



Indonesia in the Expanded BRICS Formation: Significance from Perspective of Comparative and International Education

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 13 March 2025 Revised: 12 June 2025 Accepted: 26 July 2025 Online: 21 September 2025	The aim of this research is to investigate the significance or the added value, that Indonesia brings to the BRICS grouping, from the perspective of Comparative and International Education? The article commences with clarifying the concept Comparative and International Education and taking stock of the present state of the field. Northern Hegemony and the lack of attention to education in Indonesia are identified as two major challenges. The societal context and education effort of Indonesia are then surveyed and assessed. It is concluded that Indonesian education will add significant weight to the Expanded BRICS grouping as vanguard of education in the Global South and the role of the grouping in leading the affirmation of the Global South in global education. Adult literacy, language of learning and teaching, and accommodating religion in education are identified as three aspects of the case of Indonesian education especially noteworthy for the global community.
KEYWORDS BRICS Comparative & International Education Expanded BRICS Global South Indonesia	

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1. Introduction

Background of the Study

In January 2025 it was announced that Indonesia will join the expanded BRICS grouping of nations. As Indonesia aligns itself with BRICS Plus, the expanded bloc, this membership reflects a strategic push to unlock new economic opportunities, attract investment, and strengthen its global influence (Medina, 2025). BRICS is a supra-national organization that came into being in 2009, the original members being Brazil, Russia, India and China, becoming known under its acronym BRIC. In 2010 South Africa was admitted and the acronym changed to BRICS. In 2024 five new countries became part of the formation, namely Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Algeria. The formation now became known as the Expanded BRICS grouping. In January 2025 it was announced that Indonesia will become the eleventh member of the organization.

BRICS was originally formed as an alternative to the G7 countries in order to draw the attention of the global investment community to investment opportunities in the BRICS countries. The BRICS governments have an annual summit where cooperation in the areas of economy, politics, and cultural issues (including education). However, in time BRICS has evolved as a global geopolitical bloc, presenting a counter-force to Northern Hegemony, and is widely looked up to as the vanguard of the Global South countering Northern Hegemony. At the same time one of the key features in world history since the mid-twentieth century has been a forceful education expansion and reform drive worldwide, first systematically documented and analysed in two volumes of World Bank attached Comparative Education scholar Philip Coombs (1968, 1985). However, after seventy-five years of momentous expansion and reform, two critical issues besetting this global expansion and reform project are firstly that it is not meeting, and secondly that it is widely criticised as being ensnared in the grips of Northern Hegemony (see Wolhuter, 2024) . With respect to the education sector, the BRICS formation is also looked up to assume a vanguard role in education in the Global South, and in countering Northern Hegemony in education (see Brock & Alexiadou, 2013: 157 - 176; Wolhuter, 2013; Wolhuter & Chigisheva, 2020; UNESCO, 2014).

Problem of The Study

The problem that gave rise to this research is “What is the significance or the added value, that Indonesia brings to the BRICS grouping, from the perspective of Comparative and International Education?” At this point the term Comparative and International Education and its significance as a field of scholarship should be clarified.

Defining Comparative and International Education has been a quest of scholars in the field seemingly without conclusion (see Cowen, 2023). However, this author (Wolhuter, 2022) has argued that Comparative and International Education can be defined as the study of education from a three-in-one perspective:

- An education *system* perspective: Comparative and International Education in the first place means a study of education *systems*
- A contextual perspective: The scope of Comparative Education, however, goes beyond than just the education system *per se*. The education system is studied within its societal context, and is viewed as having being shaped by societal contextual forces (of a geographic, demographic, social, economic, cultural, political and religious kind). Conversely, the societal outcomes of education systems, or the effect of education systems of societal contexts are also studied by scholars of Comparative Education.
- A comparative perspective: Comparative Education does not entail the study of one education system in its societal context in isolation. Different education systems, embedded in their societal, are compared. This is the comparative perspective.

What is significant from the above exposition, is that Comparative Education has a dual character or nature: it denotes an object of study while at the same time it represents a method of studying education (see also Epstein, 2008: 373; Manzon, 2011: 158-177; Mason, 2008). The significance and purposes of Comparative and International Education are usually given by scholars in the field and by textbooks of Comparative and International Education — as the description of education system, the explanation or understanding of education systems, the improvement of education practice (both at the level of policy formulation and at the institutional and classroom levels), serving other fields of Education scholarship, and furthering the philanthropic ideal (see Wolhuter, 2025). The improvement of practice means learning from best ideas, policies and practices from foreign education systems in order to improve the domestic or own education system.

