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Restructuring the Schoolbook Provision System in Indonesia: Some Recent Initiatives

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Abstract

Schoolbooks account for between 65% and 75% of all publishing activity in Indonesia. The amount of money allocated is continually increasing. Priority is given to the primary and junior secondary school levels (6+3 years), which are compulsory. Between 1969 and 1988, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) has produced some 550 million primary textbooks and library books. Up to the year 2000, the GOI has decided to allocate the total of US\$ 355.2 million to produce 250 million copies of primary and junior secondary school textbooks to reach the ratio of one book for each student. In addition, around Rp 20-50 billion (US\$ 10-20 million) annually is spent to purchase 8-17 million copies of reading books which are aimed at stimulating the reading interest of primary school children. These books are distributed free to some 168,000 primary and 26,969 junior secondary schools throughout Indonesia. Following the massive efforts to increase book availability at schools, some innovative policies are being taken. Book evaluation standards have been improved to ensure that only high quality books are used at schools. The distribution system has been restructured to guarantee that books reach targeted schools. Consequently, the book monitoring system has had to be strengthened to examine whether or not the books really reach the schools and are used properly by students and teachers in the classrooms. In the last three years, there has also been a growing concern with multicultural issues in schoolbook provision programs. In such a culturally diverse nation as Indonesia, schoolbooks should also be culturally

sensitive and be recognize the varied sociocultural backgrounds which affect students' learning.

Schoolbooks and Educational Quality: International Comparison

Schoolbooks, especially textbooks, tend to be the dominant instructional medium in the classroom (Patrick, 1988). Because textbooks typically deliver the curriculum, they are regarded as the single most important instructional material. As a result, they are central to schooling at all levels (Lockeed & Verspoor, 1990). Especially in a context of scarce learning resources and a shortage of teachers--in terms of number and quality--textbooks appear to have a strong positive impact on educational quality, as indicated by student achievement. A review by Heyneman, Farrell, and Salveda-Stuarto (1981) has found that of 18 correlational studies, 83% showed statistically significant positive correlations between textbook availability and student achievement.

In the Philippines, increasing the student-textbook ratio from 10:1 to 2:1 in the first and second grade of primary schools in the late 1970s led to significant learning gains among students using the new textbooks. In Nicaragua, students who received textbooks scored significantly higher by about one-third of a standard deviation on a test of mathematics achievement than students not supplied with textbooks. In Brazil, the compensatory program of adding various "school quality" elements--especially textbooks--to poor rural schools in the 1980s confirmed the crucial importance of textbooks; students made impressive improvement in achievement on tests of mathematics (World Bank, 1995: 10-11). In Indonesia, a national survey in the 1970s found that students who had library books and many other classroom facilities, as well as good teachers, demonstrated higher achievement (BP3K, 1980).

Realizing these facts, many developing countries invest heavily in schoolbooks, especially textbooks, with higher priority given to primary and secondary school levels. Many developing countries are now moving toward pursuing the goal of "a textbook for each" student. But countries pursue this goal in different ways. One can ask of these strategies: who are the targets, what is the book distribution system, what are the roles of government and private sector, and what is the contribution of the students' parents? Ten countries assisted in this endeavor by World Bank loans can be cited as examples, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
World Bank/IBRD Textbook Assisted Projects in Ten Countries

Country	Targeted Areas	Number of Textbooks	Distribution scheme
Indonesia entire country	* 29.2 million primary school students procured by MOEC's Book Center	158 million copies of student books+) & 6.3 million copies of teacher guides 100% funded by GOI.	Free for all students Total cost: US \$ 182.2 million.
	* 8.8 million junior secondary school students, procured by	85.1 million copies of student books++) & 980 thousand copies of	Free for all students

	private publishers	teacher guides, cost: US\$ 172.8 million.	
India Utar Pradesh	Primary schools, procured by private publishers.	83 million copies, reaches all children	Parents purchase at lower prices
China entire country	Primary schools, produced by state	2.2 billion copies for 180 million students (!)	Parents purchase at subsidized prices
Vietnam entire country	Primary schools, procured by state	Textbooks for all children, Per book prices: US\$.15	Parents purchase, allowing choice of buying or renting
Brazil, Northeast Provinces	Primary schools, produced by private publishers	100 million copies per year, Total cost: US\$ 63.1 million	Total cost: US\$ 63.1 million under 1/1 basis
Romania, entire country	Primary schools, produced by private publishers	15.7 million copies, total cost: US\$ 41.4 million	Textbooks are provided to schools for purchasing
Chile, entire country	Primary schools, produced by private publishers	Total costs: US\$ 25 million	Free for students in deprived urban and rural areas
Philippines, entire country	Primary schools, produced by government	44 million books, total cost: US\$ 50 million	Free books for the poor, rich parents could purchase
Venezuela, entire country	Basic education, procured by private sector	11.3 million copies, total cost: US\$ 23 million	Free for all students in marginal areas
Mexico, four states, rural areas	Basic education	70 million copies per year, many books never reach poor provinces	Free for all students in all schools in project

