WORKSHOP RISE PROGRAMME IN INDONESIA
"FIGHTING LEARNING CRISIS, BUILDING FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING"

Tuesday, 2 August 2022

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPUJfZo0dTg

Notes

Time   : 09:00—15:30 WIB (Jakarta Time)

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OPENING REMARKS

Nadiem Anwar Makarim, B.A., M.B.A. (Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology)

- The existence of research institution such as SMERU is essential to provide objective views and input on the breakthroughs of *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). I appreciate the intensive research that SMERU has carried out through RISE Programme in Indonesia, the results of which we can use as a reference for developing *Merdeka Belajar* in the future.

- There are similarities between the Indonesian Education Report Card launched as the 19th *Merdeka Belajar* and the Diagnosis, Design, Evaluate, and Adapt method designed by SMERU to address disparities in the quality of education in the regions. We can also use the findings from the "Effective and Professional Teacher Development" research to further develop the *Merdeka Mengajar* (Freedom to Teach) platform that we present to help teachers throughout Indonesia implement the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

- I believe the findings from SMERU's research through the RISE Programme in Indonesia will provide valuable input that can help us accelerate education transformation. Following the ending of RISE Programme, I hope there will be other research programmes that will produce innovative solutions that we can apply as breakthroughs for *Merdeka Belajar*.

Sudarno Sumarto (Team Leader, RISE Programme in Indonesia, SMERU)

- The learning crisis has persisted far too long in Indonesia. RISE research is an undertaking to help overcome learning crisis so that Indonesian children can get quality education. RISE research topics are driven by real problems in the education system found in the field, both at the national and regional levels.

- In identifying the root causes of the problems as well as seeking solutions, RISE research team works closely with policymakers at the national and local levels. Therefore, RISE research findings will not only enrich the global body of knowledge or literature but can also be a reference for policymakers to address educational problems in their region.

- RISE Programme in Indonesia has shown that high quality evidence, participatory engagements with policy makers, and a focus on real-world problem solving can bring about reform. In his remarks, the Minister of Education also said that RISE's research helped to formulate education policies carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

- Even though RISE Programme in Indonesia will end this year, SMERU will continue to work closely with national policymakers in studying education issues.

Lant Pritchett (RISE Research Director, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford)

- RISE is a large-scale multi-country research programme that has produced over 100 original research working papers, 57 research synthesis products, a dozen detailed studies of the politics of the education system, 235 other written words (Insight Notes, blog posts), and has 500+ academic citations to RISE work.

- Indonesia has made remarkable development progress in the last 25 years. However, this is not the case with improving the quality of education.

- The Indonesian education system has experienced rapid development in recent years. Access to schools is almost universal; the number of children attending school, the time they study in school, and the number of teachers are also increasing. These are all important and must be acknowledged. However, the current situation has stagnated and is no longer experiencing such rapid development. The challenges today are unlike before, and a different and radical skillset is needed to face them and move forward. Given the reality, the education system needs to take 5 Actions to move to the next or expected level.

- **5 Actions: Sustaining Accelerated Progress in Learning at Scale.** These are not discreet, one, soft adopted policies but continuous sustainable actions.

- **Action 1: Commit to Foundational Learning.** Foundational learning is not basic, but it is foundational mastery that can be built on. It is when students are equipped with conceptual and procedural mastery of skills on which deep, advanced learning can be built.

  Education system needs to centre on purpose. Everything else needs to stem from the shared purpose and vision. We must make improved learning outcomes a clear and urgent social and political priority. *"A commitment to the goal of learning must be everywhere in the system. Putting the purpose of learning at the centre of the bureaucracy will drive improvements in its technical practices and support functions."* –Michelle Kaffenberger

  Lessons from other countries show that the way to success is not a smooth plan; it is messy, local struggles because it will involve lots of actors changing their behaviours. Unleashing a purpose-driven struggles is what enables systems to move forward.

- **Action 2: Measure Learning.** Without measurement, it's impossible to measure progress. Measure learning overtime starts early in school. The measurement should

not for high-stakes student assessment, but rather feedback assessments that help teachers understand and adapt their classroom teaching and learning practices.

- **Action 3: Align Systems around Your Commitments.** In reality, in many education systems, curriculum, exams, and teacher instruction are poorly aligned. What the curriculum reflects often inconsistent with what the teaching in the classroom reflects. Putting pressure to a misaligned system would make it hard for the system to move forward.

- **Action 4: Support Teaching.** Policies on teachers is one of the example where alignment is not happening. There are regulations on what teachers should do that are inconsistent with regulations on which teachers are rewarded—all of which are also not reflective of the expressed purposes. So it is necessary to refocus professional development on the craft of teaching, including structured support, to support all teachers in producing quality teaching. Focus on practical training in the skills of teaching and providing ample opportunity for teachers to practice new skills.