Research's State of the Art

Research on the state of the field of Comparative and International Education depicts a picture of a dynamic field, an expanding field with a thriving research community and growing

research output (for example, see De Gayardon, 2022). The field has been described as an “infinite field” (Wolhuter & Wiseman, eds, 2019).

On the other hand, the field has its share of deficiencies too (see Wolhuter & Jacobs, 2022). One glaring challenge besetting the field is that of persistent Northern Hegemony (see Wolhuter, Espinoza & McGinn, 2025). The construct “Northern Hegemony in the field of Comparative and International Education and in education praxis in the world” has been analysed and found to consist of the following strands: criticism of the imposition of one model of development; criticism of foreign aid and of international agencies; anti-globalization; criticism of neo-liberal economics and its impact on education; calls for the decolonization of education and of Comparative and International Education; criticism of racism in education and in Comparative and International Education; an appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems; and allegations that scholars of the Global South find themselves on an unequal playing field (see Wolhuter, 2024).

Against the Northern Hegemony in the education praxis in the world and in the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education stands the rise of the Global South. The Global South does not only represent a significant (largest) part of the land surface area in the world, but has come to contain the largest part of the global population. In fact, an increasing percentage of the global population resides in the Global South. Further to the geographic and demographic weight of the Global South, it is becoming a growing economic force, and in the changing world politics, it is becoming a significant factor in the global geopolitical calculus. Also in terms of socio-cultural dynamics, the pioneer role of the Global South in the world of today has been highlighted. Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) advanced the interesting argument that societally, the rest of the world, North America and Europe in particular, is now moving down a road that has been trail-blazed by Africa. Moreover, in the education sector the Global South is also assuming a growing stature. The bulk of enrolment totals at all levels of education (whether primary, secondary or higher education) are currently in the Global South and increasingly so.

Gap Study & Objective

In the global panorama of education, and in the Global South in particular, Indonesia occupies a noteworthy space. At least as measured in terms of enrolments, Indonesia, with 28.6 million, 26.9 million and 9.9 million enrolments at respectively primary education level, secondary education level and higher education levels (2023 figures) (UNESCO, 2025) Indonesia has the fourth largest education system in the world (after India, China and the United States of America). In the

affirmation of the Global South to its rightful place in education praxis and in fields of Education scholarship, Indonesia can therefore be regarded as a significant terrain. Yet in Comparative and International Education bibliography Indonesia is a blank space. Publications reporting on content analyses done of articles published in the *Comparative Education Review*, by impact factor the leading journal in the field of Comparative and International Education, reveal that neither in the first fifty years of the existence of the journal (1957-2006) (Wolhuter, 2008), nor more recently, during the decade 2010-2019 (Wolhuter, Espinoza & McGinn, 2025) did Indonesia figure as geographical terrain of study. The aim of this article is to explore the value of imbuing Comparative and International Education scholarship and bibliography with research on Indonesian education, for the affirmation of the Global South in education praxis and in the field of Comparative and International Education.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method followed was that of Comparative Education, as was explained earlier. The societal context of Indonesia was surveyed, in order to understand the education system of Indonesia. The survey of the societal context was followed by a survey of the education system of Indonesia. Salient features of the education system and education issues and achievements of Indonesia were then compared with the global education panorama, and education in the BRICS nations in particular, in order to identify the value of strengthening or enhancing Comparative Education bibliography with material on Indonesian education.

In analysing the societal context, the rubrics customarily used in Comparative Education to analyse societal contexts of education systems were used. These rubrics are geography, demography, social system and dynamics, economy, politics, and religion and life and world philosophy (see: Brown, & Schweisfurth, 2024; Epstein, 1992; Jones, 1981). In analysing an education system, the model of Steyn, Van der Walt and Wolhuter (2015) was used. According to this model any education system consists of the following four components: education policy, educational organisation and administration, structure for learning and teaching, and support services. Each of these four components, in turn, consists of a number of elements. Elements of the component education policy include the mission of the education system, the vision of the education system, and the goals and objectives of the education system. The structure for teaching and learning comprises the structural combination of all educational institutions at the different educational levels, for example the pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary and higher education levels, and also the possibilities of student movement within and between the different

educational institutions according to the differentiated needs of students. Elements of the structure of learning and teaching include educational institutions, education levels, education programmes, curricula, teachers, students, methods of teaching, methods of learning, language of learning and teaching, teacher education, assessment, and physical facilities.

3. SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Covering 1.9 million square kilometers, Indonesia is the fourteenth largest country in the world, by surface area. The population total of 284.7 million (January 2025) makes it the fourth most populous country on earth (after India, China and the United States of America) (Worldometers, 2025). The current population growth rate is 0.79 percent per year (*Ibid.*). This figure has been steadily declining in recent years and decades: in 1960 it was still 2.70 percent per year, in 1980 2.47 percent per year, in 2000 1.57 percent per year and in 2020 0.85 percent per year (*Ibid.*).

Indonesia is one of the most linguistic diverse countries. The most recent census reported 700 home languages (Pepinsky, Abtahian & Cohn, 2024). Many of these languages are, however, mutually intelligible. Indonesia's national language, Bahasa Indonesia (hereafter Indonesian), is a standardised version of a Malay lingua franca originally spoken in parts of Sumatra but which had spread throughout the Malay archipelago prior to and under Dutch, British, and Portuguese colonial rule. Bahasa Indonesian. It has developed into a general means of communication in the government and business sectors and in education institutions, and is now understood and spoken by more than ninety percent of the population. In November 2023, the Indonesian language was recognized as one of the official languages of the UNESCO General Conference.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Indonesia came to US\$1.37 trillion in 2023 (World Bank, 2025a). The GDP expanded impressively since 2000, when the GDP was still US\$95.45 billion (*Ibid.*). Its GDP makes Indonesia the sixteenth largest economy in the world. The current (2023, latest available figure at time of writing) annual per capita GDP of Indonesia is US\$15 415.6, in 2000 it was still US\$4 639 (World Bank, 2025). In terms of the World Bank classification, Indonesia is an upper middle-income country.

As far as politics are concerned, after centuries of colonial history, Indonesia proclaim independence on the 17th of August 1945. The main historical periods since independence has been that of the Old Order (till 1966), the New Order (1966-1998) and the Reform Era since 1998. In its most recent (2024) report, Freedom House opined that Indonesia has made impressive democratic gains since the democratization exercise commenced in 1998, showing significant

political and media pluralism and undergoing multiple, peaceful transfers of power (Freedom House, 2024). The governmental structure has shown an interesting oscillation between centralism and federalism. At independence it opted for a federal structure. After 1950 there was a decided movement towards a centralised unitary state. Then since 1998 a movement towards decentralization has been evident, currently there being 38 first order administrative divisions (35 provinces, two special regions, and one federal district — Jakarta).

Among the people of Indonesia are adherents of many religions, including Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The majority of the population is Muslim. According to the Pew Centre, about 87 percent of the population of Indonesia are Muslim and 11 percent Christian (Stirling, 2024). The 242 million Muslims make Indonesia the country with the largest number of Muslims in the world. A large percentage of the population of Indonesia regard Islam as being important to the Indonesian national identity (Stirling, 2024).

4. INDONESIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Historical evolution, policy and objectives

During the historical development of education in Indonesia, three salient forces has been the interests of the ruling powers, religious and traditional principles, and national sovereignty (Suratno, 2014). During the Dutch colonial era (1600s-1942) an elitist, colonial education was established, access being much determined by descent and status. A public education system was established only late in the colonial era, when a system of village schools came into being in 1906. Only very few indigenous people, from Javanese elite groups, were permitted to study in the Dutch schools up to university level. In During the Japanese occupation (1942–5), such discrimination was ended and Bahasa Indonesia commenced to be used as the language of learning and teaching. However, the goals of education were narrowly conceived as producing military men and workers for the war effort. Still, at the end of the occupation, in 1945, less than 6% of the population were literate (Brojonegoro, 2001).