+) Covering 6 subjects: Pancasila, Bahasa Indonesia, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Local content.

++) For 9 subjects: Bahasa Indonesia, Mathematics, Physics, Biology, History, Economics, Geography, English, Art and Craft.

Source: World Bank, 1995. *Staff Appraisal Report: Indonesia, Book and Reading Development Project. Report No. 141016-IND*, pp. 21, 32.

The Anatomy of Schoolbooks in Indonesia: Vary in Kinds, Complex Procedures of Provision

The nature of schoolbooks in Indonesia is quite complex, both in terms of kinds and procedures of provision. Schoolbooks consist of student textbooks, teacher guide books, reading books, and reference books for teachers and students. There are two kinds of textbooks: 1) government textbooks which are obligatory for school use, and 2)

supplementary textbooks which are not obligatory, depending on the needs of each school. Government textbooks used to be published by Government (Ministry of Education and Culture, MOEC) mainly under the coordination of the Book Center and other projects at the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education (DPSPE). Supplementary textbooks, on the other hand, are published by private publishers. Teacher guide books used to be provided together with student textbooks.

Reading books which consist of fiction and nonfiction books are those which are intended to promote reading interests and increase literacy of primary school children. Thus far, the effort to provide reading books is only for primary school level, while for the upper levels (junior and senior secondary) priority is given to textbooks (production, quality, and distribution). Annually, each of the 168,000 SDs/MIs (Note 1) throughout the country used to receive between 50 and 100 copies of reading books in different titles. Counting all primary school libraries, approximately 75 million reading books have been delivered to schools since 1979.

The main issue concerning these books is how to maximize their use by pupils so that they can have significant impact on pupils' reading behaviors. Low correlations between the presence of reading books and student reading behaviors as revealed in the 1989 IEA (the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) study (Note 2) and cited in the 1992 World Bank's report do not necessarily mean that those books are not useful, rather they indicate that the use of these books by students is still very low. This was supported by the fact that many students spend relatively little time "reading for fun." At grade four, approximately one in five (19.5%) claimed to read a book for fun "almost never." Almost 60% of students considered themselves "average" or "not very good" at reading, while only 27.8% considered themselves "good" and 14.4% "very good." It is for that reason the DGPSE continues to work with students (and teachers) to maximize the use of reading books at primary school libraries.

Book Evaluation and Approvals: Procedures and Criteria

To be eligible to be used at schools, both supplementary textbooks and reading books have to pass the evaluation process carried out by the National Evaluation Committee for private publishing books (which I have served as chairman since 1993) and be officially approved by the Director General of PSE. The Committee members consist of experts from universities, IKIPs, and other government agencies. The evaluation comprises four aspects, viz., quality of content, language, graphical presentation, and security.

Quality of content refers to such indicators as scientific truthfulness and its relevance to the existing National Curriculum. Language basically means readability, legibility, and consistency with the standardized Indonesian language. Graphical presentation includes quality of printing, binding, format, illustrations, colors, typefaces, font sizes, spacing and book appearance in general. Security means that the content of the books should be in line with and not contradictory to Pancasila (the Five Principles--Note 3), UUD 1945 (National Constitution), Government policies, national unity and security, laws, regulations, ethics, and that the content not exploit the sensitive issue of SARA (ethnics, religions, race, and intergroup relations). Judgment of this aspect is made by evaluators coming from Mabes ABRI (Armed Forces Headquarter), Kejaksaan Agung (Office of Attorney General), Lemhanas (National Defense Institute), and Inspectorate General of MOEC.

The number of books considered in the evaluation process has increased over the years, indicating the rise of market demand, the productivity of book writers, and growth

in the size of the schoolbook sector. In 1995, the number of books nearly doubled over previous years. However, the quality of books has not increased significantly as shown in the percentage of books passed in the evaluation (Table 2). To bridge this deficit, the Directorate of Educational Facilities, DGPSE, has repeatedly held meetings with book writers, editors, and publishers to address some basic mistakes found in the evaluation process. The DGPSE has also suggested ways of dealing with those mistakes to publishers.

