

Education NOTES



EFA in Indonesia: Hard Lessons About Quality

Indonesia has seen vast improvements in access to education over the past thirty years. It is a good example of a country that has followed a disciplined linear approach to EFA: Indonesia focused first on primary school access, next on lower secondary school access, and is only now attempting to address key policy issues to improve learning outcomes. However, many long-established precedents that have a negative impact on quality are proving very hard to change.

Indonesia's struggles to improve quality demonstrate the importance of tackling such issues from the very beginning, as initial efforts are put in place to expand access.

Education Achievements

Using oil windfall funds in the mid 1970s, the Government of Indonesia launched a major program of primary school construction and teacher recruitment and deployment. Primary enrollment rose from 13.1 million in 1973/74 to 26.4 million in 1986/87 and 28.7 million in 2001. Net enrollment has remained above 90% since 1986. In 1989, Indonesia announced a program to achieve universal basic education (9 years) by 2010. Junior secondary enrollment increased from 1.5 million in 1973/74 to 6.1 million in 1986/87 and 9.4 million in 2001.

In the past decade, Indonesia has also achieved greater equity among different income levels. In 1993, the overall primary net enrollment ratio was 91%, including 87% in the poorest quintile and 93% in the richest quintile. In 2000, overall primary net enrollment stood at 93%, with a gap of only 1% between the poorest and richest quintiles. At the junior secondary level the net enrollment ratio almost doubled in the poorest quintile over the 1990's, while it increased by only a few percentage points in the richest quintile over the same period.

Education expansion was supported by significant growth in public outlays between the late 1980s and the mid 1990s. Spending rose annually by 15.9% in current prices and 7% in constant prices, while the share of education in overall expenditures increased by almost 25% between 1989/90 and 1996/97. The share of government education outlays in GDP remained low but unchanged at about 1.8 percent in this period of strong economic growth. In per student terms, real spending at the primary and junior secondary levels increased by roughly 75% and 25% respectively during this interval.

During the 1997 economic crisis, Indonesia moved aggressively to protect enrollments for primary and junior secondary schooling, with strong donor support. The share of donor support doubled during the crisis. Donors also provided more than half of the financing for a Scholarships and Grants Program (SGP). In 1999/2000, 1.79 million primary school stu-

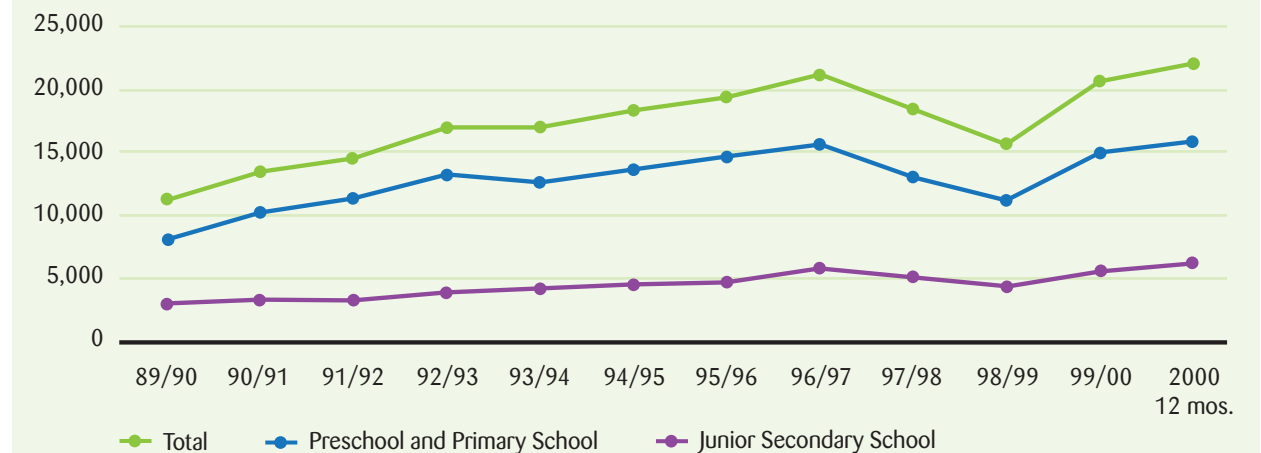
dents were awarded scholarships on the basis of financial need, and 104,609 schools received grants designated for use on teaching materials, building maintenance, and fee waivers for poor families. External assistance also played a key role in funding the junior secondary scholarships and grants provided under SGP. In 1999/2000, 1.64 million junior secondary students were awarded scholarships.

