

# The Evaluation of Community Participation in Basic Education Management

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**Abstract:** Community participation as an important component of educational practices had been taken place in many projects for Indonesian basic education. This study attempted to examine how well was the community participation in innovation programs based on projects and educational levels since the beginning of the 21st century. Data from seven provinces, consisted of 2415 teachers and 1785 parents were analyzed descriptively. The findings revealed that good practices of such participation covered the intensity of involvement, community needs, community satisfaction, communication systems, and partnership between school and community. The participation degree of these components varied among the nine projects in two level of the basic education. While changes kept on going in education, the components never fade away, and the findings would be of benefit as lessons learnt for the future school improvement.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

School is in the middle of society and can be said to have double functioning. First, is to preserve the positive values that exist in the community, in order to inherit the community values that take place properly (Bundu, 2009). Secondly, it is as an institution that can change the values and traditions according to the progress and demands of life and development (Epstein, 2009). Both functions seemed contradictory, but actually are done in the same time. Values that are in accordance with the needs of development remain sustainably preserved, while the unsuitable ones must be changed. Implementing these functions of school become the foundation of community expectations for their progress. To be able to perform the functions of the school community relationship, it is expected to be in harmony (Dreikurs, 1970). Thus, the cooperation and mutual help between school and community are encouraged. In addition, education emerged shared responsibilities between schools, government, and societies.

There are ample evidences to confirm that good practices take place everywhere. As is known, there are sets of good practices that have been or are being

developed by various projects, including those funded by donors at the Ministry of Education and Culture. At the school level, the idea of community participation in education development and implementation can be forms of local wisdom and excellence (ADB 2001, ADB 2004, World Bank, 2000; Sanders, 2001; Cohen-Vogel et al., 2010; Tunison, 2013; Cuellar and Theriot, 2017).

Since the beginning of the XXI century there had been at least nine basic education programs in Indonesia. These nine programs were arguably the mainstream innovation for a number of large and small-scale projects. These programs were known by their unique names (Muljoatmodjo, 2000, Anam, 2006): Science Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP), Creating Learning Community for Children (CLCC), Nusa Tenggara Timur Primary Education Partnership (NTT-PEP), Basic Education Project (BEP), Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) program, Managing Basic Education (MBE), Decentralized Basic Education Project (DBEP), Study on Regional Education Development and Improvement Program sponsored by JICA (REDIP-JICA), and Study on Regional Education Development and Improvement Program sponsored by Indonesian Government (REDIP-G). All the

programs alluded their success and best practices, even though none could be proclaimed as the best. The purpose of this article to evaluate how best the community participation in separate program that would be the exemplar for others.

## 2 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

With regard to community involvement, there were three things needed to be emphasized. First, in general, all programs or projects developed components of community participation. Basically, community participation was integrated in every element of the program (Anam, 2006, Bandur, 2011). Second, some programs explicitly mentioned community participation, for example in MBE, REDIP JICA and REDIP-G, DBEP, CLCC, BEP, and NTT-PEP (Muljoatmodjo, 2004; Bandur, 2012; USAID-Prioritas, 2016; RTI-USAID, 2004). While in SEQIP and CTL programs, community involvement was included in the learning process development and was not specifically developed through training (Zürcher, 2013; Sunarsih, et al., 2017). Third, the forms of community participation in each program were not exactly similar (Anam, 2006). The similarities among programs were the establishment and operationalization of school committee including school implementation team (task force), community participation in developing school development plan and budgeting, in implementing school activities, and in monitoring school performance. The activities were initiated such as workshops for developing community monitoring, regular meetings for designing schedules, and public accountability system.

The distinctive evidences considered to be the good practices of community participation in both REDIP-JICA and REDIP-G were the availability of special community supports to school through special institution like Sub-District Educational Development Team (SDEDT), and true ownership of education and its quality improvement, involvement of all types of Junior Secondary Schools (JSS), synergic approach conducted by the school and the SDEDT in achieving the same objectives through different programs conducted by each party (school and SDEDT). Whereas in MBE, CLCC and NTT-PEP the community supported the children development through direct interaction in the teaching learning process, raising the community awareness, protecting children rights, and focusing teaching learning on health and nutrition for the

lower level of primary school in NTT-PEP (Bandur, 2011; Firman and Tola, 2008).

