

## **A. BACKGROUND**

In 2004-05 UNESCO launched *UNESCO/OECD Early Childhood Policy Review Project* with the purpose of providing selected participating countries with an opportunity to review their early childhood policies and identify concrete options and strategies for improvement. Indonesia—together with three other countries (i.e., Brazil, Kazakhstan, and Kenya)-- participated in the review project. Results of the study identified both achievements as well as challenges facing Indonesia's early childhood care and education.

The achievements identified by the 2004-2005 UNESCO Policy Review Project include the following nine points as the following:

(a) significant changes in the ways in which early childhood services have been conceptualized, programmed and delivered in Indonesia by the dint of the creation of PADU Directorate in 2001;

(b) the role of this relatively young directorate has been instrumental in a significant way in streamlining of non-formal services within the government administrative structure and making these community-initiated non-formal services recognized and reckoned by government planners (This, in turn, opened up new opportunities for young children to receive center-based services and thus extended early childhood education services to disadvantaged children);

(c) the strategy adopted by PADU Directorate in diversifying service venues by reaching out to mobilize communities, private enterprises, NGOs, parents and local authorities has resulted in increased awareness—on the part of general public-- about the importance of early childhood and this heightened public awareness has also increased demand for early childhood education services; this social mobilization has resulted in partnerships at local level which develop a sense of ownership on the part of community at large towards the provision and delivery of early childhood education programs in the regions;

(d) increasingly more systematic parenting education as result of active promotional activities conducted by PADU Directorate; (e) initial steps already taken by the government to "integrate" services for children and parenting education as has thus far happened in the delivery of Posyandu and BKB;

(f) initial steps already taken by PADU Directorate to help ensure coordination among related different actors at the system level by establishing two different inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to address two different levels of early childhood

programs provision: the ECE Forum for high-level government officials coordinating policy, and the ECE Consortium for middle-level technical government officials and professionals to take care of programmatic matters;

(g) initial steps already taken toward quality assurance by creating a relatively standardized curriculum—the so called “Competence-based Curriculum” developed by MoNE Center for Curriculum Development in 2002; the creation of this standardized curriculum reflects MoNE’s awareness of the need to embrace --both pedagogically and administratively-- all different types of services currently in place;

(h) improved training programs for early childhood educators at different levels have been provided by various MoNE directorates; and

(i) inclusion of legal recognition of early childhood education (i.e., Article 28) in the new law 20/2003 on National Education System, which provides legislative status of the early childhood education as a national program prior to basic education.

## **B. PURPOSES OF THE STUDY**

The purposes of the study are two fold: (1) to update the previously conducted study by UNESCO (2004/2005) whose data were mostly issued between 2000 – 2002 period, and (2) to see if, since the publication of the UNESCO report two years ago, there has been a significant progress made in Indonesia’a ECCE services as reflected in the currently available published data.

## **C. FOCI OF THE STUDY**

Consistent with the major issues examined in the previous UNESCO study, the foci of the present study are placed on four major issues: (1) ECCE access and equity, (2) quality of ECCE services provision, (3) coordination of ECCE sponsors, and (4) ECCE budget allocations.

## **D. METHODOLOGY**

Consistent with the purposes of the study, the methodology being used in this study is eclectic in nature. Major data sources include (1) published data (statistics), (2) interviews with relevant authorities to glean on future policy directions for ECCE services, especially relative to the issues of expansion of access and improvement of intersectoral coordination, (3) published documents, to gain insights into public discourses which may serve as a precursor to new policy direction relevant to ECCE

services provision, and (4) direct observations in the center-based services to gain a general feel of what aspects of quality service are being attempted in the context of real-life ECCE services provision.

## **E. FINDINGS**

In what follows, general findings shall be presented and discussed in the order consistent with the order of the major issues being examined.

### **1. ACCESS AND EQUITY**

*(1). ECCE Participation rate is low nationwide, with higher concentration in rich urban areas.*

According to the most recent statistics from PAUD Directorate, overall there are about 28.4 million children (aged 0-6 years) in the country and 46% of these children have access to ECCE services (*EFA MDA Indonesia, 2007*). This figure contains new data sets on Qur'anic ECE recently transferred from Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) as result of an MoU established between MoRA and MoNE last year or so. In the recent past, the participation rates were 28.4 % (in 2005), and 27.8% (in 2004).