At the same time, the Book Center under the Secretary General of MOEC has been conducting workshops and training sessions involving book writers and editors. Some of the participants in these activities are newcomers but appear to have potential for book writing. This program could help alleviate the shortages and the low quality of many books.

These efforts are expected to have significant effects on the capacity of writers and editors to produce high quality books in response to the rising demand for higher quality schoolbooks. The criterion of evaluation for supplementary books has been raised from a minimum of 60 to 80, to ensure that only high quality books are recommended for use in schools. It is particularly important for supplementary textbooks to be qualitatively comparable to the main textbooks evaluated by the National Textbook Evaluation Committee (NTEC). Another criterion is that supplementary textbooks must contain significant amounts of enrichment material.

Table 2
The Number of schoolbooks participating
in the evaluation process at the
Directorate of Educational Facilities,
DGSPE - MOEC, 1979-1995

Year	No. of Books	No. Passed	%	No. of Publishers
1979	2,860	1,078	38%	n.a
1980	1,287	747	58%	n.a
1981	1,847	808	44%	n.a
1982	1,432	956	67%	n.a
1983	1,786	1,257	70%	n.a
1984	2,551	1,099	43%	n.a
1985	3,645	1,812	50%	n.a
1986	2,536	1,232	49%	n.a
1987	1,132	567	50%	n.a
1988	2,079	989	48%	n.a
1989	2,740	1,134	41%	n.a
1990	2,763	1,570	57%	101
1991	2,179	781	36%	126
1992	2,685	1,455	54%	170
1993	2,565	1,359	53%	237
1994	2,380	848	36%	230
1995	4,162	1,437	35%	275

Total	40,629	19,462	48%
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Source: Directorate of Educational Facilities, DGPSE-MOEC, 1995.

Junior Secondary School Textbooks: Improving Textbook Quality, Restructuring Distribution System

For the junior secondary school level, the GOI has launched a new project--effective of October 1, 1995-April 1, 2000-- called the Book and Reading Development Project (BRDP). The Project aims to improve the quality of education for secondary school students (nine-year compulsory basic education). In particular, the Project is expected to contribute to improving production and distribution of more and better quality textbooks, their availability in the classrooms, and their use by teachers. These objectives are to be achieved by assisting in the implementation of the textbook provision and distribution system to all school students on a sustainable basis, giving help to teachers in how to make better use of the books in the classroom, and motivate and promote reading habits among children (World Bank, 1995a).

Different from the previous book projects, the BRDP is developed under some innovative policies. First, books are selected by the NTEC--chaired by the Director General of PSE-- based on a set of high standards and strict evaluation procedures to guarantee that only high quality textbooks will pass the evaluation. Members of the Committee represent those experts whose achievement, commitment, and personal integrity have been widely acknowledged.

Secondly, books are selected from private publishers and should consist of both student books and teacher guides for grade one to three. Thirdly, book selection and procurement are "liberalized" in that international publishers--including those who are known as "global players" in the publishing business-- could participate in a bidding procedure known as International Competitive Bidding. Fourth, production and distribution of books are given to publishers whose books are selected to be purchased. Fifth, books are directly delivered from the publishers' warehouses to each individual school, rather than following conventional routes as from Kanwil's (Provincial Office of MOEC) warehouses down to Kandep (District Office of MOEC) and then sent to schools. Sixth, textbooks are procured at the provincial level --in which 90% of the total expenditures are allocated--and for that, each Kanwil is given authority to select only one title for each subject and grade for distribution to all schools in a given province.

These innovative policies have significantly changed the entire scheme of book provision with government tending to become the regulator and the private sector the main actors--a trend that is also occurring in many other sectors.

Implication of Reform: The Crucial Importance of Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation

Reforms in the book distribution system are aimed at strengthening monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that books reach the schools and are used in the teaching-learning process so that they will have significant impact on quality improvement. (Note 4) The monitoring activities are focused on providing timely and accurate information regarding actual receipt of books in the schools and their use. Three main indicators are used: (1) how well teachers, parents, and administrators understand the objectives and procedures of the system?; (2) how effectively books are distributed to schools?; and (3) how effectively teachers and students use them in the classroom,

and what is the effect of the books on quality improvement?