On 17 August 1945 Indonesia proclaimed independence. After gaining independence in 1945, Indonesia constitutionally enshrined education as a right of all Indonesian citizens and sought to establish a more egalitarian and inclusive mass education system (Shaturaev. 2021: 19). During the first decade after independence the goals of education were informed by the building of a nation, building a culture of democracy, and social justice, and a belief in God. These found

precipitation in the concept of Adab education, which entails refined character, good morals, courtesy and politeness (see Huda, Tadjuddin, Sholihuddin & Cengiz, 2022). However, during the first two decades of independence, monetary constraints however, precluded an expansion of education commensurate with the promise of the Constitution.

After the political change in 1965, the emphasis changed to the expansion or even universalisation of education. The 1973 surge in oil prices made an impressive expansion of education possible, and six-year basic education was introduced in 1984 and nine-year basic education in 1994. Tens of thousands of schools were built in all villages. President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo (President of Indonesia, 2014-2024) committed to twelve years compulsory education (Kusuma, 2014: 188). In the 1990s, in the wake of the “education for all” movement, the drive to expand access to education was maintained, while, in the context of the global neo-liberal economic revolution, the role of education in development too became foregrounded.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology is responsible for all public and non-religious national education programmes from pre-primary to tertiary education. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for all religious education institutions from pre-primary to tertiary education levels, such as religious schools (madrasahs) and state Islamic religious colleges.

Organisation and administration

The monetary crisis at the closing years of the 1990s ignited public awareness about reforming the centralistic governance and the democratisation of the political system in 1999. In this “Reform Order”, there were two new regulations relevant to the future of the national education system (Suratno, 2014). The financial crisis and the dictates of the International Monetary Fund demanded downsizing government, especially central government, and reductions in government expenditure and decentralisation of functions such as education (see Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006). In 2001 management of education was decentralised to district level, and school autonomy promoted. There are 440 districts, representing the third layer of the five-tier government hierarchy.

Finance

Since 2002 the government has had a constitutional mandate to allocate at least 20 per cent of its budget to education, a figure it achieved in 2009 (Cerdan-Infantes, 2012). As of 2024, the government budget for education in Indonesia amounted to around 665 trillion Indonesian rupiah. This represents an increase of approximately 52.8 trillion Indonesian rupiah compared to the

previous year. However, in recent years the percentage of Gross National Product spent on education has declined, and remained well below the 4-6 percent suggested in the IINCHEON Declaration (the global community's blueprint for education in the world by the year 2030). In 2023 this figure, in the case of Indonesia, reached 1.3 percent (World Bank, 2025c). Nineteen percent of total education expenditure in Indonesia is from household expenditure is on education (the balance then from public expenditure) (Wicaksono, 2022: 11). It is at primary education level where household expenditure makes up the largest part of total education expenditure — carrying almost one quarter of all costs (Wicaksono, 2022: 7); in contrast to policy that states that primary education should be free. Indonesia has a large private education sector. Twenty-three percent, forty-two percent and forty-eight percent of all enrollments at respectively primary, secondary and tertiary education levels are in private institutions (UNESCO, 2025).

Institutional fabric

Indonesia has a 6-3-3 school ladder, that is six years of primary education, followed by 3 years junior secondary or middle school and then 3 years of senior secondary or high school. Mention has been made earlier of the substantial private school sector in education in Indonesia. There are also religious schools being administered under the central Ministry of Religious Affairs, including the *madrasah* and *pesantren*, boarding schools being run by Islamic organisations. The number elite private schools is small, but is increasing. Christian private schools exist in especially East Java, where there is a long history of Christian missionary education.

Curricula

A variety of curricula are used in schools in Indonesia, including the national curriculum, the Merdeka curriculum, and international curricula, the latter being used by private international schools. The national curriculum has undergone fourteen major changes since independence. These can be summarized into four periods: the independence period and the Old Order, the New Order, the Reform Era, and the Post-COVID-19 Era (Hikmawati & Hosnan, 2022). In 1947 the first national curriculum was developed. During the Old Order the curricula was strongly shaped by the desire to maintain independence as a nation, and the ideals of socialism and guided democracy. The New Order curriculum changes were characterized by the formation of true Pancasila people (Pancasila being the official national philosophy of Indonesia, consisting of five principles of Belief in God, respect for Human Rights, Unity, Democracy and Social Justice), and the importation of the active student learning method. Curricula during the Reform Period stood in the framework of the decentralization of education discussed earlier, granting each school latitude to be creative in

implementing curricula and granting schools latitude to develop specific subjects to meet the needs of individual students. A movement to competency-based education (in contrast to content-based education) was also evident during the Reform Period. A sign of this change is the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework in 2012. The challenges of globalisation were one of the motivations for the 2013 curricula overhaul. Then the COVID-19 Pandemic induced a next set of changes. This included granting schools even more independence with regard to the development of curricula.