The distribution of ECCE access has caused a great concern. Consider this as an evidence: in the 0-5 age group bracket, about 50 percent in the richest quintile participate in ECCE services program, compared with only 20 percent of the children in the poorest quintile (World Bank, 2006:8). The gaps also prevail when the participation is seen across provinces. For instance, for children ages 3-6 years, 43.7% of the population in Yogyakarta receive ECCE services, whereas—in contrast—only 6.1% children in Maluku enjoy the same services. Children in other five provinces (Irian Jaya Barat, Maluku, Maluku Utara, Kalimantan Barat, & NTT) have approximately similarly low access: below 10%

*EFA MDA Indonesia 2007*— a most recent official document prepared by Ministry of National Education (May 2007)—explains that two reasons might have caused this low participation and inequity of ECCE services: (1) poor families cannot afford to pay fees for the ECCE services, and (2) insufficient number of ECCE services available in the poor families' neighborhood.

*(2). Various attempts are being made to address the issue of low participation in and inequitable access to ECCE services.*

A number of new initiatives have been devised and attempts have been made to increase participation and reduce the access gaps to ECCE services, including the following: (1) developing alternative models for ECCE provision to overcome scarcity of ECCE institutions, including building more new kindergartens (TKs) as a pilot project, pioneering one-roof TKs utilizing unused SD (primary school) premises, and developing a wide array of alternative forms of model services, e.g., "Foster Kindergartens" (TK Asuh), "Nature Kindergarten" (TK Alam), "Kindergartens within the premises of places of worship" (TK di Lingkungan Tempat Ibadah), "Mobile Kindergarten" (TK Keliling), "Children-of-the-Beach Kindergarten" (TK Anak Pantai), "Workplace-based Kindergarten" (TK di Lingkungan Kerja), (2) revitalizing playgroups by employing academically better-prepared personnels, (3) revitalizing Infant Family Development Systems (BKBs) by complementing them with personnels specializing in early childhood education, and (4) providing start-up block grants to encourage establishment of more community-initiated ECCE non-formal services.

While the initiatives are potentially workable as they are responsive to local needs, in this new decentralized system where not all local governments are aware of the importance of investing in early childhood care and education and as matter of fact the majority of local government officials lack the capacity to handle ECCE services programs (World Bank, 2006), it is suggested that the central government should be more tactful in initiating these well-intentioned programs by, for instance, involving local authorities and community leaders and NGO representatives in designing, running, evaluating and funding operational costs of the programs. As the time passes by, the central government gradually withdraws the assistance and leaves the responsibility with the local government.

## **2. QUALITY**

*(1). Government of Indonesia is committed to providing quality ECCE services to all children and has been making initial attempts to upgrade ECCE teaching force and developing various standards to anchor quality measures*

Quality of ECCE services program in Indonesia is difficult to assess as there has not been any study specifically conducted to address this important issue (Hajam, 2005). In the absence of empirical studies, one can only speculate on such an elusive concept of quality by indirectly assessing some of its indicators such as educational background of ECCE teachers currently in service, in-service training

available in the country, availability of standards against which to judge the quality of all programs serving children and young families, availability of standards and resources for early childhood curriculum, and coordinated system of supervision and monitoring and evaluation (e.g., Hajam 2005; World Bank 2006). Using these indicators as a yardstick, one will find the quality of ECCE services in Indonesia leaving a great deal to be desired. The following reasons would justify the conclusion: at present there are only about 6% of ECCE educators currently serving the children have the required D2 (i.e. five semester post-secondary diploma program) in early childhood education; there exist only few universities offering early childhood training program in the country; the government is now still in early stages of developing sets of standards (e.g., standards of minimum services; of contents; of competence; and of processes); coordination is still fragmented with regards to programs supervision and monitoring and evaluation.

