Sociocultural Drivers of Local Educational Innovations: Findings from Indonesia

Indonesia began decentralising its education services in 2001. Decentralisation allows local governments to create educational innovations that can accommodate their individual needs and problems. However, **not all districts have the capability to formulate educational innovation.**

To understand more about the formulation and implementation of educational innovations at the regional level, RISE Programme in Indonesia conducted a qualitative study to examine the sociocultural aspects of three highly innovative districts: **Bukittinggi City**, **Yogyakarta City**, and **Gowa District**.

Methodology
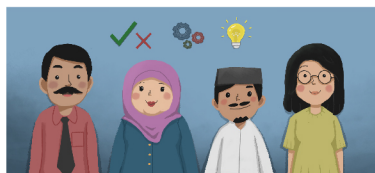

Interviews with local education stakeholders

Group discussions and focus group discussions

Observation

Findings

Three sociocultural aspects determine how local innovations are successfully designed and implemented in the respective districts.

Norms of trust among community members

Tradition, or lack thereof, of collaboration at community and elite levels

People's participation

Although highly innovative, the three districts studied differ in their educational innovation models and sociocultural aspects.

Bukittinggi

Peer Supervision of Teacher Performance

Family Education

School principals and sub-district supervisors carry out alternating school visits to give feedback on teacher performance while teachers teach in class.

A short course to train parents on how to support their children's education.

Kinship networks among local education stakeholders play an important role in educational innovation in Bukittinggi. In the Minang tradition, kinship networks affect community members' social relations because everyone is considered part of the family.

Yogyakarta

Parental Participation

The purpose of this programme is to create a room for participation and collaboration among schools, teachers, and parents to improve student educational performance.

Community Learning Hours

The programme initiated by the community aims to create a supportive environment for children to study at home, for example, by not playing gadgets at certain hours.
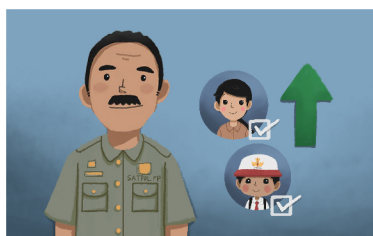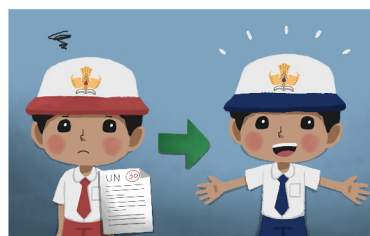
In Yogyakarta, community participation in education is particularly high. Community values that have a good effect on improving the quality of education are maintaining social harmony; mutual assistance; and *handarbeni*, the tradition of taking care of each other.

Gowa

School Security Guard

The School Security Guard was initiated to address low teacher attendance in public schools and keep schools safe.

Student Automatic Promotion

Unconditional progression to the next grade level to address the low success rate on the National Exam and the high number of students who failed to meet the minimum standard of graduation requirement.

In Gowa, the low public trust in the government (and vice versa) has resulted in the lack of community participation in implementing educational innovations. The Regent of Gowa then works together with members of the local parliament house to implement his innovative ideas.

Conclusion

- Factors that hinder the emergence and development of educational innovations in a district:

  1) In general, **public education level is low**, making it challenging to realise bottom-up policies. This explains why many districts in Indonesia prefer to simply apply policies issued by the central government without creating local innovations.

  2) **Lack of collaboration**, both at the community level and among the political elite.

- Local innovations are the response to national education policies deemed unable to accommodate individual districts' needs. To design appropriate educational innovations, local governments must consider the sociocultural aspects of their respective districts.

  Innovations from one district may not always be applicable elsewhere but are likely to be adopted by other districts with similar social structures.

- The one-size-fits-all policy is impossible to enforce given Indonesia's highly diverse sociocultural background. However, there have been little local innovations to date since **most districts tend to be passive and wait for whatever policies are issued by the central government.**