Language of learning and teaching

The official language, Indonesian, is the medium of instruction at all levels of education. Indonesian replaced Dutch as language of learning and teaching in institutions of education after independence (Fitria, 2023: 137). The Constitution and Education Act support the employment of students' mother tongues as mediums of instruction in the early grades.

Assessment of Indonesia's education effort

The assessment of any education project should comprise three dimensions, namely the quantitative, the qualitative and the equality dimensions (see Wolhuter, 2014).

To commence with the quantitative dimension, Indonesia has made impressive gains since independence with regard to expanding access to and participation in education, and in eradicating adult illiteracy. As was earlier mentioned, at independence the adult literacy rate stood at less than 6 percent. Currently, this figure stands at 96 percent (2020 figure) (World Population Review, 2025). Mention has been made earlier of the oil price hike in the 1970s making possible an impressive expansion of education. Indonesia is generally taken to have reached the point of universal primary education in 1983 (Surdayarma & Jones, 2013: 2). Tertiary education has been growing rapidly in Indonesia. Starting at virtually point zero at independence, even in 1977 it was but 2.32 percent, then rose to 15 percent in 2001 and to 23 percent in 2010. This figure reached 45.14 percent in 2023, putting Indonesia above the global aggregate of 42.63 percent (2022 figure) (Global Economy, 2025).

Education quality is a difficult concept. Rather than to bog down in attempts to derive at a one line definition, or any definition at all, of education quality, it is more meaningful to enumerate the components of education quality. These can be stated to be input quality, process quality, outcomes quality, and product quality (see Wolhuter, 2014). Indications are that the impressive progress made in the education expansion effort in Indonesia on the quantitative dimension, have

not been matched by education quality, the impressive financial allocation (indicator of input quality) and Constitutional guarantees in the regard, mentioned earlier notwithstanding. For example, on outcomes quality, the outcomes of the 2015 round of PISA tests were that although Indonesian students have improved their performance compared to the 2012 (previous round of PISA tests), still Indonesia ranked below the OECD average in the categories of science, mathematics and reading, and also behind many of its neighbours, including Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Results from the past 10 years of PISA surveys have remained consistent; Indonesia has yet to meet the OECD average for these categories during that time (Oxford Business Group, 2025). In the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) too, Indonesian students perform very poor (see Novita, 2024: 131).

Equality in education too is a concept for which no unanimously accepted definition, or one line definition exists. The conundrum of defining equality or equity in education or equal education opportunities is beyond the scope of this article. However, the universal forms of education inequality in education, that is inequality according to gender, socio-economic descent, and ethnic status; as well as geographical inequalities (both urban-rural differences, and differences between various geographical regions) are present in Indonesian education too, although commendable progress in equalization has been made (see Kawuryan, Sayuti, Aman & Dwiningrum, 2021).

5. DISCUSSION

Indonesian inclusion in the Expanded BRICS grouping will add significant force to the Expanded BRICS formation as vanguard of the Global South, and in the quest of the Global South towards a new global dispensation where the Global South comes to its right. Geographically, the ten existing Expanded BRICS countries include the largest country in the world by surface area (Russia), the third largest (China), the fifth largest (Brazil) and the seventh largest (India). To this will now be added Indonesia as fourteenth largest. Demographically, the Expanded BRICS countries represent an equally strong force in the world, having in its ranks the first and second most populous countries in the world (respectively India and China), as well as the seventh (Brazil) and ninth (Russia) most populous countries. The inclusion of Indonesia as fourth most populous country in the world will add significantly to the already substantial demographic weight held by the Expanded BRICS formation in the present world. Similarly, the picture on the economic front is strong and with the inclusion of Indonesia even more fortified. As is the Expanded BRICS grouping includes the second largest economy in the world (China), the fifth largest (India), the ninth