Nonetheless, there is a big hope that in the near future the Government of Indonesia will be able to set the quality services in place. One major reason for this optimism is that there have been some concrete attempts made toward this direction. One example is the inclusion of programs specifically intended to address the issue of quality into RENSTRA 2005-2009, including "formulation and development of various standards for personnel, facilities, infrastructure, curriculum...for early childhood education." (*EFA MDA Indonesia 2007:21*). A second real example of the seriousness of government's commitment to quality improvement is what has been done by the Directorate General for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel: in a national HIMPAUDI conference held in Bandung (June 17-19, 2007), Director of Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel announced to the audience that for ECCE subsector some 85 person/degree scholarships (79 for S1, and 6 for S2 degrees) were already granted and the fellows have now been in program since 2006; and another group of 397 ECCE educators will be sent to ECCE degree-granting programs in various universities to commence their academic programs in September 2007 (331 grantees for S1 [comparable to BA], 44 for S2 [Masters], and 22 for S3 [doctorate] degrees)

Although--in terms of number-- these initial degree-earning teachers upgrading programs might be small given the magnitude of ECCE teaching workforce in the country, these attempts to increase academic qualifications

ECCE educators represent a commendable achievement in Indonesian system whose financial resources are limited and competing needs abound.

Other quality-improvement policy directions which have been made public include "holding periodical symposiums, seminars/workshops, trainings (both ToT and regular teacher training), series of reviews of and discussions on books on ECCE , studies on new theories and methodologies, and by developing and publishing various ECCE related references" (Jalal, 2004:42).

*(2). Left almost exclusively to private providers, ECCE programs in Indonesia widely vary in their quality. Several case studies conducted to examine what happens in selected kindergartens show this wide array of variations in program quality.*

For the purposes of the present study, ten kindergartens (six in Bandung and the other four in Makassar) were selected as sites for case studies. The purpose of this case study is to gain general insights into some dimensions of program quality including ratio of teachers to pupils, educational background (and ECCE training background) of school principals and teachers, intensity of interaction (between teachers and children, and among children) in the classroom, space available in the school premises for children to move about, and parents-and-school relations, and school fees charged to parents and kinds of activities and facilities provided by the school in the context of the ECCE services.

To gain the necessary data to answer research questions, interviews with ten school principals and ten teachers were conducted, and classroom observations in the ten kindergartens were carried out. Guided by research questions as initial major categories, data were analyzed qualitatively by comparing and contrasting the data which are drawn from multiple sources. Data analyses produce the following patterns:

- Teacher-pupils ratio in these 10 kindergartens is 1:20, with only two kindergartens have two adults in every session.
- Classroom interactions in these 10 kindergartens are mainly dominated by teachers, with only occasional opportunities for children to express their ideas during the sessions in the classroom;
- Classroom space is very limited and children are confined into this classroom space having to do seat works; only two kindergartens have ample open space outdoors for the children to move about during recess.

- Relations between kindergartens and parents are generally business like and these happened when parents came to school premises the first time when they registered their children; only two kindergartens have a regular contact with parents
- Fees charged to parents in these ten kindergartens vary, ranging from Rps 10,000.00 per month [lowest, equals 1.1 US\$] to Rps 380.000,00 [highest] and teachers' salaries in these kindergartens remarkably vary, from Rps 50,000 per month [lowest, equals 5.4 US\$] to approximately Rps 1,500,000 per month. With these widely different fees, services provided to children are generally limited to classroom instruction, with only three kindergartens provide additional services such as occasional medical check up (and treatments) and counseling services.

While, admittedly, this limited multiple-case study cannot claim representativeness to the complexities characterizing Indonesia in general and qualities of ECCE services in particular, findings of this multi-site case study provide a strong support to the following research-based generalizations.

*(a). Effective leadership plays a vital role in assuring good teaching-learning processes to happen in the classroom. School principals and teachers who understand who children are and how children learn tend to adopt child-centered curriculum development and learner-centered instructional strategies.*

In this case study—as evident in data from two kindergartens—principals and teachers make collaborative efforts to ensure that every child is well taken care of both as an individual as well as a member of the community of learners as a collective. Principals observe classrooms on a daily basis and, together with teachers, reach out to parents to report on children's progress on a weekly basis. Teachers in these two kindergartens make conscious efforts to treat children at individual levels allowing these young learners choices and affording personalized scaffolds to help ensure every child develops optimally at their own pace in accordance with their developmental status.

*(b). Teachers who have ECCE training background tend to be more explorative (and experimental) in their teaching than do their fellow instructors who do not have background in ECCE pedagogy, which tend to adopt strictly*

*academic approach and treat young children in the same way as they treat older students.*

Teaching is decision making, and in deciding on what to do and what not to do, teachers are guided by a set of beliefs about what can (not) and should (not) be done under certain circumstances. In this multiple-case study, teachers who reported not to have opportunities to learn ECCE pedagogy tend to be “textbook-driven” in their teaching. These teachers, who represent a majority in this study, teach in a lock-step way, following a teacher-centered teaching orientation. In contrast, two other teachers, who reported to continually attend ECCE conferences and update their knowledge base on this specific field, make various attempts to vary their teaching strategies, including taking children outside classrooms and engage children in a individualized project-like learning activity.