## 3 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Capacity building to involve communities from the national to the school level was reviewed as follows. At the national level, MBE and CLCC have similarities in the preparation of trainers to lower levels (district level on MBE, and provincial level at CLCC). Both covered the same content and duration, which were six days for community-based community participation-PAKEM. Both used a couple of national expert trainer and facilitator. MBE trained participants from the district. While CLCC trained teachers, principals, supervisors and education officials from each district and province.

The provincial level had little effect on educational practices at lower levels due to decentralization or district autonomy regulations. CLCC and BEP began in the centralized era of the country. Therefore, in the MBE and NTT-PEP projects, capacity building at the district level was more valuable than that at the provincial level. At CLCC, training was consistent from national to provincial and district levels regarding the objectives, contents, duration, trainers, participants, and methods. While BEP, which specifically rehabilitated the physical parts of the schools, organized capacity building at the provincial level which then went down to a lower level. Community participation in BEP dealt with the selection of eligible school selection criteria, and established community partnerships for school rehabilitation.

At the district level, there appeared to be some uniqueness in terms of training goals and emphasis. MBE concerned with school budget development plans, but CLCC focused on TOT (training of trainers) on school clusters, BEP on school committee and community participation in school management functions, and NTT-PEP on collaboration between schools and communities while using minimum service standards (MSS) to prepare school plans. Consequently, the objectives and contents of capacity building itself varied among projects; MBE on drafting school plans and budgets; CLCC on the capabilities and competence of trainers; BEP on regulation, partnership, knowledge and skills in school development; NTT-PEP on MSS by introducing school-based management and transparent and inclusive school committees.

Training itself spent different lengths of time. There were held 3 days in MBE, 5 days in BEP, 6

days in CLCC and NTT-PEP. The duration of time reflected how broadly the contents were embodied into their respective project activities. MBE was most efficient at using time but other projects tended to take longer to convince people for participating in educational matters. Perhaps MBE had its own formula for approaching the community without losing the main points of objectives relating to local conditions. Trainers and participants at the district level also varied among MBE, CLCC, BEP and NTT-PEP. The diversities were shown as follows. The MBE trainers at the district level were district coordinators and district facilitators supported by national trainers, while the trainees were principals, teachers, and supervisors. The CLCC trainers were those who had passed the TOT at the provincial level, and the participants were teachers. In BEP, the trainers were technical assistants from Jakarta, and educational management experts from the district, district manager, head of district education office, head of district education council, subdistrict MBS team leader, and a secretary facilitated by the district. In NTT-PEP, the trainers were international MBS advisors, local MBS advisors, and gender advisors. Participants were members of the school committee, parents, and community leaders. The methods used in the training were lectures, group discussions (including focus group discussions), simulations, modelling, participatory approaches.

At the school cluster level, BEP gave special attention. The goals were to increase the knowledge of school rehabilitation teams in planning and managing school rehabilitation grants and providing technical assistance to field coordinators in directing physical work. The contents were: eligible school selection criteria, regulations for implementing school rehabilitation through school-community partnerships, job descriptions of the school rehabilitation team and field consultants, community roles in rehabilitation and maintenance, the trainers were national consultants (financial management, procurement, construction). They trained Provincial Project staff and District Project officers and related units through participatory lectures and discussions.

For the school level, CLCC had a special capacity building. The goal was to provide technical assistance (extended training) to teachers in schools. Provincial and district trainers trained teachers during school hours through monitoring of teaching practice, discussing and providing feedback. It was organized by the Office of the District Office and the Sub-District Branch Office.

## 4 METHODS

The purpose of this study was evaluation of community participation in basic education schools. The main question was how well the degree of performance each participation aspects of the community in schools that have experienced educational innovation programs in terms of education and project level.

Relevant tools needed for further study were guideline for focus group discussion and questionnaire. These were used in order to get the data from the field.

