everyone can access legal services and information needed for legal Aid more easily. This technology development is allocating space for the public to gather online legal information, and consulting services are also more accessible. Therefore, it is necessary to have an initiative from the Government to ensure access to legal aid services and information that all levels of society can reach. This initiative is important with the Government's commitment to the Indonesian Open Government Action Plan (OGI) 2020-2022, where one of the commitments upheld is the "Strengthening of Legal Aid through Information Portals."<sup>66</sup> This commitment is encouraged because, during the COVID-19 and post-pandemic, the need for online legal aid services is higher because face-to-face services are increasingly limited, while legal assistance is always there.<sup>67</sup> So according to the national plan, the role of technology becomes relevant in this era to providing legal aid services and information to the community, especially vulnerable groups.

Information and legal aid services are currently available on various platforms such as Legal Smart Channel<sup>68</sup>, HukumOnline<sup>69</sup>, Justika<sup>70</sup>, e-Probono<sup>71</sup>, DokumenHukum.id<sup>72</sup>, and

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<sup>65</sup> The recovery process for clients requires intensive consultation sessions with various methods, and takes a long time, so this is very limited if chose to be done online. As cited in Annisa, 'Dinamika Layanan Konseling Online Di Masa Pandemi (Dynamics of Online Counseling Services in a Pandemic Period)'.

<sup>66</sup> Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (RPJMN) 2020-2024*. (Jakarta: Bappenas, 2018), 28.

<sup>67</sup> Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 28.

<sup>68</sup> Legal Smart Channel can be accessed in <http://lsc.bphn.go.id>

<sup>69</sup> HukumOnline can be accessed in <http://hukumonline.com>

<sup>70</sup> Justika can be accessed in <http://justika.com>

<sup>71</sup> eProbono can be accessed in <https://eprobono.org>

<sup>72</sup> DokumenHukum.id can be accessed in <https://dokumenhukum.id>

many more. The services provided also vary, starting from online consultations with chat features, telephone consultations, legal assistance with video calls, and the arrangement of legal documents. In addition to the legal services, various legal information is also provided, such as explanations of regulations related to legal Aid, types of legal aid services, and other information regarding legal Aid. However, the existing platforms are still scattered and are only based on the initiative of several service institutions. The information provided is sometimes not accompanied by basic information such as the right to legal Aid, the cost of legal Aid, the benefits of legal aid, and other information that can encourage public access to legal Aid. In fact, the results of the 2019 Indonesian Access to Justice Index highlighted that people are reluctant to use assistance when experiencing problems because they are worried that the process will be complicated.<sup>73</sup>

This case shows that the public's view of legal Aid is still negative, and information regarding the flow or steps that are simple and easy to understand related to the provision of legal Aid from the start until finish, even including the potential expenditure of costs during the process of providing legal Aid is very much needed. It is also necessary to have information about the benefits or importance of legal Aid in accessing justice and the possible results of the legal issues assisted by Legal Aid.

Based on interviews with public lawyers in the Legal Aid Organization of the Community (LBH Masyarakat)<sup>74</sup>, with the use of technology, the provision of legal Aid becomes more effective and easier for both justice seekers and legal aid service providers. With the current website-based reporting system, the public can be more open and feel safe to report their current problems. In addition, the information in the reporting mechanism can also follow the needs of legal aid service providers because a format has been provided for filling out the report form on the website. The existence of this technology is also stated to be cheaper and make it easier for clients from various regions to report their cases. Moreover, providing legal aid services through this technology can ensure that all information provided can be neatly recapitulated. Then, it was further stated that technology providing legal aid services could be a sustainable medium in providing legal aid services in the future because, in general, there are many benefits to legal aid services. Moreover, it was also stated by the legal counselor of Rifka Annisa<sup>75</sup> that it would be better if other institutions, especially law enforcement offices, could develop existing services that can be accessed by the public comprehensively through the online mechanism.

The role of technology for justice seekers is considerably more prominent during this pandemic, which is proven by the increase in case reports that goes to legal Aid or assistance. Internet access and the development of increasingly widespread communication media have made it easier for legal aid providers and for people with legal problems to report and find

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<sup>73</sup> Wicaksana et al., *Indonesian Access to Justice Index in 2019*, 66.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Public Lawyers of LBH Masyarakat on July 2020

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Legal Counsellor of Rifka Annisa on July 2021

the information they need regarding the problems they are experiencing. In addition, it mentioned that in 2020, people in Indonesia tended to look for information on social media rather than from television or printed media.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, some people also look for legal information by asking directly to people and searching through a particular website or search engine. Therefore, using technology to provide information and legal aid services is important and relevant during this pandemic. Hopefully, the community, especially the vulnerable groups, who previously did not know about legal Aid and were reluctant to report or seek assistance for their problems, could be more informed about the rights and importance of legal Aid. It will also impact the creation of legal Aid's access to more open and accessible. In addition, the increased legal capability of people to access information will be easier than before through the availability of online legal services and information platforms.