*(c). As fees charged to parents represent a major (if not all) part of operational funds available in private kindergartens to run ECCE services, quality of services rendered to children depend almost totally on these monies. These monies are also strongly correlated with teachers’ dedication to their job.*

In this multi-site case study, data clearly indicate that kindergartens which charge high fees are able to provide in their school premises ample learning facilities and educative play toys both in and outside the classrooms. With these relatively complete support systems and—presumably with reasonably decent remuneration—teachers in these kindergartens make the time and efforts to vary their teaching-learning activities and individualize their attention in helping children to develop along with their interests and developmental patterns.

### **3. COORDINATION**

*(1). Government of Indonesia has made initial steps towards establishing a unified intersectoral coordination for a more holistic and integrated ECCE services*

Because of its multifaceted nature, management of ECCE calls for the involvement of many agencies from many different ministries. In Indonesian context, 9 (nine) different agencies are involved in various aspects of ECCE services. As of now, coordination is still a problem—that is, each government institution has its own initiatives (from program designs, program implementation, to training of educators for their own institutional purposes) and, in consequence, a great deal of overlaps

occurs in the use of resources and implementation of some aspects of programs. In addition, because of these multiple actors taking care of their own programs, no single institution is informed in a great detail of what is being done by other agencies in the name of children of the country as a whole.

Actually, new awareness has for the past few years emerged among few education leaders in Indonesia about the need for a consolidated body—with a clear authority—which can represent the country with explicit responsibility to take care of early childhood care and education in a holistic and integrated way. For instance, Fasli Jalal (2003) laments that many problems facing PAUD stem from a poor coordination between government, and community, which in turn results in partial, fragmented, unclear, and overlapping early childhood programs.

The same concerns over the lack of good coordination among different sectors who take care of some aspects of ECCE have since three years ago come into speeches of education leaders. Even in a most recent professional conference (June 17, 2007), Dr. Ace Suryadi—Director General of Non-formal and Informal Education, who is a successor of Dr. Jalal-- in his speech before members of *HIMPAUDI* (i.e., Indonesian Association of Early Childhood Educators) still echoed Dr. Jalal's concern by saying that "we need to really coordinate with our colleagues in different sectors such as Directorate Management of Kindergarten and Elementary Education to ensure that what we are talking about today is in line with their programs so that we can come up with a solid program" (personal minute of the conference, June 17, 2007)

While the awareness about the importance of intersectoral coordination has surfaced among few leaders for the past 3-4 years, only last year was the momentum for coordination created by a team chaired by now Deputy Minister for Human Resource Development and Culture of BAPPENAS. The team-- whose members come from various ministries/agencies concerned with ECCE services-- has been working on a more "Holistic and Integrated Early Childhood Care and Education" by conducting a series of national, intersectoral discussions. The team has now begun drafting a general guidebook for Early Childhood Care and Education under auspices from UNICEF Jakarta Office.

If one analyzes this working-draft of guidebook, one will find convincing arguments for the establishment of a more holistic and integrated ECCE services program and its more effective and efficient coordination among different sectors to

support its successful implementation. Arguing from human resource development perspectives and the nature of children as a whole human being, this document—which will hopefully serve as a precursor to the formulation of a more formal and binding policy document—contains also initial thoughts on division of roles and responsibilities for every ministry concerned with ECCE services, including lines of coordination between central offices and their regional ministerial offices (at provincial as well as district/city levels) as their constituencies. The basic principle adopted in this proposed holistic and integrated ECCE services program is “life span” or “life cycle” of children based on the ecological theory of Urie Bronferbrenner (1997). An example of matrix of treatments from National Family Planning Coordinating Body (*BKKBN*) is presented below.