largest (Russia) and the tenth largest (Brazil) (Macrotrends, 2025). To these will now be added Indonesia as the fifteenth largest economy in the world (*Ibid.*) Furthermore Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and South Africa, weighing in respectively rank order 17, 25, 29, 34 and 38 (Macrotrends, 2025), add up the Expanded BRICS as an economic bloc of note in the contemporary world. Then, with respect to education, the BRICS grouping already contains (as measured by enrolments) the largest and second largest (India and China) education systems in the world. Indonesia, with 28.6 million, 26.8 million and 8.3 million enrolments at respectively primary, secondary and higher education (Bachelor level) (UNESCO, 2025) the third largest education system in the world, will add substantial weight to the Expanded BRICS grouping's share of the global education project.

6. CONCLUSION

The inclusion of Indonesia will strengthen the Expanded BRICS consortium as vanguard of the Global South in the quest for a new global order, wherein the Global South will come to its right in education, that is both education practice and Education as scholarly field. It is not only in sheer numbers, and in grappling with issues of expanding access to and participation to education, enhancing education quality, and equalising education opportunities that Indonesia is bringing to the table a test ground and *tertium comparationis* for comparative international studies on critical issues facing education worldwide, but three particular aspects of the Indonesian education can be singled out as especially noteworthy for the global community.

The first is literacy. It was only in 1955 that the world as a whole reached the 50 percent adult literacy rate, that is when, for the first time in human history, the majority of adults in the world could read and write. Then, during the second half of the twentieth century, national governments and the international community made concerted efforts to achieve universal adult literacy within their jurisdictions. According to Arnove (1981), in the history of national adult literacy campaigns, three stand out as unusually remarkable. These are the Cuban National Literacy Campaign in 1961, the adult literacy campaign in Tanzania in the 1970s, and the Nicaraguan National Literacy Crusade of 1980. To these can surely be added the work of Paolo Freire in Brazil in the early 1960s. But the point to be made here is that the eradication of adult illiteracy in post-independent Indonesia, as detailed in this article, too is nothing short of miraculous. And in view of persistent adult illiteracy in the world, and a growth of the absolute number of adult illiterates each year, the Indonesian experience with the eradication of adult literacy presents a noteworthy case on the global education panorama.

A second education issue in which the experience of Indonesia is instructive is with regard to language of learning and teaching. The development of Indonesian as language of learning and teaching right up to the level of higher education is but one in four examples in the world where a language was empowered as language of learning and teaching up to higher education in the twentieth century (the other three being Hebrew in Israel, Hindi in India and Afrikaans in South Africa). In a world with asymmetrical power relations hegemonic languages (many a relic of colonial education systems) still stand strong and bars many students the privilege of receiving education through the medium of their first languages (see World Bank, 2021), this is a remarkable achievement. Thirty seven percent of students (at all levels of education) in lower- and middle-income countries still receive education through the medium of a language other than their first language (World Bank, 2021: 21) - a highly undesirable situation (see World Bank, 2021). It is therefore with respect to the issue of language of language of learning and teaching that Indonesian education also stands out as a model to the world.

A third unresolved issue in global education is the accommodation of religion in education. After historically occupying a central place in education, even in public education systems, the last half a century, two general trends are visible in education worldwide with regard to the place of religion in education (see Van der Walt, Potgieter & Wolhuter, 2010). One trend is secularization, that is to take all religion out of education. The second is that of replacing all confessional religious education (that is education aimed at converting students to the religion on offer) with integrative religious education (that is making students acquainted with the diversity of religions in the world, without any objective to convert students to any of these). From a number of considerations (inter alia, that it negates the role of religion in the lives of people and in society, and that it denies parents the right to choose the kind of education their children should receive) both these policy directions are objectionable (see Van der Walt, Potgieter & Wolhuter, 2010). Indonesia worked out a more positive accommodation for religion in education, and in that respect too presents a model for the rest of the world to learn from.

To conclude, the incorporation of Indonesian education in the Expanded BRICS grouping constitutes a valuable addition to that supra-national taxon, strengthening Expanded BRICS as bastion and showcase for leading the affirmation of education in the Global South.

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