Quality Concerns

The Indonesia school system is characterized by startling contradictions. It has seen great gains in primary and lower secondary enrollment as a result of strong political will, but educational quality remains very low. The school year in Grades 3-6 is among the longest in the world (over 1400 hours annually for single shift classrooms), but the potential impact of this extraordinary effort is lost in part because the school year in Grades 1 and 2 is among the shortest in the world (under 500 hours annually in most cases). Government is increasing the intake level of teachers to the equivalent of a bachelors' degree, but significantly decreasing the average salary level. And finally, it does a good job of providing fee waivers for poor children but has ceased to provide free textbooks, meaning that these children often attend school under very disadvantaged circumstances. These contradictions have risen in part because an ineffective quality improvement package, and because many quality strengthening steps that were introduced in donor-supported projects were never integrated within the program.

Indonesian children rank consistently at or near bottom compared to other countries in the region. The quality of primary education may have been further compromised when Indonesia moved ahead arguably prematurely with a second phase of EFA, junior secondary, in the late 1980s. The economic crisis beginning in 1997 further weakened the country's ability to increase financing for quality enhancement; the scholarship program designed to attenuate the equity impact of the crisis focused almost solely on maintaining access. Average class

Public Spending on Basic Education (billions of constant 2000 Rupiah)



size is quite modest, largely because of inefficient use of teachers and principals, but current practices have become deeply entrenched and are not easy to change. The result is that almost no resources are available for quality inputs and textbooks, reading books, and other teaching and learning materials are in short supply.

The Challenge of Government Restructuring

Indonesia faces the additional challenge of maintaining and improving education under a new decentralized system. Decentralization, which was launched in January 2001, has far-reaching implications for Indonesia's costly but under-performing education system. The new paradigm makes autonomous district governments accountable for education and holds the potential of better matching educational services and needs.

On the other hand, there is a risk that such a dramatic reorganization of government will be disruptive in the short run. Possible effects include withdrawal of support previously earmarked for the poor and lapses in reporting, accountability, and quality control

procedures, all potentially affecting service delivery and quality. Looking beyond the immediate horizon, there is a substantial risk that downsizing administrative units could result in key education functions that are neither technically efficient nor cost effective.

Lessons Learned

- Where EFA programs fail to place a coherent quality-access package in place from the start, competing pressures (such as the demand for lower secondary enrollments) make it difficult to perform a "quality retrofitting" at a later date.
- Timely donor support during economic crisis can make the difference in sustaining past gains and strengthening commitment to, and progress toward, EFA goals.
- While piloting ways of improving learning outcomes is useful, such approaches must be integrated into a broader school improvement strategy, and designed to go to scale.
- Quality enhancement is unlikely to occur via the "campaign"-style mechanisms frequently

Education in Indonesia

Socio-Economic Indicators:

Population (millions)	210
Percent below poverty line	27%
GNP per capita	US\$ 570
IDA/IBRD	IBRD
PRSP	No
HIPC	No

Education Indicators:

Adult illiteracy rate total (female/male)	13% (18/8)
Primary gross enrollment rate total (female/male)	114% (110/115)
Primary completion rate	91%
Secondary gross enrollment rate total (female/male)	56% (51/60)
Tertiary gross enrollment rate total (female/male)	11% (8/15)
Total education spending as % of GDP (1997)	1.8%

employed by central governments, but instead need consistent local commitment to strengthen and monitor learning processes.

- Prior to implementing decentralization, it is desirable for responsibilities and objectives, including equity and quality, to be carefully negotiated and clearly delineated.

Remaining Challenges

Indonesia must now focus on the unfinished agenda of learning quality. It must also ensure that quality

does not deteriorate even further in the near term. The quality gap is being addressed in the context of the transition to decentralization. Key issues include how to: (i) enable communities to participate meaningfully in education management, (ii) assure the availability and effective use of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, (iii) empower local authorities to develop management partnerships involving provinces, districts and autonomous schools and their governing committees, (iv) rationalize fragmented and rigid budgetary processes and ensure transparency; and (v) create an incentive structure that rewards good teaching and effective school management and addresses the uneven allocation of teachers across schools.

This note series is intended to summarize lessons learned and key policy findings on the World Bank's work in education. The views expressed in these notes are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank. For additional copies of Education Notes, please contact the Education Advisory Service by email at eservice@worldbank.org or visit the web site: <http://www.worldbank.org/education/>