### COORDINATION OF A HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATED EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

#### MINISTRY/AGENCY: BKKBN (AN EXAMPLE)

AGE	ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE CARRIED OUT	ACTIVITIES WHICH SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT	ACTIVITIES WHICH SHOULD BE COORDINATED	
			CENTRAL AGENCIES	LOCAL AGENCIES
Embriotic phase	<u>For pregnant women's family:</u> 1. Promotion of mother, infant, and child survival 2. Antenatal care promotion 3. Pregnancy care extension 4. KIE for pregnant family for pregnancy care and check 5. Early Childhood Character Development (PKSD) 6. Supply of books, modules, manuals, etc 7. Integrated BKB-KIA pilot	<u>For pregnant women and family:</u> 1. Campaign and socialization of pregnancy care and child raising at embriotic phase 2. KIE Attachment and maternal bonding 3. Family economic empowerment 4. Motherhood preparation 5. Education of child developmental raising 6. Family planning 7. Family consultation center 8. PLBK training as advisory officers 9. Cadre training on holistic BKB 10. BKB cadre apprenticeship in PAUD 11. Refreshing integrated BKB-PAUD-PSYANDU Work Groups	1. Campaign and socialization of integratedly holistic PAUD (BKKBN, Mint of Health, MoNE, MoSA, KPP, TP PKK) 2. Family consultation center (integrated substances and institutions (BKKBN, Mint of Health, MoNE, MoSA, KPP, TP, PKK) 3. Training on holistic BKB for cadres (BKKBN, MoNE, Mint of Health) 4. Integrated monitoring and evaluation (related sectors)	1. Campaign and socialization of integratedly holistic PAUD (District/city gov, TP PKK, SK PD PKB) 2. Integrated service of holistic BKB ( Local Gov, relevant sectors) 3. Family consultation center (integrated substances) as pilot reference in each district/city (related sectors, NGO, professional orgs) 4. Training on holistic BKB for cadres (BKKBN, Min of Health, MoNE) 5. Advisory services by PLKB, teachers, nurses, NGO, etc. 6. Integrated monitoring and evaluation
0-2 years	<u>For young child family and raisers</u> 1. BKB materials extension for families 2. Child developmental stimulation 3. Child developmental monitoring 4. Effective raising	1. Campaign and socialization of pregnancy care and child raising at embriotic phase focusing on " two first years of golden age" 2. Family economic empowerment 3. Motherhood preparation 4. Education of child developmental raising 5. Family planning	1. Campaign and socialization of integratedly holistic PAUD 2. Family consultation center (integrated substance) 3. Training on holistic BKB for cadres 4. Integrated monitoring and evaluation	1. Campaign and socialization of integratedly holistic PAUD (District/city gov, TP PKK, SK PD PKB) 2. Integrated service of holistic BKB ( Local Gov, relevant sectors) 3. Family consultation center (integrated substances) as pilot reference in each

	<p>methods and communication</p> <p>5. Contraceptive services</p>	<p>6. Family consultation center</p> <p>7. PLBK training as advisory officers</p> <p>8. Cadre training on holistic BKB</p> <p>9. BKB cadre apprenticeship in PAUD</p> <p>10.Refreshing integrated BKB-PAUD-PSYANDU Work Groups</p>		<p>district/city (related sectors, NGO, professional orgs)</p> <p>4. Training on holistic BKB for cadres (BKKBN, Min of Health, MoNE)</p> <p>5. Advisory services by PLKB, teachers, nurses, NGO, etc.</p> <p>6. Integrated monitoring and evaluation</p>
3-4 years	<p>1. BKB extension/workshop for families</p> <p>2. Developmental stimulation</p> <p>3. Effective raising methods and communication with child</p> <p>4. Contraceptive services</p>	<p>1. Campaign and socialization of pregnancy care and child raising at embryotic phase</p> <p>2. Family economic empowerment</p> <p>3. Motherhood preparation</p> <p>4. Education of child developmental raising</p> <p>5. Family planning</p> <p>6. Family consultation center</p> <p>7. PLBK training as advisory officers</p> <p>8. Cadre training on holistic BKB</p> <p>9. BKB cadre apprenticeship in PAUD</p> <p>10.Refreshing integrated BKB-PAUD-PSYANDU Work Groups</p>	<p>1. Campaign and socialization of integratedly holistic PAUD</p> <p>2. Family consultation center (integrated substance)</p> <p>3. Training on holistic BKB for cadres</p> <p>4. Integrated monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p>1. Campaign and socialization of integratedly holistic PAUD (District/city gov, TP PKK, SK PD PKB)</p> <p>2. Integrated service of holistic BKB ( Local Gov, relevant sectors)</p> <p>3. Family consultation center (integrated substances) as pilot reference in each district/city (related sectors, NGO, professional orgs)</p> <p>4. Training on holistic BKB for cadres (BKKBN, Kesehatan, Pendidikan)</p> <p>5. Advisory services by PLKB, teachers, nurses, NGO, etc.</p> <p>6. Integrated monitoring and evaluation</p>
5-6 years	<p>1. BKB extension for families</p> <p>2. BKB Kemas</p> <p>3. Child developmental stimulation</p> <p>4. Child developmental monitoring</p> <p>5. Child raising methods</p>	<p>1. Family consultation center</p> <p>2. Play with children</p> <p>3. PLBK training as advisory officers</p> <p>4. Training on holistic BKB for cadres</p> <p>5. BKB cadre apprenticeship in PAUD</p>	<p>1. Campaign and socialization of integratedly holistic PAUD</p> <p>2. Family consultation center (integrated substance)</p> <p>3. Training on holistic BKB for cadres</p> <p>4. Integrated monitoring and evaluation</p>	