## VII. UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE ACCESS TO LEGAL AID DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The optimizing role of technology for increasing legal aid services in this pandemic or post-pandemic period will be important to many people. The Indonesian Government, however, could be assessing more regarding the benefit of using the technology platform for increasing access to justice for all since the Indonesian Government has a mandate for supporting the quality of legal aid service based on Law Number 16/2011 regarding legal Aid. In addition, the Indonesian Government is dedicated to increasing access to justice in alignment with its commitments outlined in the Indonesian National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) for 2020-2024. This commitment is explicitly expressed as the need for the Government to enhance access to justice for all citizens by improving the quality of legal aid services, enhancing both formal and informal mechanisms, and expanding access to justice services.<sup>77</sup>

It means that developing an online platform for legal aid services and information could be one alternative method for the Indonesian Government in the future. The Government, through BPHN, has a portal called the Legal Aid Database System (Sistem Database Bantuan Hukum/Sidbankum)<sup>78</sup> and Legal Smart Channel<sup>79</sup>, a form of technology

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<sup>76</sup> Yosepha Pusparisa, 'Masyarakat Paling Banyak Mengakses Informasi Dari Media Sosial (Most People Access Information from Social Media)', Katadata.co.id, 23 November 2020, <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2020/11/23/masyarakat-paling-banyak-mengakses-informasi-dari-media-sosial>.

<sup>77</sup> Indonesia Ministry of National Planning (Bappenas), 'Indonesia National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024', 2020, [https://www.bappenas.go.id/files/rpjmnnarasi%20RPJMN%20IV%202020-2024\\_Revisi%2028%20Juni%202019.pdf](https://www.bappenas.go.id/files/rpjmnnarasi%20RPJMN%20IV%202020-2024_Revisi%2028%20Juni%202019.pdf).

<sup>78</sup> Sidbankum can be accessed in <https://sidbankum.bphn.go.id>

<sup>79</sup> LSC can be accessed in <https://lsc.bphn.go.id>

utilization that can support public access to obtain relevant information and legal aid referrals. These two platforms have existed since before the COVID-19 pandemic but can further encourage public access to legal aid data, information on legal aid locations, and legal consultation services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though there is an online platform to make more accessible information to the public, the public's understanding of the importance of legal Aid (whether free legal Aid or other legal Aid) still to be low and needs to adjust with the other needs of the public based on their vulnerability and their problems.<sup>80</sup>

Based on the data mentioned above, it can be shown that in encouraging the use of a broader and more accessible information portal, it is necessary to have an information portal that suits the public needs. To address the public's legal needs, it is important to regularly evaluate or survey the population's legal needs, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought about changes in both the availability and demand for legal Aid in Indonesia. Mapping legal needs can help determine what features on the platform are appropriate for disseminating legal aid information and provide input on what legal Aid is appropriate for the community. For example, the data mentioned above indicates that most justice seekers still do not know about free legal Aid. It means that justice seekers need the information for accessing free legal assistance, and the steps to be taken, including the administrative requirements.

The data also showed that 84.1% of people prefer not to use legal Aid when resolving their legal problems<sup>81</sup> since they worry that the process will be more difficult/complicated and are not sure that satisfactory results will be obtained.<sup>82</sup> The role of legal Aid is not only assisting clients to take a litigation process, but the public also requires non-litigation services, such as legal counseling, drafting of legal documents, case investigations, mediation, and assistance outside of court proceedings. Moreover, this online platform by the Indonesian Government has not yet accommodated a specific target for vulnerable groups. Since the Indonesian Legal Aid Law only recognizes vulnerability based on economic status. It should be considered that there is another vulnerable group who needs access to justice, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, indigenous peoples, economic-disadvantaged groups, and victims of sexual violence —including the need for qualified skills and the sensitivity of service providers to the conditions of vulnerable groups where during the COVID-19 pandemic they tended to be even more vulnerable.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Hakki Fajriando, 'Access to Legal Aid Services and Information for Prisoners at the Enrekang State Detention Center' (Akses Layanan Dan Informasi Bantuan Hukum Bagi Narapidana Di Rumah Tahanan Negara Enrekang), *HAM Journal* 11, no. 1 (April 2020).

<sup>81</sup> Ramadhan et al., *Legal Needs Survey in Indonesia 2019 (Lampung and South Sulawesi Provinces)*, 2.

<sup>82</sup> Ramadhan et al., 2.

<sup>83</sup> Center for Population and Policy Studies Universitas Gadjah Mada, 'Vulnerable Groups and COVID-19 in Indonesia: Informal Sector, Disability, and Women - Center for Population and Policy Studies', 2020, <https://cpps.ugm.ac.id/en/vulnerable-groups-and-covid-19-in-indonesia-informal-sector-disability-and-women/>.



Apart from the content of information and legal aid services portals, optimization also needs to be ensured on the knowledge and access of the community to existing portals by using a multi-stakeholders approach. In Indonesia, the duty of ensuring legal assistance is shared among parties from the public and private sectors. These stakeholders include: (1) the National Legal Development Agency; (2) the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia; (3) the Indonesian National Police; (4) the Attorney General's Office of the Republic of Indonesia; (5) Universities and (6) Legal Aid Organization (OBH). In addition, legal aid services are provided by individuals in private practice and non-profit organizations in the private sector.