Selected samples from 8 districts and 7 cities from seven provinces based on four criteria. First, the availability of programs that offered good practices in the nine programs discussed in previous sections, in the province and district respectively. Second, the number of projects offered in certain provinces, districts and subdistricts. Third, the availability of schools where good practices, from the nine programs were implemented. And fourth, the preparedness of provinces, districts, subdistricts, and schools to be visited.

The provinces that were decided to visit were Central Java (Magelang City and Pekalongan Regency), West Java (Sukabumi, Bekasi, and Kota Bogor), West Nusa Tenggara (Central Lombok and Mataram), Nusa Tenggara Timur (Ende Regency and Kupang City), South Sulawesi (Bantaeng Regency and Makassar City), South Kalimantan (Barito Kuala District and Banjarmasin City), North Sumatra (Deli Serdang District and Medan City). From each district/city, 10-20 elementary schools and about 10 junior secondary schools were picked up.

Samples for questionnaires in 364 schools (264 elementary and 116 junior secondary schools) consisted of 2415 teachers (1435 primary and 980 junior secondary teachers), 1785 parents/community members (1289 in primary and 496 in junior secondary). In each district, 80 people (teachers and parents/community members) were included in the Focus Group Discussion.

The quantitative data obtained were analyzed descriptively and presented in graphs and supported by qualitative data. Basically, comparisons between projects were very useful in answering research questions by taking into account the prominent good practices of related projects.

## 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The five components of community participation, obtained through focus group discussions (FGDs) were: the form and intensity of community involvement, community needs, community satisfaction, communication systems, and community-school partnerships. These five components were accepted as a reflection of the involvement under investigation (Barnett and O'Mahony, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Sylva and Siraj-Blatchford, 1995). Each component was elaborated into questionnaire form to obtain data for the following analysis.

The first component was regarding the activities and their intensities. The community participation in various school activities was not apart from school initiatives to invite them in various meetings. It was important to the principals to accommodate teacher and community participation in wide variety of forms including questions, information, suggestions, and objections. The high level of accommodation by principal in primary level came from MBE, NTT-PEP, and BEP. In addition, community or parents as well as school committee were involved in formulating school policies and plan.

Potential good practices of community participation, as in Figure 1, were viewed based on education level, i.e. primary and junior secondary schools. In primary level, the prominent potential good practices for this sub-component were in NTT-PEP, MBE and CLCC; while in junior secondary level were in DBEP, MBE and REDIP-G.

The evidences of such good practices based on local characteristics in primary level prominently emerged at District of Bekasi, Bantaeng and Ende; whereas in junior secondary level these emerged in District of Ende, Barito Kuala and Bantaeng. There was significant difference of community participation by education level in several district/kotas as shown in Kota Kupang, District of Bekasi, and Kota Banjarmasin. It seemed that some projects may have influenced the others. For instance, District of Bekasi, which junior secondaries are developing good practices under REDIP-G, also has the same potential good practices in their primary level developed under BEP. Hence community participation succeeded in different places and programs as part of education in terms of caring children and the degree of fulfilling their needs (Epstein, 1995; Osterman, 2000; Henderson and Map, 2002).

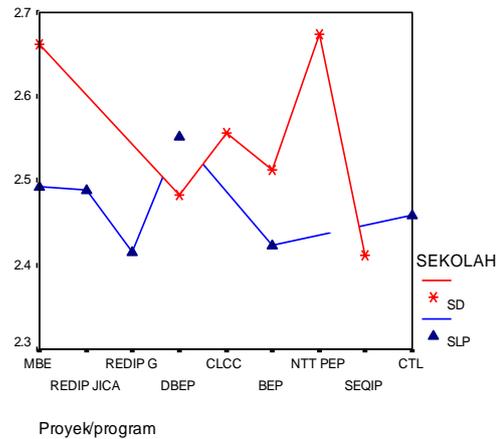


Figure 1: Programs by education level.

The second component was on community needs. Potential good practices of community needs emerged with the indicators including community aspiration of education, collaboration level among parents to support education programs at school, and the communities knew their children performance at the school without asking to the school. The following Figure 2 showed the community response to their aspiration in education based on education level.

The figure illustrated that community aspiration generally emerged in each project with varied intensities. Based on education level, the response to community needs in junior secondary level was higher than those in primary. For primary level, potential good practices in accommodating community needs emerged in MBE, NTT-PEP, and BEP; meanwhile in junior secondary level such potential good practices emerge in REDIP-G, MBE and BEP.