As this “national team” works across sectors, a special arrangement should systematically be made to ensure that this cross-cutting ECCE national program works as intended. One sure step to take is the issuance of an umbrella legal basis in the form of ministerial regulation which would lend a legal authority to the team to work across ministries. One good candidate idea for this purpose is to put this team legally under the authority of the Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare (*Kemenko Kestra*), with technical job assignments under the National Development Planning Board (*BAPPENAS*), which has for the past few years *de facto* been coordinating the work of this as yet to be inaugurated intersectoral team.

#### **4. BUDGET ALLOCATIONS**

(1). *Government investment in ECCE is low and it needs improvement to increase participation and mitigate inequity in ECCE services.*

The public spending allocation for Early Childhood Care and Education is below one percent of the total education-sector public spending. While primary and secondary education accounts for approximately 80 percent of the education budget, expenditure on ECCE is only 0.45 percent. This represents about 0.05 of GDP—which is extremely low when compared to other developing countries (World Bank 2006). In the *EFA MDA Indonesia 2007* document, it is shown that there was a 67 percent increase of budget allocation for education sector in its nominal amount from the budget allocated in 2005; when seen in terms of proportion, however, ECCE budget remains the lowest, constituting only about 0.40-0.50% of the total MoNE program budget.

While from the perspective of the order of priority in the national development program—which has determined the position of ECCE in the bottom of the list-- it is understandable that budget allocation for ECCE program is lower than those allocated for the other six higher-priority programs, the proportion of 0.40-0.50 of the total education-sector program is simply too low. This almost negligible percentage is disheartening especially when we consider the irreparable consequences we have suffered because of this under-investment of ECCE program.

Official explanation for this sorry fact is already presented in *EFA MDA Indonesia 2007* document: limited national budget for education in general. One can argue, then, that an alternative arrangement of funding should be sought after, and other possibilities should be generated.

Given limited financial resources available at the central government's disposal, and considering that ECCE is also under the responsibility of local governments, it is only fair that the provision of budget allocation for this important subsector is also borne by local governments. The standard fiscal balance currently stipulated under the decentralization law can be applied to determine the local governments' level of budget contributions for ECCE services development. In this way, overall public investments for ECCE services can be significantly increased and—in so doing— a better sense of ownership of ECCE programs can also be promoted on the part of local governments.

Contributions from both central and local governments--when combined together-- would certainly make a better share of public funding. And local government's active involvement in funding ECCE would help government officials better relate to ECCE providers who serve the children in their respective localities. This close linkage between local government officials with their community in working together to benefit their own children can potentially ensure genuinely meaningful collective educative engagement.

## **V. POLICY DIRECTIONS: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD**

The findings presented in the preceding subsection are general in nature. As such, they are not in themselves operational. To make the findings translatable into doable (plans of) activities, presented below are some general as well as specific suggestions.