A multistakeholder approach will maximize the effort to increase access to legal Aid. In the Rwanda Republic, the national legal aid policy was shaped by significant contributions from diverse individuals and organizations, including government bodies, development partners, private entities, and civil society groups.<sup>84</sup> The Open Government Partnership (OGP) proposed suggestions for enhancing access to and the quality of legal Aid, including creating or strengthening legal authority by utilizing a multistakeholder approach that incorporates legal professionals, civil society organizations, and representatives from underrepresented communities.<sup>85</sup>

Based on the mentioned data, it is also indicated that the role of the community, such as family, relatives, and local leaders, is essential for providing legal Aid. Enhancing the community's participation is closely tied to the concept of legal empowerment, which focuses on building the ability of people, both as individuals and community members, to assert their rights and making sure that laws are not just limited to being written in books or enforced in courtrooms, but rather are easily understandable and accessible to everyone. Thus, the role of the community, especially local leaders, as agents to disseminate information and optimize existing platforms can be optimized.<sup>86</sup>

The multistakeholder approach should also support the solution to encourage people to access legal aid services during the COVID-19 pandemic using the internet and technology. Each stakeholder must have a role in utilizing the legal aid information platform and online legal aid services. Each role must support one other, and there should be no overlapping or ego on one party. The collaboration is important because several parties already have their legal aid platforms. Therefore, this collaboration can be carried out to create a more integrated system or interconnected platform.

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<sup>84</sup> Republic of Rwanda, 'National Legal Aid Policy', UN Treaty Body Database, October 2014, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/RWA/INT\\_CAT\\_AIS\\_RWA\\_29583\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/RWA/INT_CAT_AIS_RWA_29583_E.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> Open Government Partnership, 'Legal Aid', 2020, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Open-Justice\\_Justice-II\\_Legal-Aid\\_Dec2020.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Open-Justice_Justice-II_Legal-Aid_Dec2020.pdf).

<sup>86</sup> Open Society Justice Initiatives, 'Legal Empowerment – an Integrated Approach to Justice and Development', Draft Working Paper, 2012, <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/uploads/149596ab-d845-4882-935d-04e99021642c/lep-working-paper-20120701.pdf>.

For example, New South Wales, Australia, has a website called [legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://legalaid.nsw.gov.au). This website integrates stakeholders such as private lawyers, aboriginal legal services, community legal centers, women's domestic violence court advocacy services, a cooperative legal services delivery program, a new legal assistance forum, and NSW's law and justice foundation. In the case of Indonesia, the Government, through BPHN, should be the leading actor in managing the central platform. This platform must contain legal aid information from various parties with authority to provide legal assistance. This model does not imply that the existing platforms have to be non-functional, but each platform can still carry out the distinctive functions based on the access to justice goals. Besides that, with the collaboration between these parties, the information obtained by the community becomes complete.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Legal Aid is one of the variables to ensure the implementation of access to justice in Indonesia. However, the COVID-19 pandemic constraints justice seekers since they have difficulties accessing legal aid services due to the Indonesian Government's physical distancing and "stay at home" policies. This problem is getting worse since the accessibility for access legal services has not been distributed well in the territory of Indonesia.

This article, therefore, has tried to explore the role of technology could be helpful as an alternative mechanism for getting access to justice. Some legal aid organizations and CSOs have initiated to provide online services to their clients. This adaptation certainly positively impacts providing legal assistance to vulnerable groups in Indonesia. Rifka Annisa and LBH APIK - the Indonesian CSOs who focus on handling women in dealing with the law - said that the availability of reporting mechanisms is more accessible to the public.

The existence of this pandemic shows the increasing use and innovation of technology through the massive use of social media platforms and internet sites. Some people can access legal aid services through online platforms more easily than before. The role of the Indonesian Government will be significant since it has a modality and resources to connect any platform and make it easier to inform and socialize with the public. The BPHN utilizes to provide legal aid services through free online legal consultation services, namely Legal Smart Channel. Additionally, the Indonesian Government has demonstrated a firm resolve to improve access to justice in its Indonesian National Mid-Term Plan (RPJMN) and its Open Government Action Plan.

The Indonesian Government, through BPHN, should be the leading actor in managing the central platform. Any community, CSOs, and private sector initiatives should be connected by the referral mechanism within the Indonesian Government's platform. This platform must contain legal aid information from various parties with authority to provide legal assistance. Besides that, with the collaboration between these parties, the information

obtained by the community becomes complete. This does not imply that the existing platforms have to be non-functional, but each platform can still carry out the distinctive functions based on the access to justice goals.

Most importantly, people do not become confused about accessing the information they need. This multistakeholder approach will also facilitate in delivering the information of Legal Aid. It also impacts increasing the Indonesian Access to Justice Index score—as mentioned in the national development target. In the end, the active role of all stakeholders will be able to succeed in increasing legal Aid.

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