- **Action 5: Adopt Adaptive Approaches Implementation to Achieve Effectiveness in Context.** It is necessary to adapt approaches that are well to get adapted up and over. Embrace iteration and feedback responsive adaptation as key to sustained success. Adaptation should not be seen as a sign of failure but rather as a precursor of success.

- While these five acts may sound like common sense, they are often not at all what current education systems do and will require deep changes to achieve and implement. To summarise:
  - Commit to foundational learning as a core purpose.
  - Measure learning early, for feedback to teaching.
  - Align learning objectives to the learning levels of students, while retaining strong goals for universal achievement.
  - Supporting effective teaching and learning practices.
  - Adapt policies and practices to achieve sustained progress in your local context

PRESENTATIONS

1. Commit to Foundational Learning & Measure Learning

Presenter : **Emilie Berkhout (Researcher, Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development/AIGHD)**

- Literacy and numeracy are prerequisites for learning more advanced skills. Children must first able to recognise numbers, count, then reach procedural and conceptual understanding.

- Foundational learning requires a lot of repetition and time. However, the K-13 curriculum has been fast-paced. According to the text-book, 1st grade students are already expected to know how to read.

- RISE study shows that Indonesian children learn in school, but many are behind the curriculum expectations. Over time, less children can answer previous grade-level items correctly. According to PISA 2018 results, few students in Indonesia demonstrated skills that build on foundational skills.

- To prevent children falling behind from curriculum, it is necessary for the government to measure foundational learning. The measurements should:

  - Include items that cover a wide range of skills to avoid floor effects

  - Be low-stakes for both students and schools/teachers

  - Use comparable tests over time to keep track of progress

  The new minimum competency assessment (AKM) meets these criteria.

- To commit to foundational learning: set achievable targets, measure progress towards targets, and support districts and schools with low learning levels.

2. Lessons from the Pandemic

Presenter   : Delbert Lim (Researcher, RISE-SMERU)

- During the pandemic, most schools simplified the curriculum, however, only a few adapted the material to the individual abilities of students.

- During school closures, parental assistance allows students to receive individual attention so that they can learn according to their respective ability levels.

- During the pandemic, low-ability children experienced the smallest decline in numeracy skills. But the same result was not found in the literacy assessment scores.

- What we can learn from learning during the pandemic:

  - Students respond to changes in the curriculum.

  - Shifting the curriculum focus to help one group may be detrimental to another group.

  - Students learn best when they learn at the right level.

  - Different subjects may require different approaches

3. Align System to Improve Teacher Quality

Presenter   : Niken Rarasati (Researcher, RISE-SMERU)

- In 1970s, the Indonesian education system focused on increasing school access and participation. The current system is moving towards a mission focused on improving students' foundational skills (but not there yet). The education system needs to focus on improving students' foundational skills.

- In improving the quality of teachers, it is necessary to align the actors who play a role in the teacher system, the accountability relationship between actors, and the coherence between these relationships. The involved actors are the government (politicians and government policymakers), organisations (universities, teacher training institutions, and government project management), front liners (lecturers, teacher trainers, and local facilitators), schools, teachers, students, and society.

- Aligning systems focused on foundational learning requires multiple changes to all actors simultaneously to be coherent. Measuring learning and tailoring learning to student abilities requires coherent work from all actors.

- This presentation is excerpted from the following RISE studies:

- ➢ The Struggle to Recruit Good Teachers in Indonesia: Institutional and Social Dysfunctions (Huang et al., 2020)

- ➢ Systemic Constraints Facing Teacher Professional Development in a Middle-Income Country: Indonesia's Experience Over Four Decades (Revina et al., 2020)

- ➢ A Policy Lens on Becoming a Teacher: A Longitudinal Diary Study of Novice Teacher Professional Identity Formation in Indonesia (Alifia et al., 2020)

- ➢ Scores, Camera, Action? Incentivizing Teachers in Remote Areas (Gaduh et al., 2020)

- ➢ Exploring the Politics of Expertise: The Indonesian Teachers' Union and Education Policy, 2005-2020 (Chambers-Ju et al., 2022)

- ➢ Does Higher Parental Involvement Lead to Learning Gains? Experimental Evidence from Indonesia (Tresnatri et al., 2022)

4. Support Teaching

Presenter   : Ulfah Alifia (Researcher, RISE-SMERU)

- Teaching is complex. The existing curriculum and textbooks are unsupportive for teachers to provide effective teaching. The teacher education programme has not provided sufficient knowledge for prospective teachers to be able to teach literacy and numeracy, especially in early grades.