In view of local characteristics (district/kota) potential good practices for the component of community needs seemed to be varied among regions in line with the existence of project in each district/kota. As shown in Kota Mataram, Kota Bogor, Barito Kuala, and District of Deli Serdang, accommodation to community needs in primary level and junior secondary level was significantly different to each other; while in other districts/kotas were relatively the same. The community needs were fulfilled as affected by the programs which start from the upper level of schools related to the policies (Henderson and Map, 2002; Osterman, 2000; JICA, 2013).

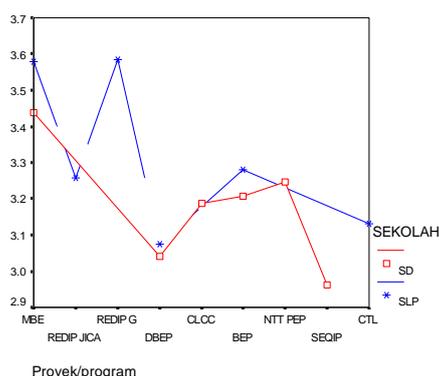


Figure 2: Community Needs.

The third component was related to the community satisfaction. The development and existence of the school would highly depend on the trust and satisfaction of consumers (community). The community satisfaction in school could be identified in several aspects, including satisfaction in school performance covering student performance and preparation of student to face occupation demand.

In view of education level, Figure 3, the prominent good practices of community satisfaction in primary level were shown in NTT-PEP, MBE and BEP. Under NTT-PEP regular reporting of student performance by the school had been the aspect highly needed by the community dealing with the children performance. In junior secondary level, the prominent potential good practices for sub-component of community satisfaction appeared in REDIP-G, REDIP-JICA, and BEP. The schools under REDIP-G the community satisfaction was particularly related to the preparation of student to face occupation challenge in the future. For instance, several junior secondary schools developed computer laboratory and internet network with support from LG Electronics and in cooperation with PT Telkom.

The community satisfaction in view of condition of district/kota seemed to be consistent in both education levels, primary and junior secondary, in the same region. The most potential good practices of this sub-component in primary level in Kota Kupang were the contribution of CLCC and SEQIP; on the other hand, for junior secondary level were shown in REDIP-G, REDIP-JICA, and CTL. The results revealed that for being satisfied, there were no need to elaborate it in detail since it was consequence of good performance (Dutta-Bergman, 2005; Zürcher, 2013; Panduprodjo, 2015).

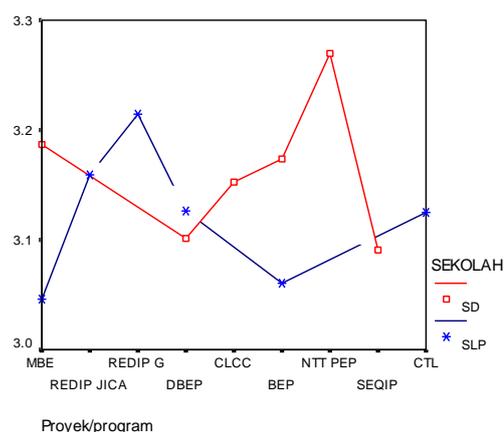


Figure 3: Community satisfaction.

The fourth component was on communication systems. Emerging potential good practices of the communication systems were the efforts to initiate the relationship within the school and stakeholders effective and accurate. Of course, the systems itself opened to be assessed by principal, teacher, staff, and stakeholders, and to enable adequate resolution of school problems.

Figure 4 clearly showed that between the primary and junior secondary, the potential good practices of system communication in primary level were shown in NTT-PEP, MBE, and BEP. Particularly the systems under NTT-PEP was developed through radio, which was a cooperation between NTT-PEP and local radio stations; however, for junior secondary level such potential emerged in MBE, REDIP-G, and REDIP-JICA. For MBE, the communication system was developed through various media such as MBE Voice, website, and other communication media.