### **A. General Suggestions**

As recognized explicitly by Dr. Fasli Jalal—a former Director General of Out-of-School Education—and as also stipulated in a series of laws governing roles and responsibilities of various levels of government under the decentralized system currently in practice, the following are suggestions emanating from the findings of this policy review study:

- (1). Central Government, represented by Ministry of National Education and in close coordination with related ministries at the central level, needs to take a lead in a more explicit way to enable better coordination with both provincial and district level governments in taking care of this massive issue of Early Childhood Care and Education. This better coordination is imperative considering that local governments have no experience in managing ECCE in its complexity because-- in their previous experiences as part of a centralized system in the past-- they used to position themselves in a relatively passive mode of participation. This coordination should include capacity building in needs assessment, program design, program implementation, supervision, and monitoring and evaluation, and program budget allocation planning.
- (2). Together with leaders of local governments, leaders of MoNE central office need to develop doable long-term work plans for ECCE services development and budget allocations with clear and sustainable funding sources to ensure

provision of quality and equitable services to meet the needs of young children in their jurisdiction.

(3). Further on, MoNE needs also to educate its counterparts in both provincial and district level government offices as to how to develop standards to ensure quality ECCE services and how to monitor program implementation in the field. Part of this capacity building is to also develop workable mechanisms for ensuring sustainable funding provision for ECCE services program operation and further development using resources available at local government's disposal. The principle should be affirmatively pro-poor so that participation of children from disadvantaged families is ensured.

(4). Within the confines of existing laws and regulations under the current decentralized education system, MoNE together with its provincial and district level government counterparts needs to develop a relatively fixed and explicit division of roles and responsibilities both at intergovernmental levels (i.e., central as opposed to local) as well as intragovernmental agencies within the local government level to ensure sustainable provision of ECCE services for all children within each locality.

(5). When appropriate and desirable, all agreements achieved between the central government and local governments need to be put in writing and these agreed-upon arrangements should be used as a reference to guide ECCE services provision and management in daily practice. This reference document can be used as a basis for periodic assessment of local governments' performance in this subsector of Early Childhood Education.

(6). If there was a choice between universalizing senior high school and universalizing ECCE services to young learners, the latter is more justifiable for the following reasons. First, worldwide, international studies have established that investments in early childhood care and education represent the most cost-effective and efficient way of assuring human resource development for a nation-state, especially true for a developing country like Indonesia whose resources are limited. Second, considering that early years of human life represent a golden moment which comes only once in a life time and (mal)treatment of this early age can have irreversible impacts on children, early childhood education is a most strategic point of departure for ensuring a better, more well-developed citizenry for Indonesia in the future. Third, if this

course of action is taken, and quality ECCE services are ensured for every child in the country, Indonesia will have a strong foundation to further develop her human capital.

## **B. Specific Suggestions for Specific Issues**

With reference to current major issues of concern within ECCE subsector in Indonesia, suggestions presented below can be used as specific strategies to address specific issues identified under each (sub)headings.

### **(1) *Improving ECCE Access and Equity***

- Attempts to expand access to ECCE services for targeted young children should start with accurate data development on who among 0-6 year olds are presently in and who are out of ECCE services. Needs assessment should also be carried out carefully to determine what kinds of ECCE services are likely most suitable to meet the needs of children in each locality (unit of analysis can be village level or smaller entities within the village); and relatively detailed registries need to be made which identify what kinds of community resources are available in this neighborhood.
- The already developed database should then be consistently used as a basis to begin to do consciousness-raising activities to draw community's attention about the importance of early childhood care and education to ensure children's multifaceted healthy growth and development as a whole person.
- Together with relevant local government officials, local community leaders, representatives of NGOs and other social organizations available in the locality, and young families with 0-6 years old children, MoNE officials need to initiate informal meetings to talk about the importance of ECCE services for young children's healthy and optimal development. Careful attention should be paid to what they say and the information already collected thus far should be shared during the meetings so that everybody becomes informed about the present

status of children's participation in ECCE services and the needs the community have based on the data development and needs assessment carried out previously.

- This bottom-up deliberations should consistently be used to help local community explore ideas about what is desired by and feasible for the community by using as a basis for this informal talk the kinds of resources available in the locality.
- Once the perceived needs become clear and available resources are identified, talks can be moved forward to address further topics such as how to ensure sustained availability of funds to support daily operation as well as further development of the ECCE services.
- In the same bottom-up fashion, more academic indicators of successful implementation of ECCE services program can also be collectively developed and ways of monitoring and evaluating the program implementation negotiated. In this way the community members get really empowered and ownership of their self-initiated program development and management ensured.