These activities involve 29 state IKIPs and Schools of Education at Universities in 27 provinces, and the Office of Inspectorate General of MOEC. Since 1996, two kinds of activities have been carried out: conducting an indepth study of 162 primary schools (6 schools in each province); conducting a quantitative survey of 810 primary and 810 junior secondary schools (30 schools in each province) to get baseline data on book condition at schools.

Each shipment of books to a school includes a simple self- addressed, postage-paid postcard which provides the following information: (a) date books received; (b) condition upon arrival; and (c) sufficient quantity or not. The returned postcards are then analyzed and reported by independent experts of IKIP. More in-depth and comprehensive studies are conducted by independent experts of IKIP and the universities. They employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data/information through a series of interviews, observations, documentary studies, and checklists.

During school visits which take 5 to 6 days in each sampled school, they conduct interviews with principals, teachers, and parents, asking specific questions about the new textbooks, how well they are liked, if they seem to be helpful, problems related to book deliveries, etc. They also interview a small number of students asking similar questions, and observe and report activities of two or three classroom sessions involving textbooks. Sampled schools are assigned to represent different locations, i.e. urban, suburban, and rural; public and private, Java and outside Java, better served and under-served schools.

Reading Promotion Program: In Response to the Challenges of 21st Century

The overall on-going efforts to increase book availability at schools (to reach the ratio of 1:1--one book for each student at basic education) and to improve their quality are also followed by a reading promotion program. This is a priority in Indonesia at present and has officially been declared as a national movement by President Soeharto on May 1995. This massive program is based on a belief that the creation of a reading society is a must, a *conditio sine qua non*, for the nation to successfully enter the 21st Century. The month of May every year has been declared "The National Book Month" and September has been declared "The Month of Visiting Library." In December 1995, the Society Association for Reading Interest Promotion (Perhimpunan Masyarakat Gemar Membaca, PMGM) was established in Jakarta representing those individual citizens concerned with reading promotion.

In addition, at the Book and Reading Development Project, there is a component dealing with reading promotion under the coordination of MOEC's Center for Communication Technology (Pustekom) in cooperation with PMGM. Its main targets are primary and secondary school students in addition to the community at large.

The challenge of book and reading promotion in Indonesia is obviously not easy, since many facts show that reading interest and behavior of Indonesian people, including school children, are still low. For instance, IEA has conducted a study covering the samples of 3,169 fourth graders of primary (SD) and 1,929 second graders of junior secondary schools (SLTP) from seven selected provinces. The sampled provinces of SDs were Riau, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, and East Nusa Tenggara; while for SLTPs were Riau, Lampung, Jakarta, West Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, and East Nusa Tenggara.

One of the most disturbing findings is that Indonesian primary school students

placed 26th out of 27 countries participating in the study, mastering only 36% of test items. Of the 27 countries, the highest scores were recorded by Finish students and the lowest were by Venezuelans. In Indonesia, among the seven provinces, the highest average scores were achieved by Yogyakarta (49%), followed by Jakarta (44.5%), East Java (38.6%), Riau (36.5%), Central Java (34.8%), East Nusa Tenggara (32.6%), and West Java (32%). At the junior secondary school level, Indonesian students placed 5th of 5 countries surveyed in Asia, i.e. Hong Kong 75.5%, Singapore 74%, Thailand 65.1%, the Philippines 52.6%, and Indonesia 51.7% (World Bank, 1992: 15-16; World Bank, 1994: 74).

This research has also revealed that both at primary and junior secondary schools, home-related variables have a greater effect on student reading behavior than school or teacher-related factors. This finding points toward the importance of massive involvement of families and parents in any effort at reading promotion.

Book Provision for Multicultural Students: Some Recent Development

Another development is that in the last three years there has been a growing concern with the importance of considering multicultural issues into schoolbook provision programs. This concern grows out of a belief that in such a culturally diverse country as Indonesia, schoolbooks should also be culturally sensitive and recognize varied students' sociocultural backgrounds which affect their learning.

How is cultural diversity taken into account in schoolbook provision in Indonesia? In 1993, the DGPSE initiated a substantial effort to recognize student sociocultural backgrounds in reading book selection and provision. Preceding the decision taken by the Director General of which books to be purchased by the project, books are read by sampled students in different regions. The goal is to identify which books are more interesting to children. Each title is read by 10 students from different locations, and samples consist of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders of primary schools. Three indicators are used, i.e.: degree of "interestingness," readability, and meaningfulness. Annually, no fewer than 600 titles are read by students, of which some 400 titles meet the criteria. On the basis of this survey, the DGPSE classifies the books into two categories: 1) those books assumed to be "culturally-fair" are sent to all or most of schools; 2) those books which tend to be "culturally-bound" are allocated to schools in certain provinces-- usually around 10-15% of the total book titles. However some locally-content reading books are also assigned to the national level (distributed to schools outside its own province) to enrich students with knowledge of other cultures.