- Existing policies are not yet oriented towards teacher quality development. Teacher competency indicators are difficult to measure. During early years of teaching, there is no adequate induction, mentoring, and supervision for novice teachers nor learning period to develop teaching skills. Performance evaluation is not based on teaching effectiveness, rather on years of teaching.

- Coherent policies and systems are vital to produce quality teachers. PPG should focus on mastering teaching skills. The induction mechanism needs to provide mentoring for teachers. Teaching skills need to be an indicator in teacher recruitment. Differentiate teacher professional standards based on teacher competency level.

5. Adapt Approaches

Presenter   : Menno Pradhan (Researcher, AIGHD)

- Good education requires a coherent system that selects, trains, motivates, supports teachers to encourage learning. Indonesia's decentralised education system provides the opportunity to experiment, and see what works best in which circumstances. RISE research on local innovation in education: district initiated innovations, co-developed district innovations, and co-developed nationally, piloted in interested districts (KIAT Guru).

- **On districts initiated innovations:** Research started with a search on district-initiated innovations. Most reported innovations consisted of providing extra funding for teachers or materials. Few innovations focused directly on learning and were sustained for more than a year. We found three interesting exceptions in Bukittinggi, Yogyakarta, and Gowa.

Innovations build on strengths and address weakness specific to each district.

- ➢ Bukittinggi has established the programmes of Inter-school Collaboration (to evaluate teachers' performance objectively) and Family Education (to educate parents on the role of family in children education). In competitive Bukittinggi, teachers and parents are more outspoken in how others can improve their contribution to education.

- ➢ Yogyakarta's innovations are Parents Association (to ensure the quality of education) and Community Learning Hours/JBM (to provide learning space for all community members). The city's innovations represent its *guyub rukun* culture, which require community and parents' participation.

- ➢ Gowa's innovations are aimed at increasing attendance and automatic promotion. They are School Security Guards (to reduce teacher and student absenteeism and to keep the school safe) and Automatic Promotion/SKTB (to overcome the low success rate of national exam in secondary schools and high rate of grade retention). Gowa has strong leadership but weak educational institutions resulting in top-down types of interventions.

- **On co-developed district innovations:** We conducted studies with Kebumen District and DKI Jakarta Province.

  The Kebumen District was interested in getting parents more involved in education. We found strong positive impacts on direct parental support in studying at home, creating a conducive environment for study at home, more communication with school, and more teacher support but there was no effect on student learning.

  The study with the DKI Jakarta is ongoing. We collaborate with them in creating an intervention to empower head teachers to develop training plans with teachers as part of teacher professional development. So to create more options for and transparency in training programmes. It has been piloted in 76 schools with qualitative evaluation.

- **On KIAT Guru:** It was piloted in 270 remote schools in 5 districts in Flores and Kalimantan with random assignment. Social accountability can raise learning outcomes in remote areas. Teacher pay incentive can add value but also carries risks. In the second-year, village-level project support stopped.

- **Conclusions:**
  - ➢ Many districts want to improve learning, but few develop policies to address their specific challenges.
  - ➢ Support to develop local solutions is welcomed.
  - ➢ Research can help to distil and spread lessons.
  - ➢ The MoECRT's *Program Organisasi Penggerak* could support this type of work.
  - ➢ A programme at scale would require more organisations to support districts, and a platform to share lessons and spread good practices.

DISCUSSION

Moderator   : Prof. dr. Fasli Jalal, Sp.GK., Ph.D. (President of YARSI University/Member of the RISE Advisory Committee)

Discussant   **: Irsyad Zamjani, Ph.D. (Acting Head of Centre for Educational Standards and Policy/PSKP)**

- The MoECRT is making efforts to transform education. Some of RISE's recommendations are similar to what we are currently working on.

- The focus on foundational learning has been carried out by implementing the simplified emergency curriculum that focuses on essential materials and delivers learning that is more flexible and focused on students.

- The MoECRT has also measured learning through the national assessment, which is now called the Indonesian Education Report Card (*Rapor Pendidikan*). It measures not only literacy, numeracy, and character but also the learning process, including the learning environment (conducive or not). It is an education system database, probably the largest in the world. Hopefully, schools and local governments will use this database to make information and data-based planning.

Discussant   **: Danang Hidayatullah (Chairperson of Indonesian Teachers Association/IGI)**

- Of the five presentations, three really touched the teacher group, which reflected teacher's problems.

- There needs to be alignment and synergy between ideas and policies and actors (teachers, students, parents). The ideas of the *Merdeka* or *Penggerak* programmes should realign its goals to achieve literacy, numeracy and character.

- The problem in the field (regardless of geographic disparities) is that not all teachers get the same training opportunities. Improvements are urgent, especially in remote areas because teachers in these areas have serious problems in educating students.

- For the *Merdeka* Curriculum, the opportunity to be involved in the *Penggerak* programme must be accelerated in order to achieve equity so that more teachers or schools are involved.