**(2) *Improving ECCE Quality Assurance Measures***

- MoNE needs to closely collaborate with authorities from both provincial and district level governments to ensure that all parties involved in ECCE services provision understand clearly the nature of quality services and the purposes of assuring quality in ECCE services to benefit the children they try to serve.
- To the extent possible, experts from universities available in the locality need to be involved in the discussion about the importance of quality assurance in ECCE services. MoNE needs to encourage local authorities to closely work together with universities within their jurisdiction and/or those within their reach. In this way, locally available human resources can optimally be "utilized" and a shared, genuine sense of ownership of the community-initiated and community-funded ECCE services can be developed to optimally benefit children in their neighborhood.

- MoNE needs to continue providing block grants and various forms of technical assistance to ensure that the “spirit of togetherness” in providing ECCE services for children stays intact and the community members stay informed of what aspects of ECCE services should be (de)emphasized so that they can make informed decisions in managing ECCE services to benefit their children.
- With a strong sense of ownership of the ECCE services program and direct involvement in formulating understanding of what quality ECCE services mean, community members have an organic need to ensure that criteria of quality services are observed on a daily basis.
- Limited multi-site case study conducted for this report has indicated that strong and effective leadership is a must, familiarity with ECCE is imperative, and relatively complete learning facilities and accessible educative play toys are essential if ECCE services are to benefit children optimally. Given that almost all ECCE service providers are private and therefore reliant on fees they charge to parents, and the majority of parents find this money-related issue a great barrier, it is imperative that government—both central and provincial/district levels—provide the necessary financial support to ensure that the ECCE services are accessible to children from disadvantaged families. *BOS* (operational financial aid, which has for the past few years been provided to support the running of programs in elementary, junior secondary, and senior high schools, seems to be in order here. To take care of this issue, MoNE central office can collaborate with MoNE regional offices and regional/district-level government to address its technicalities.

**(3) *Improving Intersectoral Coordination for a More Holistic, Integrated ECCE Services***

- Based on informal talks with some authorities in MoNE and learning from the fact that people feel reluctant to take initiative to coordinate with people from other (sub)sectors for fear of being misunderstood as “intervening” others’ business, a ministerial decision can be formulated and issued which can serve as a legal basis for the institution of intersectoral coordination to ensure a more holistic and integrated

ECCE services provision. This ministerial law and regulation should explicitly specify roles and responsibilities of each concerned ministry with regard to the provision of ECCE services for young children.

- Following the existing line of intersectoral coordination which involves education sector in Indonesia, it is suggested that the role of coordinator be assigned to representative from Coordinating Ministry for People's Welfare.
- With this ministerial decision letter serving as a basis, intersectoral coordination for a more holistic and integrated ECCE services program can operate officially and, with this official status, activities carried out by this unified intersectoral coordinating body can legitimately be funded under its own name (in the budget line of the parent ministry).

**(4) *Increasing Government Investment in ECCE services***

- Consistent with the decentralized education system, Ministry of National Education (MoNE)—representing central government—needs to establish closer and more solid collaboration with both provincial and district levels government in taking care of ECCE services provision which indeed represents a shared responsibility of both central and local governments. This shared responsibility can be translated into a more fixed and long-term division of roles and responsibilities. Consistent with this thinking, a formula of budget allocation for ECCE services provision can be negotiated and determined together.
- To ensure that sufficient budget allocations for ECCE services is included in the recurrent budget of local governments from one year to another, MoNE needs to take initiatives to coordinate and discuss with leaders of local government to determine an agreed-upon proportion of budget to be specifically dedicated to ECCE provision program. This proportion of budget should be sufficient to cover at least operational costs and program development and evaluation, and sustainable availability of the recurrent budget should be ensured from one year to another.

- To ensure continued funding support from the local government, MoNE needs to coordinate and discuss with the local governments to come up with an agreement about the magnitude and sources of funding to ensure that ECCE services are well taken care of and their sustainability guaranteed. As necessary and appropriate, the agreements should be put in writing, and these should be used as a basis for both long-term budget planning and performance of local government in this ECCE subsector.
- Considering that, as of now, not all local governments have within their organization a section/division specifically assigned to take care of ECCE services provision, MoNE central office should encourage the regional/local MoNE offices to establish the badly needed section/division. Once established this new section/division should be assigned to specifically take care of ECCE services in its locality from data development and its periodic update to standards development for quality assurance. In this way, national data base can be developed more systematically and quality improvement efforts can be coordinated more effectively.

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