In view of local characteristics, the potential good practices on communication sub-component in primary level was better in average compared with those in junior secondary level. This because of better relationship between parents and schools happened. Even CLCC had developed an association of parents for one classroom, which is able to act as the bridge between student and parent needs, even, in fact, the parents sometimes act as the teaching learning resources. In view of local characteristics, most potential good practices for the sub-component of communication system in primary level came from District of Bekasi, District of Deli Serdang, and District of Pekalongan; while in junior secondary level the most potential good practices emerge in District of Ende, District of Bantaeng, and Kota Bogor/District of Barito Kuala. Building the system of communication not only requires the participation of all people inside and outside the

school but also adjusts the programs to the local conditions in different cultural background (Fitriah et al., 2013; Cuellar and Theriot, 2017; Berger, 1991).

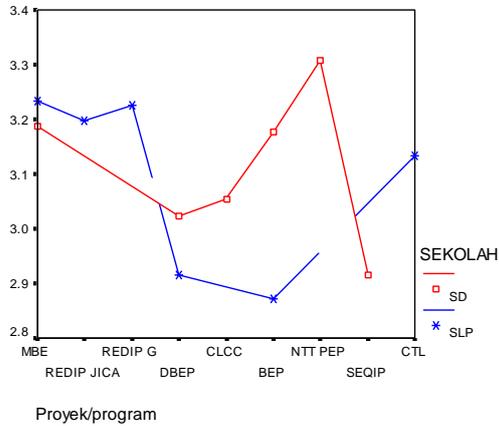


Figure 4: Communication system.

The last component pertaining the school-community partnership was described. The potential good practices of partnership were emerging in the projects include community aspiration in education, level of parental cooperation to support education programs in school level, and parent’s assistance to the children doing homework.

The illustration in Figure 5 expressed the potential good practices of partnership sub-component in primary level was better than those in junior secondary level. For primary level, the most potential good practices of this sub-component emerge were shown in MBE, BEP, and NTT-PEP, while in junior secondary level the contribution of MBE, REDIP-G, and REDIP-JICA was significant.

Local characteristics (district/kota) did not always appear in line with education level as shown in Figure 5. It was found that in District of Kupang and Bekasi, the potential good practices of partnership in primary level was better than those in junior secondary level, while in District of Banjarmasin the potential good practices of this component was better than those in primary level. The District that had equal prominent good practices of this sub-component in both primary and junior secondary levels was District of Bantaeng. The significant gap of potential good practices between primary and junior secondary levels within one region was shown in Kota Kupang, District of Bekasi, and Kota Banjarmasin. The genuine and healthy participation is constructed when the partnership exists (Brian and Griffin, 2010; Sanders, 2001; Chrispeels, 1996). Those conspicuous

programs had proved how to take care of partnership in order to achieve such kind of participation.

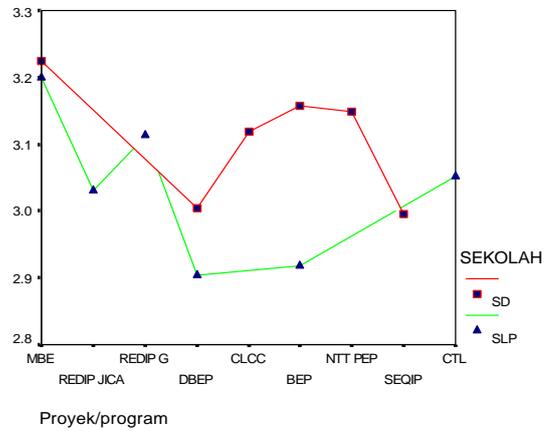


Figure 5: Partnership.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

All programs revealed that levels of education interwoven community participation with varying intensity. Although having a large variety in project designs the involvement of community still appeared as part of the overall development of education. The strengths of NTT-PEP included aspects of community involvement in planning and implementation, community satisfaction, and communication systems with communities; the MBE on the partnership aspect; the REDIP-G on community needs and community satisfaction; the REDIP-JICA's strengths on communication system and partnership; and the DBEP on community involvement in school planning. The capacity that made the success of implementation at district/municipality level and schools depending on the conditions of both providers’ and education stakeholders’ commitment, the availability of various supporting regulations, and the availability of adequate human resources.

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