Discussant   **: Dr. Ir. Hetifah Sjaifudian, MPP (Deputy Chair of Commission X of the House of Representatives)**

- Local governments often feel that the central government's policies are not communicated properly, resulting in confusion in their implementation. Local governments need assistance from the central government.

- Barriers in the regions are the lack of incentives for innovative regions and concerns about the risks. RISE research results can be used as a reference so that good initiatives from the regions can become national policies and implemented at scale.

- External institutions assisting local governments will encourage local governments to innovate.

Discussant   **: Nahdiana (Head of Jakarta Education Agency)**

- The DKI Jakarta Provincial Education Agency understands that education issue is a shared business.

- The Agency appreciates RISE's assistance to date and hopes the collaboration will continue. There are still many improvements to do.

- The quality of schools in Jakarta has large variety. Even among public schools, some are very desirable and some are undesirable. This raises questions because the policies implemented are essentially the same. If we measure only from a certain side, there will definitely be a difference.

- Jakarta's existing education agency structure is unique than other provinces. There is only one sub-department (at the provincial level) that oversees all levels of education in all municipalities in Jakarta. Each municipality should have the autonomy to regulate its own education and create educational innovations, but still coordinate with the provincial agency.

Q&A SESSION

Summary:

- The right curriculum is one that suits the needs of students and is relevant to the challenges of the times.

- Some local governments lack the confidence to make changes--they need intensive assistance. We need more massive advertisements to motivate local governments to make changes.

- Variations in leadership and bureaucratic strength at the regional level affect the local government's sense of crisis to recognise a learning crisis so that they can act quickly and make appropriate innovations at the local level.

- To improve the quality of teachers, we need to look into the schools where teachers work. Decisions about what teachers need should not only be made from the top down.

- Regarding PPG, teachers complain that many PPG instructors are not teachers, do not have experience being a teacher, or have never been teaching in a classroom. So teachers struggle to implement the knowledge they obtained from PPG in their classroom.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Group 1: How to Optimise Children's Learning

Facilitator   : Dewi Susanti (Senior Director of Research, Global School Leaders)

Co-Facilitator   : Asep Kurniawan (Researcher, SMERU)

Graphic Recorder: Eine Ayu Saraswati

Summary   : For children to learn optimally, teachers must teach at the right level, understand their readiness to learn, and involve children in choosing learning methods so that the learning process can touch them. In addition, parental involvement is also essential. On the other hand, teachers need to have one shared vision, mission, and goals for teaching well. Teachers also need to be supported by a curriculum that is clear, simple, and not abstract--as the current one.

<u>Group 2: How to Develop Quality Teachers</u>

Facilitator **: Margaretha Ari Widowati (Director of Basic Education Program, Tanoto Foundation**

Co-Facilitator : Asri Yusrina (Researcher, SMERU)

Graphic Recorder: Rari Indah

Summary : The way to develop quality teachers is through the principal because he has instructional leadership. The principal determines whether or not the quality of teachers in his school is good. If the principal is egalitarian, the teachers usually want to develop and have good quality. However, in reality, many principals are too focused on administrative matters.

<u>Group 3: How to Support Local Government in Adapting Approaches to Solve Their Education Problems</u>

Facilitator : Agus Prayitno (Provincial Education and Policy Specialist Kaltara, INOVASI)

Co-Facilitator : Niken Rarasati (Researcher, SMERU)

Graphic Recorder: Ignatia Dyahapsari

Summary : Attempts/programmes have been made to assist local governments in adapting approaches to solving education problems. However, they still face challenges, including:

- Access and budgetary capabilities
- The sustainability and replicability of a programme depend on a few key people.
- Dissemination of best practices is sporadic, so information on whether the program is suited or not is difficult to obtain by other regions.

To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to:

- Cooperate with development partners to improve access to learning for the government.
- Improve the capability of bureaucrats as well as monitoring and evaluation system in the regions that oversee programme improvement, sustainability, and replication.
- Increase collaboration with local media, teacher organisations, and monitoring and evaluation institutions to raise awareness of best practices.

CLOSING REMARKS

Widjajanti Isdijoso (Director, SMERU)

- For the past five years, RISE Programme in Indonesia research team, supported by various parties, has identified the root causes of unresolved education quality problems. The result of these studies was presented this morning.

- I thank all those who have helped RISE researchers carry out their research over the past five years, as well as all of you who have come to our workshop today. We hope that the knowledge generated from RISE's research can contribute to the

formulation of education policies in this country to realise quality learning for our children in the future.

- Although funding from the RISE Programme will end this year, SMERU will continue its commitment to undertaking strategic research in education. We will also continue to work closely with ministries, local governments, as well as other institutions to realise this commitment.