In spite of many commonalities in choice, it was evident that sociocultural backgrounds played an important role in affecting student choices. In a given geographical location, there were books which were highly favored by students (as indicated by scores) while in other locations the same books scored low. In more specific cases, such books as the folk stories of Wayan Bunter of Bali, Si Kabayan of Priangan- West Java, Si Malin Kundang of Minangkabau- West Sumatra, and other local-based folk stories tended to be scored higher in their own ethnic group location, despite the fact that some of these kinds of stories were also interesting to students of other ethnic groups.

It was also interesting that in a location where the use of Bahasa Indonesia was dominant, children tended to have better comprehension of the content of a book, a higher percentage of completing all pages of the book, and less frequent encountering of words, idioms, and paragraphs that they did not understand. Some locally-oriented

words and idioms used by writers in their books were not fully understood by students from other locations, e.g.. Javanese idioms by Sundanese children, Balinese words by Malay children of Medan and Jambi, and the like.

These findings support the hypothesis that the degree of "interestingness" and readability of a book are to some extent relative to who are the readers, from which cultural background they come, and how much culturally-specific content appears in the book. It is also clear that the closer the content of a book is with the life of children, the more interesting the book is to those children.

Diversity of student multicultural backgrounds is also accommodated by use of reading books with local content, which each province has the authority to choose. Like all other schoolbooks to be used at schools, local content reading books should also be legalized by the Director General of PSE. However, the evaluation process for these books is done by each Kanwil (Provincial Office of MOEC). Data at the Directorate of Educational Facilities shows that most of local content reading books contain local stories, traditions, customs, heroes, and languages. Unfortunately, not all provinces could provide these kinds of books because of the lack of quality writers and the absence of publishers.

As mentioned earlier, the textbook project for junior secondary schools is managed under several innovative policies, one of which is that textbook procurement is carried out by Kanwils in 27 provinces. From the list of textbook titles that have been approved by the NTEC, each Kanwil has to nominate at least three titles for each subject and grade. Of these titles, each Kanwil has eventually to come up with only one title to be produced for distribution to all junior secondary schools in its province. Preceding the process of book selection, each Kanwil has to conduct a survey of a limited sample of students and teachers in at least 10 schools to identify which book is the most appropriate for purchase by the project. The criteria for selection are no longer related to quality of content, language, graphical presentation, and security aspects; rather the main criterion is local relevance to a particular province.

From the perspective of book writers, this would imply that from the very beginning they should consider the targeted provinces in which their books are expected to be bought by the project. This policy is consistent with research findings in the area of multicultural education in that the ability of teachers and students to use and to benefit from the textbooks depend on the extent to which the textbooks meet the needs of users and are in line with their characteristics (Gollnick and Chinn, 1991).

It is clear that schoolbook provision (both textbooks and reading books) in Indonesia is moving toward incorporating multicultural aspects of student life and their diverse cultural environments. This development is still in its early stage, and the pendulum is gradually moving from the extremely "national- oriented" education (including educational books) which had long neglected the reality of diverse cultures--because of political reasons which were judged as valid at the time--toward education that recognizes local cultures, traditions, styles, and levels of community development.

Notes

1. SD (Sekolah Dasar) is general primary school under the Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Home Affairs; MI (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) is the Islamic Primary School under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.
2. According to this study, at primary school the correlations between pupils' reading behavior and the frequency of borrowing books from school library, number of

books in school library, and presence of school library were .18, .07, and .05, respectively. For junior secondary school, the correlations between student reading behavior and the frequency of visiting school library and number of books in school library were .12 and .01.

3. The Pancasila (The Five Basic Principles) is the official state ideology which consists of five principles which are formulated in the preamble of the UUD 1945 (The National Constitution) as follows: (1) Belief in the One and only One God; (2) Just and civilized humanity; (3) The unity of Indonesia; (4) Democracy guided by the inner wisdom of deliberations and representatives; and (5) Social justice for all the Indonesian people.
4. In this project, I was assigned as a Coordinator of monitoring and evaluation, covering 27 provinces.

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